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History of Knowledge, Terrorism and Gender

Dominique Grisard [*]

Abstract: *»Geschichte des Wissens, Terrorismus und Gender«.* This article focuses on 20th-century terrorist phenomena as gendered objects of knowledge produced and disseminated through history books, mass media and state institutions. By taking 1970s West German terrorism as my field of inquiry, this article will critically discuss how a bourgeois understanding of violence as fundamentally masculine has shaped the way terrorism has been represented, conceptualized and historicized thus far. I will go on to problematize the masculine gaze of mass media and state institutions and their tendency to objectify *the* terrorist. Last but not least, I will delineate how mass media and historiography of terrorism have relied on a narrative structure that pits rebellious sons and masculine daughters against figural and literal fathers, a frame that is overtly masculine and familial. In so doing I will point to blind spots in the study of 1970s terrorism, namely masculinity and the gender of state institutions. My goal is thus to show how not just individual and symbolic, but also institutional facets of the bourgeois gender order influence the way terrorism has been conceptualized and historicized thus far.

Keywords: Terrorism, gender, violence, feminism, masculinity, oedipal narrative.

1.   Introduction

How do we know what terrorism is? Who produces this knowledge? What role does gender play herein? This article focuses on the 1970s left-wing terrorist phenomenon as a gendered object of knowledge and how it has been produced and disseminated through history books, mass media and state institutions. First I contend that a bourgeois understanding of violence as fundamentally masculine underpins the way terrorism has been represented, conceptualized and historicized thus far. Furthermore, I argue that the masculine gaze of mass media and state apparatuses such as the police objectify *the* terrorist, a theme that remains by and large unacknowledged in research on terrorism. My third thesis is that the production of knowledge of terrorism has relied on a narrative structure that pits rebellious sons against figural and literal fathers, a frame that is overtly masculine and familial. Pertinently, this generational frame is equally used to make sense of terrorist acts committed by women, be it the bombings

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by female social revolutionaries in tsarist Russia or hijackings by female participants in the *Red Army Faction* (RAF) in 1970s German-speaking Europe. By using 1970s left-wing terrorism as my main field of inquiry, my goal is to show how these symbolic, institutional and individual aspects of gender have influenced the ways in which terrorism has been conceptualized and historicized thus far.

The first section briefly discusses mainstream literature on left-wing terrorism of the 1970s and their lack of interest in gender questions. The second section trains an eye on women's history of 1970s West-German terrorism. Much of this history reflects on a dominant preoccupation of 1970s West Germany: What drives women to terrorist violence? A third section hones in on the most frequent answer to the question posed above: Women's liberation and the production of the phallic woman. In my fourth section, I turn to an overarching theme structuring the disseminated knowledge of terrorism, namely the Oedipal narrative of sons (and masculinized daughters) killing their fathers. In the last section, I highlight an aspect often neglected when reflecting on what shapes our understanding of terrorism: state institutions' hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1999). By showing that parliament, police, court and prison are in fact masculine institutions that produce and disseminate gendered knowledge of terrorism, I point to a blind spot in 1970s history of terrorism. In my conclusion I argue that the Oedipal framing of the (his)stories of the RAF, the masculine gaze of mass media and the institutionalized gender differentiations of the police, court and the prison, reveal the wide-ranging influence of the bourgeois gender order (Maihofer 1995; Honegger 1996). Indeed, it produces knowledge of terrorism on an individual, symbolic and an institutional level.

2. The General and the Particular. Histories of 1970s West-German Terrorism

West Germany's *Red Army Faction* formed in 1970. The group was also known as the *Baader-Meinhof Gang*. The name Meinhof stood for the noted journalist Ulrike Meinhof, along with Gudrun Ensslin, one of two female founding members of the RAF. The RAF's history tends to be narrated in generations. All three generations knew female leaders. The already mentioned Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin were key figures of the first generation, Brigitte Mohnhaupt a leader of the second and Birgit Hogefeld a cadre-member of the third generation. The group disbanded in 1998.

Research on the RAF started as early as the 1970s. Its research focus remained on that decade. Much of the existing literature acknowledges the notable presence of women in the RAF and other West-German terrorist organizations (Aust 1985; Kraushaar 2006). This notwithstanding, none of these studies adopted a gender perspective. One prevailing argument against the relevance of

gender issues is that it was inconsequential whether the RAF was made up of women or men. Gender simply did not matter. To support this claim scholars stress that female terrorists professed that they did not see themselves and their motives to be any different from those of their male counterparts. Indeed, few of the female terrorists saw their cause related to feminism; many even went out of their way to stress that they were not feminists. It is against this background that Paczensky (1978) points out that no one asked whether masculinity made men turn to terrorism. It goes without saying that male terrorists were never asked to position themselves vis-à-vis the feminist cause.

It seems as if the antifeminist statements by female members of terrorist organizations let terrorism scholars conclude that the gender of the terrorist was clearly a private matter. The scholarship that did focus on gender issues just did not enter the cannon of terrorism studies (Paczensky 1978). Women-centered studies were seen to focus on a particular, minor detail, or worse as deflecting from the real issues at hand: the political struggles. Even if RAF's politics had been misguided, as the authors of the ostensibly gender-neutral literature on the RAF profess, their actions had been clearly tackling the West-German state, the capitalist system or German history, that is: institutions and events firmly rooted in the public sphere. Indeed, the RAF history in question reduced gender to an identity marker of the terrorist perpetrator. In this logic, a perpetrator must explicitly name his or her gender as a motivating factor in order for gender to matter. Gender is thus understood as a descriptor of individuals, while the state and its institutions are treated as if they were gender-less. The fact that gender has proven to be an organizing principle of police profiling, court hearings or imprisonment and that these same institutions produce (knowledge about) gender differences, is not taken into consideration by these studies.

Were they to take some of the more recent conceptualizations of terrorism seriously, it would become quite clear that analyses of the role of gender in terrorism must extend to other areas. Sebastian Scheerer (2004, 258) criticizes common understandings of terrorism that presume two actors who starkly oppose one another. He instead underlines the need to include a "triad of protagonists, antagonists and spectators" in the conceptualization of terrorism. In a similar vein, Klaus Weinhauer (2004, 222) observes a "constellation of perpetrators-victims-spectators whose roles are not static" but at different points overlap and even merge. Jasbir Puar (2007, 48) emphasizes the need to include differently situated spectators, consumers and producers in the study of current US-American terrorism discourses. She explicitly underscores the power of gendered and racialized representations in the construction of the terrorist perpetrator. According to Puar, a multidimensional perspective is necessary if the goal is to go beyond an understanding of terrorism as two opposing fronts. Indeed, she calls for an analysis of "multiple figures of ambivalence, many strangers who trouble and destabilize the nation's boundaries, suggesting a more complex imaginative geography" (Puar 2007, 48). To take these recent

conceptualizations of terrorism to heart also means to pay attention to a messy and ever-shifting constellation of racialized and gendered actors. The question to be asked is how the cultural imaginary of a time informs the actions of the different producers and consumers of the terrorist phenomenon.

3.   Women and Violence. Women's Histories of Terrorism

German scholarship on the Red Army Faction has been particularly resistant to adopting a gender lens (or a critical race lens for that matter). Recent scholarship of gender and terrorism is slowly filling the gaps. In the German-speaking context, Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann (2009, 2012; with van Laak 2013), Voijin Saša Vukadinović (2005, 2010), Grisard (2011, 2012, 2014) and others have been working towards a more nuanced assessment of the (self)representation of female members of the RAF and other left-wing terrorist organizations of the time. In addition, Sylvia Schraut (2007, 2012) and Christine Hikel (2012) argue that it is necessary to historicize left-wing terrorism of 1970s by placing it in the larger context of Central European modern history of terrorism and gender. Such an expanded perspective would point scholars of 1970s terrorism to significant blind spots that I will discuss later in the article.

Arguably, English-speaking academia faced fewer reservations than their German-speaking colleagues. Indeed, a substantial number of monographs with sophisticated feminist analyses on the subject have recently been published or are about to be published (Bielby 2007, 2008, 2013; Colvin 2009; Karcher 2013; Meinhof 1986; Melzer 2009, 2011, forthcoming; Passmore 2011; Rosenfeld 2010; Scribner forthcoming). This relatively new body of knowledge has focused on three related themes: the relationship between women and political violence, the connections between feminism and left-wing terrorism, and the de/centering of the terrorist perpetrator.

At the heart of most women's histories of left-wing terrorism of the 1970s is the question about the relationship of violence and femininity. A recent example is Katharina Karcher's (2013) analysis of women's contribution to the violent actions of the RAF, the *Movement Second June*, the *Revolutionary Cells* and the militant feminist group *Red Zora*. Terrorist women, she argues, performed traditional femininity as a decoy to carry out terrorist acts (Karcher 2013). Because of their image as so-called phallic women, middle-class femininity turned out to be a perfect disguise. Sarah Colvin adds another layer to the discussion when she demonstrates how mass media constructed the identity of female terrorists as determined by and even synonymous with their violent actions. She argues that the dominant gender regime effectively dehumanized violent women such as Ulrike Meinhof. Bielby takes the argument a step further by connecting gender discourse to the national project. In her monograph on the relationship of violence and womanhood in West-German print media of

the 1960s and 1970s, she is particularly interested in the concurrent threat and fascination these female figures evoked in the wider society. To name but one example: The fact that female terrorists were often not recognizable as such, that they often looked like the girl next door, was cause of much disquiet. Bielby shows how West-German print media constructed violent women, not just terrorists, as unfit mothers, as hysterical or as phallic women (Bielby 2012, 179; Bielby 2008b; Colvin 2009, 192). She argues that popular versions of Freud's theories of femininity shaped these particular representations of violent women (Bielby 2012, 112). Bielby shows convincingly how the celebration of traditional motherhood served to bolster the West-German nation. In the search for an explanation for women's participation in terrorist cells, many terrorism experts bought into the myth of women's innate greater radicalism. On the one hand, their violence was perceived to be in contradiction to their biopolitical role as the bearers of life (see Lorey 2007, 284). On the other, women's motherly instincts were believed to make them even more ferocious than men (Bielby 2012, 109; Grisard 2014, 84; Malvern 2014, 47). The terrorist cell symbolized "her brood" or her "Ersatz-family" (Grisard 2014, 86). The female terrorist – whether a mother or not – supposedly felt an intuitive need to defend her "children" from enemies and whistle-blowers. This 'motherly' conceptualization of the female members of the RAF made them seem less exceptional. Innate motherly qualities, it seems, served to explain the motives of Meinhof, Ensslin and Mohnhaupt, even if they were clearly portrayed as unfit mother figures. More importantly, though, emphasizing innate motherly qualities affirmed a devoted, docile type of German motherhood in the service of the nation.

At this point it bears mention that there are more similarities than differences in the way female terrorists and other violent women were represented in West-German, French and Swiss print media (Bielby 2012; Bugnon 2013; Grisard 2011). It points to a potential Central European commonality, or rather: mass media in these different nations represented violent woman in markedly similar ways, creating a sense of continuity or even universality where there was none. As I will explore later in this article, the 1970s press even depicted Russian female anarchists in a similar way as the female members of the RAF. Short, unkempt hair, nervous smoking, and sexual assertiveness were some of the gender markers used to characterize these different women of different epochs. The similarity in the characterization of nineteenth-century Russian anarchists and 1970s female terrorists suggest that a transhistorical type of deviant womanhood was created (Schraut 2007, 114).

The cultural imaginary of 1970s West Germany codes violence as masculine. In this logic, if women are violent, they must be masculine. One might surmise that if mass media constructed female members of the RAF as masculine figures, they must have feminized male terrorists. This thesis has been supported by Jasbir Puar's (2007) research on Islamist terrorism after the collapse of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. The male Muslim

terrorists, so Puar's reading, were feminized to bolster American masculinity and morale. A similar portrayal of Swiss male terrorists can be found in 1970s Swiss print media. In the wake of introducing women's suffrage in Switzerland in 1971, print media made it look as if Swiss men had been maliciously seduced by foreign women terrorists. The former were portrayed as harmless boy scouts whereas the latter were depicted as more liberated and violent than any Swiss – woman or man – could ever be. The Swiss male terrorists were in effect feminized in order to recuperate them into the Swiss national project. Whether this holds true for West Germany has yet to be explored. Along with Schraut und Hikel (2012) I contend that a comparison of representations of terrorist women and terrorist men in different times and places would shed light on the gendered logic of representation regarding violent women and men more broadly.

4. Feminism and (Gender) Violence. A Contentious Relationship

A dominant subtheme in analyses of female terrorists and violence has been the contentious relationship between feminism and terrorism. A host of articles and book chapters try to grapple with this question (Melzer 2009; Vukadinović 2010; Malvern 2014; Bielby 2012). Vojn Saša Vukadinović (2005) dismisses a connection between feminism and terrorism outright, echoing early feminist reactions against left-wing terrorism in West Germany (Paczensky 1978; Fabricius-Brand 1978). Colvin theorizes how the different politics of feminism and left-wing terrorism were both mirrored and produced by the language used. With Meinhof's biography in mind, she goes on to suggest a temporal, linguistic and ideological rift between feminism and terrorism (Colvin 2009, 179). According to her, Meinhof and others made a conscious decision to abandon feminism around 1973 and adopted a new kind of sexualized "language of Revolution" (Colvin 2009, 188). However, Colvin argues that the influence of the language of second-wave feminism could not be shed that easily. This notwithstanding, her narrative seems to suggest that feminism and militancy were seen to be polar opposites; it precludes that feminism could ever be violent.

According to Sue Malvern (2014) feminists did not have much choice but to sever any – symbolic or social – ties they had with (female) terrorists. The endless comparisons of feminists with female terrorists in West-German media, criminology and psychology, she argues, forced "feminism […] to disassociate itself from women terrorists or women who used political violence" (Malvern 2014, 42). At the time, noted feminists such as Julia Kristeva repudiated terrorist women on the grounds that the new order that female terrorists strove for would subjugate them even further (Kristeva 1981, 15; Malvern 2014, 43). Malvern (2014) is interested in how this contentious relationship between terrorism and feminism plays out in visual arts. Beckman (2002) too engages

visual arts to delineate a progressive blurring of feminism and terrorism. She examines the trope of sisterhood in Margarete von Trotta's film *Marianne and Juliane* (1981) and criticizes Ann E. Kaplan's (1985) portrayal of Marianne and Juliane's relationship as "a pre-Oedipal, pre-linguistic" and potentially liberating "female/female bonding" (Beckman 2002, 35). Beckman rejects the notion that there could have been a bond between the female members of the RAF that managed to "dislocate/disrupt traditional familial relationships, structured around the law of the father" (2002, 35). Indeed, Beckman seems to pit female bonding against the inherently violent Oedipal constellations terrorist women find themselves in. Karcher (2013) offers a different reading. She is interested in the tensions and contradictions in the RAF and the *Movement Second June,* for example that they opposed the contemporary feminist agenda, even though their actions might have called into question the existing gender regime more than non-militant strands of feminism ever could have hoped to. In a similar vein, Patricia Melzer asks to what extent the female participation in political violence could also be understood as a form of feminist militancy. Patricia Melzer's forthcoming *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl: Gender and Political Violence in West German Terrorism* reflects on the implications of women's political violence for feminist theories of violence. The strong reactions female terrorists provoked in the feminist movement and the public at large, and the way contemporary women's history of terrorism contrast feminism and terrorism, raises important points: First, the former is constructed as inherently peaceful and the latter as utterly violent, a narrative that reaffirms feminists' identity as women while widening the gap between true womanhood and violent others. Second, it cleans up the messy relationship between feminism and violence, in the process of which militant feminist groups such as the *Red Zora* are written out of feminism. Furthermore it never questions who the perpetrators of violence are. Drawing on phenomenologist Jean-Luc Nancy's theories of violence, Melzer argues that female terrorists were commonly perceived to have committed *true violence* against the capitalist system and the German state. However, Melzer emphasizes, while scholars are busy understanding female terrorists' *true violence*, they tend to overlook the *violent truth*, e.g. the violence exerted by the bourgeois gender order. By stressing that female terrorists' gender transgressions made the *violent truth-regime* visible, Melzer inverts the analytic gaze to scrutinize the gender order's disciplinary and violent effects.

5.   De/Centering the Perpetrator. Terrorism as Gendered Performance

I have described how Meinhof and other female members of the RAF have frequently been portrayed as *mothers*, *hysterical* or *phallic women* in mass

media, scientific literature and elsewhere (Bielby 2012; Melzer 2009; Vukadinović 2005), and that these representations have preoccupied scholarship thus far. Sarah Colvin (2009) and Leith Passmore (2011) have published captivating monographs with the name Ulrike Meinhof in the title. Using a prominent name in the title personalizes the terrorist phenomenon. Clearly neither author is interested in a purely biographical account of the co-founder of the RAF. Colvin's interest lies on the performative work of language in shaping feminist and terrorist identities. In a similar vein, Passmore theorizes 1970s terrorism as performance.

Conceptualizing 1970s left-wing terrorism as performance calls attention to the terrorist acts instead of the terrorists themselves. This notwithstanding, the term performance suggests that there is a producer, a subject-position commonly believed to be active, in control and masculine. An understanding of terrorism as performance also implies that there are consumers of this performance. In the Western cultural imaginary, consumers are generally seen as passive and feminine, which invariably steers the discussion to looking relations (Mulvey 1975; Kaplan 1983; De Lauretis 1984). In 1975, Mulvey introduced the notion of the male gaze of the camera as the mechanism through which the male spectator is entitled to objectify the woman on screen. Mulvey's theory of the gaze has been since refined by decoupling the objectifying look from the individual male body and by making the gaze reflect the complexity of power relations (Kaplan 1983; Gaines 2007; Halberstam 2005). The heterosexual masculine gaze, one might argue, objectifies terrorism by locating it in the figure of the dangerous female or feminized terrorist. The allure of her danger is what catches the attention of the spectator. The fact that she has been *caught* on paper or screen recuperates the consumers' control over knowledge production. Finally, the word performance invokes a certain kind of theatricality and artificiality in the way that it is believed to be the opposite of the natural, authentic and original self. This is clearly a false opposition, and a deeply gendered one: While there is a long tradition of associating women with nature, they are also often portrayed as duplicitous, manipulative and deceptive. Indeed, terrorist women have often filled the shoes of the latter.

Performance is an important concept in Gender Studies, informed by Judith Butler (1993) and her deconstruction of the idea of an original or natural gender. The gender binary, man and woman, is constituted by the incessant reenactment of gender on an individual, institutional and symbolic level. Inasmuch that the performance of terrorism is dependent on reenactments of terrorism in mass media and that a central mode of communication of 1970s Western European media was gender stereotyping, one may argue that mass media's performance of terrorism was inherently gendered. Gender stereotyping is the fodder of what Charlotte Klonk referred to as "image terror," a type of warfare by psychological means (Klonk 2014, 16; also Scribner forthcoming). One image-attack followed the next. To explain how information was communicated and

affects and emotions manipulated, she discusses the canonical image of kidnapped West-German Industry President Hanns-Martin Schleyer as a broken man, dressed in a suit, subdued and listless, which could be read as a symbolic castration of the ruling classes. She contrasts this image with the not less powerful wanted posters of the RAF members plastered in all of West Germany and its neighboring countries. Indeed, the wanted posters utilize a visual regime reminiscent of criminological depictions by the likes of Lombroso at the turn from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Instead of a pretty smile on their lips – a marker of docile femininity – the female terrorists on these posters looked straight into the camera, with a scowl on their faces. These images exemplify how 1970s terrorism was indeed performance, but this performance was never one-sided. The performative quality of 1970s terrorism inscribed the phenomenon in a gendered logic of *image terror*.

Given the close link between terrorism and performance in the 1970s, it would be illuminating to apply a *terrorism as gendered performance* lens to other historic incidences commonly referred to as terrorism. Questions to explore further are whether the performative aspect of 1970s terrorism is limited to this particular place and time or whether it may be considered a commonality of various terrorist phenomena in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. If there are indeed continuities, it begs the question of whether they are fostered by mass media or state institutions. To answer these questions would not only allow to draw historical comparisons but also shed light on whether performance could indeed be understood as an organizing principle of modern Central European terrorisms more generally. It is the kind of meta-analysis that Sylvia Schraut has been calling for (2012). Indeed, it would contribute to both a historicization and definition of terrorism in its relation to the modern bourgeois gender order.

6.   Fathers and the Oedipal Narratives in Mass Media and Historiography

If the aim is to get a better understanding of terrorism as an object of knowledge, an analysis of terrorism as a set of media events seems tantamount, especially since media events typically amalgamated penal, police and parliamentary knowledge of terrorism. While an increasing number of studies focus on mass media and their representation of terrorist women (Bielby 2012; Grisard 2007, 2011), less attention has been trained on the Oedipal rivalry myth as a structuring element of histories and stories of the RAF and their motifs. As mentioned earlier, the RAF is narrated as a history of radicalization in three generations. What is more is that the violent actions of the first and second generation are often seen to have been implicitly or explicitly motivated by their literal fathers or the symbolic fathers of the Nazi era. In 1967 Ensslin

accused "the Auschwitz generation, there is no arguing with them" (Varon 2004, 39). Her own father had opposed the Nazis. Silke Maier-Witt, a member of the second generation of the RAF, found out that her own father had been a member of the SS and confronted him with it (Varon 2004, 252). In her memoir she writes, "in trying to not to be like my father, I ended up being even more like him. Terrorism is close to Nazism" (Varon 2004, 253; Rubin 2001). After the South African journalist Jillian Becker used the child-father metaphor in title of her bestseller "Hitler's Children," it found its way into parliamentary and popular debates (Mulolff 2011, 61). The generational framework of fathers and masculine children also structures popular and academic accounts of the RAF, among them Norbert Elias' (1996) reading of the RAF as a "generational conflict" that was masked as a class war (1996, 201).

Female terrorists were also depicted as having been marred by conflicted relationships with their fathers. It was female terrorists' presumed female masculinity that let them enter into competition with their fathers. These phallic women were not just seen to be unfit mothers, they also *penetrated* movements and histories previously reserved to men. The prominence of the Oedipal theme shows how dominant popularized versions of Freudian theories of the masculine complex in women had been at the time (Bielby 2012, 112; Colvin 2009, 192). Whereas the severing of ties with literal and symbolic fathers was a particularly prominent trope in RAF historiography, familial metaphors abounded. Indeed, they were seen to be essential to the unfolding of the RAF drama (see Hirsch 1989, 3). Arguably, the frequent comparison of female members of the RAF to Russian women anarchists fell into that category. The comparison fostered symbolic familial ties between the two groups of women.

Newspaper articles and books on the women in the RAF regularly turned to nineteenth-century Russian revolutionaries when it came to explaining women's (political) violence. The belief was that the comparisons with female terrorists of the past would shed light on why women would turn to violence. Analogies to "perverse" women of the Nazi era were also drawn if only infrequently (Bielby 2012, 111). It might have been emotionally less fraught to draw connections to people and events in history outside of Germany. In *Daughters of Upheaval*, West-German journalist Walther Schmieding (1979) underscored the similarities between Russian and West-German terrorists. For one, they were both fighting for liberation, which he discerned from their "masculine self-presentation, in their lack of (sexual) interest for the opposite sex," and most importantly in their contentious relationships with their fathers (Grisard 2014, 86). As if this were not enough, Schmieding emphasized that they both tended to be estranged from their families of origin and had adopted the terrorist organization as a type of "Ersatz-family." Indeed, political violence – in accordance with Figner's autobiographical account – was seen to go hand in hand with changes in gender and sexual identity, in essence with a virilization and a quest for independence from both fathers and husbands (see Fauré

1978). The familial genre that a revolutionary like Vera Figner used to frame her path to revolution provided much sought after answers as to what motivated the female members of the RAF to deviate from dominant notions of femininity. It also gave at least a partial answer to the recurring question of whether women's involvement in West Germany's RAF was a consequence of feminism and women's sexual liberation. The question itself reveals much about the notion of gender espoused by those who posed it, namely a deep-seated belief in femininity as peaceful, domestic and dependent, while associating feminism and sexual assertiveness with masculinity and violence. To underscore the commingling of feminism and terrorism, terrorism experts inserted 1970s female terrorists in a genealogy: Meinhof and Ensslin became Figner's daughters (Schmieding 1979). However, framing the women in the RAF and violent women more generally as *Daughters of Upheaval* linked these undutiful daughters to each other and to their literal fathers.

A gen(d)erational understanding of terrorism proposes an ahistorical, essentialist understanding of gender. Comparing female Russian anarchists with female members of the RAF defined violent women in relation to their fathers. This effectively allowed the decontextualizing of the motifs, struggles and identities of both groups of women. Indeed, by framing terrorism as an irrationality inherent in woman allowed German-speaking print media to deflect from the sociopolitical context of West Germany. The Oedipal narrative in RAF historiography pitted sons and masculinized daughters against literal and figurative fathers. The dominance of this narrative underscores how ostensibly gender-neutral accounts of the RAF are always already gendered. Indeed, hegemonic masculinity must be considered foundational to popular and academic (his)tories of RAF.

7. Blind Spots. Masculinity in the History of 1970s West-German Terrorism

Men and masculinity studies have had a pronounced presence in analyses of current terrorist phenomena (Aslam 2012; Behnke 2014; Braudy 2003; Kellner 2008; Lorber 2002; Mann 2014). Masculinity has also been studied in relation to 1920s Weimar terrorism (Hikel 2012; Schraut 2007), 1950s Cypriotic terrorism (Koureas 2014) as well as IRA terrorism (Dawson 2014; Edge 2014; Montgomery 2011; Zywietz 2012). Men and masculinity have been something of a blind spot when it comes to the RAF phenomenon. It is as if the (omni)presence of ostensibly phallic women such as Ulrike Meinhof or Gudrun Ensslin in West-German left-wing terrorism has made it difficult to go beyond the woman and violence question in lieu of broadening the scope of analyses to encompass the study of hegemonic and alternative masculinities. A historicization of 1970s left-wing terrorism as part of a longer history of (constructing)

terrorist threats (Schraut 2012), would point to the various ways in which masculinity structures the 1970s terrorist phenomenon.

Of course there are always exceptions to the rule. Harald Uetz's (1999) sociological analysis of the hegemonic masculinity reproduced by the hierarchical organization of the RAF stresses the power of institutionalized masculinity in the way that it demanded an incredibly disciplined, militaristic and by association masculine performance from its members. Irene Bandhauer-Schöffman contrasts the machismo of the male protagonists in the RAF to the childlike Austrian "Terrorbuben" (Bandhauer 2012, 2010), while Bielby analyzes the gendered representations of male terrorists in German media of the 1960s and 1970s (Bielby 2008a; also Grisard 2007).

Analyses of masculinity of 1970s terrorism have, however, left state institutions untouched (Diewald-Kerkmann 2009), thereby reifying the idea that institutions are genderless. "Whoever speaks about the state, terrorism and inner security, will not be able to bypass the police," Klaus Weinhauer writes (2006, 244). Whoever speaks about the police, I argued elsewhere, cannot get by without a gender analysis (Grisard 2011, 209). Indeed, Weinhauer makes a note of masculinities at play in the West-German government's counter-terrorist crisis management (Weinhauer 2006, 263; Grisard 2011). The committees established for this purpose formed part of an *old boys'* network that transcended political party lines and oriented itself on masculinist, military modes of thinking (Weinhauer 2006, 263). Vukadinović (2005) too points to an unholy alliance of antifeminist and antiterrorist positions espoused by the *old boys* in criminology, psychology and other sciences, in their attempt to stigmatize and criminalize both feminists and female terrorists.

Though these scholars provide us with hints of how hegemonic masculinity contributes to the construction of the RAF phenomenon, scholarship on the state as a gendered institution remains a research desideratum. Indeed, knowledge of terrorism is produced in prison, courts, prisons, parliament and other state institutions. These institutions are gendering devices that produce and exaggerate gender differences. Erving Goffman uses the term "institutional reflexivity" to explain how institutionalized gender differentiation processes work (Goffman 2001, 114; Maihofer 2004, 37). He argues that it is not the existence of innate gender differences that lead to differential treatment according to gender. Instead it is the differential gender treatment in everyday life that magnifies and even produces gender differences. Separate bathrooms or gender-specific fashions are institutionalized practices of how gender differences are shaped. Thus far the gender differentiation processes remain by and large unexplored in terrorism scholarship. In the case of left-wing terrorism of the 1970s, the influence of gender-segregated prisons comes to mind or male dominated police units trained to profile other men. In numerous hunger strikes the RAF fought for the consolidation of political prisoners, which would have suspended the laws that prescribed gender segregation in prison (Grisard 2011,

166). It is a known fact that the prison controlled or at least tried to control the knowledge transfer to and from imprisoned terrorists. Incriminating information was regularly censored. It is thus safe to say that the image of the male terrorist as macho, coward or dilettante as much as the representation of female members as phallic woman or unfit mother were at least in part shaped by state censorship. Clearly these images also served to affirm the ideal of the masculine bourgeois citizen and the demure wife and mother. Thus, the power to control and censor bolstered the hegemonic masculinity of the state.

This said, terrorists did manage to navigate the prison system. They too produced gendered knowledge of terrorism. Due to prison censorship and archiving practices, it is possible to trace the knowledge flows from imprisoned terrorist women and men to activists on the outside and vice versa. Terrorists had blatant and subtle ways of shaping the phenomenon of terrorism, be it with noisily publicized hunger strikes, media campaigns or prison correspondence. Those who occupied a masculine subject-position and performed the "armed fighter," tended to catch the interest of mass media and other key knowledge producers and disseminators. However, it was those who adopted a feminine style of performance who often managed to bypass prison censorship barriers (Grisard 2011, 155). Prison art is such an example. Art was seen to be aesthetically pleasing, harmless and ultimately apolitical. It was thus easier to communicate with art with political activist friends on the outside.

One can hope that an increased interest in the (hegemonic) masculinity of the RAF phenomenon will prompt scholars to engage with state institutions and vice-versa: a more pronounced research focus on state institutions such as the police, the prison or the courts would invariably lead to an intense engagement with masculinities. A nuanced understanding of hegemonic masculinity and its relationship to alternative – female and male – masculinities promises to shift the focus to the structuring power of the seemingly gender-neutral organization of parliament, and it would deconstruct the court trials' ostensibly gender-less defendant to reveal that s/he happens to be modeled after a seemingly rational bourgeois male citizen, or it would allow finding out more about the gender segregation and gendered treatment of imprisoned terrorists, and whether the prison incited and rewarded gender specific comportment of RAF members or not. As the little existing research on masculinity and the RAF phenomenon shows, my presuppositions are not completely unfounded.

8.   Conclusion

The fact that there are studies on women in 1970s terrorist networks is an important accomplishment. The fact that many of them reduce gender issues to the (female) gender of the perpetrator is unfortunate if not uncommon. It might be attributed to a need of catching up with male-centric research of 1970s ter-

rorism. Recent scholarship on 1970s representations of female violence turns its attention to the symbolic gender order, with a distinct bias for the mass media. While this new body of scholarship analyzes the ways in which dominant gender ideologies constructed female terrorists, masculinities still remain a black box. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to institutional dimensions of gender, which would shed light on the perpetuation of gender differences and the construction of hegemonic masculinity. There is a long tradition of understanding women as gendered beings, relegating women and thus gender to the private domain (Klinger and Knapp 2005, 84). Gender analyses of terrorism will want to be careful not to fall into this trap. The differentiation of public and private spheres stabilizes the gender binary and occludes the manifold ways in which gender organizes the public sphere (Sauer 2001).

In this article I highlighted the substantial body of gender research on left-wing terrorism. Instead of putting gender on the backburner, this article underscores that gender is constitutive of the terrorist phenomenon. A gender analysis is not just interested in the women in the terrorist organizations, however. It focuses on the dominant gender order and its power to (re)produce two genders, woman and man, and points to the ways in which normative gender ideas are circulated. It also underscores the invisible power of the heterosexual, white bourgeois citizen as the measuring stick of most state institutions. In this light, if gender is invoked in the context of left-wing terrorist politics, police actions or court rulings, it also implicates sexuality, class, nation, ethnicity and other differentiations. I thus plead for a multidimensional understanding of gender as instrumental on an individual, socio-cultural and symbolic level of the 1970s West-German terrorist phenomenon.

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