

**XXV. Tavaszi Szél Konferencia**

# TANULMÁNYKÖTET

**I. kötet**

**XXV. Tavaszi Szél Konferencia**  
**2022. 05. 06-08. Pécsi Tudományegyetem**





# **XXV. Tavaszi Szél Konferencia 2022**

## **Tanulmánykötet I.**

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# **XXV. Tavaszi Szél Konferencia 2022**

## **Tanulmánykötet I.**

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# **XXV. Tavaszi Szél Konferencia 2022**

## **Tanulmánykötet I.**

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Lectori Salutem!  
Kedves Olvasó!

A Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége nevében tisztelettel köszöntöm abból az alkalomból, hogy megjelent a XXV. Tavaszi Szél Konferencia tanulmánykötete.

Szervezetünk meghatározó pilléreit jelentik a tudományos rendezvények, melyek lehetőséget teremtenek a közösségszervezésre és közösségépítésre. 1997-ben, tehát negyed évszázada született meg az a gondolat, hogy a doktoranduszok és fiatal kutatók egy országosan is kiemelkedő multidiszciplináris tudományos konferencia keretében mutathassák be legújabb tudományos eredményeiket.

2022-ben nekünk, fiatal kutatóknak az a legfontosabb teendőnk, hogy hitet tegyünk az igaz tudomány művelése mellett. Kutassunk magunk is és eredményeinket osszuk meg a világgal. Az élet minden területe tartogat egy újabb kérdést, egy újabb témát, amelyet vizsgálni érdemes. Minden konferenciaelőadás hoz egy-egy olyan véleményt, kérdést vagy hozzászólást, amely segít bennünket előre lépni kutatásainkban, amely új nézőpontból világít meg egy fontos témát. Éppen ezek miatt a párbeszéddek miatt fontos, hogy a Tavaszi Szél Konferenciát és minden más tudományos találkozót meg tudjunk tartani. A Tavaszi Szél Konferencia különlegessége sokszínűségében rejlik. Hány olyan tudományos rendezvény van, ahol a filozófusoknak csak egy teremmel kell arrébb menniük, ha meghallgatnának egy őket érdeklő orvostudományi előadást, vagy ahol egy villamosmérnöknek csak néhány lépést kell megtennie egy német irodalomról szóló prezentációig? Ez a multidiszciplináris jelleg olyan tudományterületek és tudományágak közötti együttműködéshez vezethet, amelynek kialakulására másutt sokkal kisebb az esély.

A konferenciára már a jelentkezési időszakban nagy érdeklődés mutatkozott, hiszen közel 700 előadói és vendég regisztráció érkezett be. Az előadásokat az absztraktok bírálatát követően 21 tudományos szekcióba, és mintegy 61 különböző alszekcióba soroltuk kutatási tématerületüknek megfelelően. A szóbeli szekcióink mellett 2 poszterszekciót hoztunk létre, melyet poszterséta keretében tekinthettek meg az érdeklődők. Az egyes alszekciók legjobbait a szekciók vezetésére felkért szekcióelnökök egy előzetesen összeállított pontozási rendszer alapján választották ki, így az ünnepélyes díjátadó során kioszthattuk a legjobb előadónak járó díjakat és a támogatóink által felajánlott különdíjakat (MILAB Különdíj, Hunexpert Különdíj).

Reméljük, hogy a 2022. évi Tavaszi Szél Konferencia is maradandó, pozitív emlékeket hagyott mindenkiben. További szakmai sikereket és kellemes olvasást kívánok minden kedves Érdeklődő számára!

Budapest, 2022. december 4.

Molnár Dániel  
elnök  
Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége



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# THE DUALITY OF “MESSAGE GENERATORS”; ANALYZING THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN SCHMID’S DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

**Jafar Baba**

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## **Abstract**

Despite the generality of terrorism and its embodiment on the ground, it does not obtain an international consensus. Most of the world’s leaders and peoples consider what armed opposition groups are doing as criminal acts, aiming to terrorize citizens and destroy state institutions, while the perpetrators and supporters of these acts consider them to be mere violence caused by the increasing corruption and injustice of the ruling political regimes. Most of those who dealt with the phenomenon of terrorism agreed that the latter has a political content, as acts of violence of this kind are not motivated by personal motives or personal interests, but rather the terrorist act often takes a dramatic character to attract as much attention as possible from the media, especially since the desired goal behind the terrorist operations is propaganda for a cause – as they consider that they fight for a cause – which the terrorists want to raise in order to familiarize the world with its dimensions. Terrorists know very well that their terrorist acts will be broadcast on television, radio and press, in addition, images of attack and violence can be broadcast around the world through satellites. For this reason, some have gone on to say that terrorists and TV news reporters cooperate in escalating both the horror and the viewership ratings. The central goal of the terrorists aims to gain people’s understanding and sympathy, and accordingly, the basis of the terrorists’ media strategy is to wage a propaganda, psychological and media war, and for this reason, terrorist groups mainly aim to deliver certain messages to people through the media. In his, “The Definition of Terrorism”, Alex P. Schmid distinguishes between two types of victims or targets; the direct targets and the main targets. Interestingly, Schmid describes the direct targets or immediate human victims of violence as “message generators”, who function as a mere physical medium that serves the sole purpose of delivering a message to the “main targets”. However, in this presentation, I will attempt to analyze Schmid’s concept of “message generators” in a way that projects the role of media as the second, if not the most important, message generator. I will try to project how the media, rather than being a fighter against terrorism, became a catalyst for terroristic operations.

*Keywords: media, terrorism, exploitation, publicity, message*

## **1. Introduction**

Despite the generality of terrorism and its embodiment on the ground, it does not obtain an international consensus. Most of the world’s leaders and peoples consider what armed opposition groups are doing as criminal acts, aiming to terrorize citizens and destroy state institutions, while the perpetrators and supporters of these acts consider them to be mere violence caused by the increasing corruption and injustice of the ruling political regimes. Most of those who dealt with the phenomenon of terrorism agreed that the latter has a political content, as acts of violence of this kind are not motivated by personal motives or personal interests, but rather the terrorist act often takes a dramatic character to attract as much attention as possible from the media, especially since the desired goal behind the terrorist operations is

is propaganda for a cause – as they consider that they fight for a cause – which the terrorists want to raise in order to familiarize the world with its dimensions.

The central goal of the terrorists aims to gain people's understanding and sympathy, and accordingly, the basis of the terrorists' media strategy is to wage a propaganda, psychological and media war, and for this reason, terrorist groups mainly aim to deliver certain messages to people through the media. In his, "The Definition of Terrorism", Alex P. Schmid defines terrorism as follows:

"Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperilled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a *target of terror*, a *target of demands*, or a *target of attention*, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought."

[1]

What is remarkable in Schmid's definition is that he distinguishes between two types of victims or targets; the direct targets and the main targets. Interestingly, Schmid describes the direct targets or immediate human victims of violence as "message generators", who function as a mere physical medium that serves the sole purpose of delivering a message to the "main targets". However, in this paper, I will attempt to analyze Schmid's concept of 'message generators' in a way that projects the role of media as the second, if not the most important, message generator.

## 2. Media and Terrorism

On the one hand, the indiscriminate massacres of innocents is a heinous act of terrorism, and on the other hand, it is exciting news, where the media is required to report following the principle that the news is not owned by the newspaper, nor is it the property of public opinion, but only the truth, taking into consideration that media professionals, in turn, seek exciting news, and amplify it for various purposes, such as distributing the largest possible number of newspapers, for example. Therefore, the news will be the headlines in newspapers, as it will be broadcast on all radio stations and all satellite channels. By doing so, the media would have achieved the terrorists' goal, which is to exaggerate their actions and then practice the process of intimidation. Thus, the media gives terrorism a kind of promotion that no other institution would give.

Terrorists know very well that their terrorist acts will be broadcast on television, radio and press, in addition, images of attack and violence can be broadcast around the world through satellites. For this reason, some have gone on to say that terrorists and TV news reporters cooperate in escalating both the horror and the viewership ratings. Terrorism always seeks to create a state of fear among the masses in order to pressure their governments to accept the demands of the terrorists. Therefore, the goal of the terrorist act is not violence per se, but rather spreading a state of panic among the targeted masses. The idea of reliance on media was further addressed by Kajal Saxena, who centralizes his discussion around the process of propagating terrorists' agendas:

"Propaganda has always been central in communicating terrorism. Perhaps the most central accomplishment of Al Qaeda on 9/11 was not killing several thousand people, but rather instilling fear in millions of people worldwide through the reports and images of the attacks, and the creating a blueprint for modern terrorist practices... The borderless flow of information

enabled by social media has been utilized as a tool by terrorist groups to spread their messages globally, facilitate online social communities and spread fear and disruption. Terrorists have been highly adaptable to changes in how their messages are disseminated around the world.” (Saxena) [2]

What Saxena suggests here is that through their implementation of various terrorist operations, terrorists achieve two main goals. First, to draw the world's attention to the fact that terrorism exists, and that terrorists have a cause, so they must be internationally recognized and get their cause addressed or respected, as they consider themselves to be ‘owners of a cause’. Second, to obtain international legitimacy and sympathy for their cause. To achieve these goals, terrorists depend primarily on the media's response to them, and it is not necessary for such response to be sympathetic. Rather, what is important is that these media deliver or “generate” the message of the terrorists to internal and external public opinion, and accordingly, the relationship that exists between the media and terrorism. What is remarkable here is the role of media in making the terrorist attack meaningful enough, since the utmost desire of the terrorists is to have their message delivered. For doing so, terrorists must rely on a medium to deliver or generate their message, as by attacking the direct targets, the message is half-generated, and in order to be fully-generated, meaningful, and delivered, the act of performing the terrorist attack needs authentication. This process of authentication, or more precisely, publicity, is unattainable without the intervention of the media. In his, “Offstage Fright: Terrorism and Theatricality”, György Fogarasi further illustrates the role of media through examining the notions of Brian Jenkins in discussing terrorism, Fogarasi writes: “Jenkins underlined the crucial element of mediation and publicity, without which such attacks would seem pointless and would probably not take place at all: ‘terrorism is violence for affect, not only, and sometimes not at all, for the effect on the actual victims of the terrorist... Terrorism is violence aimed at the people watching.’ ” [3]

Accordingly, the relationship between the media and terrorism, based the opinion of many researchers specializing in the media, is a symbiotic relationship, as each depends on the benefits of the other. The terrorist needs the media, and considers it as a strategic weapon which attention must be gained and secured, and, in a similar scale, the media may serve the goals of the terrorists by publishing their words and actions, and inadvertently amplifying their power, thus giving terrorism a wide media resonance, which the terrorists always strive to achieve.

The Information Age has produced a new media style that differs in its concept, features, characteristics and means from the previous media patterns, as it also differs in the extent of its media, political, cultural and educational influences to the extent that some named our era as the Age of Media, not because the media is a new phenomenon in human history, but because its modern means have reached far goals in depth of impact, strength of direction and severity of danger that have led to fundamental changes in the role of the media and made it a main focus in the society. Recently, Several accusations have been leveled against the media, namely that media and terrorism both work to achieve their interests alike, as terrorists plan and exploit the media to achieve their goals, and at the same time, the media benefits from the operations committed by the terrorist groups to display them in news bulletins to attract the attention of the public. From this point of view, terrorism is not considered as an issue of violence only, but it combines propaganda and violence in its operations. Thus, the negative effects of the media's role is projected in the terrorist groups' use of the media to deliver the message or the goal of the crime that they committed. Further, as scholars estimate, the matter comes to choosing the nature of the victims of terrorist operations, and the time and place in which they take place, based on the expected media echo behind. Hence, the relationship between the media and terrorism is a complex one that requires careful understanding and a balanced assessment. In each of their operations, terrorist groups are closely linked to the media that publishes their news with the aim of attracting the attention of peoples and governments in all

countries of the world, awakening the awareness of society in general, threatening the target group, introducing the goals and motives behind their actions and attracting sympathy and response from their sympathizers and others who support their demonic deeds.

### **3. Bilateral Exploitation**

In one way or another, the nature of the relationship between media and terrorism is not only of a mutual interest, but of mutual exploitation as well. This notion of exploitation was a central focus in Bruno S. Frey and Dominik Rohner's research, "Blood and Ink! The Common-Interest-Game Between Terrorists and the Media", where they suggest that:

"Terrorist attacks are a particular form of communication by terrorist groups. The media are used as a platform for securing a broad dissemination of the terrorists' ideology. The media benefit from terrorism, as reports of terror attacks increase newspaper sales and the number of television viewers. There is a common-interest game, whereby both the media and terrorists benefit from terrorist incidents and where both parties adjust their actions according to the actions of their opponent." [4]. This "common-interest game" is what prompted David Broder, a press reporter in *The Washington Post*, to demand that the terrorist should be deprived of freedom of access to media outlets, because media coverage of terrorist operations, and media interviews with terrorists are considered an award or reward for their criminal acts, as it allows them to address the public and talk to them about the reasons and motives that prompted them to do this, which may create a kind of understanding for these reasons at the expense of the criminal act itself. Moreover, many terrorists who were arrested after participating in terrorist operations have mentioned that they were affected by what some media channels were broadcasting in this domain, so they decided to join the organizations that incite bombings and suicide operations.

In fact, the media's displaying of tragic scenes and depicting the damage repeatedly and exaggeratedly, in addition to broadcasting the terrorists' views that are intended to incite fear, pose a danger and involve negative reactions that serve the terrorist act, especially in light of the 'competition' between various types of media competing to immediately report events related to terrorism in order to achieve a scoop, to attract an increasing number of readers and viewers, an act that may be at the expense of moral and human values that refuse to help spread violence and extremism. Moreover, the situation appears as if there is a tacit agreement and a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship between the media and terrorism to achieve the special interests of both parties. Terrorism presents the media with exciting news and dramatic terrorist attacks that achieve profits and a high public viewership, as well as the production of information and keeping pace with events. At the same time, media represent the weapon used by terrorists to spread and direct their messages to a wide audience base to achieve proliferation. Thus, on the one hand, the media rush to cover terrorist operations for several reasons, including satisfying the epistemic needs of the masses to understand the event, its causes and how to confront it, and support the official authorities through appropriate coverage of the terrorist event in order to obtain public support for the concerned authorities to confront such an attack. On the other hand, the media's coverage of terrorist operations also achieves great financial returns as a result of the public's heavy reliance on the media to obtain information on the latest developments and measures to confront the terrorist act.

### **4. Media as "Message Generator"**

In order to address the issue of media as 'message generator', there should be an understanding of how to define a terrorist operation within a media framework. Walter Laqueur describes this symbiotic relationship by suggesting that "the media are the terrorist's best friend. The

terrorist's act by itself is nothing; publicity is all" (104). Further, in describing the futility of terrorist attack without media coverage, Ion Marin suggests that:

"without the media's coverage the act's impact is arguably wasted, remaining narrowly confined to the immediate victim(s) of the attack, "rather than reaching the wider 'target audience' at whom the terrorists' violence is actually aimed ... Only by spreading the terror and outrage to a much larger audience can the terrorists gain the maximum potential leverage that they need to effect fundamental political change." [5]. Thus, terrorist groups do not primarily seek the material impact of these sabotage operations, but they seek those horrific psychological effects, which represent a pressure force that terrorist groups try to exploit to dictate their conditions and achieve their political demands, meaning that they depend on the strategy of force or the symbolic significance of the terrorist act. In fact, the media is the most appropriate entity to highlight these symbolic connotations whenever terrorist operations succeed in capturing its attention. The inability of extremist terrorist operations in the face of military forces makes them avoid confrontation and turn to the strategy of distracting and exhausting the army with isolated terrorist operations that enhance and expand their influence through media discourse. Every development in information and communication technology provides terrorist groups with new possibilities to gain intellectual and material access to the target audiences and to expand their sphere of influence. Although terrorism stems from a religious or political creed and strives for a cause that ostensibly represents a set of general goals, the political goal is the main one. The role of media as "message generator" is what distinguishes terrorism from other violent activities such as organized crime. Terrorism seeks to gain the understanding, sympathy and trust of the people, i.e. betting on the minds of the people, and this confirms that the most important basis on which the media strategy of terrorism is based is that they are waging a psychological and media propaganda war.

Terrorist organizations do not aim to occupy and own lands as much as they aim to deliver specific messages to people through the media. Therefore, the goal of terrorist operations is mainly directed at souls and minds, not bodies and facilities. Thus, the continuity of terrorist operations and the dissemination of their impact becomes an imperative in the terrorist strategy. In fact, the strongest and most severe form of propaganda is that which is based partially or wholly on facts. This is what necessitates the terrorist organization to have access to the various mass media, in order to manipulate the media as a medium to disseminate their ideas and the necessary information and to promote positions and trends. Thus, the media strategy of terrorism is based on enabling terrorist operations to contribute to crystallizing the vision of the masses according to the required method by spreading panic, which facilitates the process of exploiting public awareness and achieving the goal. For this reason, the terrorist attack is only a means of reaching the media and from there to the masses. The terrorists are well aware that a successful war is based on facts and actions.

## **5. Conclusion**

To conclude, the media has become a catalyst for terrorism, rather than a fighter against it. Over the years, terrorist groups have developed many strategies to attract media outlets, such as focusing on kidnapping journalists and media professionals, ensuring that there are media victims in terrorist attacks, and targeting individuals of stature so that the media is interested in covering the event. Terrorist groups have also carried out attacks in countries with distinct news importance, as they have focused on creating a dramatic or emotional atmosphere for the terrorist incident to gain more media appeal, informing the media of the terrorist attack and the purpose of its implementation, and proposing the willingness of some of its members to hold media and television interviews. Thus, based on the aforesaid arguments, the media can be seen

as the 'second', if not the most important, "message generator" in the symbiotic relationship between terrorism and attention.

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