(Counter)Terrorism and the Intimate

Bodies, Affect, Power

Sunčana Laketa

■ **ABSTRACT:** Much of the contemporary scholarship reproduces a disembodied approach to (counter)terrorism that fails to account for bodies, experiences, and subjectivities “at the sharp end.” To broaden the empirical focus and the ensuing blind spots, this article analyzes the varied and interdisciplinary approaches that put to the fore the intimacies of terrorism and the responses to it. It asks: What can the conceptual and methodological framework on embodiment and affect tell us about (counter)terrorism and terror threat? The conclusion argues that this framework does not merely extend the apparatus of terror/security to lived experience, but rather seeks to reframe the dominant notions of what terror/security is, how it is practiced, by whom, and with what effects.

■ **KEYWORDS:** affect, antiviolence, body, emotion, intimate, peace, (counter) terrorism

The accounts of global terror abound, from popular culture and everyday life to endless media reports and academic debates. The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001 in many ways ushered in the new age of (counter)terrorism. Many Western European and US cities witnessed an unprecedented rise in technologies of policing and securitization propelled by the discourses on the “war on terror,” continuing to this day (Graham 2010; Gregory 2011; Katz 2007). Moreover, the spate of more or less coordinated acts of terrorism in Western European cities during 2015 and 2016 additionally enabled specific discourses on security and governmental practices that deal with the real and perceived terrorist threats (Krasmann and Hentschel 2019). With the intensification of the processes of securitization, the research into these phenomena has continued to grow and produce a broad-ranging scholarly literature.

The article addresses the study of terrorism as the study of the discourses on and the systematic use of violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors to intimidate and provoke fear among the wider public (see also the introduction to this special section). The academic literature on the discourses and practices of terrorism and the responses to it that I label (counter) terrorism can be broadly and tentatively grouped under a conventional approach and a critical approach to terrorism and security. The critique of the more conventional approach to terrorism is well documented (Jackson 2007, 2012; Jarvis 2019). Many scholars have decried the conventional approach for its alignment with state powers as it strives and struggles to index, measure, and quantitatively “explain away” terrorism. On the other hand, within the rising critical studies of terrorism, scholars principally aim to destabilize the discursive framings and policies that enable the rising security apparatus and thus pose challenges to the prevailing state and/or national paradigm on security. However, the empirical focus of both conventional and critical scholarship is often limited to state-centered, technocratic, and/or representational dimensions

of the practices of securitization and counterterrorism. The result is a disembodied approach to (counter)terrorist violence that fails to account for bodies, experiences, and subjectivities “at the sharp end” (Dixon and Marston 2011).

Rather than being an overview of the security and terrorism studies (for full review see Goldstein 2010; Jarvis 2019; Lutz 2010; Schuurman 2019), this article starts with an outline of some major research gaps in this literature in order to focus specifically on the intimate as a site of (counter)terrorism. The aim of the article is to show the potential of this line of inquiry for asking different questions and providing different insights onto discourses and practices of terrorism and security. In doing so, I hope the article inspires further research into the intimacies of (counter)terrorism.

The blind spots of research on (counter)terrorism are multiple, and they include methodological, empirical, and theoretical absences. In terms of the methodological blind spot, the literature on (counter)terrorism is predominantly representational and often technocratic. There is a significant lack of extended qualitative and thick ethnographic work on (counter)terrorism. Empirically speaking, the scholarship is traditionally centered on global and state strategies and territorializations, with the lack of attention to multiscale spatialities of the home and the body. All this results in important theoretical absences as the scholarship reinforces a hierarchical view of (counter)terrorist violence in ways that maintain a vague ethical commitment to processes and practices of antiviolence and peace.

These critiques are not new, and many scholars have voiced them, one way or another (Fregonese 2012; Nicley 2009; Pain 2009; Sjöberg 2009, 2015). Indeed, most scholars agree that terrorism and terror threat impact everyday life (Coaffee and Wood 2006; Gregory 2011; Katz 2007), however the question of how exactly everyday lives are affected by the presence of terrorist threats and counterterrorist technologies remains underinvestigated. It is even less clear how the focus on the everyday and the banal shifts the prevailing paradigms of conceptualizing “terror threat” and “(in)security.”

Drawing on insights from feminist geopolitics (Clark 2017; Cuomo 2013; Dixon and Marston 2011; Laketa 2016a, 2016b) and from feminist, queer, and postcolonial engagements with violence and terror (Amoore 2020; Bhattacharyya 2013; Das 2007; Puar [2007] 2018; Sjöberg 2009; Wilcox 2015), the analysis that this article rests upon is based on three central ideas: (a) the idea that terrorism and security are geopolitical practices underpinned by a dynamic struggle of power and space; (b) the idea that the theoretical and methodological focus should rest on material relations of terrorism/security nexus, seeking to ground their workings in situ through specific bodies, objects, and spaces; and finally (c) that performances of terror/security rely on mobilizing a range of visceral, affective, and emotional potentialities.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable growth of ethnographic research of the everyday impacts of terrorism, counterterror security, and radicalization discourses (De Koning 2021; Fadil et al. 2019; Kublitz 2021; Nguyen 2019) and the everyday memorialization practices following terrorist attacks (Gensburger 2017), however the site of the intimate as more than discursive is somewhat under-theorized, and it is rarely central to these important ethnographic studies. The site of the intimate is a compelling yet rather absent analytic for understanding the proliferating spatialities of terrorism and the interconnections between the global and the everyday accounts of terrorism. The intimate, as an analytic, invites relations of proximity that are lived “closer to the skin” (Pratt and Rosner 2012). Through these relations of proximity, the intimate engenders multiscale politics of location and difference that displaces the hierarchical scalar thinking of the relationship between the geopolitical and the everyday (Pain 2009). However, the intimate is still rather difficult to define, both theoretically and methodologically, and in order to strengthen the agenda that calls for the intimate entanglements of

(counter)terrorism (Ochs 2011; Pain 2009, 2014),¹ this article evaluates three conceptual frameworks through which scholars have begun to assess these intimacies. First, I review the concept of the body and/or embodiment and evaluate its deployment in research on counterterrorism. From the body, I shift to the concept of affect and/or emotion and expand on the studies that address the affectivities of (counter)terrorism. Finally, I focus on the emerging literature on antiviolence and peace as intimate practices that reframe the dominant terms of debate and strengthen ethical commitments of scholarship on counterterrorism and securitization.

Corporeal (Counter)Terrorism

Bodies are a crucial site for understanding the intimacies of terrorism and violence. Terrorism and violence are imposed upon bodies, and it is through the body that terrorism and violence are experienced, mediated, and also contested (Fassin 2011). Bodies are relevant subjects and objects of analysis that aim to “understand how power acts spatially in the world to control, regulate, confine, produce, construct, delimit, gender, racialize, and sex the body” (Mountz 2018: 759). Scholars vary significantly in how they define what a body is, where it begins and ends, and how it is to be apprehended. In this article, I rely on feminist, queer, and postcolonial engagement with the body and/or embodiment as a rich source of literature that seeks to bridge the persistent mind-body dualisms of Western rationalist thought. In this scholarship a body is understood as both a physical living matter and a discursively constructed entity. Bodies are dynamic sites where the representational and the lived dimensions intersect, where the material and immaterial are intertwined.

What is then the role of the body in discourses and practices of terror? To begin with, for feminist political scholars the bodies that the practices of violence take as their object are “deeply political bodies, constituted in reference to historical political conditions while at the same time acting upon the world” (Wilcox 2015: 3). The following section outlines how scholars have approached the site of the body in their engagement with (counter)terrorism. I elucidate some case studies where the body is a relevant analytic concept, theorized as an active subject and object of terror/security, rather than merely passively enrolled. I examine how the body can be thought of as a geopolitical weapon in order to enact and/or contest terrorist violence. I do so to understand the way the corporeal approach could offer a grounded and contextualized multiscalar analytic as well as highlight the contingency of the relations of power that underpin (counter)terrorist discourses and technologies.

Disciplined Bodies

The studies of the corporeal aspects of (counter)terrorism primarily rely on the analysis of the disciplined body. In other words, the body is regarded as an instrument of power, as it is being produced, managed, and manipulated through various regimes of terror/security. The focus of this line of inquiry is mainly on the way bodies are represented and on the consequences of such discursive representations. Most of the literature that investigates the role of the body in (counter)terrorism has focused on different technologies of terror/security. In particular, scholars have drawn attention to the technologies of biometrics and the screening of bodies in places such as airports, and they have examined the role of these particular depictions of bodies in enacting counterterrorist narratives. Through these technological representations, the body is reduced to its physical components, regarded as an inert material composite to be screened and indexed. Through screening technologies, this physical inert body is sometimes curtailed to sin-

gle body parts, such as the eye or the finger (Epstein 2008; Martin 2010). Moreover, with security algorithms, the bodies are also turned into digitized information. Louise Amoore (2009) investigates how these digitized bodies are read and how this data feeds into the production of algorithmic calculations. Biometric data are for Amoore crucial in understanding how terror threat is infused with life and how the body becomes an instrument of power in the contemporary terror/security regimes. Specifically, the algorithmic calculations perform and normalize the process of differentiating between bodies that need protection and bodies that are source of threat. As such, the security algorithms enact a form of power over life, or biopower, that saturates daily life in the US-led war on terror. The discursive and digitized representations of the risky body are part of the biopolitical mechanisms that “attempt to secure liberal life” (Anderson and Adey 2011: 1107). Drawing predominantly on the writings of Michel Foucault on biopower ([1977] 2007), these studies question the representations that rely on depicting bodies as inert objects to be differentially marked, counted, grouped, aggregated, with their meaning and effects being managed through the notion of the population and its statistical correlates. The disciplined body is thus subjected to power through the mundane technologies of the “algorithmic war.”

Apart from the focus on the different technologies of counterterrorism, embodiment as an analytic has been employed in inquiries into the legal and public framings of terrorism. The corporeal framework emphasizes how differently marked bodies are enrolled and interpellated in discourse on (counter)terrorism. This strand of research attends to embodied difference, thus providing critical insights on how these discourses rely on particular gender tropes, as well as deploy ideas on sexuality and race. The field of cultural studies has been particularly influential in highlighting the cultural dimensions of (counter)terrorist projects (Bhattacharyya 2013; Puar [2007] 2018) especially in the discursive framings of the war against Islamic terrorism. Gargi Bhattacharyya (2013) analyzes different cultural texts circulating within the UK framings on the war on terror to grasp the cultural dimensions of terrorism warfare. She shows how the UK response to terrorism has been framed as a war over values and culture that relies on the “clash of civilizations” discourse between “us” and “them,” “our” and “their” values. In addition to demonstrating how the legal and the cultural framings of terrorism overlap and are interconnected, these studies show how geopolitical violence rests on the discursive representations of the body. In this discourse, bodies play an important role through the processes of gendering, racialization, and sexualization. Specifically, narratives on gender tropes and women’s bodies reinforce the masculinist and statist notion of protection of women against “Islamic oppression,” while the depictions of race and sexuality construct the notion of a supposedly latent homosexuality of “brown men.”

Differently marked bodies are discursively produced through an intersectional logic that works to reinforce nationalist narratives of “us” versus “them.” The production of orientalist terrorist bodies is also the focus of Jasbir Puar’s ([2007] 2018) study of the US framing of Islamic terrorism. Through the analysis of cultural texts and visual material, she reveals the discursive deployment of Muslim sexuality and the Islamic oppression of gays in the war on terror. The United States in turn constructs itself as the defender of the queer body, as a way to position itself against “Islamic homophobia.” In this way, the proper queer becomes incorporated into the US imperialist and national project in the war on terror. The queer subject thus upholds US nation-building vis-à-vis its Islamic other, a process Puar calls homonationalism. Puar’s work reveals how embodiment and categories of difference are entangled with violence in sometimes contradictory ways. The abject body of the queer in the heteronormative constitution of the US nation state becomes discursively transformed into a proper queer that in turn is incorporated into the nationalist project. Moreover, she analyses the photos of the torture and sexual

humiliation of detainees in Abu Ghraib detention camp released in May 2004 and questions the way they reproduce terrorist bodies as abject bodies. These representations are put to use to legitimize the violence and humiliation imposed on those bodies (Puar [2007] 2018; see also Heath-Kelly and Jarvis 2017). The scholarship on corporeal terrorism has thus voiced important critiques on the gendered, racialized, and sexualized labeling of terrorism and exposed the consequences of those representations for legitimizing the violence to which mostly Muslim and Arab communities are subjected.

Addressing the material consequences and the effects of the particular discursive renditions of bodies is further elaborated in the work of Jennifer Fluri (2014). As Amoore (2009) and others have argued, terrorist threat has suffused quotidian life to the point where sites of terror threat multiply. A terror attack is depicted as something that can strike anytime, anywhere (see Batley, this issue). Yet, while the terror threat may be everywhere, it is important to understand its differential impacts and uneven distribution across global space. This critique is articulated by Fluri (2014) in her analysis of the discursive depictions of Afghan bodies in the US war on terror. She questions the differential impact of the terrorist violence suffered by different bodies in different places, furthering the study of the embodied geographies of violence that underpin the US war on terror. In doing so, she argues for the importance of spatial displacement in securing US military violence. Using different case studies, she illustrates “the disparate techniques for shaping US citizens’ imagination of ‘terror’ as potentially ‘everywhere,’ while simultaneously situating the US military W/war ‘over there’ (‘elsewhere’) as part of securing the homeland. This move is coupled with the continual placement of military violence and hostile bodies *elsewhere*” (Fluri 2014: 810; emphasis in text).

Embodied Practices of Terror/Security

In these aforementioned works, bodies are conceptualized as produced and disciplined through various representational regimes, yet they leave little room to envisage transformations and contestations of the disciplinary apparatus. In order to go beyond the disciplined body, some scholars have embraced the concept of performativity as a way to reflect on the repetitive practices—sayings and doings—that constitute subjects and objects of terror/security. Cindi Katz (2007) draws attention to the normalized reminders of terror in urban environments that often go unnoticed. She takes the example of the presence of the camouflaged US military soldiers patrolling the streets of New York City as an instance of such visual and embodied repetitive enactments of terror threat. Katz examines how, even though the occurrence of terrorist attacks continues to be rare in the US, terrorism becomes part of the urban environment, a process she calls “banal terrorism.” For her, “banal terrorism is sutured to—and secured in—the performance of security in the everyday environment” (Katz 2007: 351), operating on the scale of the body and the scale of the urban. These performative practices thus work to stabilize the meaning of a terrorist threat. The concept of performativity as a repetitive enactment of terror/security is also used by Lauren Martin (2010). She uses the example of the banning of the bomb joke at the US airport security checkpoints to address the construction of the “subject of security” through the embodied performativity of the speech act. Martin (2010) uses document analysis to examine the disciplining of speech in the war on terror and how these repetitive interventions are central in an on-going process of subjectification. While the focus on the performativity of terrorism emphasizes the importance of embodied practices, there is still very little empirical focus on the corporeal performances of different “subjects of security.” What is more, scholars are only beginning to understand how terror/security has impacted the embodied practices of non-white subjects, especially the Muslim and Arab communities. Several studies stand as

an important exception, such as the work by Jaafar Alloul (2019) on the digital media performances of the “foreign terrorist fighters,” as well as the work of Gabe Mythen, Sandra Walklate, and Fatima Khan (2009) that uses focus groups with the Muslim community in the UK. The latter study sheds some light on the complex practices of security and enactments of identity and subjectivity in public space by a community that has been a target of suspicion as part of the UK counterterrorism strategy (see also Hussain and Bagguley 2012; De Koning 2021 in the case of Netherlands; Kublitz 2021 in the case of Denmark; Hergon, this issue, in the case of France).

The corporeal aspects of counterterrorism have mostly been explored in the “West” and there is a noted absence of studies on the embodied terrorism in the places outside the United States or Europe. This critique is also formulated by Daanish Mustafa, Nausheen Anwar, and Amiera Sawas in their research on the role of the body in terrorism in Pakistan, a place “at the epicenter of the neo-realist, militarist geopolitics of anti-terrorism” (Mustafa et al. 2019: 54). They focus on domestic violence as an example of everyday terrorism in Pakistan and as such, this work is paramount in broadening the scope of what is regarded as terrorism and who is considered the subject and object of counterterrorism. This study follows the work of Rachel Pain (2014, 2015) that argues for framing domestic violence as a form of terrorism in order to understand how global terrorism and domestic violence intersect (see also Sjoberg 2015). The incipient scholarship on domestic violence presents an important effort to “remap terrorism” onto the level of the intimate and the experiential. The site of the body is here crucial to pose different questions onto terror/security: “Whose securities, from which terrorisms, do . . . state responses prioritize?” (Pain 2014: 539).

While the work on domestic violence as a form of terrorism is important for understanding the site of the intimate, and despite these important works, extensive empirical studies on embodiment continue to be scarce. Still quite rare are ethnographies that pay attention to corporealities of (counter)terrorism, with some notable exceptions. The aforementioned research has laid the essential groundwork for understanding discursive, legal, and public framings of the body in discourses on terrorism, and researchers are beginning to turn to ethnography as a method to grasp how these discourse on the body are put to use, practiced, negotiated, and contested in a variety of settings. One such setting is the courtroom where legal framings of terrorism manifest materially through embodied court proceedings. In extremely rare ethnographic courtroom research on Islamic terrorism in Germany, Sarah Klosterkamp shows the ways embodiment plays an important role in the court, arguing that “disembodiment might heighten, enable, or mute the layers of power at work in the courtroom, dehumanizing the defendant or respondent and ultimately enabling unjust decisions” (Faria et al. 2020: 1103). And finally, there has been a growth of ethnographic work on radicalization that has become an important and widespread state strategy of countering terrorism (Alloul 2019; Jaminé and Fadil 2019; Kublitz 2021; Nguyen 2019). The discourse of radicalization has gained prominence as an “empty signifier” to fight “the homegrown terrorist” in such diverse settings, ranging from the US CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) Task Force and the UK Prevent strategy, to the policing of the Chinese Uyghur population. Scholars such as Silke Jaminé and Nadia Fadil (2019) in the context of Belgium and Nicole Nguyen (2019) in the context of the United States use institutional ethnography to uncover the intricate ways their countries’ respective de-radicalization programs are put to use by a variety of state actors—from teachers and social workers to mental health professionals. While the site of the body is not a central analytic in these studies, here we begin to glimpse the complex and contradictory ways counterterrorism is scaled down to the level of the body and the site of the intimate as these actors are instructed to be vigilant, to observe, assess and police suspect behavior.

In many of these studies, the body can be understood as both an object and a subject of discourses of terror/security, however the materiality of the body that exceeds or is not fully absorbed into discourse is rarely explored. The analysis of the “messy” bodies, bodies that fail to be incorporated into disciplinary regimes of terror/security, and bodies that become sites of resistance to those regimes are still underdeveloped. The apparatus of terror/security emerges through the bodies, it is not merely written and inscribed on them. The following section therefore turns to the affective, emotional, sensorial, and atmospheric dimensions of the lived body as a way to affirm its active and visceral role in discourses and practices of terror.

Affective (Counter)Terrorism

This section addresses affective dimensions of (counter)terrorism as another conceptual tool to expose the material and intimate experience of terrorism and violence. In the previous section, I began to outline the potential limits of the framework on embodiment for understanding the intimacies of (counter)terrorism. Most notably, there is a lack of attention to the lived body and the realms of the sensory, visceral, emotional, and affective dimensions of experience. In order to deepen our grasp of the body as more than a surface, or a flat material composite, this section elucidates the different ways scholars have employed the concepts of affect, emotions, atmospheres, or bodily senses to understand the workings of (counter)terrorism.

In this article, I approach emotions and affect as relational, contextual, and shared entities rather than bounded and individualized feelings. The works analyzed below engage with a critical understanding of emotions and affect that stand in contrast with some efforts at “psychologizing” terrorism. For example, Simon Cottee and Keith Hayward (2011) research on emotive reasons why people become terrorists is an example of such (pseudo) “psychologizing” where emotions (mostly fear and hatred) are conceptualized as fixed inner reified feelings or “basic existential desires” that work to naturalize and individualize “terrorist subjectivities,” rendering emotions as forces from “the dark ages.” In contrast, this article foregrounds emotions and affect not as things or objects that a person can have, but as relations that emerge in contact between different bodies. I draw on feminist conceptualizations of affect as shared, material, and social (Ahmed 2004; Berlant 2011) to highlight affect as productive of social and political relations and produced by them. The following section does not seek to place a strict separation between the concepts of emotion, affect, and atmosphere but rather examines how they are put to use by different scholars and assesses the benefits they yield for re-conceptualizing (counter)terrorism.

Fear, Vigilance, Suspicion: Normative Affects of Terror/Security

Terrorism has been predominantly understood through its relation to the emotion of fear. However, as Pain concludes: “In literatures on global terrorism, fear and trauma are often mentioned, but their existence and effects are more often assumed than empirically documented” (Pain 2014: 538). While the media and some scholarly reports suggest that the widespread fear of terrorism in the West is driving political actions, some empirical studies of fear show its rather limited reach (Pain and Smith 2008). Moreover, the strategic exploitation of emotion, considered core to contemporary politics, is taken for granted as a top-down process. That is to say, “there is uneasy assumption that discourses deployed to manipulate people’s feelings are produced and circulated by political actors and their various institutions in ways that make people passively experience and reflect those emotions in their daily life” (Laketa 2016a: 664). Tending

to embodied emotions challenges these views and a great example of such scholarship is the study by Monique Skidmore (2003) of the affective dimensions of living under state terror in Burma (Myanmar). In her work, she depicts the emotions of fear as flat ordinary affects, rather than amplified emotional and affective states, and analyzes the strategies of survival under the conditions of everyday fear and terror.

Besides fear, other affective and emotional states that have been examined in relation to (counter)terrorism are somewhat more ambiguous and difficult to pin down. One of them is the notion of morale, especially as it is articulated thorough the US “shock and awe” model for combating terrorism. Ben Anderson (2010b) focuses on the workings of the notorious “shock and awe” doctrine using document analysis of US army manuals. For him, this doctrine is a form of biopolitical power that has direct psychological effects on people’s bodies by creating fear and anxiety, paralyzing resistance, and undermining morale. As such, the doctrine presents one way “affects are known, rendered actionable and intervened on” (2010b: 219). The biopolitical affect is also the target of another US strategy for countering terrorism—the “winning hearts and minds” strategy. This method was employed both in the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Anderson 2011), as well as on the home front of the US war on terror (Nguyen 2019). Hopes, expectations, “popular support” become sites of state and military action to combat terrorism. The US military manuals accentuate the psychological dimensions of warfare, where an understanding of this psychological dimension “is based on an unruly combination of behaviourism, cognitive and affective neuroscience, systems theory and, most often, a folk psychology refracted through military experience” (Anderson 2011: 219). The textual analysis here informs us how affects are managed, normalized, and made predictable at the level of the population. On the other hand, it tells little on how these affective manipulations are experienced by the people who are targets of these tactics. One of the rare empirical studies on the targets of these tactics is the study by Pain (2015) on domestic violence as everyday terrorism. The study is based on qualitative interviews with survivors of domestic violence in the UK, and it addresses the effects and the impact of the strategies of “shock and awe” and “winning hearts and minds” as they trace the connections between military and domestic violence.

Affective dimensions of (counter)terrorism have also been assessed through the ambiguous affective register of watchfulness, vigilance, and suspicion. Mark Maguire and Pete Fussey (2016) investigate “counterterrorism trainings” of different security agents in the UK to understand the way suspicion is put to use as a counterterrorist strategy. The analysis reveals the way these security manuals and trainings draw on the language of natural science to naturalize emotions as primitive instincts. The counterterrorism training deployment draws on socio-biology and evolutionary biology as it instructs how to detect behavioral changes in potential terror suspects, to detect deceit through micro-facial expressions, as well as to follow gut feelings and hunches. Here, suspicion is naturalized as an instinctive reaction, thus eliding the historic, political, and racialized construct of suspicion. For Sara Ahmed “the word terrorist sticks to some bodies as it reopens past histories of naming, just as it slides into other words” (Ahmed 2004: 131). Suspicious bodies are created through circulations of affect in, what she names, affective economies. Therefore, she contends that suspicion does not reside positively in any certain subject, but rather circulates between subjects and objects. Suspicion as an affective register also works at the level of anticipation and pre-emptive temporality. Vigilance, suspicion, radicalization, all form the anticipatory regimes of governance of terrorism (Anderson 2010a). In other words, suspicion sticks to bodies that are anticipated as dangerous, rather than known as dangerous (see also Puar [2007] 2018). Moreover, emotions of suspicion become “traits of good citizenship” (Ochs 2011: 12) in the state orchestration of countering terrorism.

In recent years, there has been a rise of the discourses and practices of “situational awareness” in an effort to construct “resilience” as a way to combat urban terrorism. As Susanne Krasmann and Christine Hentschel argue: “An imaginative, practical and affective repertoire of ‘situational awareness’ is entering the governance of urban threats” (2019: 182). Drawing examples from recent implementation of situational awareness training as an urban counterterrorist strategy employed by the German Federal Police, Krasmann and Hentschel (2019) argue for the relevance of the sensorial and phenomenological underpinnings of “situational awareness” that goes beyond the significant reliance on visual culture in the project of the state engineering of vigilance (exemplified in “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign for enhancing vigilance employed in cities across Europe and the United States). This “culture of vigilance” is more than visual and the concept of affect allows some scholars to go beyond the ocular in order to grasp other sensorial and phenomenological dimensions. In other words, “situational awareness” involves not only on detecting what “looks out of place,” but also on what feels out of place. Similarly, the analysis by Kerrin-Sina Arfsten (2019) of the official US state documents that address “situational awareness” maintains that affective intensities of unease and discomfort compose of a range of senses that work in relation to and beyond the visual and that form an important part of state-engineered vigilance (for the management of the sense of touch in creating watchful citizens, see Amoores 2007).

In the aforementioned works, the focus is predominantly on normative orchestrations of affect, gathered through textual and visual analysis of documents and images. The texts that scholars study are both official state documents as well as popular culture (for additional examples of the role on emotions and affect in popular renderings of terrorism, see Heath-Kelly and Jarvis 2017). The affective politics of (counter)terrorism addresses socio-cultural power in shaping politics, yet there is also a need to go beyond the instrumental logic of affect within contemporary terror/security. If we understand affect as a force, an action-potential, that also exceeds our attempts to represent and symbolize, then there is a need for further research on affective (counter)terrorism that exceeds normative framings.

Affective and Sensorial Atmospheres of Terror

The ethnographies that address the affectivities of (counter)terrorism provide an important corrective on the way discursive renderings of terrorism are taken up by a variety of actors. An excellent example of such scholarship is the work of Juliana Ochs (2011) on the everyday impacts of the Israeli state discourses on terrorist threats. She takes a phenomenological approach to the embodied experiences of Israeli Jews to understand how these state discourses on terror manifest themselves through the site of the intimate. It forms an extensive account of the bodily habits of alertness, fleeting gestures of suspicion, and the embodied fear and hypervigilance of Israeli Jews as particular subjects of security, ones “whom security claims to protect” (Ochs 2011: 15). Furthermore, the study by Mette-Louise Johansen (2018) on the “politics of anxiety” in the war on terror employs institutional ethnography to understand the emotions of state actors—the social workers and the police officers—involved in the program of countering violent extremism (CVE) in Denmark. She addresses the state actors’ own sense of anxiety but also the fear of moral outrage as a powerful emotional driving mechanism guiding the differential application of CVE. Such studies begin to offer some potential openings in how (counter)terrorism is framed and negotiated. Moreover, they conceptualize emotions as “contained” within our (human) bodies and particular subjectivities. On the other hand, some scholars employ the concept of affective atmospheres to grasp how affect spreads between bodies, which include, in this framing, both human and non-human material composites.

The qualitative and ethnographic investigations onto affective atmospheres of terrorism center on the affective relations that surpass and exceed subject positions. These studies focus on a range of materialities that constitute the terrain of terror/security. Moreover, the concept of affective atmospheres acknowledges affect and emotions as doings. As such, emotions and affect are considered spatial phenomena—they shape the contours of social space and are in turn shaped by the space. Patrick Murphy (2012) uses the concept of affective atmospheres to understand terrorism as a background presence, exploring ordinary affects of terror/security in urban public spaces of London. Affective atmospheres of terrorism have also been studied in relation to the practices of memorialization of terrorist attacks (Closs Stephens et al. 2017). This work emphasizes the significance of fleeing encounters that help forge affective communities in ways that unsettle the normative state narrative of the nation under threat and thus “contribute towards ways of resisting the familiar responses that follow terrorist attacks” (Closs Stephens et al. 2017: 50). The work on the affective atmospheres of (counter)terrorism draws attention to relations that exceed normative framing. However, this work has tended to largely ignore or put aside questions of social difference in a problematic attempt to isolate the body outside of different power configurations. On the other hand, Shiva Zarabadi’s (2020) work with young Muslim schoolgirls in the UK puts to the fore the processes of subjectivity formation as they are materialized through the affects of terror threat. She shows how the policies on de-radicalization and the discourses on identifying potential “terrorists” in schools create specific threat-assemblages in classrooms, affectively recasting young Muslim female subjectivities.

Finally, there is only a handful of studies that address the affective dimensions of terrorism outside the US and European context, and outside the war on Islamic terror. Sarah Luna’s 2018 study is an ethnographic investigation of the affective atmospheres of terror in relation to Mexican state combat against drug trafficking. She turns to the performativities of terror along the Mexico-United States border and addresses the embodied vulnerabilities and intimacies with which the residents experience and encounter violence in their everyday life. Furthermore, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2016) investigates the affective dimensions of life under Israeli state terror in the occupied East Jerusalem. She argues that the state terror relies not only on physical violence of the occupation, but also the occupation of the senses, “referring to the sensory technologies that manage bodies, language, sight, time and space in the colony” (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2016: 1279). Shalhoub-Kevorkian uses participant observation in everyday activities as a resident of East Jerusalem to address how the sensory and embodied experience becomes a weapon of the psychological occupation of the colonized. She explores how the sounds, sights, and orchestrated affective atmospheres reinforce the Jewish dominance in that space, but also how Palestinian citizens resist and alter these affective atmospheres through embodied practices in public spaces. These studies mark an important push to address the visceral and sensory dimensions of terror violence and draw attention to the field of possibilities where such violence is contested and resisted.

Intimate Peace and Antiviolence

The final section assesses the way the site of the intimate is deployed to create alternative visions of (counter)terrorism. The theoretical and methodological focus on the site of the intimate offers an opening onto a different perspective of terrorist violences. Here I engage with intimate renderings of peace and antiviolence in order to re-frame the dominant terms of debate on terror/security.

In the previous sections, we explored how the intimate renderings of (counter)terrorism offer grounded and contextualized reflections that go beyond totalizing accounts of terrorism. This work has been essential in grasping the shifting spatialities of terror, the home, the city, the globe, and exposing the interlocking effects of multiple forms of violence, from domestic violence as everyday terrorism to the global terror of both state and non-state actors. It also elucidates how the actions of “those identified as the state and those perceived as terroristic come to mirror each other; where acts called counterterrorism create the very reality they contest” (Ochs 2011: 12). Furthermore, by centering on the bodies and their affective potentialities, this scholarship begins to underscore the contingency of the relations of power that underpin terrorism. Drawing on these insights, this chapter seeks to move the academic work on (counter)terrorism beyond the critique of the dominant narratives and practices of securitization. By seeking to understand change and transformation of the various landscapes of terrorism, the focus on intimate renderings of peace and antiviolence offers alternative epistemologies that could inform activist scholarly position. Doing so, I argue, exposes often neglected quotidian struggles of undoing violence, creates alternative politics, and strengthens ethical commitments of academic work.

In order to understand the role of the body and affect in undoing terrorist violence, I engage with definitions of peace and antiviolence suggested by feminist and antiracist scholars and activists. In this scholarship, peace is foremost understood as a process. Peace is considered performative, contingent, and unfixed process, one that is enabled and constrained through embodied practices. Antiviolence, on the other hand, is a distinct praxis that grew out of social justice movements in the United States, and it “is not synonymous with nonviolence as it typically is understood as a ‘virtue [or] a position . . . [or] a set of principles to be applied universally’” (Butler [2009] 2016: 171, as cited in Loyd 2012: 483). Antiviolence presents a way to challenge state-oriented liberal notions of peacemaking and helps forge different narratives. It is a praxis that is based on an intersectional and situated experience of violence that addresses the interlocking effects of different power structures—political, economic and cultural. The praxis of antiviolence, in the words of Jenna Loyd, “offers not only a powerful analytic for understanding connections among forms of violence and uneven spaces of harm and well-being, but also a practical way of bridging spheres of organizing that could otherwise remain discrete” (2012: 485). The site of the intimate opens up space to encompass plural geographies of peace, where peace has overlapping and competing meanings. Here, the body plays an important role as the focus on the body literally “makes space for peace” (Koopman 2011). In her writings on “anti-geopolitics,” Sara Koopman states: “I am interested in how geopolitics is thought differently not just by writing about bodies, but by moving bodies” (Koopman 2011: 277). Emotions and affect, on the other hand, offer a way to understand how bodies are moved, and how bodies are aligned in social spaces. In other words, emotions can be shared, but they can also differentiate.

There has been some important nascent work on understanding the practices of peace in relation to domestic violence as everyday terrorism. For example, the work of Katherine Brickell (2015) forefronts the importance of peace research in the home, as a form of intimate peace. In a qualitative study of domestic violence in Cambodia, she sets an important path toward understanding the complex geographies of peace at home and the way they are formed in relation to such everyday terrorism. On the other hand, the work of Chih Yuan Woon (2011, 2013) sets the stage for investigations into the role of emotions in constituting intimate peace. Woon’s study of the effects of the US-led war on terror on the residents of the Southern Philippines island of Mindanao is an excellent example of the way emotions are put to use and even strategically deployed to shape practices of antiviolence. Woon (2011) uses participant action research (PAR)

methodologies with activist groups on the island and in doing so, he shows how a shared sense of vulnerability among the participants shapes their practices of political organizing shaped by a shared sense of vulnerability among the participants. He argues that activist groups subvert and contest terrorist discourses by giving priority to state-induced vulnerabilities and marginalization due to predominantly socio-economic precarity and state neglect. The emotions of fear are thus modified and shaped into other affectivities that help foster alliances and connections across difference: “By purposefully transforming and reformulating such fears into other modalities of emotions for the advancement of peace, this collaborative effort illustrates the broader significance of going beyond a natural conjoining of fear and violence” (Woon 2011: 295). Thus, the affective dimensions of power are crucial in understanding the way different collectivities are made and remade in ways that exceed the normative framing of the nation or the state. The embodied emotions of care and vulnerability work here as an antidote to state narrative on security and fear in the war on terror (Butler [2009] 2016). Given the previously discussed dominant orchestrations of emotions of fear and discourses of “us” versus “them” that underpin state responses to terrorism, emotions of shared vulnerabilities inform the possibilities of undoing violence. Those emotions center on interconnectedness and mutual interdependencies that undermine and subvert the “us” versus “them” framing of the war on terror.

This work demonstrates that the notion of intimate peace and antiviolence does not rest on the agency of the sovereign subject, but rather highlights relational affective and emotional alliances that shape the plural geographies of peace. The praxis of antiviolence in addressing terrorism exposes how terrorist violence is suffused with other marginalizations that span domestic and international spheres and how antiviolence organizing in undoing (counter)terrorist violence could address their interlocking effects, from economic precarity, and environmental degradation to racial and gendered discrimination. Furthermore, the focus on the intimacies of peace and antiviolence in relation to terrorism affirms the entangled and complex role of the academic researcher. Some researchers adopt an activist scholar position (Koopman 2011; Loyd 2012), while others engage in more participatory action research (Woon 2011). Many of these studies further underscore the emotionality of the research processes itself and the emotions of fear, frustration, and embodied responsibility that accompanies such research (Skidmore 2003; Woon 2013). The emotional fieldwork into the intimacies of terror/security thus forms the basis of more ethical scholarly engagements based on shared alliances and vulnerabilities.

Conclusion

The site of the intimate is a noticeably missing analytic in the scholarly engagements with (counter)terrorism. In order to inspire and foster further research into the subject, this article has considered the varied and interdisciplinary approaches that bring to the fore the intimacies of (counter)terrorism. Specifically, I assessed how scholars have employed the conceptual and methodological framework on embodiment, affect, and broadly lived experience in order to grasp these intimacies. The main argument of the article is that this framework does not merely extend the apparatus of terror/security to lived experience, but rather seeks to reframe the dominant notions of what terror/security is, how it is practiced, by whom, and with what effects. The bodies and the affective relations that constitute the landscape of the intimate (counter)terrorism are more than just instruments of power whose role is to either advance or subvert the political order. Rather, this framework propels us to interrogate a multiplicity of forces that mark the relationship between the political and the corporeal, highlighting their unpredictable linkages and their mobile, volatile nature.

The body as an analytic of (counter)terrorism has been explored predominantly in relation to different technologies of terror/security. The technologies of biometrics, screening and algorithmic calculations exemplify how the body is managed, manipulated, differently marked, produced, and specified through techniques of discipline and governmentality. Others have investigated how this disciplined body is always gendered, racialized, and sexualized in particular ways. The discourse on the US and European war on Islamic terror constructs and interpellates, or hails, the orientalized terrorist body as part of their on-going nation-building processes. These discourses and technologies of the body work to demarcate and differentiate between risky, abject bodies and bodies that need to be protected. This enacting of power over life, or biopower, in the war on terror is normalized and suffused in a mundane environment with direct material consequences for the predominantly targeted Muslims and Arab communities. Besides the focus on the discursive production of the body through terror/security technologies and narratives, scholars have paid attention to the embodied practices and performativities of (counter)terrorism in a variety of settings, ranging from everyday terrorism of domestic violence in homes to the workings of global terror in courts, schools, and urban public spaces. The body figures prominently in these theorizations on the workings of (counter)terrorism, yet there is a lack of attention to “messy” bodies, ones that are ambiguously positioned to the discourses of terror/security. Moreover, the body itself remains a black box, as the lived corporeal experience is often left unknown and the bodies rich sensing worlds remain hidden.

To foreground the dynamic materiality of bodies, some scholars have turned to the concepts of affect, emotion, and atmospheres to examine the visceral forces at play in constituting a terror threat and the responses to it. The emotions of fear and trauma are widely mentioned in both scholarly and media reports on terrorism. In the wide-ranging reports on fear and terror, we often encounter totalizing claims about the “age of fear” in contemporary, mostly Western, societies. These sweeping claims are, however, rarely empirically grounded. Moreover, they tend to assume people as passive recipients of these global political manipulations of fear. In addition to the growth of literature on embodied fear that challenges these views, there is also a burgeoning scholarly interest in taking account of other affective and emotional modalities of (counter)terrorism. Some of them include ambiguous affective states of vigilance, suspicion, and situational awareness in state efforts to create watchful citizens. Others draw attention to the complex affective dimensions of psychological warfare, such as the “shock and awe” and “winning hearts and minds” strategies, as they are often employed by perpetrators of domestic violence and notably by the US military in their war against terror, both internally and abroad. In these studies, there is a tendency to “read” affect predominantly through textual analysis, and the studies of affect that rely on the analysis of live affective scenes, events, and encounters are still quite rare. As a result, affect is often rendered merely a tool for manipulation of the population in ways that further statist and elitist goals and perpetuates political and military violences. The literature on the affective atmospheres, on the other hand, draws attention to the lived materialities and to the different senses, sites, objects, and non-human bodies that form affective relations, thus opening up the field of possibilities that exceeds normative orchestrations of affect.

Finally, the site of the intimate engenders multiscalar politics of location and difference that inform potentialities for peace and antiviolence. While extensive qualitative and ethnographic studies on terrorism and counter-terrorism are severely underrepresented, the scholarship presented here forms an essential background platform for furthering antiviolence and peace as a response to terrorism. The practices of intimate peace are grounded in historically and geographically specific accounts of terror/security that acknowledge how different bodies are impacted by such violences in different ways. Scholars have begun to understand the role of bodies, collectivities, and their affective potentialities in fostering peace and creating affective

communities based on care and vulnerability that stands in contrast to dominant “us” versus “them” notions of terrorism and security. To further this research, scholars rely on a range of methodologies in the process of the co-production and cultivation of knowledge together with grassroots organizations and other collectivities as a way to produce a more accountable scholarship. Lastly, the processes of intimate peace and antiviolence animate an activist scholarly position, as it moves beyond the criticism of the terror/security apparatus into practices that enable envisioning change and transformation.

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■ **SUNČANA LAKETA** is a feminist political and urban geographer, working as an SNF Ambizione Fellow at the University of Neuchâtel. In her work, she attends to affective and emotional geographies of (post)conflict cities. Her recent publications examine the geopolitical dimensions of affect and emotions, performative subjectivities and landscapes in the “divided” city of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her current research investigates the urban affective atmospheres of security and terror threats in Paris and Brussels. ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9689-6953> | Email: suncana.laketa@unine.ch

■ NOTES

1. While this article addresses the discourses and practices of terror/security, it acknowledges the broad and related scholarship on the intimate dimensions of life in a situation of warfare, protracted conflict, post-conflict and trauma, as well as the literatures on the embodied impacts of militarism, counterinsurgency and policing (for a detailed account on the affective resonances of violence across “ordinary” and “conflict” cities, see Fregonese, this issue).

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