

The Modern Terrorism and its Forms

Edited by

Sebastian Wojciechowski



Institute of Political Science and Journalism
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań
Poland 2007

Reviewer:

Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Gałganek

© Copyright by Institute of Political Science and Journalism Press,
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

ISBN 978-83-60677-17-9

Editorial address:

89 Umultowska Street, 61-614 Poznań, Poland
tel. +4861 829 22 15, tel./fax +4861 829 21 06
e-mail: inpid@amu.edu.pl, www.inpid.amu.edu.pl

Contents

Introduction	5
Eryk PIESZAK Reading Terrorism.	9
Sebastian WOJCIECHOWSKI Selected Issues of the Studies on Terrorism	19
Krzysztof LIEDEL, Paulina PIASECKA Government and Society Partnership in Terrorism Combating – Public Prevention	29
Anna POTYRAŁA The United Nations and Terrorism Combating – Preventing the Phenomenon or Suppressing its Negative Consequences?	35
Damian SZLACHTER The European Union Fought Against Terrorism – Exterior Dimension	49
Tomasz BRANKA Anti-Terrorism War and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	67
Renata KRZYKAŁA-SCHAEFER The Challenge of a World-Wide Cultural Diversity: is Cross-Cultural Education a Necessity to Eradicate the Cause of Terrorism?	79
Wojciech STANKIEWICZ Potential Nuclear Conflict: Probability and Effects	89
Artur WEJKSZNER The post-9/11 Al Qaida. The Vanguard of Islamic Terrorism at the Onset of the 21 st Century	109
Anna NIWCZYK The Structure, Capabilities and Tactics of LTTE – the Maritime Aspect	119
Agnieszka STĘPIŃSKA Violence on Television in the U.S. Old Problem, New Consequences	129
Żaneta POLOWCZYK The Importance of the Electronic Media in an Information Society in the Face of the Threat of Terrorism: An Attempt at an Appraisal	149

Dominika PIOTROWSKA	
The Latest War in Iraq and Hactivism and Cyberterrorism – a Real Threat?	157
Magdalena LORENC	
Terrorist Groups in the Arab-Israeli Conflict	171
Radosław FIEDLER	
Victorious Hamas – is it a Final Breakdown of the Peaceful Process With Israel or a New its Beginning?	189
Miron MUSIAŁ	
Belarussian Law “On Counter Extremism:” Yet Another Tool of Political Influence?	201
Przemysław OSIEWICZ	
Terrorism: A Real Threat to Turkey?	211
Agnieszka WÓJCICKA	
The Chosen Problems of the Social Homogenization in Sweden. National Minorities, Immigration and Terrorism in Contemporary Swedish Society	227
Karol KUJAWA	
Islamic Fundamentalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina. True or False?	251
Jarosław JAŃCZAK	
Counter-Terrorism and Borders in the European Union. Tendencies, Strategies and Reactions in Border Protection Area on Changing Security Threats in Europe	267
Piotr EBBIG	
Terrorism or Guerilla Warfare? Definitions Distinction Proposal	283
Maciek DUSZYŃSKI	
Bali Bombings: A Tragedy in the Paradise	297
Contributors	307
Former Publications on Terrorism	313

Agnieszka STEPIŃSKA

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Violence on Television in the U.S. Old Problem, New Consequences

1. Introduction

Media specialist George Gerbner's 1986 report on world-wide research into media violence prepared for UNESCO found that American programs were significantly more violent than those made in other countries. The only exception to this general rule was Japanese programming, which was found to be equally violent. Since that time, the situation has hardly changed.¹

According to recent surveys, about 60% of American TV programs contain violence; an hour of prime-time television includes about five violent acts,² and only 4% of violent programs emphasize an anti-violence theme.³ Furthermore, according to George Gerbner, children's shows contain more violence than any other type of programming. He estimates that shows designed for kids average about 32 violent acts per hour.⁴

Consequently, variety of studies on violence's presence on TV and violence's image created by the mass media has been conducted since late 1950's. Actually, of the hundreds upon hundreds of studies that scholars have pub-

¹ In comparison, according to a survey made on Polish television, 2366 acts of violence were presented by program broadcasted by four TV channels during one week. See: P. Aleksandrowicz, L. Zalewska, *Przemoc, seks i audiotele*, "Rzeczpospolita," 9 December 1999.

² "National television violence study," vol. 3, Sage, Thousand Oaks 1998, pp. 5-220. See: G. G. Sparks, *Media effects research. A basic overview*, Thomson Wadsworth, Canada 2006, p. 84.

³ Federal Communications Commission, (http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Factsheets/factvchip.html, 7 November 2006).

⁴ See: G. G. Sparks, *Media effects research. A basic overview*, Thomson Wadsworth, Canada 2006, p. 84. In fact, the amount of television violence is quite high in many countries. According to B. Gunter and J. Harrison, the phenomenon might be seen in Great Britain as well. They conducted a study in which a total of 943 children's programs were coded in an exercise which content analyzed more than 4,700 hours of programs broadcast on eight television channels. Thirty nine per cent of these children's programs contained violence. More than 4,000 violent acts and 7.2 hours of violence occurred in these programs. More than half of the violence occurred in general children's programs, with somewhat under half being found in children's cartoons. See: B. Gunter, J. Harrison, *Violence in children's programmes on British Television*, "Children & Society" 1997, no. 3 (11).

lished on the effects of TV and movies, violence is, by far, one of the most frequent topics of investigation. The main controversy over television violence, however, did not concern types of studies, which measure and compare the nature of violent programming. Rather, the real point of contention was the issue of cause and effect – whether watching violent programming causes individuals to exhibit violent behavior.

The previously conducted research resulted in theories that attempt to describe and explain how and to what extent television violence may affect both children and adults. The aim of this paper is to consider potential influence of media coverage of a terrorist incident. We believe that only the integrative approach may help us better understand relations between the media, terrorist, the government and the society. Hence, by employing knowledge about terrorist organizations and their strategies, we will attempt to link it with the results of research on the mass media effects.

Thus, the first part of the paper presents definitions of television violence and its presence on TV channels in the U.S. The second part includes an overview of the previous research made on effects of television violence, as well as of the main theories developed as the results of these studies. The aim of the last part is to present the problem of mass media terrorism in context of phenomena of mass media effects and television violence.

2. Violence on television in the U.S.

A common understanding or definition of what constitutes “television violence” could be useful in examining and regulating the problem. But arriving at such an understanding is not simple. Let us recall S. Alter’s a few basic questions in that matter: “should the definition include animated portrayals or only realistic depictions? Should the context in which the violence is presented matter – for example, whether the violence is gratuitous or integral to the plot or purpose of a program, whether it is physical or verbal, or whether it is directed at people, animals or objects?”⁵

The problem with a very precise definition of television violence is that it may also be quite restrictive and, consequently, too narrow. The definition at one time used by George Gerbner in his research is a case in point: “the act of injuring or killing someone or the threat of injuring or killing someone.”⁶

Recent studies have framed violence in broader terms. The National Television Violence Study (1996), funded by the National Cable Television Association in the U.S., for example, considered violence to be: “Any overt depiction of

⁵ S. Alter, *Violence on television*, Law and Government Division, Government of Canada, <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/CIR/953-e.htm>, 7 November 2006.

⁶ See: as above.

the use of physical force – or the credible threat of such force – intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings.”⁷

Although this definition seems to be adequate, we should be aware of the fact that, unlike in some earlier studies, comic injuries were not considered violence here. Consequently, a character hitting his head on a door or beating others in comedy movies and sitcoms were not considered violent. Also in the survey, perpetrators of violence must have been punished *in the same scene* as the violent act to be regarded as a subject of the study. As S. Alter comments this: “by that measure, most of Shakespeare’s tragedies would be frowned upon; *Macbeth*, after all, does not get his comeuppance until the end of the play.”⁸

Therefore, we would recommend employing the approach previously used by the authors of The UCLA Television Violence Monitoring Project (commissioned by four major American networks: ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC) in 1995. They defined violence as anything that involves physical harm or a threat of physical harm of any sort, intentional or unintentional, self-inflicted or inflicted by someone or something else.⁹

Moreover, being aware of the mass media convergence, the notion “television violence” used in that paper will refer to *all* the violence appearing on TV screens. It includes material broadcast over the air, distributed by cable and satellite systems, and available on videocassettes and disks.¹⁰ Finally, let us emphasize that we take into consideration both, entertainment media and news ones here.

A. The presence of violent content on TV in the U.S.

According to Federal Communication Commission (FCC) violent programming on the main four broadcast networks in the USA has increased 14% in the past five years.¹¹ Most studies, however, show that the level of violence had remained fairly constant over the years. This is a number of channels that broadcast news and entertainment programs that has increased rapidly. In 1950 only 1 home in 10 even had a TV. A decade later only 1 home in 10 was without one. Additionally, in 1950 the idea of having more than 50 channels to select from – 24 hours a day – was just a dream. By the 1990s, it had become a reality.

⁷ See: S. Alter, *op. cit.*

⁸ K. Szaflik, *Violence on TV: The Desensitizing of America*, <http://www.ridgenet.org/szaflik/tvrating.htm>, 7 November 2006.

⁹ S. Alter, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ As above.

¹¹ *Federal Communications Commission*, http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Factsheets/factvchip.html, 7 November 2006.

There are two additional factors that result in increasing level of exposure to violence: new media and the flow of information. Hence, although American surveys of violent programming, done in the 1970s and '80s, found that the level of violence on American commercial television remained constant, one should be aware of the fact that these studies concentrated on conventional television and did not take into account all the material watched via newer television technologies such as cable, video and satellite services. Adding these to the mix would likely have shown the amount of violence on television to be rising.¹²

Let us present a few numbers to illustrate the scale of the problem. According to FCC, in 1998, 67% of broadcast programs contained violence. In the same year 87% of cable programs contained violence.¹³ Other survey found that in 1996 of nearly 2,700 shows analyzed in a 20 week survey of 23 channels, 57% were said to contain at least some violence.¹⁴ And according to the most recent studies, there are five to six violent acts per hour in prime time and 20 to 25 violent acts per hour on Saturday morning children's programs.¹⁵ Consequently, the average American child will witness 12,000 violent acts on television each year, amounting to about 200,000 violent acts by the time he or she turns 18 years old.¹⁶ Although the numbers might vary from research to research, they all support thesis of a high level of violence saturation of TV programming.

Not only quantitative research have been made; some other studies were concentrated on the context of television violence. For instance, the focus of the UCLA Television Violence Monitoring Project (1995 and 1996) was on the context surrounding each act of violence featured, rather than simply on the number of violent acts shown per hour. The project distinguished between depictions involving the meaningless glorification of violence and depictions in which violence was linked with a social message. It means that a value judgment was attached to every act of violence tabulated, based on the premise that "all violence is not created equal."

Among other things, the UCLA study found that programming controlled by the networks, such as network series and made-for-television movies, raised relatively fewer issues of concern than did other formats, such as the

¹² S. Alter, *op. cit.*

¹³ *Federal Communications Commission*, http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Factsheets/factvchip.html, 7 November 2006.

¹⁴ R. Zoglin, *Chips Ahoy*, "Time," 19 February 1996, pp. 58–61. See: K. Szaflik, *Violence on TV: The Desensitizing of America*, <http://www.ridgenet.org/szaflik/tvrating.htm>, 7 November 2006.

¹⁵ See: S. Alter, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ According to American Psychological Association, the typical child will view more than 8,000 murders and over 100,000 acts of TV violence in the course of a lifetime. See: G. G. Sparks, *Media effects research. A basic overview*, Thomson Wadsworth, Canada 2006, p. 84; *Federal Communications Commission*, www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Factsheets/factvchip.html, 7 November 2006.

films shown on television that had been made for theatrical release. As the networks financed the study, it is not surprising that it found "promising signs" that levels of network violence are declining.¹⁷

Context was also an important feature of the National Television Violence Study (1996), which identified patterns in portrayals of violence. A broad coalition of researchers, media executives and mental health experts from several universities, including the University of Texas, the University of North Carolina and the University of California at Santa Barbara, took part in this study, assembled by Mediascope, a non-profit organization hired by the National Cable Television Association.

The study made some damning observations about the way violence is presented. For example, it found that in the programming sampled: 47% of the violent acts shown resulted in no observable harm to the victim; only 16% of violent shows contained a message about the long term negative repercussions of violence; and in a whopping 73% of all violent scenes, the perpetrator went unpunished; the negative consequences of violence were often not portrayed; 25% of violent interactions involved handguns; and only 4% of violent programs emphasized an anti-violence theme.¹⁸ The study also found that 44% of the shows on network stations contained at least some violence, compared with 59% on basic cable and 85% on premium channels like HBO and Showtime.¹⁹

Additionally, media violence experts Ed Donnerstein, Ron Slaby and Leonard Eron, reporting in 1993 on the mass media and youth aggression for the American Psychological Association, noted that blockbuster, Hollywood action films (such as *Die Hard 2*, *Robocop* and *Total Recall*, containing 264, 81 and 74 violent deaths respectively) were far more violent than programming made for commercial prime time TV. Two studies mentioned above: the National Television Violence Study and the UCLA Television Violence Monitoring Project, corroborated this finding.²⁰

At the same time we should be aware of the fact that the large volume of American television shows flowing across the borders. It means that American productions undoubtedly contribute in a material way to the amount of violence seen on TV screens in many other countries. Hence, taking into consideration the fact that popular American films are even more violent than American television programming and that a global domestic home video and DVD market is saturated with the Hollywood's products, one may assume,

¹⁷ R. Zoglin, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ S. Alter, *Violence on television, Law and Government Division*, Government of Canada, <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/CIR/953-e.htm>, 7 November 2006.

¹⁹ K. Szaflik, *Violence on TV: The Desensitizing of America*, <http://www.ridgenet.org/szaflik/tvrating.htm>, 7 November 2006.

²⁰ As above.

without any doubt, that the problem described above, is not exclusively American one.

B. Effects of violence on television

The numbers presented above lead us to the basic questions: why the mass media broadcast violence so eagerly? Are people really so attracted to this sort of entertainment? Interestingly, most of research have showed high rating of unpopularity of televised violence among children and adults.²¹ At the same time, there have been some attempts of explaining the presence of violence on TV by presenting audience's preferences towards this type of entertaining.

Employing the uses and gratifications perspective,²² one may assume that violent entertainment may hold inherent appeal for some individuals: some people may experience post-viewing gratification from viewing events, characters, and themes that tend to appear in violent context – while not necessarily enjoying the violence itself, or violent media may contain other themes that viewers tend to enjoy.²³ Consequently, one may acknowledge that the media, by broadcasting violent programs, meet the audience's expectations and needs.

Although such explanation may be adequate for some cases, it seems to be necessary to consider also other reasons. As many of previous studies showed, people do not want to receive negative messages. This kind of information, however, fixes their attention and is better remembered than a positive one.²⁴ Generally speaking, we pay more attention to negative information and events because they may directly influence our life – regardless of the fact if the message covers real events or fictional ones.

Such explanation of people's significant concern of negative and violent messages can be found in the conception created by Wilbur Schramm. According to his classification of information, messages could have direct or delayed influence on receiver. He included to the first category of information unusual and negative messages, especially about: corruption, crimes, accidents and catastrophes and, on the other hand, information about sport and entertainment.²⁵ In this case, we may assume that the media exploit violence to focus the

²¹ See: J. Cantor, *Children's attraction to television programming*, in: *Why we watch: the attractions of violent entertainment*, J. H. Goldstein (ed.), New York 1998, pp. 88–115; J. H. Goldstein, *Why we watch*, in: *Why we watch: the attractions of violent entertainment*, New York 1998, pp. 212–226.

²² The perspective, introduced by E. Katz, J. Blumler and M. Gurevitch in 1970's, focuses on individual motivations for media use.

²³ G. G. Sparks, C. Sparks, *Violence, mayhem, and horror*, in: *Media Entertainment: The psychology of its appeal*, D. Zillmann, P. Vorderer (eds.), New York 2000, pp. 73–91.

²⁴ B. Reeves, C. Nass, *Media i ludzie*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 142–156.

²⁵ W. Schramm, *The Nature of News*, "Journalism Quarterly" 1949, no. 26; see: M. Kunczik, A. Zipfel, *Wprowadzenie do nauki o dziennikarstwie i komunikowaniu*, Warszawa 2000, p. 117.

people's attention and as a result, consolidate their position at the market by drawing a big audience.

Since the mass media are able to attract attention by broadcasting violent programs, one of the most crucial question is what are the consequences of such constant exposure to the violence. Laboratory experiments, field studies, and longitudinal and correlation based methodologies have been applied to the issue. Although a direct, causal relationship is difficult to establish, a few major American studies, spanning 30 years altogether, each found a *positive correlation* or link between children's viewing of violence on television and aggressive attitudes and behaviours.²⁶

For example, Albert Bandura, a Stanford University psychologist developed a theory of how viewing TV might cause people to act in the particular ways (social learning theory, that emphasizes the importance of rewards and punishments). The long-term studies conducted by Leonard Eron and Rowell Huesmann and the research made by Brandon Centerwall corroborated this conclusion.

L. Rowel Huesmann and Leonard Eron surveyed every 8 year old in a typical American city in 1960. It did follow up studies with the same subjects in 1971, 1981 and 1994. They found some shocking results: the correlation between violence-viewing at age 8 and how aggressive the individual was at 19 was higher than the correlation between watching violence at age 8 and behaving aggressively at age 8.²⁷ Eventually, Eron estimates that TV is responsible for only 10 percent of the violent behavior in this country. But, as he says: "If we could reduce violence by 10 percent, that would be a great achievement."²⁸

Furthermore, a series of experiments by Leonard Berkowitz and his associates at the University of Wisconsin – Madison shows angry people watch media violence, they are *more* likely to behave aggressively. Berkowitz and his colleague Jo have offered and explanation for how this facilitating effect of media violence may operate. The key word in that concept is priming – it is a process that can be understood simply in term of associations: one thing that you think about reminds you of other things in your mind that you associate with the first thing.

According to this analysis, several things may occur when people view images of the media violence. First of all, the violence can prime thoughts that are related to hostility. Consequently, such thoughts may affect the way we see

²⁶ These studies are: a report to the Surgeon General on the impact of televised violence, released at the end of 1971; the National Institute of Mental Health's follow-up to the report to the Surgeon General, ten years later; and the 1992 report of the American Psychological Association's Committee on Media in Society. See: K. Szaflik, *Violence on TV: The Desensitizing of America*, <http://www.ridgenet.org/szaflik/tvrating.htm>, 7 November 2006. See also: E. Aronson, *Człowiek istota społeczna*, Warszawa 1995; E. Aronson, T. Wilson, R. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna: serce i umysł*, Poznań 1997.

²⁷ J. Mortimer, *How TV Violence Hits Kids*, "The Education Digest," October 1994, p. 17.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 19.

other people and interpret their actions. Secondly, media violence might prime thoughts that lead one to believe that aggressive behavior may be warranted in certain situations and might bring about some benefits. Consequently, in some cases we may observe the copycat phenomenon, as people sometimes imitate the exact behaviors that they see depicted in the media. Finally, media violence might prime people action tendencies that cause people to be more inclined to act violently.²⁹

On the other hand, some experts remain quite skeptical. L. Friedrich-Cofer and A. C. Huston, for example, although argue strongly for the casual effects of viewing television violence, say that the relationship is a small one.³⁰ J. N. Hughes and J. E. Hasbrouck also claim that the research findings show consistently that there is a relationship between television viewing and later aggression, but they also accept that the amount of variance in aggression accounted for by television viewing is small.³¹ Also Jonathan Freedman – a Canadian psychologist – concedes that children who watch more violent television tend to be more aggressive, but, he argues, field experiments have not proven, consistently and as a matter of incontrovertible scientific fact, that watching violent television actually *causes* viewers to become more aggressive.³²

Seymour Feshbach made even one step further in questioning negative influence of violence on TV. According to the catharsis hypothesis, that he developed in 1960's, a person could cleanse pent-up feelings of anger by watching other people act aggressively on TV. He believed that watching violence on TV may decrease level of negative emotions, and limit aggressive behaviours. This hypothesis, however, has not been supported by any research or study.³³

Unanimous agreement may never be reached on whether and how television violence affects audiences, but the bulk of the literature amassed on this subject concludes that violence on television could produce at least three negative effects. It has been associated with viewers exhibiting increased aggression or violence toward others (the aggressor effect); increased fearfulness about becoming a victim of violence (the victim effect); and increased insensitivity about violence among others (the bystander effect).³⁴

²⁹ E. Jo, L. Berkowitz, *A priming effects analysis of media influences: an update*, in: *Media effects: advances in theory and research*, J. Bryant, D. Zillmann (eds.), Hillsdale NJ 1994, pp. 43–60.

³⁰ L. Friedrich-Cofer, A. C. Huston, *Television violence and aggression: the debate continues*, "Psychological Bulletin" 1986, vol. 100, pp. 364–371. See: C. McCullagh, *Media power. A sociological introduction*, New York 2002, pp. 4–5.

³¹ J. N. Hughes, J. E. Hasbrouck, *Television violence: implications for violence prevention*, "School Psychology Review" 1996, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 134–151. See: C. McCullagh, *Media power. A sociological introduction*, New York 2002, pp. 4–5.

³² G. G. Sparks, *Media effects research. A basic overview*, Thomson Wadsworth, Canada 2006, p. 84.

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 91–92.

³⁴ S. Alter, *Violence on television*, Law and Government Division, Government of Canada, <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/CIR/953-e.htm>, 7 November 2006.

Moreover, according to theory of agenda setting, introduced originally as a hypothesis by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, the mass media may not be successful in telling people *what to think* but they are stunningly successful in telling people *what to think about*.³⁵ In other words, the media set the public agenda; their coverage of issues helps to define for the public what they should be thinking about on a given day. The so called first level of agenda setting is a further result of two processes: selection and priming; by covering some issues and events, the mass media introduce them to the public.³⁶

Furthermore, so called attributed agenda setting (or: the second level of agenda setting), first introduced and explored in late 1970's, expanded researchers' focus to the attributes (i.e. characteristics or traits) of issues or objects. The basic idea of second-level agenda-setting is that when the media emphasize certain attributes of objects/issues while giving less or no attention to other attributes, the public is more likely to think and talk about the attributes which the media highlight while ignoring attributes the media did not stress. Consequently, agenda-setting researchers once again revised Cohen's classic declaration by saying that "the media not only tell us what to *think about*, they also tell us *how to think about it*."³⁷

The phenomenon is explained by the concept of framing. As J. Tankard defines this term, framing is "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggest what issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration."³⁸ As a result the mass media not only *select* issues and events to be covered and introduced to the audience, but they may also *define and describe* them in some particular way. Consequently, the news mass media may influence (to some extent) the not only the audience's perception of the reality, but also its attitude towards some people, issues, or events. It means that mass media, by covering violent acts may focus people's attention and affect the way some particular acts will be perceived.

C. Violence in the news media

First, let us emphasize that this is television news that gives violent crime a particularly prominent place in its coverage. A crime that might be covered in the middle of the "New York Times" "Metro" section is likely to be the top story

³⁵ This is a revised Cohen's classic declaration. See: B. Cohen, *The press and foreign policy*, Princeton 1963.

³⁶ See: M. McCombs, D. L. Shaw, *The agenda-setting function of mass media*, "Public Opinion Quarterly" 1972, no. 36, pp. 176–187; M. McCombs, *New frontiers in agenda setting: Agendas of Attributes and frames*, "Mass Communication Review" 1997, no. 24 (1/2), pp. 32–53; M. McCombs, *Setting the Agenda*, Cambridge 2004.

³⁷ See: as above.

³⁸ See: E. Griffin, *A first look at communication theory*, Boston 1999.

on that night's local television newscast, complete with gory shots of the crime scene and sound bites from the victim, witnesses, or the police.³⁹

On the basis of a study that spans 15 years G. Gerbner estimates that crime is about 10 times more prevalent on TV than it is in the real world. Moreover, according to the most recent Annual Report on American Journalism – *The State of the News Media 2006* made by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, an institute affiliated with Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, almost 35% of all topics covered by all types of American media were crime/accident/disaster ones. In some media, e.g. local TV and national cable TV, crime coverage totaled, accordingly, almost 42% and 31% of the topics presented during the year 2006.⁴⁰

The high level of violence saturation in news programs has been inspiring many studies that specifically look at television news coverage of violent crime, as well as studies on the way the news media cover crime affects people's perceptions of the world.

One of them was Doris Graber's 1976 project conducted in Evanston, Illinois, in which she did an in-depth study of several individuals' news-following behavior and their perceptions of events and the world in general. As part of the study, her team observed patterns of crime coverage in various local media outlets and found that most sensational crimes were covered quite well, particularly if they happened locally. Violent crime and street crime made up almost half of television crime reporting, but the human element of pain and victimization was almost always left out of the stories. Crime coverage was generally descriptive and remote, giving only the facts of the crime and little about the human cost. Only in the most sensational crimes was there in-depth coverage of the human angle.⁴¹

Furthermore, the news media reports a disproportion of violent crime such as murder and rape compared to burglary and white-collar crimes such as embezzlement and fraud.⁴² This can hardly help but distort people's perceptions of what kinds of crimes are happening and to whom.

Simultaneously, almost all the studies on television violence have noted the connection between violence and negative world views. People who see a lot of violence on television are more likely to see the world as a nasty place. In a 1978 study, G. Gerbner found a definite correlation between the level of television

viewing and a perception that most people tend to be selfish and underhanded. He termed this "mean world syndrome."⁴³

Furthermore, people's perceptions of crime rates actually tend to reflect the rate of crime reporting in the area, rather than the actual incidence of crime.⁴⁴ Many studies on that subject found little connection between actual crime rates and the level of crime reported. Although there was a decrease in the actual level of crime, this was the increase in reporting the violence by the media that shaped people's perception of the crime problem.⁴⁵

Additional consequence of an exposure to media (both news and entertainment) is an audience's desensitization. By watching violence on television people may become numb to violence in real life so they do not react to it as they would if they had never seen it on the screen. This correlation was shown, for instance, in the study made by Ronald Drabman and Margaret Thomas in 1970's.⁴⁶ Desensitization to violence results in two main phenomena: escalation of violence and higher level of violence saturation of media products. For example, as one of the studies shows, sequels of movies are always much more violent than the original movie.⁴⁷ The problem, however, goes beyond the entertainment sphere.

3. The mass media and terrorism

As an instrument of political violence, terrorism is not new. The propaganda of the fear as a means of creating political change was carefully played against the backdrop of the ancient marketplace of Jerusalem as early as between years 60 and 70 A.D. What makes contemporary terrorism unique is its need – its almost incessant craving for publicity, whether favorable or unfavorable, at whatever cost.⁴⁸

At the same time, news – hungry media seek for issues or events that can be easily 'sold' to the mass audience. Consequently, in a high competitive modern news business, with an emphasis on live action, modern terrorism – especially

³⁹ W. Diamond, *Crime Story*, New York, 18 April 1988, p. 54. See: L. Kimmel, op. cit.

⁴⁰ An Annual Report on American Journalism – *The State of the News Media 2006*, The Project for Excellence in Journalism, <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2006/index.asp>, 27 November 2006.

⁴¹ D. A. Graber, *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide*, New York 1988, p. 81; D. A. Graber, *Crime News and the Public*, New York 1980, pp. 45–46. See: L. Kimmel, *Violence on the news. Television crime reporting and society*, <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/3682/tvnews.html>, 27 November 2006.

⁴² B. Gunter, *Dimensions of Television Violence*, New York 1985, p. 47. See: L. Kimmel, op. cit.

⁴³ T. H. A. Van der Voort, *Television Violence; A Child's Eye View*, "Advances in Psychology," vol. 32, North-Holland, Amsterdam 1986, p. 86. See: L. Kimmel, op. cit.

⁴⁴ R. Quinney, *The Social Reality of Crime*, Boston 1970, pp. 281–282. See: L. Kimmel, op. cit.

⁴⁵ J. E. Conklin, *The Impact of Crime*, New York 1975, p. 23; D. A. Graber, *Crime News and the Public*, New York 1980, p. 124. See: L. Kimmel, op. cit.

⁴⁶ R. S. Drabman, M. H. Thomas, *Does watching violence on television cause apathy?*, "Pediatrics" 1976, no. 57, pp. 329–331. See: G. G. Sparks, op. cit., p. 94.

⁴⁷ S. Jhally, *The killing screens: media and the culture of violence [video]*, Media Education Foundation, Northampton, MA. See: G. G. Sparks, op. cit., p. 94.

⁴⁸ A. H. Miller, *Terrorism, the media and the law: A discussion of the issues*, in: *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982, p. 13.

in it's the most extravagant and atrocious forms – is obviously undertaken for its spectacular, histrionic, and media-attracting effects. Terrorism is capable of writing any drama – no matter how horrific – to compel the media attention. If initially ignored, terrorist do not hesitate to change the plot, the setting, and the characters so the performance will not be disregarded. Therefore, today terrorism and media are entwined in an almost inexorable, symbiotic relationship. As A. H. Miller wrote: "Terrorism, like an ill – mannered enfant terrible, is the media's stepchild, a stepchild which the media, unfortunately, can neither completely ignore nor deny."⁴⁹

Although numerous research have been conducted on the phenomenon described above,⁵⁰ there is still many crucial questions unanswered. The aim of this part of the paper is to present some other consequences of presenting violence in the media. Namely, we will consider following questions: 1. What features distinguish a terrorist incident among other acts of violence presented on TV? 2. How are terrorist acts covered by news and entertainment media in the USA? 3. What are consequences of that coverage for: terrorist, police/government, and the society?

A. Terrorist acts and other types of violence on TV

First, let us recall main goals of many cotemporary existing terrorist organizations. Besides of killing some particular people who are regarded to be enemy (e.g. politicians), the aims of terrorists may vary from demoralizing the enemy, demonstrating terrorist organisation's abilities and its political power, revealing enemy's weakness to causing fear, panic and chaos, as well as influencing general direction of the policy or some particular political decisions. Furthermore terrorist may seek for the opportunity to create or change their image.

One of the most significant feature of many contemporary terrorist groups and organizations is the desire of being introduced to the public. On contrary to majority of those who commit crimes, terrorists seek for publicity to achieve their goals. Consequently, they attempt to attract the mass media's attention to open channels and spread the message to the audience.

⁴⁹ A. H. Miller, op. cit. p. 13.

⁵⁰ For an impressive bibliography of that subject one may check: *Violence and Terror in the Mass Media. An Annotated Bibliography* compiled by N. Signorielli, G. Gerbner, Greenwood Press 1988 or: <http://www.mipt.org/terrorismbibliography.asp>. Also the author of that has paper made some research on that topic. See: A. Stepińska, *Modern Mass Media and International Terrorism*, in: *The Faces of Terrorism*, S. Wojciechowski ed.), Poznań 2006; *The Global Flow of Information and Propaganda. Terrorist Attacks on the USA, September 11, 2001 as a media event*, in: *Terrorism as a timeless actor on the international stage*, S. Wojciechowski (ed.), Poznań 2005.

Contemporary terrorism often called "mass media terrorism" occurred in late 1960's. As Schmid and de Graaf write: "primarily it was the outgrowth of minority strategies to get into the news. Since the Western mass media grant access to news – making to events that are abnormal, unusual, dangerous, new, disruptive and violent, groups without habitual access to news – making use these characteristics of the news value system to obtain access."⁵¹ Since that time, as B. Bagdikina suggests, there have been "growing numbers of men who understand how news is generated, organised and transmitted, and it would be unintelligent of them if they did use it to their own advantage."⁵²

Thus, since 1970's to early 2000's many terrorist groups have been analysing the mass media's needs and expectations in order to provide them what they want: the "news events." The desire for maximum publicity creates a tendency to select target and engage in types of symbolic action that translate well visually in coverage and broadcast. In order to catch the mass media attention and distinguish themselves among others, terrorist organisations usually employ one of the five main strategies:

- 1) To select and attack a symbolic place (e.g. WTC, Pentagon, 2001). In that case, terrorists' idea is to shock the audience by attacking buildings that are easily recognized by many people and identified with political or economic power.
- 2) To use an opportunity of attention focused on some event or place (e.g. Olympic Games in Munich, 1972).
- 3) To kill some particular people: members of governments, representatives of some organisations, including journalists, or symbols of some direction of policy; to exclude the person who is regarded enemy.
- 4) To attack means of public transport and other widely used facilities (theatres, subways, trains, airplanes, schools) to spread panic and make people afraid of elements of their everyday life. For example, two attacks on European capital cities took place in 2004 (Madrid, March 11) and 2005 (London, July 7). In both cases the public means of transports were targets of bombs attacks. About 190 people were killed in Madrid and 52 in London. Furthermore, on October 12, 2002 a car bomb exploded outside the Sari Club Discotheque in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, killing 202 persons and wounding 300 more. The common aim of all of these terrorist acts was to destroy people's sense of security and to disturb their everyday routine.

Strategies mentioned above are focused on a quick action and their power lies in a shock that their cause. One more strategy usually used by terrorist is taking hostages (5). In this case, the scenario of drama is different – instead of

⁵¹ A. Schmid, J. de Graaf, *Violence as Communication*, London 1982, p. 217, see: B. Mc Nair, *An Introduction to Political Communication*, Routledge, London-New York 1995, p. 153.

⁵² B. Bagdikina, *The Information Machines*, New York 1971, p. 293. See: E. E. Dennis, J. C. Merrill, *Media Debates. Issues in Mass Communication*, Longman Publishers, p. 171.

quick action, it is a terrifying event that may take couple of hours or even many days. In that case, terrorists want to catch and hold attention for longer, by playing with the audience in cruel and terrifying game of life and death.

Thus, terrorism not only presents opportunities for outstanding stories for the mass media, but it confronts the media with some of their most difficult ethical, moral and legal choices; choices between a free people's right to know and the right of terrorist victims to survive; between the media's right to disseminate information and a society's right to exist.

B. The mass media coverage of terrorism – the main issues

Terrorists try to manipulate the message that is spread to define the situation according to their own objectives or to create "new reality." For them, the value of propaganda lies in getting the public to be so amazed at their own description of reality that it will begin to question its own assumptions about morality and about the political system. The implications of this type of redefinition of values maybe be: (1) challenging existing values and modes of thought; (2) alienation of intellectuals, who then proceed to question the value system which sustained the regime; (3) building a network of supporters; and (4) building more general ultimately influence the way in which other Western nations deal with terrorism.⁵³

Let us emphasize that the media's coverage of terrorism does not create new problems for journalists so much as it dramatizes. Since journalists usually are not able to establish the truth of an issue themselves, they heavily depend on information from the sources. In this case, a search for truth takes place among self – serving sources who that try to use the mass media to achieve their own objectives and dispense highly subjective information.⁵⁴

On the one hand, terrorist treat every act of violence as an opportunity to introduce themselves and to present their priorities. Some of them tend to portray themselves as outraged heroes and desperate individuals forced by brutal, repressive and insensitive regimes to commit acts of violence for which the terrorist are not responsible.⁵⁵ Some others called themselves an "soldiers" or "legal representatives" that are "morally justified in carrying out the campaign of resistance against foreign occupation forces and domestic collaborators" (IRA).⁵⁶

⁵³ A. H. Miller, *Terrorism, the media and the law: A discussion of the issues*, in: *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982, p. 14.

⁵⁴ *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982, p. 4.

⁵⁵ As above.

⁵⁶ *Irish Republican Army, The Green Book*, quoted in: J. S. Tuman, *Communicating Terror. The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*, Sage Publications, 2003, p. 9.

Let us recall the theory of agenda setting (second level) to support the thesis that the problem of how media portray terrorists appears to be of strong concern not only to society but also to policy makers dealing with issues related to terrorism, and to the media themselves. In democracy, public perceptions of events will determine the policy course government will be able to pursue. If the public' image of terrorists is one of "freedom fighters," "commandos" or "liberators," then that set of images will have profoundly different consequences for government policy than will a set of public perceptions which define terrorist as brutal murders.⁵⁷

Therefore, the mass media may be influenced by the government as well to provide some particular definition of the situation that occurred as a result of terrorist attack. For the government the coverage of terrorist attacks is important not only for handling with a current situation, but also for the future actions. They are aware that "factual and fictional depictions of incidents of extraordinary violence in the mass media are an important part of the background against which individual choices whether or not to participate in crimes of this nature are made."⁵⁸

In these circumstances, even the most conscientious and objective journalist might become the unwitting conduit for propaganda. On the one hand, the crisis involving journalists' own national community and its citizens often poses challenges to their professional authority as objective sources of information. In such cases journalists tend to abandon their professional norms and values.⁵⁹ When the reporters' own country is in risk, they tend to employ "national frame of references" rather than "professional frame of references," serving more as representatives of national interests, than detached observer of the incidents.

On the other hand, there are examples of journalists who yielded terrorists. For example, in 1970's the journalists seemed to be fascinated with the reality and threat of violence. Consequently, as A. H. Miller wrote, "Arab terrorists were romanticized by the media in the USA, Britain and much of Europe."⁶⁰ Furthermore, some journalists spread the terrorists' messages without checking the situation and without considering the potential consequences of such a decision.

⁵⁷ *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982, p. 3.

⁵⁸ National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. *Disorders and terrorism: Report on the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism*, Law Enforcement assistance Administration, Washington D.C. 1977.

⁵⁹ E. Zandberg, M. Neiger, *Between the nation and profession. Journalists as members of contradicting communities(in) Media*, "Culture & Society" 2005, no. 27, pp. 131-141.

⁶⁰ L. Rukeyser, *American Information Radio Network*, 4 March 1972; J. Lafflin, *Fedayeen*, Glencoe 1973.

There may be a few different explanations of such a behaviour. According to E. J. Epstein, the problem is in the business of gathering and producing the news. They are limited by time, space and human resources that can be allotted to any story. Moreover, in the era of new technology, the flow of information is very fast. In a world where only a few hours are needed to print the newspaper, where there are 24 - hours television and radio channels, and one may insert new information in the Internet any time he or she wants, the pressure of the scoop is inextricable component of the process of gathering the news.

But still, some journalists seem to accept one of the versions of the story, accordingly to their own attitudes, beliefs or objectives, and for others not be scooped by competitors, instead of establishing the truth, seems to be the main objective.⁶¹

C. Consequences for social and political environment

Besides it's influence on children's and adults' perception of the world and their behaviour, violence in the mass media seem to affect political life. Let us recall arguments that have been made that "the U.S. war effort in Vietnam was defeated by television's portrayal of the war's violence. [...] television did not upend the war effort, but perhaps people's perception of what they saw did."⁶² The phenomena, recently called "CNN effect," consists of three main directions of influence and roles of mass media in political environment: accelerant, impediment and agenda setting agency.

The first potential effect of global, real - time media is the shortening of response time for decision - makers. "Policymakers decry the absence of quiet time to deliberate choices, reach private agreements, and mold the public's understanding."⁶³ Secondly, the mass media through emotional, grisly coverage may undermine morale of the society. Moreover, they can constitute a threat to operational security. And finally, they are able to attract public opinion's attention to some crisis and consequently reorder policy priorities.⁶⁴

It is worth mentioning that besides consequences mentioned above, covering terrorist attacks may have some additional ones. First of all, although it has been not scientifically proved, one act of a spectacular violence covered by the mass media seems to be followed by others. We would argue that both copycat

phenomenon and facilitating effect may occur when there is a strong need of publicity.

Let us present numbers of terrorist incidents regarded as "significant" and listed by Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs at U.S. Department of State.⁶⁵ Although the document is not intended to be complete or comprehensive, it shows some interesting trends. According to that document, since 1961 to 1982, 25 terrorist incidents took place. In 2001, 19 terrorist incidents took place (7 of them happened after 9/11) and next 43 in 2002, and 43 in 2003 (17 of the latest took place in Iraq). In comparison, in years 1983-1995 the numbers varied from 2 to 8, and in 1996-2000 from 8 to 22 (most of terrorist acts during that period took place in 1996). The increasing number of "significant" terrorist incidents may be caused by many reasons (e.g. some particular events), but we believe that one of them is followers' conviction that terrorist attacks are effective strategy to achieve their goals.

At the same time, in world with media saturation, and news stories already devoted to coverage of so many issues relating to violence, death, and tragedy, guaranteeing coverage of terrorism story requires visually compelling, dramatic, and therefore devastating violence on a larger scale; sadly this also means that with each act of terror, the threshold for what is dramatic and truly terrifying must be raised. Consequently, we may observe a dramatic escalation of violence.

After attacks in the USA on 9/11, 2001 when a few symbolic places and buildings were chosen as targets of attacks and more than 2,700 people were killed,⁶⁶ many terrorist incidents took place. Some of them should be recalled to illustrate the trend described above.

On October 23, 2002, Chechen rebels stormed a Moscow theater during a performance of the musical *Nord-Ost*, taking an estimated 900 people hostage, including 90 staff members of the theater. The standoff ended three days later, when Russian troops raided the building. 129 hostages died in the takeover, almost all as a result of a gas that was used by federal forces to subdue the rebels. What was exceptional in that case was the number of hostages.

Two years later, on September 1, 2004, at School Number One (SNO) in the Russian town of Beslan in North Ossetia, armed Muslim terrorists took more than 1200 school children and adults hostage. On the third day of the standoff, gunfire broke out between the hostage-takers and Russian security forces. According to official data, 344 civilians were killed, 186 of them children, and hun-

⁶¹ Description of some examples of such an attitude one may find in: *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982.

⁶² See: J. W. Hoge, *The media and terrorism*, in: *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982, p. 92.

⁶³ S. Livingston, *Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of the Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention*, Research Pages. R - 18, Harvard College, June 1997, p. 2.

⁶⁴ As above.

⁶⁵ Significant Terrorist Incidents, 1961-2003: A Brief Chronology, Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs at U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/ts/5902.htm>, 30 November 2006.

⁶⁶ The numbers of killed in these attacks given by different sources vary from 2,819, according to NY Magazine, www.nymag.com/news/articles/wtc/1year/number.html to 2,752 according to CNN, www.cnn.com/2003/US/Notheast/10/29/wtc.deaths/, 15 November 2006.

dreds more wounded.⁶⁷ What made that case extremely terrifying was the fact that even more people were taken as hostages, and that many of them were children.

Another example of escalation of violence that might have been inspired by the content of TV programs is recording by terrorists and broadcasting in the Internet the beheadings of the hostages.⁶⁸ As the Western press, radio and TV stations stopped spreading some messages received from terrorists, they decided to use new media to extend the group of potential audience of these murders. The motives behind these kidnappings include influencing foreign governments with troops in Iraq and foreign companies with workers there (very often the deadlines to fulfill terrorists' requirements in these matters were given), as well as ransom money and discouraging travel to Iraq.

Furthermore, as it has been shown in some previous studies, terrorist groups have already learned that manipulation of media could be achieved if they approached news reporters acting less like terrorists and more like politicians or public relations experts. Hence, some terrorists discovered the advantage of selective access to information – a regular tactic used by politicians seeking favourable media coverage. By granting interviews to some reporters but not to the others, terrorists could hold out the promise of a competitive scoop while also guaranteeing coverage and possibly more favourable treatment in a story.⁶⁹

In fact, in the response of such a "exclusive" information, the mass media make broadcasting terrorists' messages possible. Cases of interviews with terrorists, presenting tapes and letters prepared by the terrorist or direct reporting their messages have happened to even such significant mass media as BBC (the interview with a disguised member of the Irish National Liberation Army on July 5, 1979).

Consequently, the mass media may cause many problems for the police and government in many ways including: (1) by attempting to negotiate with terrorists, thus depriving the police of their official responsibility for dealing with terrorists; (2) by talking directly with terrorists, thereby reinforcing the terrorists' sense of power and diluting the influence of police negotiators; (3) by casting doubt upon the veracity or reliability of what the police say and do; (4) by dislocating tactical information which might endanger hostages and other under the threat of terrorist violence; (5) by raising anxiety of terrorists by disclos-

⁶⁷ BBC News, 2 September 2005.

⁶⁸ Beginning in April 2004 members of Iraqi insurgency began taking hostage foreign civilians in Iraq. Since then, they have kidnapped more than 200 foreigners and thousands of Iraqis; among them, 30 foreign hostages have been killed. Many hostages remain missing with no clue as to their whereabouts.

⁶⁹ J. S. Tuman, op. cit., p. 136.

ing police plans and tactics, for example, that a police sharpshooter squadron may be on scene.⁷⁰

Let us mention one more potential consequence that is a result of attribute agenda setting: creating and establishing stereotypes. On the one hand, through mass – mediated stereotypes precondition public assumptions about terrorism, and these stereotypes in turn can be reinforced by terrorist mythology, the most effective opportunity for terrorists themselves to really control and manipulate mediated coverage of their messages resides in the relations they have with news media.⁷¹

On the other hand, the impact of stereotyping specific groups of terrorists by their inclusion in Hollywood movies results in creating preconceptions, beliefs or expectations in any audience member that certain kinds of people and terrorists are indeed one and the same (as the result, the Middle East terrorists were initially suspected in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, well before anyone in the law enforcement community connected the act with Timothy McVeigh).⁷² Such a unification of the terrorists' image might be a serious inconvenience for individuals or groups that seek for establishing their own identity.

4. Summary

Violence on American TV has been recognized as a problem and became a subject of studies since late 1950's. A decade later terrorist organisations started to use the mass media to their own objectives and prepare their own violent spectacles. Till late 1990's terrorists recognised the mass media expectations so well, that they were able to attract mass media attention and made terrorist attacks promptly covered by reporters. The attacks on WTC on 9/11, 2001 showed that terrorist are perfectly aware of both public fears and media needs. Most recently, terrorist groups have become even more sophisticated about controlling messages for broadcast and distribution. Like politicians who use paid media to guarantee that the message gets out to the public, some terrorists have resorted to producing their own videos for selective or global release.

⁷⁰ P. V. Murphy, *The police, the news media, and the coverage of terrorism*, in: *Terrorism, the media and the law*, A. H. Miller (ed.), Transnational Publishers, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 1982, p. 83.

⁷¹ J. S. Tuman, op. cit., p. 135.

⁷² And when the problem of crime is presented in the U.S. television one may notice a similar tendency to associating crime and race and, in this way, supporting racial stereotypes among the audience. See: S. Iyengar, "Media Effects" Paradigms for the Analysis of Local Television News, Paper prepared for A. E. Casey Foundation Meeting, Center for Communication and Community, 17-18 September 1998.

Summing up, terrorist groups seem to follow the direction of contemporary art of propaganda. They attempt to achieve their goals by employing new techniques and instruments of influence widely used in advertising and public relations. Hence, the interdisciplinary approach seems to be adequate one to understand problem of terrorism today.