

Vadym Slyusar*doctor of philosophical sciences, docent***Iryna Vitiuk***PhD in Philosophical Sciences, Docent***Mykola Slyusar***assistant**Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University***THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF MAX WEBER'S
THEORIES IN TERRORISM STUDIES**

Max Weber's theory, particularly his concepts of political ethics, types of social action, and the theory of legitimate domination, is a crucial tool for analyzing terrorism [1; 2; 3].

Violence is a decisive force in political activity and carries the risk of fracturing social cohesion. According to Weber, the primary sources of antagonism are the qualities that drive individuals to political activity. A politician must possess three qualities: passion, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of proportion, forming a triad of «devotion to a cause – accepting responsibility for that cause – a psychological factor preventing negative consequences of the former components.» Political activity depends on the subject's ability to balance passion and restraint; otherwise, it transforms into extremism. Political ethics becomes paramount. Achieving any ethically good goal may have ethically dangerous consequences, as it inherently allows for the justification of outcomes. Based on the relationship between goals and consequences, Weber distinguishes two forms of ethics: the «ethics of conviction» and the «ethics of responsibility.» The former focuses on the goal without regard for consequences (acting for the sake of the goal, shifting responsibility to others or divine will), while the latter holds the politician accountable for the outcomes of their actions [2]. Weber's theory highlights that terrorist organizations

predominantly rely on the «ethics of conviction» in evaluating their activities, prioritizing the establishment and maintenance of a state of fear. Thus, based on Weber's theory, counterterrorism policies must balance both ethics, while terrorist organizations rely solely on the ethics of conviction.

In his work *Economy and Society*, Weber introduces the concept of «social action», which refers to human behavior imbued with a certain meaning, always involving an attitude toward objects with understanding, where a (subjective) meaning exists or is implied, regardless of how well it is understood. Internal behavior is social action only when oriented toward the behavior of others. Weber identifies four main types of social action based on their causes (ranging by degree of rationality): purposive-rational, value-rational, affective, and traditional. Purposive-rational action is directed toward achieving a specific goal, with means and methods rationally calculated, and goals and means establishing a causal relationship. Value-rational action is oriented toward a conscious belief in the unconditional intrinsic value (ethical, aesthetic, religious, etc.) of certain behavior, regardless of its outcome. Affective action is driven by emotions, arising spontaneously or in response to an event, determined by current affects or emotional states (e.g., revenge, piety, or sensual pleasure). Traditional action is a «reaction to familiar stimuli, toward a previously formed disposition», based on ingrained social behaviors and norms perceived as habitual [1].

Social actions oriented toward values, affects, and the ethics of conviction play a significant role in shaping the activities of terrorist organizations. For terrorists, performing an action is often more important than achieving a specific goal, though the rationality and meticulous planning of terrorist acts must be noted (e.g., the

September 11, 2001, attacks demonstrate a rational choice of means to achieve a goal, or the targeting of energy infrastructure by cyberterrorists). The same type of social action governs the recruitment and financing processes of terrorist organizations. Their activities share characteristics with affective social actions, as they are also driven by the desire to vent anger toward «enemies» or satisfy a sense of revenge. Value-rational action orients terrorists' activities toward the social significance of the struggle itself, rather than its outcome. They often label themselves within their communities as «fighters for justice», «defenders of oppressed groups», or «righteous ones.»

Building on the idea that power in society gains recognition and support through legitimacy, Max Weber distinguishes two types of power: power as authority (characterized by legitimate application) and power as coercion (illegitimate, achieved through threats and violence). Based on the trust of subjects or citizens in power, Weber identifies three «ideal types» of legitimate domination: rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic. The first is based on established rules, with its purest form being bureaucratic domination. Laws are enacted and amended through formal procedures, and the power structure functions as an enterprise with organs of power, including heteronomous and heterocephalous structures. Obedience is directed not toward individuals but toward rules, with subordination distributed hierarchically and subject to appeal procedures. Traditional domination is based on belief in the sanctity of ancient orders, with its purest form being patriarchal domination, where the community submits to the ruler out of reverence for their lineage. Formal law is absent, material principles of justice prevail in governance, and orders are limited by tradition, the violation of which

undermines legitimacy. Outside tradition, governance is exercised at the ruler's discretion. The absence of formal law is a key feature of all traditional forms of domination. Charismatic domination is based on devotion to a leader due to their unique qualities (e.g., magic, heroism, or oratory), with the purest examples being the domination of a prophet or military hero. Followers submit to the leader through faith in their charisma, which persists only as long as their qualities are confirmed; otherwise, domination dissipates. Charisma rejects traditions and established rules, creating new norms through revolutionary ideas or force [3].

Terrorist activity is a significant threat to the legitimacy of power, serving as a stimulus for authorities to strengthen political, legal, economic, and other institutions. In the context of studying terrorism, the theory of legitimate domination reveals the nature of certain terrorist organizations that mimic rational-legal structures by creating their own «pseudo-state» institutions (e.g., the Donetsk People's Republic, Luhansk People's Republic, or the Islamic State). This also applies to their justification of activities by appealing to «laws» and «rules», declaring either the illegitimacy of existing power or their own legitimacy. Thus, one direction of state activity is establishing the rule of law and transparent legitimation procedures. The rejection of the rational-legal type and the adoption of an alternative – traditional type – characterizes the activities of terrorist organizations rooted in religious fundamentalist ideologies. They typically position themselves as «defenders of tradition», legitimizing their power through traditional norms and belief in the «sanctity» of local customs. Regarding the third type, the charisma of a terrorist organization's leader fosters the devotion of its followers. Belief in their supernatural abilities is significantly amplified today through media idealization and

heroization, particularly via social media, as traditional democratic media do not promote terrorist activities.

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