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A Research Note: Counter-Elitist Power Organization

Theoretical Basics and Conception

Abstract

This article endeavours, for the first time, to impose the concept of the counter-elitist power organisation upon the correlation of the debate on the effectual means of terrorism in general, and on non-governmental organisations, availing themselves of such means for the enhancement of their interests.

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Introduction

The current third wave of globalization since 1991 ensued with the end of the system-wide pact confrontation.[1] Increasing expansion of production, distribution and finance cycles, beyond national borders, has caused veritable gains in the fields of transport, conveyance and communication. The relative arbitrariness between transnational interactions is not a result of an erosion of regulations, but must be interpreted as outcome of political decision-processes. These developments left their mark on the operational environment of the international state system. While the manoeuvring scope for national Governments remains thus rather confined, that of non-governmental agencies[2] such as multinational companies, business associations, churches, sects, and diverse religious organisations and networks have been markedly increasing, as did that of organised criminal or terrorist organisations. Due to changes in the operational environment, increasing numbers of non-governmental agencies emerge in the form of anti-regime and even separatist/irredentist or autonomist

organisations on the world stage and compete with existing governments in political power. Non-governmental organisations of the latter kind, both in the political, journalistic and scientific discourse, are being customarily referred to as terror or terrorist organisations. Obviously, by means of rather sinister associations, the mere use of such attributes implies a negative context. Basically, this would entail no great disadvantage to the scientific discourse, would not this deficiency extend to the content dispute and thus to the proceedings of discourses, kept up in the long run not as informative-designative but as valuative-prescriptive[3]. As a result of misperceptions, reflected appropriately in referring - regardless of their effective use of resources - to all forms of anti-regime organisations, as well as autonomist, separatist and irredentist organisations, as terrorist groups. To counteract this trend, the authors of this article would like to introduce the concept of the counter-elitist power organisation in order to enhance the scientific discourse.

Counter-elitist power organization

Terminology

Non-governmental organisations are structured associations of individuals who, on a private basis, unite under counter-elitist political, social and socio-economic ideals, and represent the latter in public. Non-governmental organisations may be categorized horizontally as profit-seeking and non-profit-seeking, as well as vertically in transnational and domestic groups[4]. Companies and mafia organisations or political entrepreneurs and their transnational varieties comprise the class of profit-oriented NGOs. The category of non-profit organisations are composed from sub-divisions of personal

associations, business associations, churches and influential organisations, forming a transnational cooperative to help promote their interests in a globalised world.

The array of common NGOs and of the non-profit organizations compete with each other in order to gain political power and to implement domination, thereby assuming a special position, as their functions entail socially binding decisions and the implementation of legal and budgetary issues through effectual means. Specifically, the object of conflict - in the context of domination and exercise thereof - indirectly gains direct access to the levers of power. The non-governmental factions mentioned are permanent associations of like-minded people who share together common ideals with regard to the formation of various societal subsystems and intend to realize the latter by the takeover of government responsibility.

As long as the competition for the acquisition of political position within the apparatus of domination is being conducted by standards and regulations in fixed orbits, thus institutionalised, and the ambition of decision-makers (elite) of such non-governmental factions, in order to secure permanence in office, do not seek the complete elimination of political competitors, organised units as these parties are, to be referred to as parties! Parties in this context are existing since the 18th century, and since the French Revolution.

If the ambition of decision-makers of an organisation of power implies the annihilation of political competition, as well as a fundamental revision of political structures or order, then, based on the study of "Power and Society"[5], penned by Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, they may justly be described as a counter-elite, and their respective organisations as counter-elitist power organisations.

A range of means is available to such organisations in order to achieve a change in the political structure or order. Roughly, one can categorize these means into violence and subversion[6]. Wherever the organised and systematic application of force plays a crucial role, targeted assassinations, terrorist operations, guerrilla operations or the use of classic conventional war tactics are involved. Tactics of subversion might be employed in a supplemental or even primary role; in this case, an attempt would be mounted to deprive the political class of the ability to rule over tracts of their territory or even over the entire territory, by means of infiltration or counter-mobilisation of the mass public.

Agenda-setting

The sociological reappraisal of the agenda settings of such organisations will also be achieved with phrases such as 'socialist-revolutionary movement' and vague hints regarding autonomy and self-determination of peoples or ethnic groups, mainly lacking precision.

To assess both width and depth of elitist agendas it is advisable to revert to the concept of (international) revisionism. Although the concept of "Revisionism", established 20 years ago by Barry Buzan in the scientific discourse to classify political currents that seek a permanent change of order or structure in the international state system, it is not too widespread. International revisionism can be orthodox, after Buzan, radical or revolutionary[7]. Orthodox revisionism remains confined to its objective, i.e. to improve its position within the power structure, while the revolutionary variant additionally aims at fundamentally changing the current valid rules. The radical variant lies between those two and contrives to connect a basic improvement of its state of power with a moderate reform of the mentioned rules.

Since political movements of such an alignment tend to harbour their own vision of internal control and social order (particularly radical and revolutionary revisionism), this system can also be applied to the collation of internal conflicts on the state micro-level. As with international revisionism in the internal variant, requests for alteration may affect both the structural and the order level. As far as the level of requests for alteration is concerned, real facts or a wide range of actions are involved. The American sociologist Marion J. Levy on this issue: "Simply speaking, structural-functional analysis consists of nothing more complicated than phrasing empirical questions in one of the following several forms or some combination of them: (1) What observable uniformities (or patterns) can be discovered or alleged to exist in the phenomena studied? (2) What conditions (empirical states of affairs) resultant from previous operations can be discovered or alleged to exist in the phenomena studied? (3) When processes (or action, i.e. changes in the patterns, conditions, or both, depending on one's point of view) are discernible between any two or more points, can be discovered (or alleged) to take place in terms of observable uniformities, what resultant conditions can be discovered? The first question asks, 'What structures are involved?' The second asks, 'What functions have resulted (or have been performed?). And the third asks 'What functions take place in terms of a given structure(s)?[8]'

As far as the changing desires of a counter-elite concern the level of structures, a complete and permanent exchange of personnel in the top positions within the apparatus of domination can be sought without however diminishing the ruling power of the central government in specific areas of the state association in question. Now, there are many cases where revisionist objectives in relation to the internal power structure could also indirectly cause an impact on the geography of rule, as State rule remains territorially bound. This implies territorial conflict. A rather ideologically-oriented counter-elitist power organisation is attempting to seize institutionalised exercise of power over a region/population itself (autonomy)[9], without however opting out of the state association; or to extract a particular area from a state association, to (a) merge into another, socio-culturally closer state association (irredentism) or (b) to establish a sovereign state (separatism)[10].

The underlying reason thereof lies in a state system, the members of which comprise in the main not a single nation, but contain a relatively strong socio-cultural fragmentation[11] and spread different races among several territories. Experts estimate that more than 550 such socio-cultural fabrics are currently in existence, which, by their degree of integration, could establish a nation state. Specifically, ethnic minorities of political relevance inhabit 120 countries[12]. In the period from 1945 to 2001 more than 450 ethno-political groups were engaged in conflict, often resorting to violence; fragmented social structures, however, are not a pre-requisite condition for attaining active and passive support from the mass public, but more of a surface phenomenon exploited by other counter-elites[13].

The category 'separatism' embraces such anti-colonial movements who had their independence wrung from colonial rulers throughout Africa and Asia, as well as more recent examples such as the Basque ETA in Spain, Kurdish insurgents in the Iraq as well as islamic movements in the Chinese province of Xinjiang. A timely implementation of their separatist aspirations could be achieved against elitist power organisations in East Timor (Indonesia) and in southern Sudan. Other counter-elitist power organisations of irredentist orientation are still active, too: parts of the IRA demand withdrawal from the United Kingdom to seek unification with the Republic of Ireland; some islamic movements in the region of Kashmir press for withdrawal from the Indian State Association in order to be incorporated into Pakistan. Irredentist movements will find an optimal habitat wherever the settlement area of an ethnic group transgresses the frontiers of the own nation state and is affected beyond the border by discrimination or even repression. The separatist/irredentist potential is considerable and will form the basis for more or less violent confrontations within and beyond formal state borders in the future.

Thus we approach the order level: if requests for alteration aim at the order level, then the rules and regulations for the control of internal and social proceedings of the state are being affected; specifically the exercise of rules, determination of intent and the social order[14]. The order of rule can be monistic or pluralistic. Special attention in this context should be attached towards the process of the distribution of positions within the apparatus of domination, i.e. the power process[15]. The participation in this process of power can be awarded to all respectable members of the citizenry or be limited to a privileged group of individuals. The process of determination of intent - the modus of how socially binding decisions are being agreed upon - can be monopolised or designed for competition. Finally, it is to behold whether the social order is a partial or total one. Wherever the generally binding decisions grant as much room as to form and determine in the individual functional subsystems of the social system, a relatively large span of order, structure and processes through intrinsic interactions, a partial social order arises. If however the control width and depth prevents an independent formation of an order, structure and the processes in all other functional subsystems, a total social order emerges.

Basically every important position in the apparatus of domination has to be staffed with own supporters and the ruling political elite permanently shattered, in order to initiate and implement lasting changes on the order level.

In this context, Dr. Bard O'Neill identifies four types of insurgents, which exceed the ambition of the counter-elite for the mere seizure of power and aim at modifying further functional subsystems of the social system.

- Anarchist wants to destroy all institutionalized political arrangements within a state but not replaced, because they are viewed as illegitimate. Today no significant influencing anarchist movement does exit.

- Egalitarian seeks the radical transformation of society based on the value equality, distributional and centrally controlled political structures. Present examples are the Shining Path in Peru and the front for the liberation of Nepal.

- The traditionalist seeks to replace the political and societal structure within a state, but they want to restore them through a primordial system rooted in ancestral ties and religion. This subtype includes most of the neo-islamic movements like ISIS, the Kach movement of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane in Israel or the Christian Identity Movement in the United States.

- Pluralist seeks to establish a system in which the values of individual freedom, liberty and compromise are emphasized, and in which the political structures are differentiated and autonomous. There are some examples in the past and present: ANC in South Africa, the UNITA in Angola or the NRM in Uganda[16].

Since the end of the cold war, more and more counter-elitist power organisations with an Islamic revisionist agenda entered the world stage and the prospects for a successful implementation of their agenda are rather more likely to improve than to deteriorate, because the amount of ruined or failed states will remain high in the future (in Islamic-dominated regions of the world).

Intraorganisational Design

As to the form of organisation of non-governmental activist groups in general and power organisations in particular, specifically counter-elitist power organisations, relevant scientific volumes are being continually published. Especially in the scientific debate relating to counter-elitist power organisations in the context of "New Terrorism" elementary findings of organisational science are scarcely or not at all heeded; instead, the topic is especially treated under the heading of networked terrorism. It is

however paramount within the scientific treatment of the topic in question - counter-elitist organisation of power - to revert to the terminology of business-economy organisational theory which owns already a certain dignity and, above all, a signal effect. The business-economy organisational theory suggests, in the treatment of organisational phenomena, a twofold division, the conditional and relative structures (structural organisation), and the process structure (organisational proceedings).

Process Organisation

The task of a process organisation, in consideration of the settings posed by a target system, is the splitting of the main tasks in as so many fractional tasks, so that the subsequent combination of these subtasks will afford an optimised organisational structure and system of order. The mentioned status and relationship structures are not to be regarded as static, but, as the process structure itself, are subjected to permanent change. This change results on the one hand from alterations in the overall task or the partial tasks - by internal or external influences - and on the other from the attempt to optimise the organisational structure.

Referring to counter-elitist power organisations it may be stated that current data material[17] is sufficiently available and augmented to develop in a structurally functional perspective a basic model of such an organisation in modern terms. Specifically, the following segments[18] will be discerned:

Counter-elites set the political or ideological stance and all intra-organisational decisions in relation to maintenance, escalation and de-escalation of a conflict. Moving still on the non-violent level of conflict, but an organised use of force for the realisation of their respective agenda is ideologically legitimised. Basically, the creation of violence-prone units is taken into account within the framework of organisational planning within each counter-elite. To which extent forceful means are deployed depends on the chosen strategy in the context of the conflict. Within this segment one may distinguish between a sort of 'leader figure' and the so-called ideological core group. An impersonation of such a 'leader figure' is heading this segment. Authority, expertise, charisma and/or prestige are attributed to that individual, whereby he represents the counter-elitist organisation externally and is supposed to exert an integrating effect internally. The ideological core group are those who promulgate binding decisions at the strategic level in co-operation with the representative. Recent examples of the role of "representative" would be the Hamas-founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin, Osama bin Laden, or the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al Banna. Al Banna occupies a special position on this issue, as his personality was so over-ruling that he forced all the mandatory strategic decisions for the Muslim Brotherhood single-handed during his tenure. As proponents of the ideological core group Ayman al-Zawahiri or Abd al-Aziz ar-Rantisi are conspicuous.

Mangers(Mangers (..) can provide both top leadership and grass-roots with valued resources:

From the grass-roots´perspective (…) they can provide skills and expertise, and may facilitate access to finance and training camps. For the top leadership (…) provide an efficient and trusted channel through which to facilitate connections, weed out „timewasters", and reduce the risks involved in reaching out of the movement`s grass-roots"[19]

So, they are responsible for providing the material-personnel-organisational basics and involved both indirectly as well as directly in acts of terrorism or guerrilla operations. This segment is the Center of Gravity, because specific contacts with decision makers as well as lower batches are maintained.

Paramilitaries are charged with violent engagements in the form of acts of terrorism or guerrilla operations, as well as conventional warfare.

Radicals are ideologically committed and their commitment is so far progressed that they are prepared to participate pro-actively in illegal actions - from preparing to committing acts of violence. This constitutes the domain of ideological run-up organisations, which are not yet involved in the perpetration of acts of violence. Definite examples would be found in leftist associations, Koranic schools, or agitating charitable organisations. In the West the latter are not prosecuted, since they are involved only in political agitation or propaganda. Such bans as exist in Western democracies are directed merely against national-socialist or leftist organisations. Against Islamic revisionism, no legal prohibition is yet known, alas.

Activists sympathize out of diverse political, ideological, or socio-cultural motivations with the counter-elite, any material-personnel-organisational support is however lacking. That segment is only rudimentary structured - politically - and their attitude towards organised violence cannot be verified because of lacking data. Historical examples show however, that following the acquisition of political power, the levers of power are seized and a mobilisation will ensue among activists.

Evidently, each Government government faces the dilemma that the competing counter-elitist power organisation is far larger, more comprehensive and diffuse as the actual violence aggregate that is fought by police or military forces within the framework of internal security. Because the gross of the counter-elitist power organisation circles around the non-violent level, the use of force against them, at least in western democratic states, is unthinkable and would be diametrically opposed to human and civil rights valid in these states. Up to now no coherent concepts exist as to confronting these groups below the level of violence.

Process Structure

Thus on to the process-oriented structures. The process-oriented structure describes the content, spatial and temporal sequence of activities designed to meet systematic target requirement issues. It regulates the flow of intra-organisational activities, taking into account the requirements for the intended result and the efficiency of personnel and resources. At this level the intra-and extra-scientific discourses on "new terrorism" or "networked terrorism" are gathered[20]. Such discourse would be further advanced nowadays, if more attention had been directed towards economic planning theory in general and to the schemed target system in particular and if it had bridged the gulf towards the discipline of "Business Planning"[21]. This shall be attempted in this section!

To redeem these projects, it is useful to turn to the schemed target system in order to model a preliminary rough figure of the process organisation of a counter-elitist power structure. The ideal concept of a schemed target system consists of four layers. The premises, strategic, tactical and operational levels have to be differentiated.

Premises: .....„Planning premises mean literally that which goes before, previously set forth, or stated as introductory, postulated, or implied. … Planning premises cut through every part of the planning process. In developing them important choices are required in deciding which premises are applicable, which are most important, which should be studied in depth, and how much resource should be used to define them"[22].

The premises constitute a sketch of the reality-level in summa. Specifically, the values of the ruling elite, their organisational purpose and environment will be roughly outlined.

- Strategic level: the strategic goals will outline the shape which the organisational environment should assume, and the position the respective organisations aspire. So only the global and long-term objectives and their basic probabilities of realisation will figure crudely at this level.

- Tactical level: at this stage the strategic objectives will be operationalised, i.e. dissected into tangible action instructions taking the shape of activity programs. "Medium-range programming is the process in which detailed, coordinated and comprehensive plans are made for selected functions of a business to deploy resources to reach objectives by following policies and strategies laid down in the strategic planning process"[23]. At this point, the implementary guidelines, the resource framework for the entire subsequent implementation as well as the means of communication assume tangible features. The mentioned programs summarily refer to myriads of implementary actions.

- Operational level: at this level the operative work ensues! Myriads of implementary actions (operations) are controlled or co-ordinated to attain the desired shape of the organisational environment, as well as the aspired position within. Among the implementary actions non-routine operations are to be differentiated from routine operations. Non-routine operations ensue at the operational level, where new action designs for the implementation of strategic and tactical objectives are established, or existing action programmes are subjected to far-reaching changes. Individual as well as collective behaviour will be institutionalised thereby, i.e. it is to be kept by norms and rules in specific tracks. Accordingly, routine operations exist - as the result of non-routine operations - whenever a repetitive character is attributed to implementary actions.

A strategic target system for the this scientific treatment of GMO has as yet not been taken into account, so the following tabular representation of the organisational sequence issues of a counter-elitist power organisation renders a theory-guided overview in full version.

This tabular review affords the basis for assessing the changes at the operational level of elite power organisations in terms of organisational science and depicting them analytically. In scientific as in non-scientific discourses on this issue the terms "Network Terrorism" or "New Terrorism" are used, wherefore it has to be noted that global networking of counter-elitist power organisations is not a novelty at all.

During the era of pact confrontation a system-wide network of co-operation was forged by the communist side from various counter-elitist power organisations in order to destabilise regimes within the Western influence sphere, which matches at least today's revisionist islamic networks such as Al-Qaeda in financial and organisational influence[24]. In retrospect, this ought not be the case! But a marked difference exists, as today these organisations are no longer led or controlled by Moscow or other power centres in the pursuit of national interests, but they increasingly compete with Washington, Moscow or Beijing, if, for example, the Saudi regime or other regimes in the Middle East or Africa are being focussed upon. Additionally, the third wave of globalisation[25] - which began with the end of the East-West conflict in 1990/91 - as well as revolutionary developments in information technology[26] and the expansion of the belt of ruined states in certain regions of the world, are boosting the emergence or rise of counter-elites.

To distinguish the new from the traditional kind of organisation forming hierarchies, terms such as network terrorism or strategic terrorism were devised; their semantic content remains at least doubtful. This is mainly due to the science guild's obsession with rewording phenomena long hitherto

discovered, and to adorn the terms encasing them with an altered terminology. That the identical phenomenon already existed in a different form in the history of mankind and had duly been provided with a terminus technicus, boasting a certain dignity and emitting an infallible signal effect, is likely to be overlooked by the scientific guild. The term "Rogue States"[27] affords an example of more recent times. This term implies states, in which the political class, or the mere ruling political elite, support clandestine organisations actively as well as passively, thereby violating the conventions of international law intentionally. International Law contains obsolescent terms such as "pirate state/pariah state". "Governments or regimes that consistently violate some or many of these norms are usually ostracized in the society of states. We thus have the concept of "pariah" states"[28]. This concept is more extensive and thus includes the so-called "rogue states".

Let us return to the process-flow, focussing on the implementation of effective means. Therefore we may revert to the principles of "mission-types orders" and "lead-by-order"[29] derived from military theory. An order strictly contains the following informations: which individual or group of individuals is to employ which effectual means in a certain place at a certain time. This in turn requires a tight material/personnel/organisational structure in the traditional sense. With "lead-by-order" individual actions, as well as action complexes, are kept within certain guidelines, which serves to absorb uncertainty. Wherever a counter-elite attempts to attain territorial gains, to defend or even enforce a change of power, the classical military model is being applied. The procedural organisation of the IRA during the 1980s was organised in this manner[30].

The principle of "mission-type orders" will be applied when decision-makers merely determine who is using which effectual means[31]. Any further parameters, such as where, when and how, will be decided by the individual, or group of individuals appointed. The advantage of the latter principle is that a counter-elitist power organisation can respond immediately and flexible; discarding existing plans, devising new ones and exchanging personnel within the operational environment. This form of organisation is favoured by counter-elites whenever the territorial issue is not in focus, but rather the exertion of pressure upon the system of the domestic state association, or upon the government of another state in order to discontinue the support for the challenged government. The procedural organisation of the PLO was modelled on such patterns during the 1970s[32].

Concluding remarks

This article endeavours, for the first time, to impose the concept of the counter-elitist power organisation upon the correlation of the debate on the effectual means of terrorism in general, and on non-governmental organisations, availing themselves of such means for the enhancement of their interests. The authors are therefore resorting to the established concept of counter-elites, as featured

in Lasswell/Learner, and referring to the organisational/scientific representation of counter-elitist power organisations and to the established and generally accepted differentiation between organisational and operational structures, as stated in organisational theory. For depicting the aspect of the organisational process, George A. Steiner's business planning template was resorted to, which resembles the military planning scheme - strategy, operation and tactics - whereas the terms for the middle and lower planning levels are being swapped in business administration, the tactical level termed the middle, the operational level the lower one[33]. Particularly the well-defined and structured delineation of the organisational structure of a counter-elitist power organisation should fit the debate of "new terrorism" or "net terrorism" into the mould of organisational theory.

In scientific literature, the objectives of such non-governmental organisations are listed under the key words anti-regime, separatism, irredentism, or autonomy. In order to gain a high level of differentiation in relation to the objectives of counter-elites, the development of a viable typology of the concept of revisionism has been reverted to, and on the other hand the differentiation between structure and order levels has been adhered to in the classification of a counter-elite's intentions.

In addition to the benefit for scientific discourse the concept thus presented also bears a relevant potential for all those practitioners who have to deal with the issue area of riot and counter-insurgency in various political administrations, whenever one or more of the counter-elitist power organisations are aiming at the overthrow of the political elite or an alteration to the geography of dominion within the own state association, or if they seek an alliance partner. Practitioners from the political administration will therefore acquire a potent tool of analysis for the assessment of the status quo and, on this basis, an enhancement for the modification of current counter-insurgency practices, or even for developing an efficient and effective counter-strategy[34].

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