LINGUISTIC FRAMING OF POLITICAL TERROR
DISTANT AND CLOSE READINGS OF THE DISCOURSE ON TERRORISM IN THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT 1993–2018

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MAGNUS P. ÄNGSAL, DANIEL BRODÉN, MATS FRIDLUND, LEIF-JÖRAN OLSSON, PATRIK ÖHBERG
UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
Framing Terrorism in the Riksdag

1. Research questions
2. Theoretical and methodological remarks
3. Terrorism and its contexts in the data
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1. Research questions

1) What framing elements understood as discursive key meanings are connected to the words terrorism (and terrorist) when used in parliamentary speeches in the debate as simplex, and

2) as part of compounds along the lines of controversies and party affiliations (close reading of the compound statterrorism)?
2. Theoretical and methodological remarks

Terrorism as "violence or its threat intended as a symbolically communicative act in which the direct victims of the action is instrumentalized as a means to creating a psychological effect of intimidation and fear in a target audience for a political objective" (Jackson 2011: 123)

Discourse as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Reisigl/Wodak 2009: 89)

Framing (Fillmore, Goffman, Entman, Busse, Wehling)

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman 1993: 52)
2. Theoretical and methodological remarks

A basic frame for terrorism:
(1) Event (act of terrorism)
(2) Agent
(3) Target
(4) Place
(5) Motive (symbolic meaning)

Methodical / analytical tools: search runs in Korp with applying word pictures and co-occurrences in the corpus search system
3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data

Hits of simplex *terrorism* (n 4399) in the Korp corpus ‘Anföranden’ 1993-2018 (screenshot from https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/)
(n 4755 simplexes and compounds generated by *terrorism*)
3. **Terrorism** and its contexts in the data

Word picture with top 10 co-occurrences for terrorism from Korp corpus ‘Anföranden’ in the Swedish Parliament 1993-2018 (screenshot from [https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/](https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/))
3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data

*Den islamistiska terrorismen bör vi européer möta gemensamt.*  
[The Islamist terrorism is something we Europeans ought to encounter together.]  
(Mikael Jansson, SD, 2016-05-19)

*När det gäller det som vi debatterar i dag, nämligen terrorism i allmänhet, kan man bara konstatera att Kent Ekeroth försöker få allt till att handla om islamistisk terrorism.*  
[When it comes to what we debate today, i.e. terrorism in general, one can only conclude that Kent Ekeroth tries to make everything to be about Islamist terrorism.]  
(Maria Ferm, MP, 2012-05-02)
3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data

Compounds with *terrorism* (n 356) from Korp corpus ‘Anföranden’ in the Swedish Parliament 1993-2018

([https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/](https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/))
3. *Terrorism* and its contexts in the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compound type</th>
<th>Left or right constituent / <em>Engl.</em></th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>terrorismbekämpning</td>
<td>-bekämpning / <em>combating</em></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statterrorism</td>
<td>stats- / <em>state-</em></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrorismresa</td>
<td>-resa / <em>travel</em></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrorismlagstiftning</td>
<td>-lagstiftning / <em>legislation</em></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrorismområdet</td>
<td>-området / <em>area</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrorismrelaterad</td>
<td>-relaterad / <em>related</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrorismsyfte</td>
<td>-syfte / <em>purpose</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compounds including *terrorism* from Korp corpus ‘Anföranden’ in the Swedish Parliament 1993-2018
4. The case of *statterrorism* and party affiliations

1. Israel (16)
2. Iran (15)
3. Turkey (11)
4. Russia (9)
5. Afghanistan, Colombia, Peru, Al-Qaeda (one instance each)
   + a few unspecified
4. The case of *statsterrorism* and party affiliations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of hits</th>
<th>Party affiliation</th>
<th>Agent behind state terrorism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 23             | Green Party (MP)          | Turkey (9)
|                |                           | Israel (8)
|                |                           | Russia (3)
|                |                           | Turkey/Russia (1)
|                |                           | Unspecified (2) |
| 13             | Left Party (V)            | Israel (7)
|                |                           | Iran (2)
|                |                           | Turkey (1)
|                |                           | Peru (1)
|                |                           | Colombia (1)
|                |                           | Unspecified (1) |
| 9              | Social Democratic Party (S) | Iran (8)                                           |
|                |                           | Israel (1)                                           |
| 8              | Moderates (M)             | Russia (5)
|                |                           | Afghanistan (1)
|                |                           | Al-Qaida (1)
|                |                           | Unspecified (1) |
| 5              | Christian Democrats (KD)  | Iran (5)                                               |
| 2              | Liberals (L)              | Unspecified (2)                                      |
| 3              | Centre Party (C)          | Unspecified (3)                                      |
4. The case of statsterrorism and party affiliations

Efter det att statsterrorism från iransk sida konstaterats av en domstol i Tyskland måste vi nu gå igenom formerna för våra kontakter med Iran över huvud taget.

[After state terrorism on the part of Iran has been concluded by a court in Germany, we must now review the forms of our contacts with Iran in general.]

(Lena Hjelm-Wallén, S, 1997-04-17)
5. Final remarks

• Agent slot: often occupied by Islamists and/or international agents (terrorism as a foreign phenomenon)
• To some extent: states as agents (cf. statterrorism)
• Motive slot: often empty, but symbolic meaning often implied by identifying agents
• Target slot: often empty
• Place slot: underspecified, but sometimes possible to locate outside of Sweden; from 2015 probably framed also as a Swedish phenomenon (has yet to be examined)
Thank you for your attention!

Selected references:


• Jackson, Richard (2011): ”In defence of 'terrorism': finding a way through a forest of misconceptions”. In: Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression 3 (2), p. 116-130.