

LEGITIMATION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE: THE CASES OF HAMAS AND THE KHMER ROUGE

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INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the legitimization of political violence in/by two different organizations, namely the Palestinian Hamas and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Both Hamas and the Khmer Rouge fit the category of radical political organizations which use violence. In order to analyze the legitimization of political violence, the authors will ponder on the question of what has changed in the use of political violence during the time discussed in this article and, most importantly, how this change has been possible.

In this article, Hamas is discussed until spring 2004, when Hamas leader Ahmad Yasin was killed, and the Khmer Rouge is discussed until spring 1975, when it gained power in Cambodia. The reason for this time frame is the radicalization of the two organizations. With Hamas, radicalization refers to the increase in the amount of so called suicide attacks against civilians during the period in question. With the Khmer Rouge, radicalization refers to the increasing use of violence towards civilians towards the end of the period in question and the inclusion of violence in standard practices such as interrogations. The international situation played a key role in both organizations' action. However, due to the scope of this article, this aspect is not scrutinized in great detail in this article.

Violence can be defined as action causing injury to people. The violence discussed in this article is coordinated violence carried out by specific organizations. By political violence the authors refer to violence, the purpose of which is to affect a change in people's actions. In the case of Hamas, this includes violence which can be seen as terrorism. By the legitimization of political violence the authors mean the emergence of political violence as something which is acceptable or allowable.

Hamas, which is an Arabic acronym of *Harakat al-muqawama al-islamiyya* (Islamic Resistance Movement), is an Islamist group and the term Islamism is used in this article to describe Islam as a political ideology. The ideological goal of Islamists, including Hamas, is to implement an Islamic state, which is governed by shari'a. Islamists try to reconcile Islam to the demands of modernity but they are against blindly imitating the West (Roy 1994: 3–4; Guazzone 1995: 4–12). Hamas is by far the most significant Palestinian "opposition" group, which carries out armed, political and social action and has a strong socio-political strategy. Hamas seeks to Islamize the society, and to end Israel's occupation through armed action, *jihād*. The term occupation is used in this article as it is used in the UN documents, that is, to refer to the areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which Israel seized from Jordan and Egypt during the 1967 war and has since occupied. Yet, according to Hamas, the whole "historic Palestine from the Mediterranean Sea to the River Jordan" is occupied.

The Khmer Rouge, which referred to itself as the "revolutionary organization" (*angkar padevat*) or simply "organization" (*padevat*), gained power in Cambodia in April 1975. As an organization, the Khmer Rouge combined Marxism-Leninism, especially in its Chinese form, with Khmer nationalism and general anti-colonialism. The Khmer Rouge is discussed in this article through the analysis of its route from action through involvement in a political party to becoming a guerrilla organization, which in the early 1970s had a double role through the inclusion of some of its leaders in the resistance government founded in Beijing in 1970. The analysis here is until 1975, when the Khmer Rouge gained power in Cambodia. The discussion on the Cambodian genocide is deliberately left beyond the scope of this article based on the time frame employed here. What is of interest here is the Khmer Rouge before gaining power.

The authors of this article in no way claim that these two organizations are vitally alike or related or that Hamas in some way or form is undergoing a similar phase as the Khmer Rouge in the 1960s or the early 1970s. The two organizations are here under scrutiny together due to the following considerations, which have to do with the legitimation of political violence: 1) the role of resistance, 2) the use of nationalistic symbolism in mobilization, and 3) the dehumanization of "enemies". The legitimation of action for members of the organization and the surrounding community is also discussed. The authors acknowledge that these viewpoints could be used to analyze many other organizations and that they are in no way the only way of looking at these two cases.

The nature of power as it applies to the organizations discussed here has a connection to the legitimation of political violence. There are several different possibilities of labelling and dividing power. The authors have decided to use Andrew Silke's division of personal power, physical power, resource power and

position power (Silke 2000: 79–88). Power comes from many different sources, and different types of power are effective in different situations. For example, physical power, e.g., the use or threat of violence, is effective on a short-term basis. People tend to change their behavior when threatened with violence. Even though Silke specifically refers to terrorist organizations, his division of power seems to be usable for other organizations using political violence, which cannot be labeled as terrorist, as in the case of the Khmer Rouge during the time frame used in this article. According to Silke, resource power is based on an organization controlling or being of possession of something which is of need to the general public. Silke's position power refers to the power that comes as a result of an organization's role in its surrounding community/society.

HAMAS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

In Palestinian history, there is a continuum of creation of new, more radical groups diverging from the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*). This group was created in the late 1930s and early 1940s in Palestine from the example of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in order to Islamize the society from grassroots level. In the 1950s, the Islamic Liberation Party (*Hizb al-tahrir*) and the Palestine National Liberation Movement (*Fatah*) were the first of these new radical groups. At that point, there was a clear division between the national orientation and the Islamic orientation.

After the war in 1967 and the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, religiosity and the return to tradition became more important among Palestinian Muslims as well as among Israeli Jews (Schiff & Ya'ari 1991: 225; Rubinstein 1984). According to the Brotherhood, Israel's very existence was seen to be the result of the abandonment of Islamic norms. Some of the Brotherhood's members supported armed resistance: a new and more radical organization, the Islamic Jihad (*al-Jihad al-islami*), was founded in the Gaza Strip in 1980. As a new approach, the Islamic Jihad connected religious ideology to Palestinian nationalism as Hamas would do later.

The support of Israel was of primary importance in strengthening the Islamic movement. Surprisingly, Israel was willing to register the Brotherhood, and one of its parts, the *Mujamma'*, was formally legalized as a charitable society in 1978. It seems that the purpose of Israel's active support was the hope that the Brotherhood would undermine the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation). The PLO was created in 1964 in the spirit of Arab nationalism and was led by Yasir Arafat from 1969 until 2004. It became an umbrella organization for different Palestinian secular nationalist groups.

In the 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology radically changed when one of its duties became military action. Also, the Muslim Brotherhood's conception of the future Islamic state changed. The former idea of the broad community of believers, *umma*, evolved into a nationalistic idea of an Islamic Palestine (Schiff & Ya'ari 1991: 221). The culmination of the strategic change came from the foundation of Hamas by the Muslim Brotherhood on the eve of the first Palestinian popular uprising, *intifada* (1987–93).

The PLO and Hamas struggled for the symbolic leadership of the *intifada*. The struggle was not only against Israeli occupation, but also for the hegemonic power and ideological leadership of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. During the first *intifada*, the secular PLO, and especially its part Fatah, changed their language and started to use religious rhetoric. It could be argued that they rediscovered the vitality and mobilizing power of Islamic rhetoric and symbols in confronting the Israeli occupation.

When the peace process with Israel started, the PLO became an active Palestinian party in the process and declared itself to be the representative of the Palestinian people. Hamas opposed the peace process and the PLO's status. The decision to create the Palestinian Authority (the PA) headed by the PLO's leader Arafat was made in 1994 by Israel and the PLO. Hamas did not participate in the election of the PLC (Palestinian Legislative Council) or the PA's presidential election in 1996.

The ideological long-term goal of Hamas is to win back "all of Palestine", in other words, the area within its "historic borders from the Mediterranean Sea to the River Jordan". The more pragmatic, short-term solution of Hamas accepts Palestinian, Arab, or Islamic sovereignty over only a part of the historical territory of Palestine, alongside a sovereign State of Israel. It could be argued that, as a pragmatic organization, Hamas would settle for a State of Palestine comprising the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, if the majority of Palestinians would accept that solution.

The functional units and leaders of Hamas have been divided into two diverse groups: ones in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and ones operating outside these areas. The "outside" leaders have identified themselves more with the ultimate goals of Hamas and are more supportive of radical action. The "inside" leaders concentrate more on acute problems and close-to-home issues inside the occupied territory. (Mishal & Sela 2000: 59, 162–163) Hamas strategy has been to keep, or at least present, its political and military branches as independent and separate units. The Martyr 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades unit carries out the violent attacks of Hamas. The leader of this unit is kept secret and the unit acts in cells based on a thin command chain (Milton-Edwards 1996: 149). It is very difficult to get any information about this branch since it is underground most of the

time. According to Hamas, the orders and overall policy for the movement come from the political leadership, but the actual operations are carried out by the military branch without the interference of the political branch. (Gaess 2002; "A May 2002 Interview with the Hamas Commander of the al-Qassam Brigades", 2002.)

The armed struggle of Hamas has followed clear principles. Hamas has restricted its struggle to the area of "historical Palestine" and it has not used armed force on an international level. According to Hamas, it sees itself as a "freedom fighting organization" and not a terrorist organisation, a category into which it thinks the PLO fell because the PLO's armed operations became international (Hroub 2000: 245). According to Hamas, the Western countries should differentiate between "terrorist actions taken to promote self-interest" (e.g. Israel's military operations, which lead to civilian casualties), and those "actions which are a legitimate means of self-defense" (e.g., the armed action of Hamas) (al-Hamad & al-Barghouthi 1997: 27). Hamas sees jihad as a legitimate expression of political action or, to be more exact, a defensive act against oppressors.

In its struggle, Hamas makes wide use of terror directed toward civilians. Even before the establishment of Hamas, the attacks toward Israelis have been a part of Palestinian armed tactics. In particular, the PLO was using them in the 1970s and 1980s. Milton-Edwards stresses that Hamas seeks to change political actions from nationalist to Islamic-inspired activities rather than to change the Palestinians' political habits. In other words, the activities are essentially the same but the justification changes (Milton-Edwards 1992: 51–53; cf. Tarrow 1998: 20).

To justify the attacks against civilians, Hamas claims unbalanced military power compared to Israel, which is backed by the United States. With the same words that Arafat used for justifying the PLO's action in 1974, Hamas appeals to all laws, human and divine, for justification to resist the occupation with arms (Hroub 2000: 247–250). Also, in its policy Hamas has had a tendency to connect its attacks to Israeli attacks against Palestinians. With this tactic, Hamas' attacks can be presented as a legitimate form of revenge. Circumstances have an effect on the action of Hamas, too. For example, from the beginning of the second intifada in September 2000, Hamas' use of violence has become more visible and strongly increased within the area's radicalized political culture. However, if Hamas thinks that it will lose popularity because of its armed struggle, it reduces armed action or stops it briefly. This is the situation at the beginning of 2005.

THE KHMER ROUGE: PRECONDITIONS FOR SURVIVAL/SUCCESS

The Khmer Rouge, which gained power in Cambodia in April 1975, has its roots in Cambodian communist movements, which had been working since the 1930s and were actively involved in armed nationalist resistance prior to Cambodia's

gaining of independence from France in 1953 (Kiernan 1997: 35). The organization's route to power was facilitated by the protracted anti-colonial conflict in Cambodia and Vietnam in the 1940s and early 1950s.

Political parties such as the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party, founded in 1951, and later renamed the Communist Party of Kampuchea, had little freedom of movement in Cambodia, characterized by the country's leader Prince Sihanouk's cold war neutrality. Khmer People's Revolutionary Party veterans were often harassed by the police, which enabled younger, more militant members to gain importance within the Party, due to their not being targeted as often as the older, more prominent leaders. When the Khmer Rouge went underground in the 1960s, younger militant, Paris-trained members, including Saloth Sar (later known as Pol Pot) had already gained power within the organization.

The Khmer Rouge did not originally refer to itself as the Khmer Rouge. The name was given to the organization by Prince Sihanouk in the 1950s, and it highlights the difference between various organizations active at the time, including, for example, the *Khmer Sor* (White Khmers). Going underground in the 1960s meant that the Khmer Rouge was in isolation not only from other Communist parties (e.g., in Vietnam and in China) but also from many of its own members, many of whom had fled the country due to the anti-Communist measures.

In the late 1960s, the (now guerilla) organization was in the process of distancing itself from Vietnam, its former supporter – and from the members who had lost contact with the organization, who were thus unaware of the organization's new stands – and was planning an armed rebellion against the Sihanouk regime, which the Khmer Rouge had labelled an U.S. puppet. Civil war broke out in Cambodia in the late 1967 and the Khmer Rouge's limited domestic insurgency provoked escalating military reaction. Intellectual influences on Khmer Rouge thinking included the Chinese military and political leader Lin Biao's speech "Long Live the Victory of the People's War", published in September 1965 (Zhang 2003). The speech argued that rural areas throughout the Third World are able to encircle and suffocate "capitalist cities", as had happened in China in the 1940s, and that Third World revolutions should proceed under their own momentum rather than under the guidance of foreign parties. External symbolic support from China was vitally important to the Khmer Rouge, especially in the latter half of the 1970s.

The leadership of the Khmer Rouge remained to a great extent unchanged from the 1960s to the 1970s. Most of the Khmer Rouge leaders were French-educated and from middle-class families, unlike the largely peasant based people mobilized in action.

Cambodia experienced a bloodless coup d'état in March 1970. General Lon Nol replaced Prince Sihanouk, who was abroad at the time of the coup, as the

leader of the country. Lon Nol was supported by the United States, and Prince Sihanouk became the figurehead of anti-Lon Nol resistance through his role in the United Front government of Cambodia, founded in Beijing in 1970, which was working under Prince Sihanouk's (nominal) lead. Sihanouk, in theory at least, joined forces with the Khmer Rouge, which was, through the participation of some of its key figures, involved in the United Front government. The official role of Saloth Sar in the United Front government was as chief of the military directorate of the armed forces. His deputy, Nuon Chea, was named chief of the army's political directorate. The Front's publications, financed and printed in China, were designed to give the impression that the guerrillas inside Cambodia were fighting on Sihanouk's behalf.

What characterized the working environment of the Khmer Rouge more than a (possible) Chinese influence was the U.S. economic and military destabilization of Cambodia, including the intense bombing of the Cambodian countryside, which began in the form of the B-52 bombing campaign started in 1969. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Khmer Rouge portrayed itself as a freedom fighting organization, and the political violence it was first involved in centered on killings of Lon Nol officers and soldiers and/or people accused of collaboration with them.

At the beginning of the 1970s the Khmer Rouge highlighted its supposed pro-Sihanouk nature. Working in cooperation with Sihanouk after the founding of the United Front government in 1970 was seen as a way to secure foreign, e.g., Chinese and Vietnamese, support and to recruit new members. In reality, the Khmer Rouge worked behind the facade of the United Front. They used the U.S. bombing's devastation and the deaths of thousands of civilians in their recruitment. The organization grew quickly, from a mere 3,000 armed men and women in 1970 to 70,000 in 1975, when the Khmer Rouge gained power upon seizing the country's capital Phnom Penh in April 1975. The Khmer Rouge army was divided into regional commands and had not yet been brought under centralized control when the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh.

The reign of Khmer Rouge (1975–79) and the evacuation of Phnom Penh and other cities in April 1975, when the Khmer Rouge came to power, has been described by many survivors (memoirs by Pin Yathay 1980, Martin Stuart Fox and Ung Bunheang 1985, and Someth May 1986, to name a few). The radical, massive-scale program put into action included emptying the cities, which was followed by the abolishment of money, banking, and private property. Schools, hospitals, universities and Buddhist monasteries were closed. People from the urban areas were relocated to the countryside where they were expected to work on farms.

Post-1975 tyranny, which falls outside the scope of this article, was preceded by smaller-scale programmes, which had been employed in Khmer Rouge domi-

nated areas prior to 1975. Measures used prior to 1975 include restrictions on religious practise, and the forced movement of some of the population (Chandler 1999: 96). As a result of the employment of the above-mentioned policies, thousands of Cambodians sought asylum in nearby countries, e.g., Vietnam and Thailand in particular. Already prior to 1975, civilians were robbed, molested and rounded up.

The aim of the Khmer Rouge was to thoroughly change the Cambodian society. A lot of scholarly discussion has taken place on whether the Khmer Rouge's coming to power in April 1975 was an extreme case of "socialist practice" as argued by David Chandler or an anti-Marxist "peasant revolution" as argued by Michael Vickery or a question centered more on ethnic issues than on political class as argued by Ben Kiernan. (See Kiernan 1997: 26.) Regardless of the stand chosen, the use of political violence played an important role in the Khmer Rouge's action. It was seen as a tool in the transformation of the society.

The leaders of the Khmer Rouge frequently declared that they were not following any foreign models and that the Cambodian revolution was incomparable – something that other revolutions should actually learn from. Cambodian party documents, including the "Four-year plan to build socialism in all fields" put a great deal of emphasis on class struggle, the priorities of "building and defending" the country, the purging of "enemies". (See Chengdu junqu zhengzhibu lianluobu 1987.) Marx and Lenin or other foreign influences were seldom cited. Instead, the documents emphasize the autonomy of the Cambodian revolution. What the Cambodian leaders meant by independence, in large part, was that they were different from, and superior to, Vietnam, whose Communist movement had shaped and guided them during the formative years of the Cambodian Communist movement.

PREREQUISITES FOR ACTION

There are several different sources of power that organizations use. One way to label them is Andrew Silke's division: personal power, physical power (campaigns of violence, threat of violence), resource power and position power (Silke 2000: 79–88). During the specific time frame the authors of this article are looking at, Hamas has had strong sources of power and it exercises all of the above-mentioned power sources. What the Khmer Rouge had during the time frame of this article was predominantly physical power and position power. One should not, however, rule out resource power, related especially to Chinese and Vietnamese support. Personal power should also not be ruled out because it is possible to view the lack of information about the organization's leaders in the 1960s and early

1970s as actually contributing to the organization's personal power by making the leaders almost mythical.

Position power, which is also known as "legal" or "legitimate power", is created as a result of the role or the position of an organization. As Silke stresses, vigilantism is closely related to this power, and it can actually allow the organization to access position power. Vigilantism emerges in a situation where regulations of social order are absent or government is unable or unwilling to protect values in moral life and property protection (Silke 2000: 87–88). It can be said that the chaotic nature of the political situation in Cambodia in the late 1960s and early 1970s worked in favor of the Khmer Rouge, who therefore had opportunities for mobilization they wouldn't have had in a more controlled political environment.

Position power can be seen in two very different ways in these specific cases. Both Hamas and the Khmer Rouge have position power but in the case of Hamas a long-term vigilante role is an essential explanatory factor for the group's action. Also, physical power is in both cases connected closely to position power.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as corruption and the lack of effective social structures of the PA during the second intifada have made it possible for Hamas to have political and position power within the society as well as in the conflict. Furthermore, Hamas has presented itself as of an incorrupt organization to the Palestinian people. Also, Hamas stresses that it has the information about how the society should be ruled in the correct Islamic way. The organization delivers this information to people through the Islamization of the society and by providing a network of schools, adult education centers, libraries, youth and sports clubs, hospitals and charity organizations.

The physical power tactics of Hamas have included kidnappings, bombs, shootings and lately the so called suicide attacks. As suicide is forbidden in Islam, the suicide attacks are called "martyr operations" or "martyrdom attacks". Hamas also exercises violence and the threat of it within the society. There is a threat of being labelled as a collaborator with or henchman of Israel among ordinary Palestinians. Also, Hamas' physical power or its threat have been used to internally control Palestinian society in order to make it more "Islamic", that is, to influence those outside the organization. For example, members of Hamas have destroyed restaurants which sell alcohol, and killed Palestinian women based on the idea of "honor killings".

The corruption and incapability of the PA has led to the current situation in which Hamas enjoys resource power even though Hamas' attacks against Israeli civilians have created considerable international pressure on the PA to freeze all funds of the institutions affiliated with Hamas. Yet, the PA has faced enormous pressure from inside Palestinian society to provide basic services, which it cannot

provide, or to release some previously frozen funds of charities linked to Hamas. The PA has been forced to carry out the latter option.

The Khmer Rouge's position power, to use Silke's terms, can be seen to come as a result of the position of the Khmer Rouge particularly during the Lon Nol regime of 1970–75. The Lon Nol government's inability to curb corruption and/or stop the devastation caused by the U.S. bombing worked in favour of the Khmer Rouge, which was able to portray themselves as a more "legitimate" actor in terms of the solutions they offered. (For theory, cf. Silke 2000: 87–88.) In the case of the Khmer Rouge, Silke's position power is of course backed by, most of all, physical power, e.g., the use of violence and threat of violence in the society. Use of torture as a means of interrogation has been discussed, among others, by Sasha Sher, who compares the methods used by the Khmer Rouge to interrogation practises in China and Stalin's Soviet Union (Sher 2004: 160–163).

It is important to note that the threat of violence also exists within the organization, as it very much did in the case of the Khmer Rouge, which, to quote Ehud Sprinzak, became a "social unit with a reality and logic of its own". Violence, executions of members, for example, and the threat of violence within the group was used deliberately to weld supporters together and to dehumanize opponents. (For similar, see Tarrow 1998: 94.) What made this possible, in large part, was the Khmer Rouge's background as a guerilla organization with limited links to the outside world. It enabled the atmosphere of threat to exist and grow.

According to Sidney Tarrow, the possibility to engage in contentious politics develops when patterns of political opportunities and constraints change.

Contention increases when people "are threatened with costs they cannot bear or which outrage their sense of justice". But according to Tarrow, contention is not related as closely to social or economic factors people experience than to political opportunities for collective action (Tarrow 1998: 19, 71).

This kind of changed situation for political opportunity can be seen in the Palestinian areas starting from the beginning of the second intifada in September 2000. The Palestinians' high expectations regarding a just settlement for their grievances, and peace through negotiations, seemed to vanish. The patronage and corruption, the lack of peace, and democratic and personal rights for Palestinians, who were familiar with Israelis' political rights as well as the absence of patron-client relations in Israeli politics, had a strong impact on them, and their disappointment slowly deepened. This led to a resurgence in the Islamists' popularity and their opportunities for contentious activity. Masses were mobilized by different resistance groups and ordinary people started to test the limits of social control. People took part in collective action by participating in demonstrations, riots, throwing stones and even using firearms. However, it was organized social movements, such as Hamas, that took the contentious politics to a different radicalized

level by using strong tactics of political violence, such as terror attacks. Even though Hamas had used these tactics before, the number of its attacks increased substantially during this time. (See International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, at: <http://www.ict.org.il/>)

An interesting issue in this context is to look at external opportunities for Hamas' armed action. Israel's policies before and after the eruption of the second intifada were important sources for opportunities to act. However, the PA's role in this context and the lack of repression toward Hamas and other resistance groups which used violence have been questioned. Yet, it could be speculated that PA's president, the late Yasir Arafat, did not – at least actively – try to repress the uprising. Due to this, there have been possibilities for the mobilization of collective action.

LEGITIMATION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The legitimation of political violence in both Hamas and the Khmer Rouge is discussed here through three themes, which are 1) resistance, 2) nationalistic symbolism and mobilization, and 3) the dehumanization of enemies. In addition to this, the legitimation of action for members of the organization and surrounding community is also under scrutiny.

Resistance

Both Hamas and the Khmer Rouge have a history of intense social and political opposition to a specific regime – or as in the case of the Khmer Rouge, to several regimes – and the role of the opponent is widely used in the organizations' rhetoric. In their cases, the legitimation of political violence during the time frame discussed in this article is sought partly from the opposing force. Hamas' own legitimation for its use of violence is its participation in nationalistic resistance against Israel. As there is no independent Palestinian state, nationalism has been seen as inherently anti-Israeli.

In the case of the Khmer Rouge as it existed in the 1960s and the early 1970s, the opposed external actor may not be as clear as in the case of Hamas. One could argue that the Khmer Rouge portrayed itself as an opposing force to several regimes. They included, among others, the Lon Nol government of 1970–75, and the United States engaged in bombing campaigns that affected Cambodian lives.

According to Ehud Sprinzak's delegitimation theory, the role of the opponent force affects an organization in the following ways. In the beginning, when the organization is undergoing a crisis of confidence, it attempts to introduce a new ideological and symbolic style of radical opposition in its country. After this the

organization becomes a challenge group, and is ready to question the legitimacy of the whole system, thereby wanting to transform the system completely. Sprinzak also speaks about the organization becoming an alternative ideological and cultural system (Sprinzak 1991: 55).

The wish to transform the system or society becomes possible with popular support or massive scale mobilization. In attracting support or mobilizing people, an “injustice” frame is necessary to encourage people to think about their problems in terms of group membership rather than as individuals (Grove 2001: 9).

What is important is the way leaders frame the situation for their audiences. When a situation is framed, it is described, portrayed and explained, and specific solutions are offered to solve the problem. The solutions suggested can be said to depend on how the causes of a problem are defined (Grove 2001: 2). For example, in the case of the Khmer Rouge, part of the society’s problems is framed in a way which describes the problems as being dependent on the corrupt nature of the cities. The forced return of city dwellers to the countryside is offered as a solution to this problem. The use of violence in evacuating people from the cities is explained as a short-term tool in society’s transformation.

Khmer Rouge’s use of Marxist rhetoric is a complex issue, and it is often valid to ask at whom it was aimed. Scholars debate whether the Khmer Rouge’s ideology was a “variation on a Marxist theme”, to quote Tarrow, or whether wordings from Marxism-Leninism, especially in its Chinese form without formally acknowledging the debt, were chosen more in order to amass support from China and Vietnam.

It is important to note that legitimation is given to a broader issue and action than merely the use of violence – whether it is the goals the organization is striving towards or the services it is providing at present. For example, when Palestinians get basic social services from Hamas, it gains popular support and can spread its political agenda, Islamize society, and recruit new members. This has been the case especially during the second intifada when the PA has had a legitimation crisis. At the same time Hamas has been enjoying legitimate power in regard to resistance to Israel and the provision of health care for the poor.

Nationalistic symbolism and mobilization

As Andrea Grove (2001: 1–2) has pointed out, multiple processes are at work as nationalist groups mobilize: one or two variables are not enough to explain a case. Whether one wants to call Hamas or the Khmer Rouge nationalist groups is another case, but, regardless, the authors of this article argue that taking a few variables such as deprivation and access to power is not enough to explain the organizations’ mobilization.

In their mobilization, organizations use mutual struggles, shared experiences and symbols. Tarrow (1998: 107) highlights the familiarity of the symbols used by organizations which employ political violence. They proffer “symbols that are familiar to people who are rooted in their own cultures”. Yet Tarrow (1998: 110) points out that the organizations also have to be innovative in their use of symbols in order to create a feeling of bringing something new. One example of this is the use of the image of Angkor Wat in Cambodia. The temples of Angkor Wat are the most familiar symbol of Cambodia, and the country’s different regimes and organizations have used the image of Angkor Wat in their respective ways (Chandler 1997: 38).

Another example of this is Hamas’ use of martyrdom as a mobilization force. Funerals of “martyrs” are used as mobilization places for people who are connected by solidarity and grief (Tarrow 1998: 36). The thought about martyrdom (*shahada*), self-sacrifice, is closely linked to jihad, and it is distinct from suicide (*intihar*), which is generally understood to be forbidden in Islam. The human who is defending Islam is seen to be rewarded in afterlife by God if he/she dies as a martyr. During the second intifada Hamas, and other Palestinian organizations using violence, have taken the martyrdom idea to a broader level. This is not clearly accepted by all religious scholars, who debate on what is acceptable self-sacrifice and what belongs to the category of forbidden suicide. There is also the question: are secular national movements’ members, Muslims or Christians, martyrs if they die during what they call “resistance struggle”?

References to a common past and common fate, national heroes, and martyrs are all important in the mobilization of people. Organizations may focus on how the past must be redeemed and/or on how it is important to avoid repeating the past (Grove 2001: 11). An organization’s relationship to its history is often complex as in the case of the Khmer Rouge, which rewrote its history several times. (For more on the debate on the founding date of the Party, see Chandler 1999: 59–60.)

A narrative pattern named by Levinger and Lytle (2001: 177–178) as the “triadic structure” of nationalist rhetoric”, not only motivates political action, but also diagnoses the “causes of national decline and prescribes the specific actions required for the community’s redemption”. Tololyan (1988: 218) has a concept of “projective narrative”, which in many ways is similar to Levinger and Lytle. Levinger and Lytle’s “triadic structure” involves descriptions of a glorious past, when the original nation once existed as a pure, unified and harmonious community, and of the degraded present. A key dimension of this rhetoric is the identification of the sources of the nation’s decay. By describing the utopian future, which is to be reached through collective action, the nation is expected to

reverse the conditions that have caused its present degradation and recover its original harmonious essence.

This kind of narrative pattern is clear among Palestinian Islamists. Israel's very existence is seen to be the result of the abandonment of Islam and its norms. By Islamizing the society, ending the occupation of Israel and creating an Islamic Palestinian state, Hamas seems to promise a harmonious life for all, including also Christians and Jews.

Religion is a source of emotions which is useful for collective narratives. Nationalism also functions in a similar way (Tarrow 1998: 112). When religion and nationalism are connected, as in Hamas' ideology, the source of symbolism is strong. This also creates solidarity in Palestinian society. Hamas Islamizes the national struggle and places it also in a broader Islamic context.

Hamas has managed to connect ideas of traditional Islam with nationalism by using religious terms. This has resulted in an increase of support throughout the society, not just from religious individuals.

By seeking to create an ideal community and discovering a suitable national past, organizations such as the Khmer Rouge and Hamas link collective memories of past injustice with particular directions of mobilization. Mythic images of the past strengthen the legitimacy and emotional appeal of the organizations (Levinger & Lytle 2001: 181).

Dehumanization of enemies

Identifying and describing enemies is also of great importance to the legitimization of political violence. Questions related to enemy images include, for example, how an organization sees its enemies and how they are understood to affect, or relate to, the organization. Framing enemies also identifies "us" and "them" in a movement's conflict structure. Shared understandings and identities are used to draw and define enemies by real or imagined attributes and evils (Tarrow 1998: 21–22).

Both organizations have used violence to dehumanize opponents. However, already before that there have been linguistic and symbolic signs of crisis of legitimization: the enemy has been dehumanized. (See Tarrow 1998: 94; Sprinzak 1991: 57; and the introduction to this article.)

The Khmer Rouge saw educated city dwellers as legitimate targets of political violence. Cases of "muggings" of people turned into more controlled torture and executions based on the division of people according to categories such as education, profession and race following the Khmer Rouge's coming to power. One should, however, note that being a city dweller or a person of certain ethnic heritage was in itself not enough to be chosen as a target of violence.

Accusations of non-revolutionary behavior, support for Lon Nol, foreign influences or espionage were involved in the process of framing a person as a legitimate target of political violence. The torture and execution of suspected targets, labelled as “enemies”, was seen as the only way to ensure the survival of “continuous revolution”. The purpose of the relocation policies was to turn Cambodians into “new people” (*monou thmey*) through agricultural labor. People relocated to the countryside from the cities in/after April 1975 (including tens of thousands who had fled to cities to escape the chaos caused by the American bombing campaigns which started in 1969) were called “new people” or “April 17 people” because they had not taken part in the Khmer Rouge’s coming to power. Residents of the countryside were known as “base people” and were treated less harshly than others.

The Khmer Rouge suspected a great number of the population of having connections with the former government or with foreign countries. People within the “organization”, and normal Cambodians with a professional background, in addition to people from Cambodia’s many ethnic minorities, were arrested (in many cases leading to execution) based on these charges. It is important to note that many confessed to these charges out of fear, regardless of the validity of the charges. An environment of fear was reflected in people’s actions – also within the Khmer Rouge organization, which saw Cambodia as surrounded by enemies and the country as formed of concentric circles with the Khmer Rouge leadership at the center. Being involved in the Khmer Rouge did not exclude people from charges including espionage. In many cases, people involved in the organization were purged from their posts, tortured and killed. There are, however, significant differences in the policies employed in the different zones Cambodia was divided into by the Khmer Rouge, with certain zones seeing more violence than others.

Originally, Hamas’ enemies were “legitimate military targets”. These were, according to Hamas, Israeli soldiers and armed settlers who attacked unarmed Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip (Hroub 2000: 245–246). In 1994 at the latest Israeli civilians became the target of Hamas attacks. From that point on Hamas has not made a distinction between military or civilian targets, as they see all Israelis as occupiers of Palestinian land (Post, Sprinzak & Denny 2003: 18).

In Hamas’ publications, “enemies”, particularly the Jews, are associated with negative connotations. The Hamas Charter uses very anti-Semitic terminology: Jews are accused of being behind every great event in world history, like the French Revolution, the First World War and the October Revolution in Russia. It is also usual for the Jews to be mentioned as descendants of Satan, of monkeys and pigs (The Hamas Charter; Mishal & Sela 2002: 5–6). However, the appearance of such language in the movement’s literature and political discourse de-

creased in the early 1990s, and later Hamas differentiated between Judaism (religion) and Zionism (Jewish nationalist movement). Yet, Hamas does not clearly define the difference between a Jew and its enemy, a Zionist person. Furthermore, during the second intifada, anti-Semitic terminology re-emerged and dehumanization of the enemy has occurred again.

The Khmer Rouge often labelled its “enemies” as collaborators with foreign countries or, simply, as “CIA agents”. Accusations of collaboration with foreign countries were sometimes based on education, including skills in foreign languages, or a profession which involved interaction with international parties. The same “enemy” labels were, however, used regardless of their validity and it was common to label an illiterate peasant a “CIA agent” or charge an active member of the Khmer Rouge with supporting the Lon Nol government. It is interesting to note that also within the country, the “enemies” suspected of betrayal were referred to as foreign, e.g., Americans, or accused of having contacts abroad. This freed the Khmer Rouge of needing to come up with domestic labels.

Legitimation of action for members of the organization and surrounding community

There are differences in the highlighting of an organization’s message depending on the target audience. The authors of this article argue that in the cases discussed here, in material intended for the organization’s own use, arguments regarding society’s future transformation and the organization’s operational policies are used more often than in statements intended for a larger audience. In the organizations’ own legitimation, short-term action is often explained by long-term goals.

In the case of the Khmer Rouge, what was highlighted to the public prior to the gaining of power in 1975 was, first and foremost, the organization’s role as a resistance force. Plans the Khmer Rouge had for transforming society were mainly stressed within the organization. However, the Khmer Rouge made very little effort to explain or promote its message, and a great deal of its material was secret also to its members. What makes the Khmer Rouge different from organizations such as Hamas is, in other words, its almost complete lack of willingness to promote its agenda through the use of political rhetoric, both prior to and immediately after gaining power in Cambodia.

Hamas, on the other hand, seeks to inform people about its actions because popularity among Palestinians is essential for its functioning and power. By informing people and listening to their reactions, Hamas can mirror the costs and benefits of its actions. Furthermore, as Silke points out, the more power and influence the group exerts, the less likely it is to face resistance from the community (Silke 2000: 86).

With regards to what is highlighted within an organization, a good example is July 1992, when Hamas circulated a secret document among its senior members in order to analyze the costs and benefits of official participation in the elections of the PA and to give up armed actions. The rhetoric and substance of the document, which was meant only for core members, differs totally from the rhetoric and substance in other Hamas documents and leaflets intended for a larger audience. The rhetoric is usually colored by religious phrases or terms, and “enemies”, particularly the Jews, are associated with negative connotations. This document lacks this kind of rhetoric. It calls Israel by its name and uses secular political rhetoric, which totally contradicts the rhetoric it is using, for example, in its publications for the masses (Mishal & Sela 2002: 5–6). Also, from time to time the divergent public statements of different leaders regarding Hamas’s policies indicate possible changes in the policies of the organization. However, Hamas has been careful not to analyze its possibilities for action in public.

Silke has argued that most organizations involved in the use of political violence have internal rules designed to foster and maintain support among those whom they see as their constituents. What is important to note is which people the Khmer Rouge viewed as their constituents (Sher 2004: 124–128). Many people actively involved in the organization were refused access to information about the organization’s inner structures, and the majority of the population was unfamiliar with the goals of the Khmer Rouge – except for it being anti-Lon Nol – when it seized power in April 1975. In other words, the Khmer Rouge’s constituents were understood to be a small, condensed inner group of people, which, for its part, explained the lack of publicity regarding the organization’s goals.

Khmer Rouge’s active support, that is the number of people actively working for the organization, quickly grew from about 3,000 armed men and women in 1970 to about 70,000 in 1975. What has proven to be difficult to discuss in retrospect is the soft support, e.g. passive support, given to the Khmer Rouge in the 1960s and early 1970s. Due to the violent nature of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1975–79 it is extremely difficult for people now to admit that they did support the Khmer Rouge at a certain stage. Studying a contemporary phenomenon is, naturally, different in this respect.

Many secularists, who had already given up violent action, turned again to violence during the second intifada, and Hamas gained new supporters in people who did not necessarily support all the political goals or religious perspectives of the group. These new supporters were disappointed at what they saw as the inability of the PLO and the PA to resist the Israeli occupation. Hamas is seen by many Palestinians as the only, or the strongest, alternative for ending this occupation. In the eyes of many Palestinians, what the organization has done on the

ground with regard to the provision of social welfare services has become an important factor in their support of Hamas.

All together, the number of active and passive supporters of Hamas within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has been strong during the second intifada. For example, public opinion polls between 2003 and 2004 show that the popularity of Hamas (between 20.3 % and 26.5 %) is very near to the popularity of the strongest secular nationalist group Fatah (between 22.3 % and 29.3 %) (an-Najah National University, 2003; 2004; Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2004; Jerusalem Media & Communication Center, 2003).

FINAL REMARKS

This article has discussed the legitimation of the use of political violence by two radical political organizations, Hamas and the Khmer Rouge. What has changed in the use of political violence during the time frame of this article is, in the case of Hamas, that the use of violence of the organization has strongly increased and become more visible. In the case of the Khmer Rouge during the time period in question here, the targets of the use of violence have changed and the use of violence has become more common and more "standardized" upon the Khmer Rouge's gaining of power in 1975.

In the case of Hamas, opportunities for increased political violence were created in a situation where the Palestinian governance was weak, public uprising existed and, at the same time, Israel was using strong power politics towards Palestinians. The Khmer Rouge's opportunities for action were connected to, among other things, the U.S. bombing and the corruption of the Lon Nol regime.

The use of political violence has been legitimized to different audiences in different ways. Plans the Khmer Rouge had for transforming the society were mainly stressed within the organization, whereas what was highlighted to the public prior to 1975 was the organization's role as a resistance force. The Khmer Rouge was, however, exceptional in its lack of willingness to promote its message through the use of political rhetoric, and it is important to note that the threat of violence also existed within the organization.

Hamas has portrayed itself as an incorrupt organization which provides social services for Palestinians and resists Israel's forcible measures and occupation. The organization has also used religious and nationalistic symbolism which works as mobilization power. These things increase Hamas support, popularity and power. As Charles Tilly has stressed, "where participation in organized violence opens paths to political and economic power, collective violence multiplies" (Tilly 2003: 41).

Worth contemplating in the future is how addressing the international dimension of internal or ethnic conflicts – the category of “international involvement/mediation” – relates to the strategies organizations use. Does the external actor affect how the organization portrays itself (through the use of myths and symbols, etc.)? One could also look at the similarities between these two cases through the ideas of occidentalism, as discussed by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit (2004).

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