Terrorism in Context: Race, Religion, Party, and Violent Conflict in Zanzibar[1]

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Sociology has had plenty to say about terrorism.[2] We do not have a subfield on the sociology of terrorism, nor should we. Terrorism is a political label, and well intentioned scholarly attempts to define the study of "it" may only reify its political uses and cloud our understanding (Tilly, 2004). We certainly need tools to understand the origins, trajectories, and outcomes of political violence and there is plenty of scholarly work on political violence, revolutions, conflict, and social movements that can lead us in that direction. In this paper we will draw on a case study of violent political conflict that has been labeled "terrorist" in Zanzibar, an island in the Indian Ocean currently a part of Tanzania. We will examine the political opportunities and social movement organizations as they have framed and mobilized racial and religious conflicts on the island. We use this case to illustrate three points relevant to the study of terrorism that have been argued in the sociological literature on social movements and violent conflict. First, "terrorists" are rational actors; second, terrorism is one of many tactics potentially used by any social movement to achieve political ends; and third, terrorism is relational, that is, its rise and trajectory must be understood in relation to other groups, and in response to perceptions of threat.

Zanzibar is on the map of the United States "War Against Terror" primarily because three suspected bombers in the 1998 al-Qaeda attack on the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania were from Zanzibar. Twelve were killed in Dar es Salaam and 213 in Nairobi. Khalfan Khamis Mohamed was convicted in 2001 by a U.S. court for his role in the attacks. Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, has been indicted for his alleged role in the attacks and is listed on the FBI's most wanted terrorists list. Rashidi Saleh Hemed has been charged by a Tanzanian court with conspiracy to commit murder for his alleged role (Sultan, 2004). According to newspaper reports, after the September 11 attacks in the United States, Islamic fundamentalists in Zanzibar were distributing lists in some mosques seeking vol-

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unteers to aid Osama bin Laden (Lacey, 2002). Four years later there were news reports that Muslim extremists were recruiting young Zanzibaris to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan (Sultan, 2004). In January 2003 the U.S. Treasury identified the Tanzanian branch of a Saudi Arabian charity, the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, as key in helping plan the embassy bombings. The U.S. State Department then issued an advisory warning Americans not to travel to Zanzibar. This warning was copied quickly by Britain, Canada, Norway, and Italy, crippling Zanzibar's tourist industry, which is the second largest source of income to the island (Dougherty, 2004).

Of most concern to Zanzibaris is violence on the island itself. In the months following a hotly disputed election in 2000, there were nine bombings targeting local bars, wealthy tourist resorts and political headquarters. Government police killed 40 people and arrested 59 individuals. Violence increased again in 2004. Following incidents of government suppressions of Muslim religious events, a Catholic church, a school bus, a police car, and an electrical transformer were set on fire. A grenade was thrown onto a restaurant table where an American and a British diplomat were dining, but it failed to explode. The residence of the Minister of Transport was bombed, and in a separate incident, the residence of a government appointed religious leader, the mufti of Zanzibar was bombed. There have been several incidents of protests turning violent.

The conflict in Zanzibar has a long history. Race and religion have played a central role in Zanzibar politics. Because of its location along trade routes in the Indian Ocean, Zanzibar is a hybrid of Arab, Persian, and African cultures. A thousand-year history of racial intermarriage and assimilation, complicated by colonization, means that racial categories are themselves socially-defined. A Zanzibari native told a reporter, "in Zanzibar you can't identify who's Arab and who's not, there is so much mixed blood," (Aidi, 2001). But these categories nonetheless have been used to allocate resources. More recently, socialist revolution, unification with Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and the recent imposition of multi-party democracy has further complicated and recreated racial divisions along political party lines, and has made Zanzibar a volatile racialized state. Zanzibar is also 95 percent Muslim, mostly Sunni, compared with a predominantly Christian mainland Tanzania. Most recently, the increasing strength of radical Islamist movements globally has helped mobilized the youth (age 18-35) and brought them into party politics.

In the years since colonial rule, political parties have provided the organizational frame for religious and racial conflict on the island (Mmuya and Chaligha, 1993; Mmuya and Chaligha, 1994; Mmuya, Chaligha, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1992; Mukandala and Othman, 1994; Mukangara, 2000). Today, the Civic United Front (CUF), the second largest political party in Zanzibar, largely represents the local Arab and Muslim population. The ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) represents those of African heritage and Christian religions. Although, according to one scholar, "this idiom of race has come to be an expression of status rather than color, so much so that those who identify themselves as Arab or Shirazi could hardly pass a genetic test for proof" (Mbwiliza, 2000: 30).

The current political conflicts on the islands dates back to 1995, when the CUF refused to accept the results of that year's general elections, saying the vote had been rigged in favor of the long-ruling CCM. The opposition party repeated the allegations after elections were held on October and November 2000, and they

boycotted Zanzibar's regional parliament (*Baraza la Mapinduzi*) and Tanzania's national legislature (*Bunge*). An international team of observers reported that the 2000 elections were plagued with violence and corruption. In January 2001, at least 33 people were killed in Zanzibar when police opened fire on opposition supporters who had flouted a government ban on a demonstration.

More recent violence comes as Muslims complain of discrimination and increasing attempts by the ruling government to control Muslim affairs. There are also complaints that CCM is importing voters from the mainland. The Zanzibar government, following pressure from the U.S. government has adopted anti-terrorist laws that target Muslims. The Zanzibar government is applying the label of terrorism to the challenging political party who it sees as responsible for the violence. The challenging CUF denies connections with bombings, and accuses the ruling CCM of the bombings to justify repressing the CUF. Terrorism thus has become, as it often is, a label used to justify repression and escalate conflict.

In this paper, we will outline the ways in which political institutions have framed racial politics and conflict on the islands, and examine the increasing role of religion in the construction of identity and mobilization of members of youth political movements. We argue that the construction of racial and religious identities as organized by political parties has led to an increasing mobilization of youth in a context of global religious polarization. Party structure has provided the organizational base for mobilizing racial and religious conflict. We will argue that the violence allegedly coming out of this youth arm of the opposition political party is a strategic choice in response to the perception of oppression by the government, and the violence is but one tactic used to achieve political ends. Further, government labels of terrorism and increasing repression have motivated an escalation of violence. Multiparty democracy and party conflicts have provided the political opportunity for escalating violence.

Our research is based on interviews and ethnographic data gathered in the summer of 2003 from an allegedly militant Islamic youth arm of an opposition political party in Zanzibar. We conducted 40 in-depth interviews with members and leaders of two of the largest youth political movements in Zanzibar, the Zanzibar Youth Forum (ZYF) and the Blue and White Guards, the youth arms of the opposition political party, the Civic Union Front. One of the authors is a native Tanzanian, and conducted the interviews in Swahili. There are about 15 youth movements in Zanzibar standing for various principles and social issues. The ZYF has 3,000 members; 2,500 on Zanzibar Island; and 500 on Pemba Island, while Blue and White Guards have a total of more than 5,000 members. Sampling was purposive—officials of the movements gave us a list of names and we selected the subjects from the lists. Each interview lasted 45 to 90 minutes. We also gathered field texts from some of the members with whom we did not speak.

Ethnographic data was gathered over two months at three sites in Zanzibar. The first was at the ZYF offices in the middle of Stone Town at a place called Forodhani, where they gave us an office space specifically for in-depth interviews during the day. The second site was Jaws Corner at Mkunazini, an empty space with benches for members to sit, a folding table with some chairs, plus three huge coffee kettles in a charcoal grill. The setting was surrounded with shops and game arcades. Blue Guard members gather here everyday after evening prayers for coffee and informal discussion until 12 or 1 a.m. The third site was the Lebanon Corner at

Sokomuhogo, which is similar to Jaws Corner, but the setting is more "quiet," "classy," and only high ranked officials gathered here. They meet twice a week for coffee and doughnuts after evening prayers and keep each other up to date on the movement by comparing notes with ZYF and the Blue and White Guard.

We drew on secondary sources to analyze the history and background of Zanzibar's complicated racial make-up. We examined the development of competing political parties that have marked the racial conflicts in the past decade of Zanzibari politics. We then examined the organization of the political parties and their religious ideology in the framing of political goals and tactics among Zanzibari Islamic youth activists.

Studies of Political Violence

The definition of terrorism is extremely wide ranging, particularly depending on its political purposes (Cooper, 2001). Law enforcement entities like the FBI stress the unlawfulness of the use of force to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population. Others stress the targeting of innocent populations to achieve a political objective (Laqueur, 1987). In arguing to separate a sociology of terrorism from other studies of political violence, Bergeson defines terrorism as premeditated violence by a non state group using fear or intimidation to reach a larger audience. Yet most all scholars stress the political nature of terrorism and the terrorism label (Crenshaw, 1995; Hoffman, 1998). As Tilly argues "No useful generalization covers all the different sorts of political interaction for which observers, analysts and participants sometimes use the term terror, much less for terrorists and terrorism" (Tilly, 2004). Rather than beginning with a definition of terrorism, we prefer to start with the explanatory schemes that can be directed at any form of political violence, including race riots, violent protest events, etc. This allows room for potential fluidity between the actors, organizations, timings, and strategies that may result in a "terrorist" act.

Social movement and collective action scholarship has particular relevance to understanding terrorism (Collins, 2004; Oberschall, 2004; Tilly, 2004). Three general points are relevant for us. First terrorists, like social movement actors, generally are rational actors. That is, by the time they come to commit a terrorist act, they have formed a collective identity in response to perceived threats and see themselves as working for social change.[3] Second, terrorism is best thought of as one of a variety of tactics used by any social movement to achieve political ends. Third, terrorism is relational, that is, its rise and trajectory must be understood in response to relations of power, political opportunity structures, and cycles of violence.

To say that terrorists are rational actors is largely in response to much of the popular discourse that labels terrorists as "kinds of people" who then can be labeled "evil madmen" and who only respond to threats of force. Terrorists are as "rational" as the groups they are struggling against. To say that terrorists are rational is to direct questions away from kinds of people arguments and recognize that violence does not dominate every political action taken by potential "terrorists" (Tilly, 2003; Tilly, 2004). It directs us towards questions about the constructions of collective identity, group cohesion, the process of mobilization, and how grievances and the definitions of disadvantage are framed (Blumer, 1939; Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Melucci, 1989; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Snow and Benford,

1988; Snow and Benford, 1992; Taylor and Whittier, 1992; Touraine, 1981). It directs us to ask about organizations, recruitment, training, networks and resources (Jenkins and Eckert, 1986; McAdam, 1982; McCarthy and Zald, 1977).

Second, to think of terrorism as a tactic allows us to examine questions about how, why, and when a group would turn to violence. The framing, timing, and sequence behind the choice of a "logic of material damage" becomes critical (Della Porta and Diani, 1999). When violence would develop in the cycle of a movement has been considered by many scholars (Della Porta, 1995; Feagin and Hahn, 1973; Gamson, 1990; McAdam, 1983; McAdam, 1986; Tarrow, 1993, 1998; Williams, 2003).

To say terrorism is relational recognizes that violent actions usually occur in relation to actions of groups and in response to perceptions of threat. Violence has been explained in relation to the unequal distribution of resources, an effect of relative deprivation (Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970) resource allocation (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Oberschall, 1973) or political conditions (Tilly, 2003). The choice of violence as a tactic is often in response to the ways police or security forces handle protest (Futrell and Brents, 2003; Oliver and Myers, 1999; Smith, 2001). States and political opportunities impact the context of social movement actions (Kitschelt, 1986; McAdam, 1982; McAdam and Moore, 1989; Jenkins, 1995; Tarrow, 1998).

Of most relevance for our case study is attention to the formation, strength, and mobilization of racial identity. Scholars of Tanzanian politics have long noted the racial politics that frame current political upheavals on the island (Mmuya and Chaligha, 1993; Mmuya and Chaligha, 1994; Mmuya, Chaligha, and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1992; Mukandala and Othman, 1994; Mukangara, 2000; Maliyamkono, 2000). Lofchie summarizes many scholars by arguing that there are three strains in Zanzibar's political history, ambivalence about race that combines a strong impetus toward multi-racial unity with an equally strong class inequality pushing racial disintegration Second, there are major differences in African-Arab relations in the two islands making up Zanzibar—Pemba and Unguja. Third, British colonial policy privileged the immigrant Arab oligarchy (Lofchie, 1965). Others argue that in addition to this, prior to the late 1800s when the Omani began colonizing the land, Islam provided a multiracial ideology that could have created inter ethnic solidarity (Mbwiliza, 2000: 28).

The effect of political opportunities in leading to ethnic violence then is important (Gurr, 1990; Jenkins and Kposowa, 1990; Kposowa and Jenkins, 1993; Williams, 2003). Aminzade has examined the role of political party formation and electoral competition in framing racial debates in Tanzania (Aminzade, 2003; Goldstone, 2003). Party formation and politics in Zanzibar may also help explain the contours of violent conflict in the case of Zanzibar today.

Context of Conflict—Zanzibar's Racialized History

The Construction of Racial Identity and Colonialism

Global politics and colonialism has shaped racial divisions on Zanzibar. Today's political conflict comes out of these racial divisions. There are for the most part three socially constructed identities that figure in Zanzibari politics today:

1. “Shirazi” descedants of “indigenous” tribes who are said to come from the intermarriage of mainland Africans and 7th century Arab traders.
2. Arabs who are immigrants and descendents of immigrants from Oman, an Arab country on the Western tip of Saudi Arabia.
3. Africans who are immigrants and descendants of immigrants from the mainland.

Shirazi. Because of Zanzibar’s unique location in the currents of the Indian Ocean it had been visited for centuries by Arab and Persian cultures. Years of intermarriage, acculturation, and assimilation between Arab traders and Africans developed a Swahili culture in Zanzibar and on the coast of East Africa.

The first writings of racialized identities came from European colonists visiting the islands in the 1800s. These writers seemed taken with distinguishing the obviously “non-African” tribal Zanzibari, whom they labeled “Shirazi,” from the exotic and native black “Africans” they had seen on the mainland. They called these Zanzibaris, Shirazi because they were said to have originated from seventh century intermarriages with traders from Shiraz, in what is now Iran. Subsequent British colonial policies later “cemented” these identities by imposing labels that assumed these inhabitants never subsequently intermixed with mainland Africans, Arabs, or other migrating groups (Mukangara, 2000).

Omani Arabs. The Omani Arabs first settled on the island in the 1800s and began to colonize the area through expanding trade in ivory and creating a plantation economy (Mbwiliza, 2000). The Omani saw Zanzibar as an important center to expand their empire into East Africa, and in 1832 they actually moved the capital of Oman to Zanzibar. The Omani created clove plantations on the island of Pemba and the arable parts of Unguja Island. Stone Town grew as a port city on Unguja and urban center of this colonial economy. Clove production created a prosperous economy in Zanzibar, so much so that for years, Omani elite sent their children to school in Zanzibar.

Mainland Africans. Mainland Africans came to the islands as slaves when Zanzibar became an important slave-trading center for the Muslim empire in the 1800s. Hundreds of thousands of Africans were brought through Stone Town under conditions of extreme inequality before they were shipped to the Persian Gulf and Europe.

Political Institutions and the Shaping of Racial Conflict

By the late 1800s Africa was being carved up by colonial powers. Internal battles separated Oman into monarchies governing the Sultanate of Oman and the Sultanate of Zanzibar. Neighboring Tanganyika (now Tanzania) fell to the control of the Germans. In 1890 the British assured the Sultanate of Zanzibar it would provide protection and in 1890, Zanzibar became a British Protectorate. After World War I, the British took Tanganyika from Germany.

Several writers argue that British Colonial rule created contemporary racialized identities on the island. The British privileged the Arabs with whom they established governing relations. The productive plantation economy sustained landholding Arab elites. While the British pressured the Sultanate to eliminate slavery, mainland Africans who remained in the urban areas were the most exploited and least privileged socioeconomic group.

One example of colonial policy illustrates the subsequent fluidity of race. To ration food during World War II the British imposed a formula based on race. Euro-

peans, Asians (including Indians, Pakistanis, Goans, and Arabs) and Africans received preferential treatment in that order (Mbwiliza, 2000). In 1948, individuals who may have labeled themselves Swahili or simply African increasingly claimed their Arab descent and embraced the use of "Shirazi as a mark of identity."

That Shirazi identity was fluid is also exemplified in the way Shirazi on Pemba more readily adopted an Arab identity than those on Unguja. The plantation economy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century created two separate class and racial political structures on the two islands.

On Unguja Island arable land was scarce, and the Arab immigrants subjugated and repressed local Shirazi subsistence farmers as they built their plantations for an export economy. Unguja, also became more urbanized, and contained the colonial infrastructure. On Unguja, inequality was felt more sharply and Shirazi more clearly differentiated themselves from the Arab oppressors.

On Pemba Island, land was more plentiful, Arab immigrants did not overrun indigenous Shirazi land holdings and colonial Pemba was less class divided. In a less competitive environment, Arabs became more like fellow settlers than colonizers. Shirazi peasants over the years were increasingly able to become small landholders themselves. Shirazis more readily adopted Arab culture. The Islamic rural, agrarian economy remained more directly insulated from global contact (Mapuri, 1996: 72; Mbwiliza, 2000: 32; Mukangara, 2000: 39).

In Pemba, then, Shirazi identified as Arab not only by recalling the legend of African intermarriage with Persian Gulf traders, but also by owning clove plantations and Arabising their own households (Maliyamkono, 2000; Newbury, 1983).

Political Opportunity and Racial Conflict—Revolution and Socialism

Where the politics of colonialism shaped racial identity, independence movements and democracy gave organizational structure to racial groupings. Political parties helped form, frame, and mobilize constructions of national identity based on race. When cultural associations in the 1930s and then political parties in the 1950s began to organize on the islands they organized along these three racialized groupings—Shirazi, African, and Arab. They were framed by two competing pressures. The first was a growing African national identity based on identification with the African continent and arguing for independence from colonial powers. The second was a Zanzibari national identity that embraced roots in Indian Ocean cultures and saw the islands as separate from the African continent.

The African movement for independence grew in the 1950s, and both Arabs and Africans joined. However, African mainlanders and Arabs formed separate political parties. African mainland parties developed more political and social connections with party members in Tanganyika. African parties mobilized members in an appeal to African independence and nationalism. Arab parties sought an end to colonial rule, but supported the retention of the Arab Sultanate monarchy. Tensions grew between the two groups. Arabs accused Africans of wanting to sell Zanzibar to Tanganyika. Africans accused Arabs of supporting a return to slavery. The two remained united through ousting colonial rule. But that same year a violent uprising resulted in ten percent of the Arab population being killed by mainlanders. It was the African parties, later united into the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), who, with U.S. encouragement (Petterson, 2002) brokered the unification of Zanzibar and Tanganyika into the current state of Tanzania later in 1964.

The importance of the Shirazi, and indeed the fluidity of the Arab identity is an important component of this story. Both cultural groups needed the Shirazi. In 1960 53 percent of 300,000 Zanzibaris reported themselves as Shirazi, 20 percent were African immigrants, and 17 percent were Arab. Indeed the African party called themselves the Afro-Shirazi Party to draw support from Arabs close to them on the socioeconomic ladder. But the Shirazi were reluctant allies with Africans, and the Shirazi on Pemba withdrew their support and later joined with the Arab Zanzibar National Party. The Zanzibar National Party drew support from Muslim Africans and Shirazi as well based on an appeal to the brotherhood of all Muslims (Lofchie, 1965; Mbwiliza, 2000).

Between 1964 and the 1990s Tanzania was a socialist state with one party rule. Since 1977, that party has been the African-based CCM. Since the revolution, people claiming Arab identity (mainly from Pemba Island) have claimed that the revolutionary government of Zanzibar is discriminating against them in almost every important sphere of life, be it government jobs, housing or just acquiring a business license. And interestingly, by 1990, only one percent of the population labeled themselves Shirazi while 75 percent label themselves African and 23 percent label themselves Arab. According to surveys, those former Shirazi now consider themselves African (Maliyamkono, 2000).

In the 1990s when multi-party politics was reinstated in Tanzania, one of the first parties to organize was the Arab based Zanzibar National Party now known as the Civic United Front (CUF). It has since become the largest opposition party.

Since then the CUF and CCM have solidified political tensions to create what appears to be a permanent political stalemate on the island. The 1995 and 2000 elections were widely regarded by outside observers as plagued with violence, errors and corruption. The CUF refused to accept the results of the elections and boycotted parliament. A deal was later brokered, but violence has marked political relations on the island since. Violence by anti-government forces is usually met with arrests and repression, spurring further violence. The CUF blames the government for widespread discrimination against those of Arab descent. The main political conflicts between the two parties center on the extent of Zanzibar's autonomy from Tanzania. But, as one researcher reports, in recent years it is the CUF and CCM and their political traditions that have polarized the Zanzibaris into "two ideologically, sharply divided groups" (Maliyamkono, 2000: 167).

Multi-Party Democracy, Religion, and Violence

Global conflicts between Muslims and Christians have had their impact on Zanzibari politics, and increasingly political conflict and party identity in Zanzibar is centered around religion (Lacey, 2002; Mwangi, 2003). Both parties publicly deny race and religion as central issues, and talk instead of nationalism. But the CCM accuses the CUF of links with Muslim fundamentalists, presumably to highlight the connection to Islamist terrorism and marginalize the CUF. Publicly the CUF denies its link to religion or Arabism, and frames their base as one of Zanzibari nationalism, and the enemy CCM as based on "foreigners." One Zanzibari student interviewed by the press equated the African label with foreign attempts to squelch Zanzibari autonomy,

> Zanzibaris had to be called Africans and were forced to deny their Indian Ocean heritage. Zanzibaris are reacting to this pressure from the mainland to incorporate Zanzibar as another province. The idea of pan-Africanism was created by foreigners and the Union loosely arranged with American pressure (Aidi, 2001).

At the forefront of the conflict today are youth. Both the press, and even Muslim leaders have labeled the increasing extremism as coming from "youth." According to a recent poll, youth (age 18-27) are much more likely to label themselves Arabs than are older groups (Maliyamkono, 2000: 151).

Youth groups are mobilizing in reaction to perceptions of religious oppression of Arabs by Africans. Religion is mobilizing youth, and the government's attempts to link Islam with violence are only feeding this. On the one hand, the CUF denies connections to radical Islam to the press. Yet CUF members are hardening against what they see as religious discrimination by the government. Nathalie Arnold, former Human Rights Watch consultant and professor at Hampshire College, defended Islam against those who would blame religion for the violence.

> If Islam is responsible for anything in Zanzibar it is for maintaining peace. Rather than inciting anyone to violence, it is people's religious faith that has contributed most significantly to continued nonviolence and forbearance in the face of a government which is increasingly, by any standards, immoral (Aidi, 2001).

On the other hand, one official of Zanzibar Youth Forum confessed to us that indeed, these youth love and adore Osama bin Laden. He is seen as doing two things critical to their social movement. He is fighting against cultural domination and exploitation by western powers and he is representing Islamic people who are oppressed and impoverished by the world system.

Party organization has helped mobilize religious identity. Most all of the members of the youth arms of the CUF, the Zanzibar Youth Forum (ZYF) and the Blue and White Guards, consider themselves to be of Arabic descent and are Muslim.

Blue Guard members meet nightly, after prayers in open plazas to talk politics. Jaws Corners and Lebanon Brothers' corner in Stone Town are the most well known plazas for young hardliner aspirants to sell their policies to other young hardliners.

Religion clearly frames their political identity. One of the ZYF members described the "rules" of belonging to the cause:

> You have to follow the fundamentals of our religion to be with us, as all members of our "harakati" [movement] follow it ... to be precise, this implies adherence to the doctrines of faith, to the original principles of Islamic polity (umma), and to the fundamentals tenets governing the legitimacy of power (sharia).

Religious identity is the mobilizing force for the Blue and White Guard members with whom we spoke. Religious-civilizational unity was a key source of self-identification and new group loyalties. Politics must be directed by a religious worldview. Salvation can be achieved both in this world and the next, a view that makes politics increasingly important to self-identity. One Blue and White Guard member told us:

> Which belief are we talking 'bout here? I think my religious belief ... to be precise "Islam" allows me to struggle for my rights ... democracy being one of them. There is no distinction between religion and politics ... they are all the same, helping the same course, social change for the better. My belief is part and parcel of who I am now and what I stand for."

Another member pointed out that:

> "We don't really differentiate religion and politics ... to us it is the same thing, when we go to the mosque we get ideas from the quran on how to be pious and do good deeds, whether you're politician or not, and that is what we believe the country should be. Religion shows us the right path politically, on how to run the state affairs ... they are one ... inseparable."

According to the Blue Guard members we interviewed, the Guard was created as a security and intelligence arm within the CUF to facilitate house to house and town hall campaigning. According to the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, which is supported by the Political Parties Act, matters of security are the preserve of the state (union government) and therefore no political party is allowed to have guards that imitate or copy government security organs. However, Blue Guard members told us they felt obliged to protect their party leaders and property. One high official of the Blue Guard and a regular at Jaws Corner said,

> If CCM has all the rights to have a youth wing and all the police under their arms (meaning controlled by CCM government), then what? What should we do? Blue Guards take seriously matters of party security, which includes intelligence. We have to be ahead of the game. Even if it will require us to obtain military training, we will ... we have to be able to defend and attack if attacked"

Many Blue Guard members we spoke with emphasized their role in security in gathering intelligence.

> I'm a Blue Guard member, a delegate to the National Congress of the Civic United Front (CUF), also a delegate to the Zanzibar Urban District Congress and a member of the Executive Committee of Zanzibar Urban District, my position in this party and Blue Guard specifically is to make sure the security of party officials is maintained, and to collect important intelligence information.

He did not specify what kind of intelligence information but evidence indicates that intelligence includes spying on other political parties, especially the CCM, and assisting in recruiting radical youth who can participate in rallies and other actions.

Another chief executive officer of the Blue Guard had this to say:

> All the people of Zanzibar should know and recognize who we are CUF and what we stand for i.e. justice, liberty and democracy. Everyone at the Blue Guard and our whole movement at large, carries a different identity but we all have one goal at the end, to take control of the government, and the different identities and tasks we carry makes us to achieve the goal perfectly.

The goal of many of the youth members with whom we spoke was to release Tanzanian society at large from the "dictatorship" of Christianity. According to Blue Guard members, the CUF would like to make Zanzibar an Islamic state and join the Organization of Islamic States. The key method of achieving this, according to Blue Guard members with whom we spoke, was to regain control over Zanzibar by winning elections. Most Blue Guard members agree that their main enemy is the government and its ruling party, the CCM. However the majority of mainlanders who are the main supporters of CCM are Christians. Blue Guard members see this religious orientation contributing to the deterioration of Zanzibari life.

> The mainlanders have to go back to the mainland…They should leave Zanzibar to Zanzibarians ... look here currently almost all of the government jobs and other private companies prestige position are being held

by wabara [mainlanders], which leaves us in bad situation, and on top of it they help CCM to stay in power here by voting for it, but for sure as soon as we get the permanent voter registry we won't allow any mainlander to register here ... time has come for CCM to go and hence wabara too."

How does violence come to figure into the tactics of the Blue and White guards? Blue Guard members do not define themselves as terrorist. However, violence to achieve political ends is potentially a part of their repertoire. One of the officials of Blue Guard and CUF central committee said, "The main goal of the Blue Guard is to help the CUF to take control of the country, by winning next year's elections, by any means, we are sure of the victory." He went on to legitimize potential violence by saying the government gave them no choice.

It's not true that Blue Guards are terrorists ... CUF is a political party, whatever we discuss in the podiums that is what we do ... violence is not our nature. But the governing party makes us do that.... We had won past elections twice ... but the only problem was that we as CUF were not ready to take control of government, but I promise you that this time we, the CUF youth and Blue Guard, we are ready to help our party to win and take control of government. We won't wait to be given power but to take over as soon as the elections ends next year.

Again, the key point here is that because of atrocities by the CCM, the CUF feels it must be ready to use violence. Many Blue Guard members reiterated their peaceful stance and blamed the escalating conflict on the ruling government party,

CCM are the bad guys here.... It is the government setting off bombs in order to execute arrests of Blue Guards.... Most of us in the Blue Guard are good Muslims, hence our responsibility is to keep and maintain peace rather than inciting anyone to violence, I'm sure most members of CUF will agree with me that our party is dedicated to harmonious political processes.

Blue Guard members indicated that religious, racial and political oppression justifies "whatever methods are necessary" to obtain rights in a context of government oppressions.

None would lay claim to recent bombings. But they felt violence was clearly an option if the elections were stolen from them again. They all said they were 100 percent sure that CUF would win a fair election. The Blue Guard with whom we spoke promised that if these elections are rigged, then no one would be allowed to live peacefully in Zanzibar again. One member summed up,

Brotha [he meant Brother] the direction this country is taking now with the CCM government in power does not give much cause for hope. As you can see by yourself brotha, educated young men like me we don't have any hope for the future. Our only hope for political and economic change lies in the hands of CUF, and we are its soldiers ready to fight for the betterment of our future and next generations. I'm telling you, as soon as we get into power in 2005 it will be the turn of Mkapa [referring to the President of the United Republic of Tanzania] and Karume [the current president of Zanzibar] to leave the country the same as our brothers and sisters did two years ago. This is only fair my brother, because we have lost our respect and dignity on the way because of their leadership. Only CUF will get this country back to its lost glory ... look here now, what we got? NO jobs or anything good to be proud off, rather than government brutality [referring to Police force].

One official of the Blue Guard reiterated implicit support for the bombings.

"The bomb blasts that are occurring in Zanzibar are good signs which indicate that the Zanzibaris are tired of the brutality and alienation done by CCM and its government.

Another member of Blue Guard confirmed that potentially violent missions are a part of their job when discussing some of the difficulties dealing with their families;

> The committee has to implement hard or harsh policies of not leaking or saying anything to the people outside our cycle of confidentiality whether they are family or not, no matter what is your perspective. Most of the time with some of us going into a mission, telling your family whom cannot be trusted in such serious issues, they might spill everything to the police or government spies in a minute.

Violence is escalating repression and accusations of terrorism by the ruling government. When addressing a rally at Kibanda Maiti in Zanzibar on July 2004, the President of Zanzibar warned the CUF that it would no longer tolerate their incitements to violence.

> I want to tell them that we are tired! We are tired! We are tired! I want to warn the CUF Secretary General with his band against implementing his threat to "set the country ablaze" if he is robbed of victory in next year's presidential election (Speech at the rally in Kibanda Maiti Zanzibar).

These threats make it likely that repression will be the response as elections draw near. We can likely expect more violence on the island.

Conclusion

Sociology has much to say about political violence that can speak to questions about "terrorism." This paper has used a case study of violent political conflict labeled "terrorist" in Zanzibar, to illustrate how sociology can examine terrorism. We used this case to illustrate three points relevant to the study of terrorism that have been argued in the sociological literature on social movements. First, "terrorists" are rational actors. Second, terrorism is one of many tactics used by any social movement to achieve political ends. And third, terrorism is relational, that is, its rise and trajectory must be understood in relation to other groups, and in response to perceptions of threat.

The construction of racial and religious identity has been important in understanding the backdrop of political violence on Zanzibar. The cultural and political history of Zanzibar created a unique configuration of racial identity on Zanzibar. A history of inequalities exacerbated by colonialism, political opportunities and party organizations framed the construction of racial and religious identity. Historically the creation of Shirazi identity was one which emerged from colonial political structures, and their political alliances have shifted, created and recreated their alternating Arab vs. African self constructions.

Current political parties have given new meaning to this racial identity and given organizational structure to contests of power. Contests of nationalism and the construction of nationalist identity have mobilized political actors. The recent strength of radical Islamist movements has given new impetus to religious conflicts and has turned potentially apathetic youth to be willing to fight for cause. It is certainly not new to say many of our current conflicts result from increasing cultural and economic globalization and a desire to retain localized heritage, traditions and identities. The rise of an increasingly militant Muslim fundamentalism is one indication of this trend.

Relations between government and opposition parties have created the conditions whereby some members feel violence is a legitimate tactic to use to gain political power. The members of the youth groups with whom we spoke are primarily oriented toward electoral politics for social change. But they believe that past history has indicated winning an election is not enough. They must be ready to fight perceived injustice. The perception that there are few other tactics left in their arsenal is important to understanding the choice of a logic of material damage.

We feel that Zanzibar represents an important site to make sense of the mechanisms that create and sustain political violence. At the least, it certainly represents an interesting case study in examining the intersections of political institutions and politics, race and religion in the construction and mobilization of identity. The increasing mobilization of youth into politics, and particularly into the opposition party CUF are framed by nationalism infused with religious identity and a growing popularity of Muslim extremism. This process is important to understand.

Understanding the sociology of race, political party and religion are key to understanding the rise of and trajectory of terrorism and violent conflict on Zanzibar. We hope that further studies of the sociology of "terrorism" recognize the political nature of the label. We realize that political realities are such in the U.S. today that public relevance, and grant funding, may require us to define research under the rubric of a sociology of terrorism. But we urge scholars to keep the focus on political violence and not fall into a definitional trap that disaggregates violence from its contexts, the political opportunities that give rise to conflict, the social movements and organizations that recruit and sustain it, and the systems of inequality and power in which it exists.

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank Professors Max Mmuya, Robert Futrell, and those in Zanzibar who gave so freely of their time.
2. Some have argued that the events of September 11 caught sociologists somewhat off guard while political scientist and international relations specialists dominated analysis. Bergesen, Albert J. and Omar Lizardo. "International Terrorism and the World Systems." *Sociological Theory* 22; Senechal de la Roche, Roberta, 2004. "Toward a Scientific Theory of Terrorism." *Sociological Theory* 22: 1-4.
3. By "rational" we do not mean to argue that actors are only rational and strategic in their actions, but to also recognize that meanings and framings are constructed in analyzable ways (Oliver, Pamela, Jorge Cadena-Roa, and Kelly D. Strawn. 2003. "Emerging Trends in the Study of Protest and Social Movements." *Research in Political Sociology* 12: 213-214.

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