

Terrorism - A Concept Under Construction: The Use of the Term in Mexican Congressional Debates in the First Half of the XX Century

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the perceptions of “terrorism” that Mexican politicians developed in the initial decades of the 20th century, and which definitions did emerge in the Congressional debates. The aim is to assess which events were crucial in shaping an official narrative of the phenomenon, and, in doing so, it will apply the *Foucaultian* theory, looking at the issue of discontinuity, which provides an analytical key to assess the whens and whys for the emergence of a State-centered discourse on terrorism.

Keywords: Institutional Narrative Terrorism, Mexican Politics, Congressional Debates

Introduction

Historiography shows that there is **no consensus** in the conceptual **definition** of the term "**Terrorism**". The phenomenon of terrorism has, nonetheless, a common element across the different views: the use of violence.

On that regard, Max Weber's analysis about the concept of state comes to our aid: he says that there is a "**... monopoly of legitimate physical coercion, in view of the implementation of legal systems**"¹. **The state is seen as the ultimate source of legitimacy for the use of physical violence.**

Mario Stoppino² considers that the use of legitimate violence relies on the political and legal order in which it is produced, according to its own historical experience.

1 Weber, M. (1922). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tubingen, Mohr. (trad. it. 1974, 1° vol.). 53.

2 "Analyzing the violence exercised by the Government which in fully developed political societies is just characterized by its monopoly of «legitimate» violence, the A. examines both the ordinary use of violence by the Government, meant to strengthen the political commands, and its terroristic use, typical of some totalitarian systems where violence has the direct function to inhibit the potential opposition and the indirect one to turn passive attitudes into active adhesion to the regime. Turning then to the uses of violence in conflicts among groups, and particularly internal groups of a political system, the A. distinguishes the functions of violence in respect of the antagonistic ...". Stoppino, M. (1973). *Gli usi politici della violenza*. *Il Politico*, 445-467. www.jstor.org/stable/43207674. (Accessed 22 Feb. 2020).

That means that each nation-state has a different characterization of legitimate violence based on different cultural, political, economic and social principles.

This is why for almost fifty years (since nineteen seventy two -1972--) the United Nations have not been able to find a definition accepted by the representatives of all countries regarding terrorism¹. That means that the particular interests of each State have prevailed.

Since the conceptualization of terrorism assumes the use of <<violence to coerce, force or persuade a "state", society or social and/or political group through acts of terror in order to reach a political end>> it is clear that we **need to study** the phenomenon on the **basis of the legal-political order** to which it refers.

These premises lead to the aim of this work: *to show the meaning of terrorism in the context in which it comes up.*

The historical context: Latin America and Mexico in the twentieth century

From the mid twentieth (20th) century Latin America has been in a condition of political fragility in the context of a problematic economic situation and the generalized unrest of different social realities.

The interference of the United States in the region –over the years of the **cold war** and the **aspirations of an imperialist capitalism--** has contributed to the destabilization of different state entities, some of which of young age.

The status quo of national and international politics in the region clearly shows a socially and politically unstable situation. As for Mexico, the political order is rather stable, although not exempt from the influences of the authoritarian policy mentioned. After the convulsion of the Mexican Revolution in the early century, the system develops a government with a republican form with a strong Presidency.

The authoritarian turn and the centralization of the decision-making process with respect to the three branches of government, that eventually would be referred to by historians as the phenomenon of "Presidentialism", is interpreted as the failure of post-revolutionary solutions and political actions during the first half of the twentieth century. The weakness of the State is manifest in the place and role of nationalism, the function of elections and, finally, the difficulties of democratization in Mexico².

1 Rojas León, A. (2012). Acción, acto y fenómeno terrorista: propuesta teórico-conceptual sobre las implicaciones del terrorismo en el siglo XXI". Reflexiones. 91 (1). Universidad de Costa Rica San José, Costa Rica. 97-116. <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=72923937008>

2 "En la obra de (Rafael) Segovia hay un estudio temprano de la Ilustración hispánica, en Tres salvaciones del siglo XVIII español, México: Universidad Veracruzana, 1968; un incomparable estudio empírico de la cultura política mexicana: La politización del niño mexicano, México: El Colegio de México, 1975, y una serie de ensayos sobre la vida política mexicana, reunidos en Lapidaria política, México: FCE, 1996." Escalante Gonzalbo, F.(2004). Los años amargos. Pensamiento político en México a fines del siglo veinte. Historia y Política. Ideas, procesos y movimientos sociales, (11), Madrid, 2.

Since the thirties (1930's) the centralization of the executive power based on the political hegemony of the official party (PRI) had been established. This element, combined with the relative tranquility in the relations with the United States (and therefore a threat of military intervention in Mexican territory discarded), along with a situation of internal political stability, lead the Mexican government to aim at increasing the autonomy to govern¹.

The political stability and the economic development that began in the forties (1940's) inhibited the sources of social conflict in the country. The lack of political opposition to the regime and a long tradition of laicity also helped to prevent the Church from taking a stance on state affairs.

A watershed moment that opens up **the reformist general aspirations** and **increases the electorate base** during the term of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines in the mid-fifties (**1953**) is given by **the constitutional reform that grants women the right to vote**². The circulation of **communist and socialist ideas** becomes unstoppable and their bearers are the students and workers who organize themselves into **structured groups**.

Social conflicts pop up and in nineteen fifty-eight (1958) **the government dissolves a demonstration** by the teachers with a **violent action**. The unrest continues and in the spring of nineteen fifty nine (1959) the government **represses violently a demonstration** by the railway workers³. The leftist cultural ferment is fostered by a fundamental event that thrills the hearts: **the success of the Cuban revolution** gives rise to the fear, by both the national state apparatus and the United States, of spreading such a movement to Mexico.

It would be almost a decade later, on October the second (2th), nineteen sixty eight (1968), after several months of student demonstrations and strikes in schools and universities, that the irreparable occurred: the "Matanza (Slaughter) de Tlatelolco"⁴, in which the government of Díaz Ordaz gave orders to open fire to the students. Three years later (in 1971) the student movement would be utterly repressed, in the so-

1 SCHIAVON, J.A. (2006). La relación especial México-Estados Unidos: Cambios y continuidades en la Guerra y Pos-Guerra Fría. CIDE. México. 137. https://cide.repositorioinstitucional.mx/jspui/bitstream/1011/118/1/000068956_documento.pdf (Accesed 24/02/2020)

2 On October 17, 1953, the right to vote and be voted for Mexican women was recognized. Lau Jaiven, A., & Rodríguez Bravo, R. (2017). El sufragio femenino y la Constitución de 1917. Una revisión. *Política y cultura*, (48), 57-81.

http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0188-

3 Ortiz, O. (1978). *La violencia en México*, (prólogo y selección), Editorial Diógenes, México.

4 Corruption and authoritarianism unleashed Mexico 68. Those who participated in the 146 days that the student movement lasted will never forget it. The massacre occurred on October 2, In Poniatowska, E. (2008), *La Matanza de Tlatelolco*, El País. AGUAYO, S. (2015). *De Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa: Las violencias del Estado*, Editorial Ink, Mexico, <https://books.google.com.mx/books?id=GeWZCgAAQBAJ>

called "jueves de Corpus"¹, when groups of armed and paramilitary youngsters got infiltrated and squashed a demonstration, so starting what would be called the era of the "dirty war".

Methodology

In the analysis of the acts of the Debates of the Mexican Congress, we apply a Foucaultian methodological model whose validity has been proven in previous researches². We carefully examine the documents and look for the appearance of the term "terrorism", register and count it, and then perform a statistical analysis on the acquired data. This approach has revealed its utility elsewhere³, in a quite different context, both geographically, temporally and culturally, with even some concrete and more recent applications⁴.

An equally interesting aspect of this is the manner in which this language has been woven into – and indeed has facilitated – a broader discourse of security within which considerable rhetorical progress has been made. Here, the present leadership appears largely to have embraced the lessons of contemporary academic debates over the concept of security⁵, replacing hitherto dominant conceptualizations of this term with

1 "1971: Ocurre en México la 'matanza de Jueves de Corpus' o 'El Halconazo Un día como hoy ...", AGENCIAS CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, domingo 10 de junio 2018, actualizada 4:44 pm, <https://www.elsiglodetorreon.com.mx/noticia/1468817.1971-ocurre-en-mexico-la-matanza-de-jueves-de-corporus-o-el-halconazo.html>

2 Semboloni L. (2013). The Use of the term "Nation" in writings by Lucas Alamán and Mariano Otero, *Storia e Futuro*, (31), Bologna. <https://storiaefuturo.eu/the-use-of-the-term-nation-in-writings-by-lucas-alaman-and-mariano-otero/>

3 "The language used when referring to terrorism on one hand helps determine some of the policy options available at particular historical junctures (as the phrase 'War on Terror' exemplifies), while on the other hand stands in the way of other plausible courses of action." Richard Jackson, R. (2005) *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-terrorism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester. Lee Jarvis, L. (2009) *Times of Terror: Discourse, Temporality and the War on Terror*, Palgrave, Basingstoke. "the impact of the war on terror on the global South, gender dimensions of terrorism, historical cases of terrorism, the cultural construction of terrorism, pathways out of terrorism, and the political causes of terrorism...", Richard Jackson. (2007). *The Case for Critical Terrorism Studies*, European Political Science, (6-3). <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/interpol/csrvc/case-for-a-critical-terrorism-studies-richard-7.pdf>. p.6.

4 "The Brown government has tended primarily towards a more sophisticated language of terrorism than one might have expected, albeit one that has still over-emphasised the threat ..." (Oral Answers to Questions — Prime Minister: Engagements (11 Jun 2008), Hansard Commons (HC) Deb, 11 June 2008, c302; Written Ministerial Statements- Monday 9 March 2009 - <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090309/wmstext/90309m0001.htm#0903091000072>

5 For excellent recent overviews of the relevant debates on security, see both: Williams, P.D. (ed.) (2008). *Security Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge, London and Collins, A. (ed.) (2010). *Contemporary Security Studies (2nd Edition)*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. (2010). *Speaking of Terrorism: Gordon Brown's War of Words*, The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), 12 February 2010, England. <https://rusi.org/publication/speaking-terrorism-gordon-brown%E2%80%99s-war-words>

a far more nuanced and potentially productive understanding.

The term terrorism appears, within the period examined, in twenty four (24) sessions in the debates of the Chamber of Deputies, during the year's nineteen twenty one to seventy three (1921-1973). From that total, one-third (8) are counted in a period of almost fifty (50) years (from 1921 to 1969), and the remaining two thirds (16) appear in the period of the last four years (1970-1973).

From the first pinpointed document, dating back to May 1921, it is already possible to connote the term under analysis: terrorism refers to violent acts of a rebellion against the legitimate-order system of the state, that is, it is linked to a rebellion within the state. A curious observation should be noted here, concerning another term appearing along with terrorism: "revolutionary" is to be considered with a positive connotation, given the socio-political context of the Mexican Government in that period, presenting itself as the product –on political as well as on legitimacy basis—of the Mexican Revolution.

The first document:

"El C. licenciado y diputado Octavio Paz, desempeñó durante la época de Huerta el cargo de agente del Ministerio Público adscrito al Juzgado de Distrito de Campeche en el año de 1913, cargo que le fue conferido especialmente para el proceso que se instruía ante ese Juzgado contra el gobernador **rebelde** Manuel Castilla Brito y socios por **los delitos de rebelión y conexos**, y al que fue designado el licenciado Paz por las siguientes circunstancias:... la conveniencia de nombrar un agentea efecto de que procediera a ejercitar la acción correspondiente contra los presuntos responsables de esa **rebelión**, ... Durante esa época de **terrorismo** fueron villanamente asesinados los señores José María Blengio, en unión de sus dos hijos, menores de edad, y Fernando Minet, Salvador Avila, Ramón Pineda y otros...

.... Aquellos infelices indígenas ... se trata de uno de los defensores de las masas anónimas, quedando impunes esos **crímenes**..... en nombre de la justicia y en nombre de todo, pido que me fusilen a mí y que se salve la vida de mis hijos...quedando impunes esos crímenes....

... La XXVII Legislatura del Congreso de la Unión, a iniciativa del representante ante ella por el Estado de Campeche, C. Juan Zubarán, aprobó una ley de pensión a los familiares de los **citados revolucionarios**...."¹

In the next documents, we find that in 1932 the word "terrorism" is associated with violent crimes committed against civilians, in a response to internal politics in the central region of Mexico:

1 Honorable Congreso de la Unión (HCU), Diario de los Debates (DD), Crónica Diputados(CD), Legislature XXIX - Año I - Período Extraordinario - Fecha 1921/05/11 - Número de Diario 43, cronica.diputados.gob.mx. -

<<" ... Avísanme ayer fué asesinado Facundo Calderón cuadrilla Amacuahuitl, Municipalidad de Arcelia, Edo. de Guerrero, por elementos armados Gobernador Castrejón. Suplícote interponga su valiosa influencia efecto cesen asesinados son víctimas frecuentemente pacíficos campesinos. ...

¡A base de un **terrorismo** infundado desea seguir sosteniendo su Gobierno! - Atentamente. - Diputado Rufino Salgado R."

- A la Comisión que tiene antecedentes y transcríbese al C. Presidente del Partido Nacional Revolucionario y a la Secretaría de Gobernación. ...>>1

The appearance of the term in 1942, with a world war in progress, sees it associated with the actions of the Nazi regime, thus relating the phenomenon with a foreign policy:

<<... Están reunidos ustedes esta noche para condenar las atrocidades de Hitler en Europa y ofrecer toda su asistencia a las Naciones Unidas en la guerra contra el Eje. Ustedes recordarán que el día 25 de octubre pasado los dos, el presidente Roosevelt y yo, expresamos el horror que experimentan todos los pueblos civilizados en vista de las carnicerías y el terrorismo nazi>>2

The document of 1958 shows a shift in the narrative of terrorism. The social discontent with the government becomes organized and the resistance begins to be violent. The intervention in the Chamber of Deputies brings up the whole social context, and terrorism is a term used to refer to the resistance to legitimate authority, and the indiscriminate use of violence:

<<... Respecto a los partidos que amenazan y quieren realizar un juego de fuerzas con su retiro, debemos recordar la forma escandalosa y grosera con que realizaron su campaña preelectoral. Campaña de insultos y calumnias, **campaña de incitación al desorden y expresión** de la más absoluta falta de respeto.

Al mismo tiempo, debemos recordar cómo las Autoridades de la República les permitieron la más amplia libertad para seguir con esa campaña de vituperios y diatribas. ... a los abusos que han intentado después de las elecciones.

No podemos dejar de mencionar, la salvaje zacapela de Guadalajara realizada por elementos de Acción Nacional, los cuales son pretexto de una refriega con elementos de la C. R. O. C. se lanzaron sobre el Palacio de Gobierno en actitud **abiertamente subversiva**.

Lapidaron ese edificio público, lanzaron cal a los ojos de los policías - acto de incalificable barbarie y aun hirieron con puñal y por la espalda a un patrullero- . Y

1 HCU. DD. CD. (1921). Legislature XXXIV - Año II - Período Comisión Permanente - Fecha 1932/02/17 - Número de Diario 49 - cronica.diputados.gob.mx.

2 HCU. DD. CD. (1942). Legislature XXXVIII - Año III - Período Ordinario - Fecha 1942/10/06 - Número de Diario 9 - cronica.diputados.gob.mx.

ahora, para continuar con **actos de terrorismo** como ése, pretenden escudarse en el artículo 9o. de la Constitución, ... Por ejemplo - con toda claridad- el artículo noveno dice que no tiene derecho a deliberar una reunión armada.

También dice que no será legal la reunión en la cual se profieran injurias contra la autoridad, o en que se haga **uso de la violencia** o de las amenazas para presionar a la autoridad a resolver en el sentido en que la reunión lo desee.

Ninguna autoridad, y menos aún este Poder Legislativo, puede oponerse a la realización de asambleas de ciudadanos; pero cualquier autoridad debe - la ley se lo exige- impedir **los actos tendientes a romper el orden público y la paz social** que la patria necesita para su progreso ...>> 1

It is already clear that the established order is able to invoke the use of legitimate force to maintain public order and social peace. In any case, an internal political situation is always described.

With the entrance of Mexico to the scene of international geopolitics, in 1961 the term terrorism appears related to the description of international events, in the specific case of Gandhi's India:

<<La técnica **pacifista** de Gandhi. - ¿Cómo pudo - se ha preguntado el mundo - lograr su independencia la India como fruto supremo de la paz?

La India, antes de la libertad, era un pueblo sin esperanza y sin destino.

¿Cómo era posible organizar la fuerza y la inteligencia de la India en un movimiento capaz de hacer cambiar y desalojar los poderes del Imperio?

¿Cómo organizar el viejo sueño de libertad de la India, si todo intento de violencia o **terrorismo** aconsejado por los líderes de la vida pública de otras épocas había fracasado rotundamente?

Ghandi, que fue ... el maestro de una nueva acción política.

Su técnica, lejos de aconsejar **el uso de la fuerza de las armas**, proclamó el **uso de la fuerza de las almas**. Como usted lo ha recordado, reiteradamente, en sus discursos, señor ministro Nehru, Gandhi, entonces, dijo a su pueblo...>>2

It is associated with the use of force with the purpose of changing the established order, and in favor of a specific political choice, though it is always located in the context of internal politics in the country of reference. That particular use presents Terrorism as opposed to Pacifism.

1 HCU. DD. CD. (1958). Legislatura XLIII - Año III - Período Comisión Permanente - Fecha 1958-07-24 - Número de Diario 36 - cronica.diputados.gob.mx.

2 HCU. DD. CD. (1961). Legislatura XLV - Año I - Período Ordinario - Fecha 1961/11/16 - Número de Diario 31 - cronica.diputados.gob.mx.

It will be till 1968 that the term terrorism becomes a general topic of discussion within the Congreso de la Unión (the joint sessions of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate). The Mexican political context makes the political class to discuss, define and control the phenomenon of terrorism. The first complete document, dated December 17 of that year¹, about the debate in the Chamber of Deputies on the Organic law for the courts of justice (“Ley Orgánica de los Tribunales de Justicia”), produces a frequency of 21 times of the word terrorism.

For the following period 1970-73, the term appears several times², but 1970 is the most relevant year: the word "terrorism" appears 110 times.

It should be noted that this study is a work in progress, as it responds to a three-year research project, so this is a partial analysis of the documents found to date.

Analysis

1. When the term "terrorism" appears in the debates of parliamentary sessions it aims at amending the criminal code with the introduction or otherwise of the crime of "terrorism". The interventions have therefore a formal and legal nature, refer to a broad spectrum of different international situations and cannot be decontextualized from the historical period the Mexican Republic is in.
2. This means above all that the very appearance of the term, almost absent in the past, is embedded in the political situation of 1968, with the strong student and popular protests that led to the fierce repression by the government on October 2nd, called "the Massacre of Tlatelolco"³.
3. Another historical factor to highlight is the Olympic Games in Mexico (starting on October 12, 1968), a sounding board and world showcase for both protesters and government actions. Unfortunately, these facts would not remain isolated, as the attacks in Munich four years later (1972) eventually revealed.

Within this context, during the debates of 1970 the political force that refers the most to the term is that of the majority, **Partido Revolucionario Institucional** (PRI). That use makes reference to foreign legislation and international law in order to support the legislative reforms in place at the national level.

1 HCU. DD. CD. (1968). Legislatura XLVII - Año II - Período Ordinario - Fecha 19681217 - Número de Diario 29; <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/47/2do/Ord/19681217.html> , 655549 bytes

2 1970-73 - during 16 sessions, there is a frequency of 115 times.

3 On the subject see the article by Oriana Fallaci, direct testimony <http://www.orianafallaci.com/numero-42-1968/articolo.html>. In the newspaper «I've never seen anything like it. Even colleagues who made Vietnam say they have not seen anything like it. It is true that the students fired, and perhaps first, but the police did the shooting on a crowd of ten thousand people» (“olimpiadi con la paura”, Corriere della Sera, Paolo Bugialli, 1° pagina, Venerdì, 4 ottobre 1968). http://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/slider_pagina.html#!paolo-bugialli/NobwRADghgtgpmAXGA1nAngdwPYCcAmYANGAC5wAepSYADINgDbYAEARgK4DmAlli4x5gAvGF0gA

The documents also show how political forces distance themselves from the acts: in fact the Popular Socialist Party attributes the acts of terrorism to right-wing forces¹.

The discussion of the Congress involves:

- a) The analysis of the penal codes of foreign states, in some of which the death penalty is used, explicitly referring to the United States of America. This fact shows the verbal tightening by Mexican politicians on the response to the phenomenon of terrorism in progress in Mexico.
- b) The approval of the Resolution "Action and general policy of the Organization with respect to acts of terrorism and in particular the kidnapping of persons and extortion related to this crime", by the Organization of American States (OEA, in Spanish) in relation to the escalation of violence in Central and South America

To typify the crime of terrorism, the deputies open the discussion starting with the crime of social dissolution (article 145 of the Criminal Code)². The abolition of this article was one of the six requests that the student movement forwarded to the government (Pliego Petitorio)³.

1 The words of the deputy Lázaro Rubio Félix are clear: <<Los actos de terrorismo, a través de la historia, han sido provocados siempre por las fuerzas de la derecha, que se han opuesto y se oponen al progreso de los pueblos y jamás han sido realizados por las corrientes progresistas que tienen y disponen de otros medios para alcanzar sus objetivos. ... Los revolucionarios, los que manejamos ideas, los que tenemos fe en el futuro de México y de la humanidad, jamás hemos recurrido al terrorismo. Nunca hemos usado estas armas a las que sólo acuden los impotentes, los frustrados y los que no tienen perspectiva histórica...>>. HCU. DD. CD., (1968). Legislatura XLVII - Año II - Período Ordinario - Fecha 19681217 - Número de Diario 47. <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/47/2do/Ord/19681217.html>

2 "Creo que debemos abordar el problema muy responsablemente. Una cuestión tan delicada, tan grave como ésta, no podemos resolverla sobre las rodillas, es preciso examinarla más detenidamente para no cometer el error gravísimo de hundir al pueblo mexicano en otros 20 prolongados años de lucha por la supresión de delitos mal configurados, como 20 años ha tenido que luchar sufriendo pérdida de vidas, de libertad, para lograr la supresión de los "delitos de disolución social." Sánchez Cárdenas miembro del PCM. HCU. DD. CD., (1970), <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/47/3er/Extra/19700724.html> (24/07/1970).

3 4 de agosto de 1968, << ... Días antes de la matanza, la organización estudiantil enlistó el pliego petitorio de sus demandas, el cual quedó oficialmente conformado el 4 de agosto de ese año. Dicho pliego estaba confirmado por seis puntos (demandas) y un séptimo transitorio.

- 1 Libertad de los presos políticos
- 2 Derogación del artículo 145 y 145 bis del Código Penal Federal
- 3 Desaparición del cuerpo de granaderos
- 4 Destitución de los jefes policiacos Luis Cueto y Raúl Mendiola, así como del teniente coronel Armando Frías
- 5 Indemnización a las familias de los muertos y de los heridos por los actos represivos
- 6 Deslinde de responsabilidades de los funcionarios involucrados en actos de violencia contra los estudiantes

Both the Socialist and the Communist parties are opposed to the policies of the PRI and that, despite the apparent satisfaction of the student movements' request regarding the derogation of article 145, in reality the government has foreseen harsher penalties for crimes that punish behaviors very similar to those qualified as social dissolution (rebellion, sedition and mutiny). If on one side the opposition raised by the **Partido Popular Socialista** concerns the excessive penalization brought about by the amendment to the Criminal Code, on the other side the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) opposes the strong psychological connotation given to the crime of terrorism, while emphasizing the purpose of the terrorist act: to disintegrate the political and social structure of a state.

One of the declarations promoted by Preciado Hernández, one of the founding members of the PAN, expresses opposition to the definition given to terrorism contained in the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code. The definition of terrorism taken from Henry Pratt Fairchild's Dictionary of Sociology,

*"Crime against public security, consisting of the commission of acts of violence qualified by the means used, use of explosives, incendiary substances, or weapons that are normally capable of causing considerable damage to the life or integrity of persons or of any other purposeful means to cause serious damage to public services, with the purpose of disturbing public order, frightening society or certain social groups, or carrying out revenge or reprisals to achieve the disintegration of the social or political structure"*⁷.

referred to by the PAN deputy, defines the purpose of terrorism in the act of disintegrating the social and political structure of a state and not the definition contained in Article 139:

The proposed modification of the PAN is to delete all the terms referring to alarm and fear and to keep only "terror". It also required to delete the expression "or a group or a sector of society", letting "seriously disturb", in order to define the crime for the purpose of the terrorist act: to disintegrate the political and social structure of a state.

The final result arrives (in 1970) with the derogation of article 145, as well as the definition of the crime of Treason to the Fatherland (article 123) and finally the configuration of the crimes of Terrorism and Espionage, contained in the same section of the Criminal Code, Articles 139 and 140 respectively.

7 *Exigencia de un diálogo público entre representantes del Movimiento y representantes del Gobierno,

<https://www.unotv.com/noticias/portal/nacional/detalle/querian-estudiantes-68-pliego-petitorio-085231/>

1 Definition of the word terrorism from Henry Pratt Fairchild's Dictionary of Sociology. HCU. DD. CD., (1970) <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/47/3er/Extra/19700724.html> (24/07/1970)

The crimes of Terrorism and Sabotage are defined, which thus become autonomous, and distinct from the crime of Treason to the Fatherland and the crime of Social Dissolution is eliminated. "1

Conclusions

The term terrorism is introduced and repeatedly mentioned in the context of the construction of a legal and formal definition, and as such, it is necessarily linked to the social effects and repercussions it inflicts. In the specific case of Mexico and its circumstances, it is worth noting that the term terrorism and the construction of the concept turn out to be relevant in the context of the quest to participate in the global politics, and therefore the need to identify the concept and definition of the phenomenon in such a way that can be shared by the majority of States in the world stage. Hence, further and deeper studies, of both political and historical nature, are needed in order to achieve a common ground for the interpretation of the anti-terrorist actions and strategies, as well as for the very meaning of terrorism. In the last decade a number of researches and papers have been carried out on the issue, mainly over the contemporary period². The difficulty emerges though from the roots or historical origins of the "terrorism" phenomenon, as every country has its own historical experience that has yielded particular actions and institutional narratives, with their own political ideas and strategies. It is necessary, therefore, to provide a basis that allows to homogenize the institutional response given that the terrorism has become a supranational phenomenon. The present study aims at centering the attention, from a historical-political perspective, over the construction of a narrative around the concept of terrorism, an approach that has been scarcely followed by scholars despite the number of works recently published³ over the subject, and that

1 "Delito de Terrorismo. El Terrorismo, como su nombre lo indica, provoca un estado anímico, individual o colectivo, de miedo, espanto, pavor de un mal que amenaza o de un peligro que se teme, de angustia, aflicción, congoja o desesperación" This definition will be the triggering reason for the criticisms of the PAN referred to above, for which the definition of psychological damage should be subordinated to the definition of the purposes for which the crime is committed. HCU. DD. CD., (1970). <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebate/47/3er/CPerma/19700714.html> (14/07/1970).

2 Farrell, W. R. (2019). *The U.s. Government Response To Terrorism: In Search Of An Effective Strategy*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis; Chenoweth E., English R., Gofas A., and Kalyvas S.. (ed.) (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*. OUP Oxford, United Kingdom; Salinas de Frías A. M., Samuel K., White N. (ed.) (2012). *Counter-Terrorism: International Law and Practice*, OUP Oxford, United Kingdom. Yonah A., Introduction, in *Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries*. (2002). University of Michigan Press, United Kingdom. 1-23.

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3 Miller, M. (2012). *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism: State, Society and the Dynamics of Political Violence*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Laqueur, W. (2003). *Una historia del terrorismo*.

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could offer new insights into the actions and strategies of each historical experience of a particular political-geographical area.

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