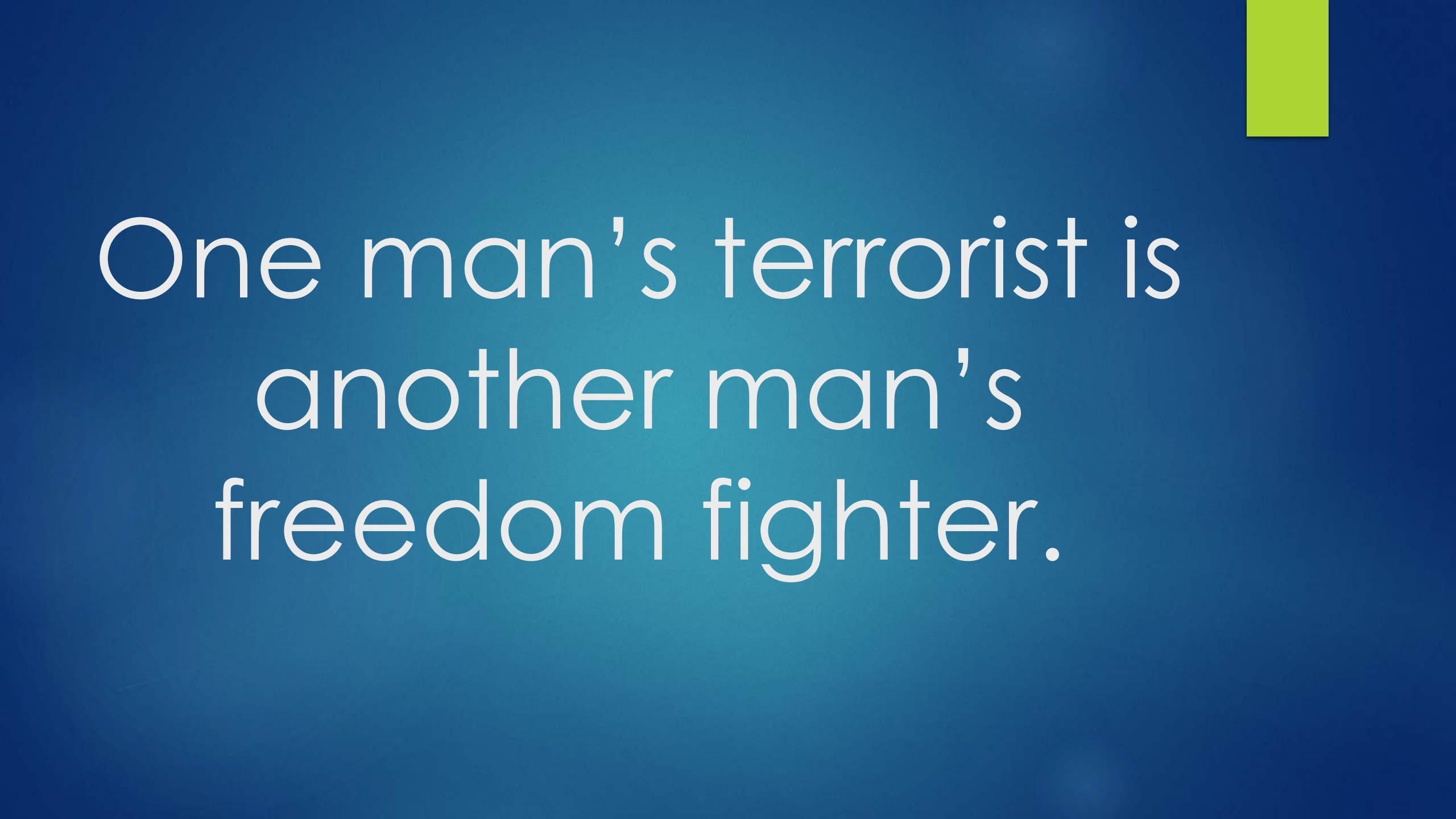




The Changing Meaning of Terrorism


BRIAN HALSEY



One man's terrorist is
another man's
freedom fighter.




Who do you think
of, when you think
of a terrorist?



When was the last
time the United
States declared a
genocide?







“Reaffirming also that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.”

UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)



History vs. Law vs. Philosophy

Orthodox Accounts of Terrorism

- ▶ Three Pillars
 - ▶ Functional – provoke a response by the state
 - ▶ Symbolic – violence used to intimidate and strike fear into targets
 - ▶ Tactical – both short term goals and long term strategic initiatives
- ▶ Theory to suit hegemonic agendas (institutionalized power)
- ▶ How terrorism works and what it is intended to achieve
- ▶ Recognizes “terrorist” as a rational actor
- ▶ Example: The United States

Issues With The Orthodox Account

- ▶ https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?charttype=pie&chart=target&casualties_type=f&casualties_max=&start_yearonly=2001&end_yearonly=2015&dtp2=all&country=217&count=100

Critical Accounts of Terrorism

- ▶ Two Schools of Thought
 - ▶ The Revisionist School
 - ▶ Impossible to predict where violence will occur, how it will occur, and who will compose the violence
 - ▶ Violence is politicized
 - ▶ Definitions thus far serve national, sectional, and/or class interests
 - ▶ Critical Terrorism Studies
 - ▶ Autonomy possessed by the individual
 - ▶ A commitment to emancipation
 - ▶ Those who feel slighted and want to break from their chains
- ▶ Example: Syria

Issues With the Critical Account

- ▶ https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?charttype=pie&chart=target&casualties_type=f&casualties_max=&start_yearonly=2001&end_yearonly=2015&dtp2=all&country=200

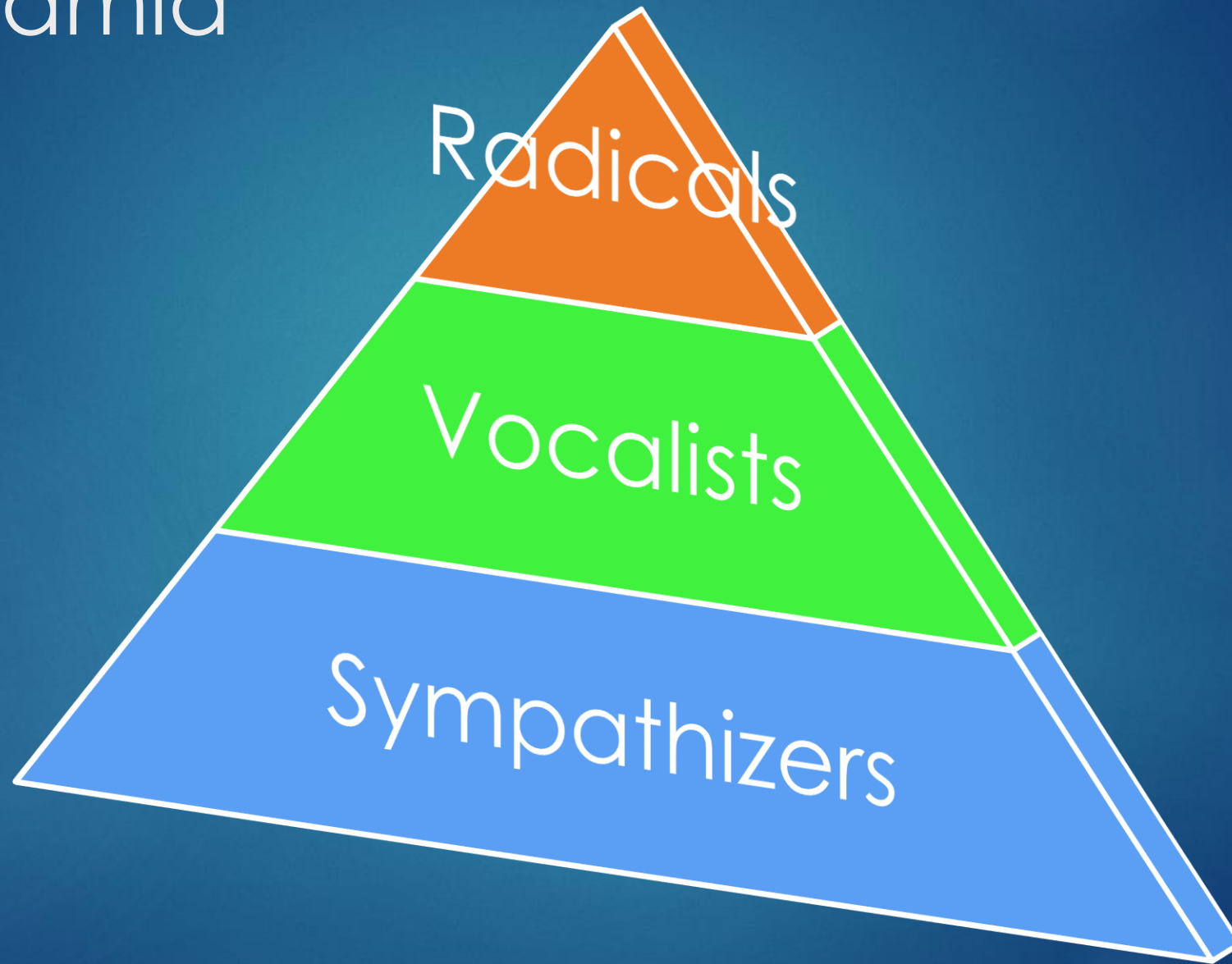
Radical Accounts of Terrorism

- ▶ Personalized stories and interpretations from the actors themselves
- ▶ This field transcends time and space, and is still the least studied field in defining terrorism
- ▶ Situational basis in history, by group, for different causes

Issues With The Radical Account



The Pyramid



Terrorism: What can be done?

- ▶ The term itself incites fear and violence
- ▶ To derive prevention scenarios and punishment schemes by labeling something as terrorism is incredibly misleading
- ▶ Broad strokes are made against individuals or groups bound by the actions of very few
- ▶ The way we treat actions domestically as compared to the same events in another country, changes dramatically
- ▶ The term questions the fabric of history itself

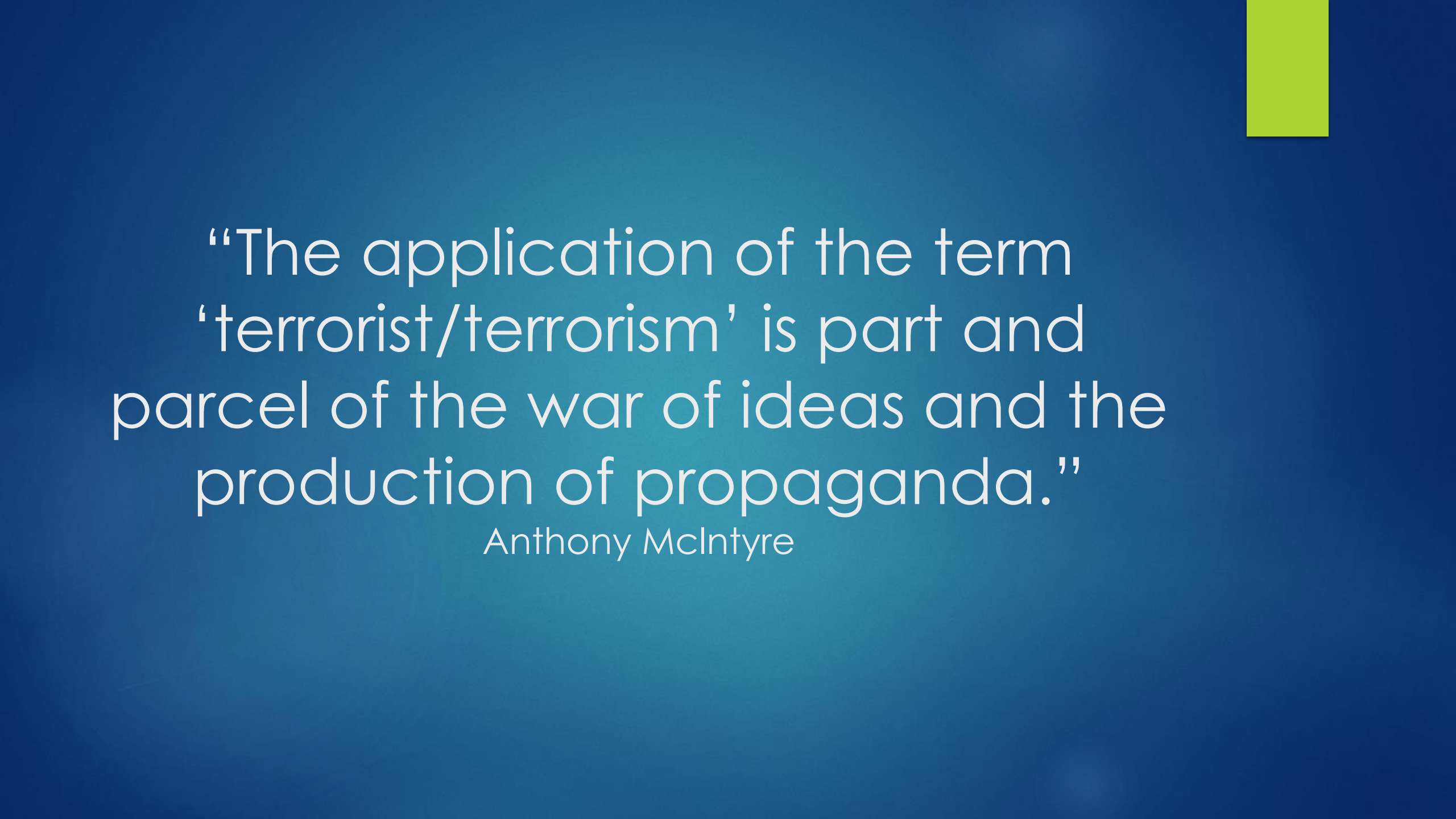


Autonomy Violence

SINCE ALL VIOLENT ACTIONS CAN BE DEEMED AS TERRORISM, IT
INVALIDATES ANY MEANING OF THE TERM ITSELF


Autonomy Violence

- ▶ Combined definition of the accounts mentioned without the inflammatory language or sweeping terms
- ▶ Differentiates treatment of those guilty dependent upon the crime
- ▶ Broad strokes are not made to incorporate the entirety of organizations, civilizations, ethnic backgrounds, religions, or nationalities
 - ▶ To recognize large groups or organizations that are truly guilty of such violence (such as ISIS) only gives them more legitimacy
- ▶ THE INSTITUTIONAL JUDGE, BUT THE SITUATIONAL JURY
- ▶ Historical influence must be taken into account
 - ▶ War crimes, genocide, or political activism



“The application of the term
‘terrorist/terrorism’ is part and
parcel of the war of ideas and the
production of propaganda.”

Anthony McIntyre



One man's terrorist is
another man's
freedom fighter.