

## TOPIC 15

# Technology and Globalization

MUCH OF WHAT WE IN SOCIOLOGY UNDERSTAND ABOUT social change and the future is tied to such things as “technology” and “globalization.” Some would argue that we live in the technological age, that we are experiencing a “biological revolution.” Others would mention the effect of the microchip on the world as we swim in a sea of “information” and the “communication revolution” brought on by wireless technology and the Internet. The personal and structural aspects of all these changes remind humans that we are often led by technology into social arrangements with which we have not yet learned to cope. It is true; culture “lags” behind technology. The success of the Genome Project has brought about the prospect of human engineering and cloning. The advent of the computer a short half-century ago brings us to the brink of e-mail, e-commerce, and e-communities. Much of the world perches on our visual and intellectual doorstep as a computer monitor. A new reality waits nanoseconds away. How has and how will social life be affected by such rapid change?

Toffler’s “future shock” theory warned us that the future is rushing toward us at an ever-increasing pace. If this is true, the mandate for social and personal adaptation seems more real than ever. Perhaps the “post-modern” world is more about pretense than substance, more about TV shows than human relationships and substantive issues. Will technology and computers and movies and electronic games become reality? If this is so, the shift toward virtual reality will soon affect all our definitions of what is important and meaningful, and social life will

have passed into another level that can no longer be understood using the traditional tools of science. Technology, by itself, is neither good nor bad. The Internet is a place of great, expanding possibilities for commerce and learning and, simultaneously, is a place of gross pornography that victimizes women and children while feeding lewd interests among the masses. Will society, indeed humanity, rise to meet such challenges?

Globalization is the worldwide adoption of similar social and economic patterns. When the entire world watches American TV, the news and shows of the day will be defined, in part, by the filtered content on the screen. This content, in turn, affects individual perceptions and collective cultural values. Social life is leveled to a plane that has more similarity than diversity, and the world proceeds with a “globalized” sense of what is right and just and true. Is this something that rests in the immediate future? Will America’s version of capitalism be exported across the globe and become the standard by which many societies measure themselves? Will democracy become the political preference for many nations? To be sure, McDonald’s has arrived on the world scene and most are rejoicing. Even the standardization of computer software, which more and more of us use through much of the day, creates culturally imposed patterns and globalized restrictions on creativity.

In Topic 15: Technology and Globalization, three articles outline some of the important issues raised by this introduction. First, George Ritzer’s “The McDonaldization of Society” illustrates the underlying rationality of production done to preserve profit at the least expense. With thousands of stores worldwide, and success of storybook proportions, other businesses will adopt the McDonald’s approach to hiring, creating, and selling a product. Second, the Internet is useful in identifying and attracting persons who are susceptible to recruitment by the Nazi Skinhead organizations in the United States. Once identified, the contact of these young people and their recruitment into the organization make for an interesting glimpse into marginal lives and extremist groups. Finally, Austin T. Turk takes us into a sociological examination of terrorism. Over the past few years, the world has changed and all of us feel the risk of possible harm in ways we would never have imagined. How do we deal with terrorism in the United States and around the globe while “enemies without an address” threaten our domestic calm? Indeed, the future of our lives may depend on a clearer understanding of terrorism.

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GEORGE RITZER

## The McDonaldization of Society

Ray Kroc, the genius behind the franchising of McDonald's restaurants, was a man with big ideas and grand ambitions. But even Kroc could not have anticipated the astounding impact of his creation. McDonald's is one of the most influential developments in twentieth-century America. Its reverberations extend far beyond the confines of the United States and the fast-food business. It has influenced a wide range of undertakings, indeed the way of life, of a significant portion of the world. And that impact is likely to expand at an accelerating rate.<sup>1</sup>

However, this is *not* a book about McDonald's, or even the fast-food business, although both will be discussed frequently throughout these pages. Rather, McDonald's serves here as the major example, the "paradigm," of a wide-ranging process I call *McDonaldization*, that is,

*the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world.*

As you will see, McDonaldization affects not only the restaurant business, but also education, work, health care, travel, leisure, dieting, politics, the family, and virtually every other aspect of society. McDonaldization has shown every sign of being an inexorable process by sweeping through seemingly impervious institutions and parts of the world.

McDonald's success is apparent: in 1993 its total sales reached \$23.6 billion with profits of almost \$1.1 billion.<sup>2</sup> The average U.S. outlet has total sales of approximately \$1.6 million in a year.<sup>3</sup> Many entrepreneurs envy such sales and profits and seek to emulate McDonald's success. McDonald's, which first began franchising in 1955, opened its 12,000th

outlet on March 22, 1991. By the end of 1993, McDonald's had almost 14,000 restaurants worldwide.

The impact of McDonaldization, which McDonald's has played a central role in spawning, has been manifested in many ways:

- The McDonald's model has been adopted not only by other budget-minded hamburger franchises such as Burger King and Wendy's, but also by a wide array of other low-priced fast-food businesses. Subway, begun in 1965 and now with nearly 10,000 outlets, is considered the fastest-growing of these businesses, which include Pizza Hut, Sbarro's, Taco Bell, Popeye's, and Charley Chan's. Sales in so-called "quick service" restaurants in the United States rose to \$81 billion by the end of 1993, almost a third of total sales for the entire food-service industry.<sup>4</sup> In 1994, for the first time, sales in fast-food restaurants exceeded those in traditional full-service restaurants, and the gap between them is projected to grow.<sup>5</sup>
- The McDonald's model has also been extended to "casual dining," that is, more "upscale," higher-priced restaurants with fuller menus. For example, Outback Steakhouse and Sizzler sell steaks, Fuddrucker's offers "gourmet" burgers, Chi-Chi's and Chili's sell Mexican food, The Olive Garden proffers Italian food, and Red Lobster purveys . . . you guessed it.
- McDonald's is making increasing inroads around the world.<sup>6</sup> In 1991, for the first time, McDonald's opened more restaurants abroad than in the United States.<sup>7</sup> As we move toward the next century, McDonald's expects to build twice as many restaurants each year overseas than it does in the United States. By the end of 1993, over one-third of McDonald's restaurants were overseas; at the beginning of 1995, about half of McDonald's profits came from its overseas operations. McDonald's has even recently opened a restaurant in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. . . .<sup>8</sup>
- Almost 10% of America's stores are franchises, which currently account for 40% of the nation's retail sales. It is estimated that by the turn of the century, about 25% of the stores in the United States will be chains, by then accounting for a whopping two-thirds of retail businesses.<sup>9</sup> About 80% of McDonald's restaurants are franchises.<sup>10</sup>

## McDonald's as "Americana"

McDonald's and its many clones have become ubiquitous and immediately recognizable symbols throughout the United States as well as much of the rest of the world. For example, when plans were afoot to

raze Ray Kroc's first McDonald's restaurant, hundreds of letters poured into McDonald's headquarters, including the following:

*Please don't tear it down! . . . Your company's name is a household word, not only in the United States of America, but all over the world. To destroy this major artifact of contemporary culture would, indeed, destroy part of the faith the people of the world have in your company.*<sup>11</sup>

In the end, the restaurant was not only saved, but turned into a museum! A McDonald's executive explained the move: "McDonald's . . . is really a part of Americana." Similarly, when Pizza Hut opened in Moscow in 1990, a Russian student said, "It's a piece of America."<sup>12</sup> Reflecting on the growth of fast-food restaurants in Brazil, the president of Pepsico (of which Pizza Hut is part) of Brazil said that his nation "is experiencing a passion for things American."<sup>13</sup>

McDonald's truly has come to occupy a central place in popular culture.<sup>14</sup> It can be a big event when a new McDonald's opens in a small town. Said one Maryland high-school student at such an event, "Nothing this exciting ever happens in Dale City."<sup>15</sup> Newspapers avidly cover developments in the fast-food business. Fast-food restaurants also play symbolic roles on television programs and in the movies. A skit on the television show *Saturday Night Live* satirized specialty chains by detailing the hardships of a franchise that sells nothing but Scotch tape. In the movie *Coming to America*, Eddie Murphy plays an African prince whose introduction to America includes a job at "McDowell's," a thinly disguised McDonald's. Michael Douglas, in *Falling Down*, vents his rage against the modern world in a fast-food restaurant dominated by mindless rules designed to frustrate customers. *Moscow on the Hudson* has Robin Williams, newly arrived from Russia, obtain a job at McDonald's. H. G. Wells, a central character in the movie *Time After Time*, finds himself transported to the modern world of a McDonald's, where he tries to order the tea he was accustomed to drinking in Victorian England. In *Sleeper*, Woody Allen awakens in the future only to encounter a McDonald's. Finally, *Tin Men* ends with the heroes driving off into a future represented by a huge golden arch looming in the distance.

Many people identify strongly with McDonald's; in fact to some it has become a sacred institution.<sup>16</sup> At the opening of the McDonald's in Moscow, one journalist described the franchise as the "ultimate icon of Americana," while a worker spoke of it "as if it were the Cathedral in

Chartres . . . a place to experience ‘celestial joy.’”<sup>17</sup> Kowinski argues that shopping malls, which almost always encompass fast-food restaurants, are the modern “cathedrals of consumption” to which people go to practice their “consumer religion.”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, a visit to another central element of McDonaldized society, Walt Disney World,<sup>19</sup> has been described as “the middle-class hajj, the compulsory visit to the sun-baked holy city.”<sup>20</sup>

McDonald’s has achieved its exalted position because virtually all Americans, and many others, have passed through its golden arches on innumerable occasions. Furthermore, most of us have been bombarded by commercials extolling McDonald’s virtues, commercials that are tailored to different audiences. Some play to young children watching Saturday-morning cartoons. Others solicit young adults watching prime-time programs. Still others coax grandparents to take their grandchildren to McDonald’s. In addition, these commercials change as the chain introduces new foods (such as breakfast burritos), creates new contests, and ties its products to things such as new motion pictures. These ever-present commercials, combined with the fact that people cannot drive very far without having a McDonald’s pop into view, have served to embed McDonald’s deep in popular consciousness. A poll of school-age children showed that 96% of them could identify Ronald McDonald, second only to Santa Claus in name recognition.<sup>21</sup>

Over the years, McDonald’s has appealed to people in many ways. The restaurants themselves are depicted as spick-and-span, the food is said to be fresh and nutritious, the employees are shown to be young and eager, the managers appear gentle and caring, and the dining experience itself seems fun-filled. People are even led to believe that they contribute, at least indirectly, to charities such as the Ronald McDonald Houses for sick children.

## The Long Arm of McDonaldization

McDonald’s has strived to continually extend its reach within American society and beyond. As the company’s chairman said, “Our goal: to totally dominate the quick service restaurant industry worldwide. . . . I want McDonald’s to be more than a leader. I want McDonald’s to dominate.”<sup>22</sup>

McDonald’s began as a phenomenon of suburbs and medium sized towns, but in recent years it has moved into big cities and smaller towns,<sup>23</sup> in the United States and beyond, that supposedly could not

support such a restaurant. You can now find fast-food outlets in New York's Times Square as well as on the Champs Elysees in Paris. Soon after it opened in 1992, the McDonald's in Moscow sold almost 30,000 hamburgers a day and employed a staff of 1,200 young people working two to a cash register.<sup>24</sup> McDonald's plans to open many more restaurants in the former Soviet Union and in the vast new territory in Eastern Europe that has now been laid bare to the invasion of fast-food restaurants. In early 1992, Beijing witnessed the opening of the world's largest McDonald's, with 700 seats, 29 cash registers, and nearly 1,000 employees. On its first day of business, it set a new one-day record for McDonald's by serving about 40,000 customers.<sup>25</sup>

Small satellite, express, or remote outlets, opened in areas that cannot support full-scale fast-food restaurants, are expanding rapidly. They have begun to appear in small store fronts in large cities and in nontraditional settings such as department stores, service stations, and even schools. These satellites typically offer only limited menus and may rely on larger outlets for food storage and preparation.<sup>26</sup> McDonald's is considering opening express outlets in museums, office buildings, and corporate cafeterias.

No longer content to dominate the strips that surround many college campuses, fast-food restaurants have moved onto many of those campuses. The first fast-food restaurant opened at the University of Cincinnati in 1973. Today, college cafeterias often look like shopping-mall food courts. In conjunction with a variety of "branded partners" (for example, Pizza Hut and Subway), Marriott now supplies food to almost 500 colleges and universities.<sup>27</sup> The apparent approval of college administrations puts fast-food restaurants in a position to further influence the younger generation.

More recently, another expansion has occurred: People no longer need to leave the highway to obtain fast food quickly and easily. Fast food is now available at convenient rest stops along the highway. After "refueling," we can proceed with our trip, which is likely to end in another community that has about the same density and mix of fast-food restaurants as the locale we left behind. Fast food is also increasingly available in service stations,<sup>28</sup> hotels,<sup>29</sup> railway stations, airports, and even on the trays for in-flight meals. The following advertisement appeared in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* a few years ago: "Where else at 35,000 feet can you get a McDonald's meal like this for your kids? Only on United's Orlando flights." Now, McDonald's so-called "Friendly Skies Meals" are generally available to children on

Delta flights. Similarly, in December 1994, Delta began to offer Blimpie sandwiches on its North American flights,<sup>30</sup> and Continental now offers Subway sandwiches. How much longer before McDonaldized meals will be available on all flights everywhere by every carrier? In fact, on an increasing number of flights, prepackaged “snacks” have already replaced hot main courses. . . .

As powerful as it is, McDonald’s has not been alone in pressing the fast-food model on American society and the rest of the world. Other fast-food giants, such as Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken, have played a key role, as have innumerable other businesses built on the principles of the fast-food restaurant.

Even the derivatives of McDonald’s and the fast-food industry in turn exert their own influence. For example, the success of *USA TODAY* has led many newspapers across the nation to adopt, for example, shorter stories and color weather maps. As one *USA TODAY* editor put it, “The same newspaper editors who call us McPaper have been stealing our McNuggets.”<sup>31</sup> The influence of *USA TODAY* is blatantly manifested in *The Boca Raton News*, a Knight-Ridder newspaper. This newspaper is described as “a sort of smorgasbord of snippets, a newspaper that slices and dices the news into even smaller portions than does *USA TODAY*, spicing it with color graphics and fun facts and cute features like ‘Today’s Hero’ and ‘Critter Watch’.”<sup>32</sup> As in *USA TODAY*, stories in *The Boca Raton News* usually do not jump from one page to another; they start and finish on the same page. To meet this need, long, complex stories often have to be reduced to a few paragraphs. Much of a story’s context, and much of what the principals have to say, is severely cut back or omitted entirely. With its emphasis on light news and color graphics, the main function of the newspaper seems to be entertainment. Even the *New York Times* has undergone changes (for example, the use of color) as a result of the success of *USA TODAY*.

The expansion deep into the newspaper business suggests that McDonaldization may be inexorable and may therefore come to insinuate itself into every aspect of society and people’s private lives. In the movie *Sleeper*, Woody Allen not only created a futuristic world in which McDonald’s was an important and highly visible element, but he also envisioned a society in which even sex underwent the process of McDonaldization. The denizens of his future world were able to enter a machine called an “orgasmatron,” which allowed them to experience an orgasm without going through the muss and fuss of sexual intercourse.



Sex actually has, like virtually every other sector of society, undergone a process of McDonaldization. “Dial-a-porn” allows people to have intimate, sexually explicit, even obscene conversations with people they have never met and probably never will meet.<sup>33</sup> There is great specialization here: Dialing numbers such as 555-FOXX will lead to a very different phone message than dialing 555-SEXY. Those who answer the phones mindlessly and repetitively follow “scripts” that have them say such things as, “Sorry, tiger, but your Dream Girl has to go . . . Call right back and ask for me.”<sup>34</sup> Escort services advertise a wide range of available sex partners. People can see highly specialized pornographic movies (heterosexual, homosexual, sex with children, and sex with animals) at urban multiplexes and can rent them from local video stores for viewing in the comfort of their living rooms. Various technologies (vibrators, for example) enhance the ability of people to have sex on their own without the bother of having to deal with a human partner. In New York City, an official called a three-story pornographic center “the McDonald’s of sex” because of its “cookie-cutter cleanliness and compliance with the law.”<sup>35</sup> These examples suggest that no aspect of people’s lives is immune to McDonaldization.

## The Dimensions of McDonaldization

Why has the McDonald’s model proven so irresistible? Four alluring dimensions lie at the heart of the success of this model and, more generally, of McDonaldization. In short, McDonald’s has succeeded because it offers consumers, workers, and managers efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control.<sup>36</sup>

First, McDonald’s offers *efficiency*, or the optimum method for getting from one point to another. For consumers, this means that McDonald’s offers the best available way to get from being hungry to being full. (Similarly, Woody Allen’s *orgasmatron* offered an efficient method for getting people from quiescence to sexual gratification.) Other institutions, fashioned on the McDonald’s model, offer similar efficiency in losing weight, lubricating cars, getting new glasses or contacts, or completing income-tax forms. In a society where both parents are likely to work, or where there may be only a single parent, efficiently satisfying the hunger and many other needs of people is very attractive. In a society where people rush, usually by car, from one spot to another, the efficiency of a fast-food meal, perhaps even without leaving their

cars by wending their way along the drive-through lane, often proves impossible to resist. The fast-food model offers people, or at least appears to offer them, an efficient method for satisfying many needs.

Like their customers, workers in McDonaldized systems function efficiently. They are trained to work this way by managers, who watch over them closely to make sure they do. Organizational rules and regulations also help ensure highly efficient work.

Second, McDonald's offers *calculability*, or an emphasis on the quantitative aspects of products sold (portion size, cost) and service offered (the time it takes to get the product). Quantity has become equivalent to quality; a lot of something, or the quick delivery of it, means it must be good. As two observers of contemporary American culture put it, "As a culture, we tend to believe deeply that in general 'bigger is better.'" <sup>37</sup> Thus, people order the *Quarter Pounder*, the *Big Mac*, the *large* fries. More recently, there is the lure of the "double this" (for instance, Burger King's "Double Whopper With Cheese") and the "triple that." People can quantify these things and feel that they are getting a lot of food for what appears to be a nominal sum of money. This calculation does not take into account an important point: the extraordinary profitability of fast-food outlets and other chains, which indicates that the owners, not the consumers, get the best deal.

People also tend to calculate how much time it will take to drive to McDonald's, be served the food, eat it, and return home; then, they compare that interval to the time required to prepare food at home. They often conclude, rightly or wrongly, that a trip to the fast-food restaurant will take less time than eating at home. This sort of calculation particularly supports home-delivery franchises such as Domino's, as well as other chains that emphasize time saving. A notable example of time saving in another sort of chain is Lens Crafters, which promises people, "Glasses fast, glasses in one hour."

Some McDonaldized institutions combine the emphases on time and money. Domino's promises pizza delivery in half an hour, or the pizza is free. Pizza Hut will serve a personal pan pizza in five minutes, or it, too, will be free.

Workers at McDonaldized systems also tend to emphasize the quantitative rather than the qualitative aspects of their work. Since the quality of the work is allowed to vary little, workers focus on such things as how quickly tasks can be accomplished. In a situation analogous to that of the customer, workers are expected to do a lot of work, very quickly, for low pay.

Third, McDonald's offers *predictability*, the assurance that their products and services will be the same over time and in all locales. The Egg McMuffin in New York will be, for all intents and purposes, identical to those in Chicago and Los Angeles. Also, those eaten next week or next year will be identical to those eaten today. There is great comfort in knowing that McDonald's offers no surprises. People know that the next Egg McMuffin they eat will taste about the same as the others they have eaten; it will not be awful, but it will not be exceptionally delicious, either. The success of the McDonald's model suggests that many people have come to prefer a world in which there are few surprises.

The workers in McDonaldized systems also behave in predictable ways. They follow corporate rules as well as the dictates of their managers. In many cases, not only what they do, but also what they say, is highly predictable. McDonaldized organizations often have scripts that employees are supposed to memorize and follow whenever the occasion arises.<sup>38</sup> This scripted behavior helps create highly predictable interactions between workers and customers. While customers do not follow scripts, they tend to develop simple recipes for dealing with the employees of McDonaldized systems.<sup>39</sup> As Robin Leidner argues,

*McDonald's pioneered the routinization of interactive service work and remains an exemplar of extreme standardization. Innovation is not discouraged . . . at least among managers and franchisees. Ironically, though, 'the object is to look for new, innovative ways to create an experience that is exactly the same no matter what McDonald's you walk into, no matter where it is in the world.'*<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, *control*, especially through the *substitution of nonhuman for human technology*, is exerted over the people who enter the world of McDonald's. A *human technology* (a screwdriver, for example) is controlled by people; a *nonhuman technology* (the assembly line, for instance) controls people. The people who eat in fast-food restaurants are controlled, albeit (usually) subtly. Lines, limited menus, few options, and uncomfortable seats all lead diners to do what management wishes them to do—eat quickly and leave. Further, the drive-through (in some cases walk-through) window leads diners to leave before they eat. In the Domino's model, customers never come in the first place.

The people who work in McDonaldized organizations are also controlled to a high degree, usually more blatantly and directly than customers. They are trained to do a limited number of things in precisely the way they are told to do them. The technologies used and the way

the organization is set up reinforce this control. Managers and inspectors make sure that workers toe the line.

McDonald's also controls employees by threatening to use, and ultimately using, nonhuman technology to replace human workers. No matter how well they are programmed and controlled, workers can foul up the system's operation. A slow worker can make the preparation and delivery of a Big Mac inefficient. A worker who refuses to follow the rules might leave the pickles or special sauce off a hamburger, thereby making for unpredictability. And a distracted worker can put too few fries in the box, making an order of large fries seem skimpy. For these and other reasons, McDonald's has felt compelled to steadily replace human beings with nonhuman technologies, such as the soft-drink dispenser that shuts itself off when the glass is full, the french-fry machine that rings and lifts itself out of the oil when the fries are crisp, the pre-programmed cash register that eliminates the need for the cashier to calculate prices and amounts and, perhaps at some future time, the robot capable of making hamburgers.<sup>41</sup> This technology increases the corporation's control over workers. Thus, McDonald's can assure customers that their employees and service will be consistent.

## The Advantages of McDonaldization

This discussion of four of the fundamental characteristics of McDonaldization makes it clear that there are good, solid reasons why McDonald's has succeeded so phenomenally and why the process of McDonaldization is moving ahead so dramatically. As a result, people such as the economic columnist, Robert Samuelson, strongly support McDonald's. Samuelson confesses to "openly worship McDonald's," and he thinks of it as "the greatest restaurant chain in history." However, even Samuelson recognizes that there are those who "can't stand the food and regard McDonald's as the embodiment of all that is vulgar in American mass culture."<sup>42</sup>

McDonaldization has undoubtedly led to positive changes.<sup>43</sup> Here are a few specific examples:

- There is a far greater availability of goods and services than before; their availability depends less on time or geographic location.
- This wider range of goods and services is available to a much larger portion of the population.
- People are able to get what they want or need almost instantaneously.

- It is far more convenient to get what they want or need.
- Goods and services are of a far more uniform quality; at least some people get even better goods and services than before McDonaldization.
- Far more economical alternatives to high-priced, customized goods and services are widely available; therefore, people can afford things they could not previously afford.
- Fast, efficient goods and services are available to a population that is working longer hours and has fewer hours to spare. . . .

More specifically, McDonald's itself offers many praiseworthy programs, such as its Ronald McDonald Houses, which permit parents to stay with children undergoing treatment for serious medical problems; job-training programs for teenagers; programs to help keep its employees in school; efforts to hire and train the handicapped; the McMasters program, aimed at hiring senior citizens; and an enviable record of hiring and promoting minorities.<sup>44</sup>

## A Critique of McDonaldization: The Irrationality of Rationality

Though McDonaldization offers powerful advantages, it has a downside. Efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control through nonhuman technology can be thought of as the basic components of a *rational* system.<sup>45</sup> However, rational systems inevitably spawn irrationalities. The downside of McDonaldization will be dealt with most systematically under the heading of the *irrationality of rationality*; in fact, paradoxically, the irrationality of rationality can be thought of as the fifth dimension of McDonaldization. The basic idea here is that rational systems inevitably spawn irrational consequences. Another way of saying this is that rational systems serve to deny human reason; rational systems are often unreasonable.

For example, McDonaldization has produced a wide array of adverse effects on the environment. Take just one example: the need to grow uniform potatoes to create those predictable french fries that people have come to expect from fast-food restaurants. It turns out that the need to grow such potatoes has adversely affected the ecology of the Pacific Northwest. The huge farms that now produce such potatoes rely on the extensive use of chemicals. The need to produce a perfect fry means that much of the potato is wasted, with the remnants either fed to cattle or

used for fertilizer. However, the underground water supply is now showing high levels of nitrates that may be traceable to the fertilizer and animal wastes.<sup>46</sup> There are, of course, many other ecological problems associated with the McDonaldization of society—the forests felled to produce paper, the damage caused by polystyrene and other materials, the enormous amount of food needed to produce feed cattle, and so on.

Another unreasonable effect of the fast-food restaurant is that it is often a dehumanizing setting in which to eat or work. Customers lining up for a burger or waiting in the drive-through line and workers preparing the food often feel as though they are part of an assembly line. Hardly amenable to eating, assembly lines have been shown to be inhuman settings in which to work.

Of course, the criticisms of the irrationality of the fast-food restaurant will be extended to all facets of the McDonaldizing world. For example, at the opening of Euro Disney, a French politician said that it will “bombard France with uprooted creations that are to culture what fast food is to gastronomy.”<sup>47</sup> This clearly indicates an abhorrence of McDonaldization, whatever guise it may take.

As you have seen, there *are* great gains to be made from McDonaldization. However, this book [The McDonaldization of Society] will focus on the great costs and enormous risks of McDonaldization. McDonald’s and the other purveyors of the fast-food model spend billions of dollars each year outlining the benefits of their system. However, the critics of the system have few outlets for their ideas. There are, for example, no commercials between Saturday-morning cartoons warning children of the dangers associated with fast-food restaurants.

A legitimate question may be raised about this critique of McDonaldization: Is it animated by a romanticization of the past and an impossible desire to return to a world that no longer exists? Some critics do base their critiques on the idea that there was a time when life was slower and less efficient, and offered more surprises; when people were freer; and when one was more likely to deal with a human being than a robot or a computer.<sup>48</sup> Although they have a point, these critics have undoubtedly exaggerated the positive aspects of a world without McDonald’s, and they have certainly tended to forget the liabilities associated with such a world. As an example of the latter, take the following case of a visit to a pizzeria in Havana, Cuba:

*The pizza’s not much to rave about—they scrimp on tomato sauce, and the dough is mushy.*

*It was about 7:30 P.M., and as usual the place was standing-room-only, with people two deep jostling for a stool to come open and a waiting line spilling out onto the sidewalk.*

*The menu is similarly Spartan. . . . To drink, there is tap water. That's it—no toppings, no soda, no beer, no coffee, no salt, no pepper. And no special orders.*

*A very few people are eating. Most are waiting. . . . Fingers are drumming, flies are buzzing, the clock is ticking. The waiter wears a watch around his belt loop, but he hardly needs it; time is evidently not his chief concern. After a while, tempers begin to fray.*

*But right now, it's 8:45 P.M. at the pizzeria, I've been waiting an hour and a quarter for two small pies.<sup>49</sup>*

Few would prefer such irrational systems to the rationalized elements of society. More important, critics who revere the past do not seem to realize that we are not returning to such a world. In fact, fast-food restaurants have begun to appear in Havana.<sup>50</sup> The increase in the number of people, the acceleration of technological change, the increasing pace of life—all this and more make it impossible to go back to the nonrationalized world, if it ever existed, of home-cooked meals, traditional restaurant dinners, high-quality foods, meals loaded with surprises, and restaurants populated only by chefs free to fully express their creativity.

While one basis for a critique of McDonaldization is the past, another is the future.<sup>51</sup> The future in this sense is defined as human potential, unfettered by the constraints of McDonaldized systems. This critique holds that people have the potential to be far more thoughtful, skillful, creative, and well-rounded than they are now. If the world were less McDonaldized, people would be better able to live up to their human potential. This critique is based not on what people were like in the past, but on what they could be like in the future, if only the constraints of McDonaldized systems were eliminated, or at least eased substantially.

## NOTES

1. For a similar but narrower viewpoint to the one expressed here, see Benjamin R. Barber. "Jihad Vs. McWorld." *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1992, pp. 53–63.
2. These and other data on McDonald's come from its most recent (1993) annual report, *The Annual*.
3. Cynthia Rigg. "McDonald's Lean Units Beef up NY Presence." *Crain's New York Business*, October 31, 1994, p. 1.

4. The source for this information is PepsiCo, Inc.'s 1993 Annual Report, p. 18.
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## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of McDonaldization? How is this related to "globalization"?
2. List other businesses that have become like the McDonald's restaurant. Can you look at places where you go that have become like McDonald's? What similarities do they have with McDonald's?

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RANDY BLAZAK

## White Boys to Terrorist Men

### Target Recruitment of Nazi Skinheads

There is an important distinction between hate crimes and hate group activity. Although reported hate crimes appear to be declining, there is evidence that hate group activity is increasing. This includes hate group consolidation, the increase in hate Web sites, and more sophisticated recruitment of youth. This research explores how hate groups, specifically racist skinheads, target specific youth populations for recruitment. Using a layman's interpretation of Durkheim's "anomie," skinheads look for youth who live in a world of change. Based on ethnographic research and guided interviews, this research finds that older Nazi skinheads manipulate anomic teens and indoctrinate them into a world of terror.

Skinheads in Denver murder a police officer and a Black man waiting for a bus, critically injuring a White woman who tried to help the victim. A Black Texan is dragged to his death behind a truck driven by three members of the Aryan Brotherhood. A member of the World Church of the Creator goes on a shooting spree in Illinois and Indiana, killing two minorities and wounding nine others. The late 1990s saw its share of violence committed by members of hate groups.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) (2000a) *Intelligence Report*, the number of hate groups may be on the decline, but their activity is not. "Official" data on hate crimes are becoming more reliable since the implementation of the 1990 Hate Crimes Statistics Acts, but there are still problems. Many police departments are not trained to identify hate crimes or, for various reasons, may

choose not to report acts as hate crimes. Several states have no hate crime laws, and those that do have varying definitions of who should be included in the laws' "protected class." Should women, homosexuals, the disabled, and others be protected by hate crime laws? And, of course, there is a great reluctance by many to report hate crimes.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data that we do have, most hate crimes are committed by young people. In their research, Levin and McDevitt (1993) classified 60% of hate criminals as "youthful thrill seekers." Some of these youth are members of hate groups; most are not. That hate crimes tend to be more vicious and injurious than normal violent crimes only adds to the destructive impact they have on the community. As with other forms of crime, most youthful hate criminals will "age out" of their criminality. But, some will be brought into the fray of terrorist hate groups. These groups may perpetrate or encourage other hate crimes, but more importantly, they create a climate where bias-motivated crime is justified. To groups such as the Aryan Nations, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK, Klan), and the World Church of the Creator, the hate criminal is a hero, doing God's work to save the White race from extinction.

The process by which young people are brought into the shadowy world of White supremacy must be researched for two primary reasons. First, we must be able to identify the macro-level social dynamics that create environments conducive to hate. Hate group membership ebbs and flows. Although some of this may be due to law enforcement policing and the courtroom challenges of legal groups such as the SPLC, it must also be related to shifts in social dynamics, including the economy, immigration, and changes in gender roles. Second, by understanding the root explanations behind hate group recruitment, strategies can be developed to combat youth involvement in adult terrorist groups. Prevention programs on the local level (education, mentoring, etc.) as well as the global level (multicultural curriculums, youth employment, etc.) can feed from the findings of sociological research.

The distinction between hate crimes and hate group activity is an important one. Although official data reflect increases and decreases in their activity, hate groups continue to operate. The SPLC (2000b) reports that in 1998, there were 537 identifiable active hate groups, but in 1999, there were only 457, 80 fewer. Understanding this trend is crucial because a significant part of change is related to the development

of more sophisticated recruitment tactics. The reduction in the number of hate groups relates to five key trends:

1. **Consolidation:** Like corporations in merger frenzy, small hate groups are being swallowed up by larger ones. A Michigan chapter of the neo-Nazi group the American Nationalist Party joined the National Alliance. The New Jersey Confederate Knights merged with the Alabama-based America's Empire of the KKK. Even skinheads who have been fiercely defensive of their autonomy are being brought back into adult racist groups. Most notable is the Hammerskin Nation, which has moved beyond its Texas home to recruit skinheads from Oregon to Russia. According to the SPLC, the group increased in size by 70% in 1999. According to the Center's *Intelligence Report* director, Joseph Roy, the situation is deeply troubling: "Many of the less active groups have joined forces with much more serious players. There is strong evidence that far more people are now in really hard-lined groups like the National Alliance and the Hammerskin Nation" (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000b, p. 7).
2. **Web sites:** More than 300 hate sites on the Web allow hate groups to spread their messages to those who might not ever travel to a rally or clandestine meeting. But, Web sites also allow individuals not associated with groups to spread their ideologies. The SPLC reports that 47% of hate sites are not affiliated with active hate groups. But, these sites may be gateways into established hate groups because most provide links to them; just a click away.
3. **Leaderless resistance:** On October 23, 1992, Christian Identity leader Pete Peters launched the idea of the leaderless resistance into the extreme right. At a meeting of White supremacists who desired to respond to the siege at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, earlier that year, Peters argued that the Klan, militias, and others should move away from the hierarchical organizations of the past because of their tendency to be infiltrated by law enforcement agents. Small cells of terrorists who shared an ideology and agenda (as laid out in *The Turner Diaries*, a fictional manual for starting a race war) would avoid government policing. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombers, represent Peters's concept. As some right-wing extremists consolidate into larger hate groups, others (perhaps more) join no groups, only the vague leaderless resistance. This includes skinheads. Whereas some merge into the Hammerskin Nation, others claim no affiliation, making it hard for law enforcement and community groups to monitor nameless, small groups of skinheads.
4. **Mainstream politics:** It should be acknowledged that many right-wing extremists may have found homes in mainstream right-wing politics. Encouraged by the election to the Louisiana State legislature as a Republican of David Duke, the leader of the National Association for the

Advancement of White People, others have taken off their Klan hoods and played the mainstream game. Successful campaigns against affirmative action in California, Washington, and Texas, the power of the gun lobby and the antihomosexual lobby, and sizable campaigns to preserve the Confederate battle flag's place in Southern society give right-wingers legitimate opportunities to advance their causes.

5. Recruitment: Like gangs and cults, hate groups have a high turnover rate. Research shows that most members stay in hate groups only as long as the groups meet their personal needs (Ezekial, 1995). Hate groups play the role of subcultural "problem solver" (Cohen, 1995). When they no longer appear to be solving the problem, members move on. Although many hate groups may find new members from the mainstream right-wing community, this research focuses on how skinhead groups specifically target young, "anomic" people. Both skinhead and nonskinhead groups are increasingly skilled in identifying "strained" populations that have gone through some type of ascribed status crisis ranging from factory layoffs to interracial schoolyard fights. Instead of the general recruitment of Whites in the past, skinheads and similar groups now target specific populations from which they are most likely to successfully recruit new members.

These five trends create a three-level environment conducive to right-wing terrorism: (a) stronger, consolidated hate groups with chapters in many states and even nations; (b) an unknown number of leaderless cells that share much of the hate groups' philosophy along with a mandate that supports violence against representatives of the government, abortion, and multiculturalism; and (c) a populace in which bigoted, antigovernment agendas are reinforced and supported. . . .

## Skinheads as Terrorists

Skinheads have been affiliated with hate groups in America for more than 15 years. Their roots as a subculture go back to the mid-1960s, when they emerged in London as a working-class response to the hippie phenomenon. Not initially racists (in fact, skinhead style draws heavily from Black "rude boys," Jamaican immigrants), skinheads were reactionary, resenting social forces representing social change (Hebdige, 1979). Skinheads first appeared as a reactionary element of the American punk rock scene, but it was not until the mid-1980s that they began to be recruited by more established racist groups (Blazak, 1995).

As groups such as the Klan, the White Aryan Resistance (WAR), and the New Order (a Nazi group) increased their recruitment of skinheads,

skinhead violence also rose. Hundreds of acts of violence and destruction in the last 1980s were attributed to skinhead groups. One of the better known cases was the murder of Mulugeta Seraw in Portland, Oregon, in 1988. The day after an airing of an episode of *Geraldo* that featured skinheads and Nazis violently rioting on TV, Seraw was killed by three skinheads. The skinheads claimed membership in a Portland hate group known as East Side White Pride. In a 1990 civil trial, SPLC founder Morris Dees successfully proved that East Side White Pride members had been recruited by the California-based WAR to become foot soldiers in a violent race war. The trial ended with a \$12.5 million judgment against WAR leader Tom Metzger and his son John, head of the Aryan Youth Movement.

Although the judgment may have temporarily sidelined WAR from recruiting skinheads (Metzger's Web site, <http://www.resist.com>, is now one of the most popular sources of hate propaganda on the Web), skinhead violence continued well into the 1990s. Some of the most violent acts made headlines. In 1990, two Houston, Texas, skinheads killed a Vietnamese teenager whose dying words were "Please stop. I'm sorry I ever came to your country. God forgive me!" (SPLC, 2000a, p. 11). In 1992, three skinheads recruited by Bill Riccio's Aryan National Front stabbed to death a homeless Black man. Two Aryan Nations skinheads killed their parents and brother in 1995 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Their motivation was that their parents were Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1996, a dozen Nazi skinheads stabbed to death a youth who had ejected them from a party. Denver, Colorado, saw a wave of skinhead violence in 1997 that included two murders. There have also been numerous synagogue and church attacks, random bombings, and malicious harassment cases that police attribute to skinhead groups.

Although the number of skinhead groups may have peaked in 1991, when the SPLC counted 144 groups, they may be more active now in consolidated groups such as the Hammerskins or in unaffiliated small cells. Many racist skinheads share a belief in an inevitable race war in America. Although this race war will lead to an "autonomous Aryan homeland in the Northwest" (as a Volksfront newsletter describes it), the ultimate goal is an America that has been ethnically cleansed of all enemies, including White race traitors. This civil war may require some "sparking," as described in *The Turner Diaries* (which was written by National Alliance leader William Pierce). Act of violence and terror by skinheads are viewed within the movements as important in speeding the polarization of the public into racial "tribes."

The relatively infrequent attacks by racist skinheads (compared with economically or interpersonally motivated crimes) should not distract observers from the increase in hate group activity. Effective policing on the federal and local levels as well as the willingness of prosecutors to test new hate crime laws may have discouraged some violence. But, recruitment and consolidation, along with the spread of unaffiliated cells, are part of racists' vision of forming armies in preparation for the prophesied racial civil war. This "drawing up of sides" is reflected in a recent statement on the Hammerskin Nation Web site:

*Skinheads are meant to be a visible opposition on the street, but when you're out there, try to earn respect rather than contempt. Even those of us who aren't so visible anymore matter, because people still know who we are. Only with people's respect will we ever gain any public sympathy, which will lead us toward our goals. It takes the few brave souls to lead before the "sheep" will follow. I am reminded of some of the "outlaw" motorcycle clubs who calls themselves "1 percenters" because they are the few who have the courage to "live on the edge" and defy the law. I say Hammerskins are like 1 percenters, except that we are forced to the edge. We are sane people in an insane world. Let us bring that edge inward until our values, morals, honor and glory are the only law and we have won back the minds, hearts and souls of our people! (Hyde, 2000)*

## Strain Theory and Hate Group Recruitment

From Durkheim and Merton to Passas and Agnew (1997), it has been argued that the effect of macro-level anomie can manifest on the micro level as criminal behavior. Existing as a sense of "normlessness" or as a disjunction between aspirations and expectations, this stage is reflected in a form of psychological distress or strain. Whether it is Agnew's (1992) general strain theory or Messner and Rosenfeld's (1994) institutional anomie theory, the human face of strain is the same: frustration, anger, and a need to resolve some perceived inequity.

Much has been written about how strained boys and men end up in gangs as a way to address their blocked goal attainment (Cohen, 1955, Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Not as evident are data that suggest that strained youth are actually targeted for recruitment by delinquent subcultures. This article explores research on racist skinhead groups and

their recruitment targets. Although the criminal activity of skinheads is often seen as a phenomenon separate from street gangs (Blazak, 1998; Hamm, 1993; Levin & McDevitt, 1993), criminologists have referred to skinhead groups as “White gangs.” Increasingly, local police departments are including skinheads in their gang-monitoring activities.

### *Strain as a Red Flag*

What does strain look like? How can one tell if someone is experiencing anomie? Agnew (1985) discussed the presentation of “life hassles” coming from the presentation of negative stimuli and the removal of positively valued stimuli as well as blocked opportunities. This “negative affect” generates anger and frustration, and crime becomes a corrective action. Cohen (1955) researched how strained individuals search out subcultural solutions (i.e., gangs) to resolve their strain but not how gangs search out strained individuals to recruit. On the street, strain can manifest in the values seen in Cohen’s delinquent boys: nonutilitarianism, maliciousness, and negativism.

This “reaction formation” to dominant conforming values can appear as antisocial behavior (e.g., fighting or vandalism) before the strained individual finds his or her collective solution in either a nonutilitarian gang or, if he or she has the opportunity, in a more goal-oriented gang (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Regardless of the path, the individual is exhibiting behavior reflective of his or her psychic stress. Researchers have found evidence of this desire for a group to relieve individual alienation. In Wooden and Blazak’s (2000) work on skinheads, graffiti taggers, and skaters, the authors identify anomie as a motivating factor for joining deviant groups.

Although the musical tastes and styles of dress differ from group to group, these adolescents share one commonality: They are experiencing what sociologists refer to as anomie, a sense of rootlessness or normlessness. In part, to combat this state, they join groups and assume identities that, for many, become all encompassing, a form of a “master status,” the core way of defining themselves. And, embracing or identifying with a specific group—whether a “metaler” clique, a stoner gang, or a tagger crew—provides these “tearaway” teenagers with a way of reducing their anxiety and alienation (Wooden & Blazak, 2000, p. 12).

The logic of anomie theory is that the individual experiences strain, which then leads him or her to group delinquency. Much of the



research focuses on the group delinquency (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960) or the presence of strain from noxious stimuli (Agnew, 1985) but not necessarily on the precriminal expressions of strain. There is an assumption that the anomic person is flailing around, frustrated, angry, and inching toward the “criminal solution.” High school counselors are skilled at identifying these “at-risk” youth. They exhibit certain characteristics of alienation including maliciousness, rebellious dress, and antisocial attitudes, all of which are red flags.

Other red flags can be the social–structural conditions that create anomie. The disjunction between goals and legitimate opportunities or between aspirations and expectations can take the form of economic blockage, as described in the classic strain theory of Cohen (1955); in more micro-level problems, as described in Agnew’s general strain theory (1985); or in the institutional over-emphasis on economic success, as described in Messner and Rosenfeld’s (1994) institutional anomie theory. In each of these instances, the individual wants something—a car, popularity, wealth—and society has not regulated the means to attain these positively valued goals. There is also evidence that cultural status (Blazak, 1995) and masculinity (Messerchmidt, 1993) may represent goals that when blocked lead to criminal activity. Gangs, for example, may use the lack of opportunity for material wealth and legitimate performances of masculinity in poor urban areas to offer a group solution for those strained boys who need to “be a man and make money.”

With regard to the racist skinheads, the negative stimuli can be represented in the presence of threats to class and ascribed status. Skinhead belief is based on the traditional cultural superiority of heterosexual, White men; therefore, anything that could undermine that group’s dominance represents a threat. Antiracism, gay rights, feminism, and multiculturalism are all perceived as enemies of the status quo. Therefore, in places where these concepts are a part of the dominant discourse, it can be assumed that a certain segment of heterosexual White men will feel a great deal of strain as their traditional picture of the world and their place in it is threatened.

I theorize that both identifiers of strain are used by skinheads to target recruits. The presence of structural conditions that represent threats to ascribed status first attract the attention of the group to a specific population. . . .

I hypothesize that racist skinhead groups use these red flags of strain to guide their recruiting activity. Threats to the traditional status

quo or “cultural anomie” attract the groups, which then seek out strained individuals. The threats exist in four categories:

1. Threats to ethnic or racial status
  - growth in the minority student population
  - minority student organizations or events
  - shifts to multicultural curricula
  - racial conflict in which the institutions appear to support the minority group
2. Threats to gender status
  - conflict over female participation in male activities
  - feminist activist groups
  - antisexual violence events or programs
3. Threats to heterosexual status
  - sexual minority organizations
  - gay pride events
  - inclusiveness movements or sponsored dialogue
4. Threats to economic status
  - factory layoffs
  - large employer downsizing
  - high competition for manual labor or service sector jobs

The most common scenario involves the transition in secondary schools from Eurocentric curricula to inclusive, multicultural curricula. Here, the representations of ethnic Whites as the “heroes” of civilization (where every month is “White History Month”) are replaced with a more balanced picture of social history that presents non-White perspectives that may be seen as vilifying White participation in society. Especially when reluctantly presented by “old-school” White teachers, this new curriculum may be portrayed as attempting to create “White guilt” over issues such as slavery, colonialism, and segregation. A 15-year-old boy, born in the 1980s, without the benefit of firsthand experience of his country’s overtly racist past, may wonder why he has been pegged as the bad guy in history. He notices Black, Hispanic, and Asian student groups flourishing, yet he is branded a racist if he asks why there is no White student group. He is in the middle of cultural change without the tools to navigate it. This condition of anomie is exactly what racist groups are looking for.

## Method

The data to support the theory that culturally strained youth end up in skinhead groups were collected in a 7-year ethnographic study (Blazak, 1995) in which it was found that members of skinhead groups had

experienced threats to economic status (usually, their parents had experienced downward mobility), racial status (through the increased integration of White suburbs), gender status (represented in the perceived end of the ability to be “real men” because of feminism), and heterosexual status (fostered by the idea that the gay rights movement was destroying the traditional family). Data on the recruiting goals of the skinheads were retrieved more through guided conversations and anecdotal experiences. . . .

Based on the 65 formal interviews, approximately 200 informal interviews from the ethnographic study, the interview with three skinhead recruiters through Oregon Spotlight, and the additional data from approximately 200 Oregon secondary school students, a theory can be inductively reasoned. Ultimately, future research will test the hypotheses that (a) schools that publicly experience a threat to culturally valued status are targeted for recruitment and (b) individuals expressing the negative affect of strain are targeted for recruitment.

## Findings

Of the 65 intensively interviewed skinheads, roughly half admitted being involved in some form of recruitment activities. Usually, these involved getting flyers into high schools or rock clubs. The flyers contained contact addresses or phone numbers for those who were interested. An informal youth network was also used to find out about specific individuals who might be easily recruited. The three skinheads in the Oregon Spotlight research were all active recruiters in the Portland and Eugene areas. All three have also served prison terms for various hate crimes, and one is currently incarcerated for a parole violation.

### *The Selection of Anomic Populations*

Members of organizations such as Youth Corps (the youth wing of the KKK), the Aryan Youth Movement (the youth wing of WAR), and Volksfront (an Oregon Nazi skinhead group) often discussed strategy meetings in which core members would discuss target populations where recruitment activities would have the greatest results. Leafleting was the most common strategy, but members might also stage a violent confrontation with an “enemy” to raise visibility and awareness. There was a manipulation of the power of rumor and the knowledge

that young people will quickly spread forbidden information. Trey, a 22-year-old Portland skinhead, said,

*There was this fight at [Walker] High School between a Black kid and a White kid and everyone was supporting the Black kid who had been picking on this White forever. Typical bullshit, right? But we knew that there were Whites there who were sick and tired of being called “racists” just for sticking up for themselves. So we went down there one day, right, when school was letting out and beat the shit out of some gangster-looking nigger. The next day everyone at Milwaukee was talking about, “Oh man, did you hear that the skinheads kicked some nigger’s ass?” It was the talk of the school so we went back a week later and put up a bunch of flyers and got a bunch of calls from kids wanting to know what they could do.*

. . . Over 15 years, I have heard these stories over and over again: Skinheads leafletting neighborhoods where automobile or textile workers have been laid off, blaming affirmative action and “Jewish capitalism.” Skinheads coming to the “rescue” of White youth who have been victimized by minority gangs. Skinheads who present a viable model of masculinity to boys confronted with the “homofication” (a skinhead term) of American culture. But, perhaps the newest recruitment technique is to target schools that are experiencing a curriculum shift toward multiculturalism. As history and social science books are retooled to be more inclusive, the voice that is diminishing is the hegemonic, straight, White male perspective. Without the proper context, this shift can seem to be a conspiracy to write White contributions out of the standard educational curriculum. Several high schools in Oregon have been targeted for recruitment using the backlash against multiculturalism as a way in. . . .

## Discussion

I found that the skinhead recruiters interviewed were aware of the experience of normlessness among certain youth populations. These populations were targeted because of their desire for structure, a sub-cultural solution to their anomie, as well as their need for consistent models of authority and masculinity. They were easily manipulated and brought into the fray of right-wing hate groups.

The violent solution that these groups offer (becoming a soldier in a race war) will appeal to a large percentage of anomic young men because of its simplistic reality. Wars are won. Evil conspirators are

banished. The mythical past of unchallenged, straight, White male hegemony is restored. For a generation weaned on video games and violent media, the world of Aryan terrorists can be intoxicating.

Sociological research is crucial in unlocking this attraction that makes recruiting so easy. The recruiting process is similar to that used by cults. Young skinheads may also end up in more serious right-wing groups such as Aryan Nations and even militia groups. Additionally, the readiness of the coming youth generation to look for extremist, subcultural solutions must be discussed. Finally, intervention strategies are proposed that will prevent young people from entering the world of racist terror. . . .

### *Generation Why?*

Despite the success of multicultural curriculums in reducing bias among youth, no cohort may be more ripe for recruitment than the current teenage generation. Unlike the culture-shaping baby boomers and the relatively small Generation X, youth born after 1981 face numerous sources of anomie and thus have been dubbed “Generation Why?” (Wooden & Blazak, 2000).

The youth of Generation Why? were born after the experience of overt racism (busing, segregation, etc.) and have always known Black History Month. But, they are also a more racially diverse generation. Thirty-three percent of the high school class of 2000 were members of minority groups. Only 28% of Americans, in general, are minorities (Foster, 1999). The potential for racial unity exists as more youth define themselves as “multiracial,” but there is also a potential for conflict as schools and communities become “less White,” inciting fears among racists. The 2000 census is expected to reveal that California is the first state where Whites are a minority.

This has been described as a generation in crisis. They are less likely to spend time with their parents or to be known by name to their teachers. Nanette Davis (1999), in her book *Youth Crisis: Growing Up in the High-Risk Society*, points out that all the institutions involved in helping youth make a safe transition from childhood to adulthood are in a state of crisis. These include the family, schools, religion, the juvenile justice system, and the occupational structure. Davis outlines seven of the manifestations of cultural “crisis”:

1. Modern life is uncertain.
2. Politicians opt for short-term solutions, ignoring long-term consequences.

3. The emphasis on consumerism.
4. Race, class, age, and ethnic divisions discourage youth from believing in social institutions.
5. There is a lack of adequate child care.
6. Risk reduction attempts do not target the most vulnerable.
7. There is a “cult of individualism.” (pp. 14–15) . . .

### *Prevention Strategies*

Considering the proclivity of hate groups to bring young people into their dark world of conspiracy and violence through the skinhead subculture, strategies must be developed to protect youth. Although the life of the terrorist might seem romantic or heroic, the reality is far different. Death in police shoot-outs or from unexpectedly exploding pipe bombs is normative in adult hate groups such as The Order. More likely are long prison terms due to stricter policing by the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and local police, and enhanced sentences mandated by new hate crime laws. The fact that the largest skinhead group, the Aryan Brotherhood, is essentially a prison gang reflects this.

### *Reducing Cultural Anomie*

Reducing cultural anomie on the macro level is no easy task. As long as society values correcting the power imbalances that have given certain categories privilege, straight, White men will feel threatened. No one likes to lose the privileges of power. Riane Eisler advocates the development of institutions based on partnerships (Eisler, Love, & Loye, 1998). The current dichotomous power model (male-female, straight-gay, White-Black) dictates that one group be dominant and the other group subordinate. Here, the advances of the subordinate group are seen as losses by the dominant party in a zero-sum game format. Erasing those boundaries allows all to share in the advancement of any member of society. The gains of women and ethnic and sexual minorities are not seen as threats to men, Whites, and heterosexuals in the partnership model.

Shifting society out of the dominant-subordinate paradigm may be plausible, but I argue here that an achievable macro-level solution is to reduce threats to economic status. The policies of deregulation under Ronald Reagan and the North American Free Trade Agreement under Bill Clinton have propelled the deindustrialization of the American workforce. The Dow Jones industrial average topping 10,000 and the creation of millions of low-wage, service-sector jobs in the 1990s have

not prevented a significant portion of Americans from feeling that they have lost out on the American dream. As has been done in other countries, legislation can be passed that protects factory workers from layoffs and white-collar workers from downsizing. Currently, few politicians advocate for the working class, leaving racists free reign in their interpretations.

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Which persons are most susceptible to becoming skinheads?
2. What techniques are employed to recruit and turn out these terrorists?

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## Sociology of Terrorism

### Introduction

Sociologists had until September 11, 2001, shown little interest in terrorism. Although conflict analysis, in one form or another, is a long established approach in the field, researchers have focused mostly on class and labor struggles, race relations, criminalization and other deviance-labeling, and the collective violence of riots and revolutions. Nonetheless, sociological concepts and methods have been fruitfully applied (albeit mostly by nonsociologists) in efforts to understand and counter terrorism. The aim of this review is to note what has been learned in order to suggest agendas for future research on the dynamics through which terrorism becomes a social phenomenon.

### The Social Construction of Terrorism

Probably the most significant contribution of sociological thinking to our understanding of terrorism is the realization that it is a social construction (Ben-Yehuda 1993, Turk 2002a). Contrary to the impression fostered by official incidence counts and media reports, terrorism is not a given in the real world but is instead an interpretation of events and their presumed causes. And these interpretations are not unbiased attempts to depict truth but rather conscious efforts to manipulate perceptions to promote certain interests at the expense of others. When people and events come to be regularly described in public as terrorists and terrorism, some governmental or other entity is succeeding in a



war of words in which the opponent is promoting alternative designations such as “martyr” and “liberation struggle.” . . .

The United States has a long history of violence associated with political, labor, racial, religious, and other social and cultural conflicts (Gurr 1989). Assassinations, bombings, massacres, and other secretive deadly attacks have caused many thousands of casualties. Yet, few incidents have been defined as terrorism or the perpetrators as terrorists. Instead, authorities have typically ignored or downplayed the political significance of such violence, opting to portray and treat the violence as apolitical criminal acts by deranged or evil individuals, outlaws or gangsters, or “imported” agitators such as the radical Molly Maguires of Pennsylvania’s coal miners’ struggles. Although violent acts believed to be politically motivated are assigned the highest investigative priority, those accused are rarely charged with terrorism (Smith 1994, p. 7). In official public usage, terrorism is far more likely to refer to incidents associated with agents and supporters of presumably foreign-based terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda than with the violence of home-grown militants acting in the name of such groups as the Animal Liberation Front, Earth First!, or the American Coalition for Life Activists (one of whose founders, Paul Hill, was executed in Florida on September 3, 2003, for murder, not terrorism).

In sum, to study terrorism presupposes investigating the ways in which parties in conflict are trying to stigmatize one another. The construction and selective application of definitions of terrorism are embedded in the dynamics of political conflicts, where ideological warfare to cast the enemy as an evildoer is a dimension of the struggle to win support for one’s own cause.

## Terrorism as Political Violence

Differing sociological perspectives encourage contrasting views of political violence. Insofar as functionalism assumes that order and peace are normal, violence is an aberration, a presumably temporary deviation from the normal state of human social life. Even archaic versions of functionalism (e.g., Germanic “combat theories”) arguing that war is necessary to sustain national identity and strength do not imply acceptance of nongovernmental violence, especially assaults on public order and authority, as other than deviant behavior. More liberal and

critical theories tend to posit that violence is an understandable response to oppression and exploitation, the last resort of the deprived and desperate. Whether reflecting anarchist objections to regimentation, communist or socialist critiques of capitalism, or simply liberal objections to excessive “possessive individualism,” critical theories presume that political and/or economic inequalities are the sources of collective violence.

While acknowledging that social inequities may be causally involved, particularly in originating conflicts, analytical or “structural” conflict theories (Collins 1975) attend more to the possibility that violence may be a product of strategic and tactical decisions in a process of ongoing conflict. That interests or values may not be reconcilable is accepted, as is the proposition that various forms of violent action may be political options within the perceptual range of parties in conflict.

It is increasingly clear that terrorism is most usefully defined, for empirical research purposes, as the deliberate targeting of more or less randomly selected victims whose deaths and injuries are expected to weaken the opponent’s will to persist in a political conflict (Turk 2002b). Terrorist acts are political, rarely involving psychopathology or material deprivation. Indeed, the evidence is mounting that terrorism is associated with relative affluence and social advantage rather than poverty, lack of education, or other indicators of deprivation. The typical terrorist comes from a relatively well-off part of the world, and appears to be motivated by political-ideological resentments rather than economic distress. Suicide bombers, for instance, appear increasingly likely to be respected individuals from advantaged classes, with stable family and community ties. Although their violent deaths may surprise relatives and friends, they are far more likely to be honored than to be condemned or stigmatized as somehow deviant. . . .

Traditional notions about violence are misleading insofar as they lead terrorism researchers to focus on psychopathologies (see, for example, Robins & Post 1997) or material disadvantage instead of the political contexts in which terrorist acts occur. A priority for research is to connect the emergence of terrorism to the political histories of the settings in which people come to see it as an option in their struggles over who will have what life chances. Recognizing that terrorism is the product of a blending of demographic, economic, and political determinants, a panel of the National Research Council (Smelser & Mitchell 2002) observed that regions most likely to generate terrorist threats have a history of colonialist exploitation by Western interests, and more

recently of postcolonial economic and cultural penetration. These facts have facilitated identification of the West as the source of global economic and political disadvantage, military weakness, and cultural malaise, which provides a credible focus for resentment and moral outrage in the recruitment of terrorists and the mobilization of supporters and sympathizers.

## Terrorism as Communication

The considerable and growing literature on the role of the media in framing images of criminality readily extends to terrorism (Jenkins 2003). Since the nineteenth century caricatures of anarchists in newspapers (deranged, bearded bombers), the established media have encouraged the belief that political violence in opposition to authority is both criminal and crazy. Assassins are widely portrayed as lone disturbed persons whose murderous acts are attributable to their individual pathologies, the consequences of loveless lives and frustrated ambitions (see Turk 2002a). Suicidal attacks are similarly pictured as the irrational or obviously misguided acts of uninformed people driven by despair or fanaticism.

Even when some recognition is given to the possibility that grievances may arise from real injustices, reportage in mainstream outlets tends to accentuate the theme that grievances never justify violence. The consistent message is that violence expresses hate, which only leads to reciprocal violence in destructive escalations of hostilities. Who is blamed for ongoing terrorist violence depends on which media one examines. For example, Western, especially American, media reports generally blame Palestinians and their supporters for the ongoing violence between Arabs and Israelis, whereas non-Western media reports in outlets such as al Jazeera generally blame Israel and supporters—especially the United States.

Certainly alternative views are more often expressed in outlets independent of the politics and economics of mainstream, especially Western, media competition. Sympathetic comments accepting terrorism as an understandable, perhaps even legitimate, form of defense and protest against oppression and threat are more likely to appear in radical, underground, or non-Western communications.

Whether alternative descriptions and interpretations of terrorists and terrorism should be disseminated is a major issue in debates over

counterterrorism policies. Reminiscent of the idea that collective violence (food riots, strikes, ethnic and racial clashes, etc.) signals authorities that something is amiss, terrorism has been analyzed as a communication through violence that problems exist (Schmid & de Graaf 1982). The usual assumption is that peaceful methods of seeking the redress of grievances have failed, so that violence is left as the only way in which to force attention to the aggrieved.

Governmental and other organizational authorities are predisposed to minimize the risks of either public sympathy for terrorists or public fear of terrorism. Accordingly, the inclination in counterterrorism policymaking is to deny legitimacy to oppositional violence and to discourage the media from granting too public a voice to those who resort to or sympathize with terrorism. A complicating factor is that a satiation effect has been noted as a contributor to terrorism, in that acts of terrorism must be ever more horrendous in order to overcome the tendency for newsmakers and their publics to become inured to “ordinary” violence. . . .

## Organizing Terrorism

Most of what is known about terrorist organizations is now outdated. Even distinctions such as “international” and “domestic” terrorism are decreasingly meaningful because technological advances (electronic communications, transportation networks) and corporate globalization facilitate more complex and flexible ways to organize terrorist activities, frequently involving cooperation among various “international” and “domestic” parties.

The classic model of the terrorist organization is a tightly organized hierarchy comprised of small, isolated cells whose members have little if any knowledge of planning and organization above and outside their cell. They are disciplined by a blend of social isolation from all outsiders (especially family and former friends), blackmail after crimes demonstrating their commitment, physical threat, and indoctrination without access to other sources of ideas and information. The aims of such organizations have historically been relatively simple: to overthrow an oppressive regime or system or to drive an alien force from their land. The financial resources needed to sustain terrorist organizations were obtained from donations by sympathizers and sometimes supplemented by criminal acts (e.g., kidnapping for ransom, bank robbery, or protection racketeering).

As the last century ran its course, the motives and organization of terrorism became less simple and local. Nationalist and material concerns receded (though still significant in particular times and places, as in the Balkan conflicts ignited by Serbian ethnic cleansing), while ideological, especially religious, and wider geopolitical concerns were in the ascendant (e.g., the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir). Most recently, religious fundamentalism (Juergensmeyer 2000) has propelled the recruitment and organization of multitudes into loose networks of terrorist groups acting more or less on their own with encouragement and logistical assistance from facilitators with resources (on the global level most notably Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, along with various Middle Eastern entities). Funds are increasingly provided by a wide range of legitimate business operations and donations to “independent” charitable organizations, and channeled through legitimate financial institutions. . . .

Because terrorism is increasingly organized in networks, and in some places committed by lone individuals, conventional organizational analysis offers little promise; models developed through network analyses are obviously needed. Most such work has so far been operational, with little produced beyond descriptive accounts focused on the identification of connections among persons and institutions believed by governmental agencies to be committing or facilitating terrorism, and on the frequency and distribution of terrorist incidents. Explaining as well as tracking the financial and logistical support for terrorism appears to be the most promising focus for social network researchers. Whatever approach is used, to make a contribution sociologists must get past operational to analytical (more clearly generalizable and explanatory) models of the nature and dynamics of the organizing of terrorism.

## Socializing Terrorists

High on the research agenda is understanding why and how individuals become terrorists. Although some earlier commentators argued that political criminals were either deranged or lacking proper “moral socialization,” it is now well established that opposition to authority or a particular social order is more likely to stem from a reasoned position than from pathology or deficient socialization. As indicated above, reasoning in cosmological, religious terms is increasingly characteristic of the rationales by which terrorists justify their acts to themselves and others.

People learn to accept terrorism as a political option when their experiences lead them to see truth in messages that defending their way and kind cannot be accomplished by nonviolent means. In democratic societies political radicals usually come from relatively advantaged sectors and go through a sequence beginning with conventional political activism (Turk 1982, pp. 81–108). The more educated and affluent their backgrounds, the more impatient they are likely to be with the inevitable disappointments of political life—where one rarely gets all that is envisioned. Socialized to be knowledgeable about the gaps between ideals and realities and to see themselves as significant participants in political struggles, higher class young people (especially from liberal or otherwise contrarian families and communities) are more likely than their less advantaged counterparts to become involved in a process of radicalization moving toward violence. Although social banditry and peasant uprisings may challenge social orders, organized terrorism is by far most likely to originate in the alienation and analytics of higher status younger people. Whether the Weather Underground of Vietnam-era America or the Al Qaeda network of today, initiating and committing terrorist acts is nearly always the work of radicalized younger persons with the intellectual and financial resources, and the ideological drive, to justify (at least to themselves) and enable adopting the violence option.

However, although liberal family and educational backgrounds may encourage an openness to violence as a political option, few even of the most militant radicals become terrorists. Those who do appear to have undergone something of a conversion experience in making the transition from a willingness to “trash” public property and fight riot police, to a readiness to murder specific politically significant persons (e.g., governmental or corporate leaders, police officers, or soldiers), and then to the random targeting of populations including noncombatants as well as combatants.

Exposure to ideologies justifying terrorism appears to be a crucial ingredient in the mix of personal and vicarious learning experiences leading to a commitment to terrorism. Before bombing the Murrah federal office building in Oklahoma City (killing 168 men, women, and children), Timothy McVeigh immersed himself in the writings of William Pierce (author of *Hunter* and *The Turner Diaries*). Pierce detailed his vision of how brave heroes resist the imminent threat to the white race and America posed by Jews, blacks, and other minorities. McVeigh, encouraged by his coterminator Terry McNichols and probably others,

was so impressed that he visited Elohim City, a white supremacist bastion, and sold or gave away copies of *The Turner Diaries* at gun shows (Hamm 1997). McVeigh's military background, including distinguished service in the Gulf War, undoubtedly played a role in his self-definition as a soldier who had merely inflicted "collateral damage" in performing his duty.

One may hypothesize that self-education to terrorism is less likely in societies where personal mobility and access to intellectual resources are more limited. Islamist fundamentalism, in particular, seems to depend on radicalization through formal education consisting mostly of religious indoctrination. In madrassas throughout the world, potential recruits to organized terrorism are drilled in the most extreme interpretations of Sunni theology, emphasizing the duty to engage in holy war (jihad) against all enemies of the true Islam. The most spectacular product of the madrassas so far is the Taliban ("students of religion") of Afghanistan, who until overthrown by the United States and allied troops in 2001 provided a base for al Qaeda, and who still threaten all who do not accept their archaic and rigid version of an Islamic society (Kushner 2003, pp. 357–59).

Once underway, campaigns of terrorism and related political violence tend to gain momentum. Inspired by the ideological messages, the charisma of leaders, the potential for material or status gains, or whatever else attracts them, others are likely to join. Particularly in nondemocratic societies, conflicts are likely to proceed along fault lines reflecting class, ethnic, racial, or religious divisions. If such conflicts persist, years of reciprocal violence tend to result in its institutionalization, so that individuals caught up in the conflict may have no real comprehension of why they go on attacking one another—the classic feud. The bloody years-long slaughter of whole villages of "conservatives" by "liberals," and vice versa, in Colombia's *la violencia* is a chilling historic example (Fals Borda 1969). In such contexts, explaining why people become terrorists is relatively straightforward: They see themselves as having to fight for "us" against "them."

The key to explaining the socialization of terrorists is understanding how specific individuals are brought to the point where they see themselves as bearers of the responsibility for violent actions. Education, training, socialization—deliberate or not—may encourage the development of a self-concept as one who must fight against the threat to "us." However, little has been learned so far about how eventual terrorists are selected in the course of their political socialization.

It is woefully unhelpful merely to point to religious schools as “factories” producing terrorists, or to assume that only the foolish or aberrant become terrorists, or to blame terrorists as evil souls or acclaim them as heroic fighters. Researchers have to be much more aware of the impact of media and political-ideological influences on the definition and characterization of terrorists if their life courses are to be understood.

## Social Control of Terrorism

Efforts to understand terrorism have generally been incidental or secondary to efforts to control it. By definition, the goal of operational studies is to provide authorities with information needed to prevent terrorist attacks and to neutralize terrorists. Operational research necessarily, then, prioritizes immediately applicable results rather than theoretical knowledge whose applicability is problematic. It follows that debates over the respective merits of counterterrorism options revolve around the weighing of legal against military options, the political risks associated with different options, the levels of threat associated with current and potential enemies, and the ability of control agencies to implement policy decisions. Regardless of specific issues and situations, decisions are heavily influenced by calculations of how control actions may strengthen or weaken the chances of retaining power.

Nationally and internationally, legal systems and procedures have been developed without anticipating the contingencies involved in dealing with modern terrorism. For the first time in history, terrorists are gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. Credible threats of worldwide terrorist campaigns are now regularly documented, attacks and attempts in various countries are frequently reported, and multinational cooperation in countering terrorism is a growing reality. Political pressures to lessen legal restraints on police, and military responses to terrorism have resulted in the, possibly temporary, erosion in the United States and elsewhere of legal protections against intrusive and secret surveillance, arbitrary detention, and hurtful interrogation methods, as well as assassination and extralegal executions.

When President George W. Bush declared a war on terrorism immediately following the catastrophic attack of September 11, 2001, not only most Americans but also governments and millions of people throughout the world agreed that international terrorism had to be stopped. But it has become obvious that “the devil is in the



details.” The extraordinary threat of modern terrorism has been mirrored by extraordinary counter measures. For example, the U.S. government adopted two fateful policies. The first was the decision to dilute or abrogate established legal restraints on governmental power. The second was the decision to invade Iraq without United Nations legitimation. . . .

The decision to launch an essentially unilateral invasion of Iraq was a huge departure from generally and increasingly accepted (outside the United States) international norms for reviewing interstate grievances and providing for a collective (Security Council) decision authorizing military action against a sovereign government. The long effort to subject national sovereignties to international legal restrictions (Jones 2002) has surely been set back by the globalization of terrorist and counterterrorist operations. With a war proclaimed, the military option is being emphasized over the legal option in attempting to control terrorism (Smith et al. 2002, Turk 2002c).

As the world’s superpower, the United States has weighed and accepted the political costs of ignoring the United Nations, many international and American legalists, and other voices questioning the unilateral adoption of the military option. The prevailing assumption is that the threat is beyond the control capacities of established legal systems and procedures. Regard for legalities has been subordinated to concerns with assessing levels of threat and with the demonstrated shortcomings of intelligence agencies in making and responding to such assessments. Numerous other governments have joined the United States in expanding investigative and enforcement powers against terrorism, at the expense of democratic governance and declining investments in public services (Haque 2002). The politically dominant approach is to persuade the general public to accept the necessity of militarizing and delegating the effort to counter terrorism. Post-invasion developments in Afghanistan and Iraq, and continuing attacks in those countries and elsewhere, have led to increasingly acrimonious debates over the effectiveness of investing so disproportionately in the military option. As long as the terrorism war rages, we should expect, given the history of political conflict in wartime and periods of civil turmoil, that the military option will continue to be given priority over the legal option, and that expansion of legal powers will continue at some cost in civil liberties. The citizens of democratic societies are unlikely ever to see again the freedoms from governmental surveillance that existed in earlier times (Marx 1988, Staples 1997). . . .

## Theorizing Terrorism

Developing a sociological explanation of terrorism is a politically and intellectually formidable task. Political obstacles abound: Officials are inclined to be wary of outsiders with independent agendas and resources. Policymakers and control agencies prefer operational findings clearly applicable to targeting and neutralizing defined enemies. Funding priorities are affected by rivalries within and among intelligence and enforcement agencies, as well as competition for budgetary influence among politicians, lobbyists, and other interested parties such as grant applicants, whose concerns seldom include basic research. The organizational penchant for keeping records confidential is heightened in agencies charged with controlling terrorism. Such political constraints exacerbate the intellectual problems encountered in terrorism research.

Gurr (1985) is one of the first to have explicated methodological options in studying terrorism and indicated which kinds of research questions are appropriate to each method. Theoretically significant levels of analysis are posited: global, national, group, incident, and individual. Gurr argues cogently for “question first” (i.e., theory-driven) research that treats terrorist groups and incidents, for example, as “independent” rather than “dependent” variables, focusing on their causation rather than their traits and consequences. The crucial need for relevant datasets is emphasized, as is the necessity for their availability to researchers “insulated from direct involvement in policy-making or operations” (Gurr 1985, p. 34).

Regardless of whether official or independent datasets are constructed, transforming information about terrorism into measures of conceptually meaningful variables is clearly a daunting task. . . .

The intellectually ambitious and stimulating research on terrorism from a world systems perspective (Bergesen & Lizardo 2002) begins with the premise that the passage of time makes structural analysis more applicable than participant analysis. As time passes, the appropriate level of analysis moves from (a) the individual to (b) group and social movement, (c) nation and state, (d) the present historical period, (e) a past historical analogy, and finally (f) longer historical cycles. At this ultimate level of analysis, terrorism is to be explained in terms of cyclical rhythms in which waves of terrorist activity are associated with cycles of political-economic deterioration and replacement by new forms of political order. As the previous global order breaks down, semiperipheral areas are drawn into a process of modernization characterized by

conflict in the absence of a unifying hegemonic power (core). Perforce, once peripheral areas are caught up in the dynamics of political (re)organization, “the first signs of strain in the semiperipheral zones are those of terrorism and pan-religious/ethnic ideological movements” (Bergesen & Lizardo 2002, p. 17). Bergesen & Lizardo (2002) raise the question of whether the current wave of terrorism signals the beginning of a global restructuring that will end the hegemony of the United States. . . .

However one approaches the sociological study of terrorism, the distinctive objective is to develop an explanation of its causation, the dynamics of its escalation and de-escalation in relation to other forms of political violence, and its impact on the stability and change of social orders. Turk (2002d) has outlined a scheme for analyzing the social dynamics involved in the progression from coercive, to injurious, to destructive violence—the most extreme of which is terrorism. The main hypothesis is that terrorism is the culmination of a conflict process that predictably, having reached this extreme, ends in either the annihilation of one party or mutual exhaustion. Assuming that they must somehow continue to live in proximity and interdependence, survivors have to begin anew the search for a viable relationship. Whether “cosmic wars” can stop short of the extermination of one or both sides, and be ended by acceptance of the need to recognize one another’s right to exist, has still to be determined.

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Identify and write a brief summary of each of the seven sociological issues in terrorism.
2. What role do religion and politics play in the creation of terrorism?