"Rhetoric Techniques
of Labeling of Environmentalists as 'Terrorists':
the Case of the Earth Liberation Front in the United States of
America, 1996 – 2006"

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the rhetoric techniques of terrorism labeling with the focus on the Earth Liberation Front in the USA, 1996-2006. Narratives of terrorism have found extreme popularity in various dimensions of social sciences. The increase in application of 'terrorism' labels towards non-killing environmental movements has notably risen since 2001. The Earth Liberation Front is considered to be of particular concern of the US authorities, when speaking of eco-terrorism. In 2001 the FBI has classified ELF at the top domestic terrorism threat; whereas the movement speaks in defense of all forms of lives, and there have never been any victims in consequence of their actions.

The study aims to investigate how it is possible to label a non-killing environmental group as 'terrorists' in the US mainstream discourse. Taking into account the absence of the universally accepted definition of terrorism, I also reflect upon the ambiguity of its concept per se. To research the techniques, applied by the US authorities and mainstream media, while drawing a parallel between terrorism acts and actions of economic sabotage, I use qualitative method of discourse analysis. The research is done, relying on the analysis of the sources, presenting both perspectives: the authorities and mainstream media on the one hand, and the environmentalists on the other hand.

The main findings of the research show that although both the US authorities and the Earth Liberation Front refer to the concept of terrorism, in the mainstream discourse ELF is classified as a domestic terrorist threat with an emphasis on the violent nature of their acts. However, according to the official ELF position, terror tactics are considered unacceptable; and there is a distinction between acts of economic sabotage, directed against property, and terrorism, possessing a threat against human beings. However, in the US mainstream discourse the line between these concepts are blurred, by mixing the notions and emphasizing the potential danger of the environmentalists' tactics.

Key words: discourse analysis, Earth Liberation Front, eco-terrorism, mainstream discourse, rhetoric techniques, terrorism.

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Abbreviations

ALF	Animal Liberation Front
ELF	Earth Liberation Front
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The definition of someone who is a terrorist is purely a labelling device.

(cited in Thackrah, 2004)

Narratives of terrorism have found extreme popularity in many dimensions of social sciences. The increase in applications of 'terrorist' labels towards non-killing environmental movements since 2001 is of high interest and concern. "Professor Andrew Silke, director of terrorism studies at the University of East London, says that if current trends continue, more than 90 % of terrorism studies literature will have been written post-9/11. He says a new book on terrorism is published every six hours in the English language" (cited in Shepherd, 2007). Anti-terrorism international cooperation, military and security strengthening of the states, meant to combat the terrorism threat, wars against terrorism and domestic anti-terrorism security measures are a few symptoms, marking the fact that "terrorism has become a major cultural phenomenon (Smyth, et al., 2008, p.1).

While both the US authorities and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) refer to the concept of terrorism, the authorities classify ELF as a terrorist threat for domestic security; whereas according to the ELF official position, terror tactics are unacceptable for environmentalists. It makes terrorism an interesting and at the same time illusive concept for examination. Thus, the general problem the thesis deals with is terrorism in an era of globalization. According to Eriksen, 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA have blurred boundaries between the inside and the outside (2007, p. 136). But I want to narrow the focus of the research to the reflection upon the ambiguity of the concept of terrorism per se through the discourse analysis of the narratives that are applied to the notion of 'terrorism' in the realm of environmentalism.

1.1. Aim of the research

Taking into account that even though since the September 11 terrorist attacks Islamic extremism is considered being both domestic and international threat, the FBI has reported that roughly two-thirds of terrorism in the United States was conducted by non-Islamic American extremists from 1980-2001; and from 2002-2005, it went up to 95 % (Masters, 2011). The Earth Liberation Front is considered to be of particular concern of the US authorities, speaking of eco-terrorism. In 2001 the FBI has put ELF at the top of domestic terrorism threats list, emphasizing their potential danger to the American nation. In spite of the fact that ELF members classify their movement as non-violent and advocating defense of all forms of life, FBI officials classify their

actions as "politically motivated violence to force segments of society, including the general public, to change their attitudes about issues considered to be important to the extremists' causes" (Lewis, 2004), thereby building the ground for the 'terrorists' labels being possible to apply.

My general objective, then, is to investigate discursive tools, used by the US authorities (FBI) and mainstream media to classify a non-killing environmental movement as 'terrorists', taking the Earth Liberation Front as a case study for the analysis. To get a complete picture I also aim to explore what defensive rhetoric is applied by ELF activists to protect their movement from 'terrorism' labels. The research aims to study the rhetoric, used to label eco-activists as 'terrorists' over the period of 1996 – 2006. I also intend to reflect upon the overall ambiguity of the concept of terrorism with the focus on environmentalism, contributing to the existing studies in the field. I analyze rhetoric techniques, because I consider this as the first step to research the ambiguity of the concept of terrorism. And this, to a great extent, linguistic approach is to be the background for further research, raising broader questions of power, democracy and shrinking limits of the latter (which is beyond the scope of this thesis).

Since I intend to research the US mainstream discourse while analyzing the 'terrorism' labels, applied to the Earth Liberation Front, what is meant by "mainstream" is to be explained. Using the term 'mainstream', I refer to the concept as the representation of the dominant tendency, disseminated by the media, which I also consider as a part of the analysis. When studying the perspective of the US authorities, I use FBI as its main source, because this governmental agency is responsible for anti-terrorism measures and influence US legislation in the field. And by mainstream media I mean those media sources that have the highest readership among the public. It is, therefore, obvious that the materials I use as the sources to analyze the US mainstream discourse (FBI documents and mass media) represent the concept of mainstream, since they have a great influence on the lives of the US population.

1.2. Research questions

I use the following questions as a guideline to achieve the objectives stated above:

1. What arguments are used to justify picturing the Earth Liberation Front as a 'terrorist group'?
2. What are the discursive tools of the ELF activists, used to put the movement out of a 'terrorist box'?

1.3. Delimitations and ethical considerations

As any researcher I may face some difficulties during my work that will probably challenge the research. I have come up to the following aspects that should be regarded as the delimitations of the present thesis project. Throughout the paper I try to answer the sensible question about the delicate balance between radicalism and terrorism, and it would be interesting to include interviews with the US citizens to present general public's perception of the topic. However, at the present period of time it does not seem do-able for me, taking into account financial and temporal aspects. That is why I focus on the discourse analysis of the sources, presenting both activists' and 'mainstream' perspectives (the US authorities and media). Hopefully, the above-mentioned delimitations can be avoided, by being included in the further deeper research project, more flexible in terms of time and financial expenses. When it is appropriate, I use quotation marks, while referring to terrorism, to emphasize the ambiguity of its concept.

Talking about ethical considerations in social sciences, it seems natural to refer to Weber's description of sociology as "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects" (Bryman, 2008, p. 15). Thus, subjectivity is considered to be an inherent feature of the qualitative researches, studied from the interpretivist epistemological position. However, such sensible aspects as gender, age, etc., which are often subject to a researcher's bias, are not considered to be within the framework of my research questions. It is obvious to suppose that the conclusions of the research, based on the analyzed material, can be subject to a researcher's personal viewpoints and values, taking into account the statement that all the people are constantly interpreting variety of meanings in their everyday life (Bryman, 2008, p. 17). However, my aim is to follow the logic of the chosen theories as objectively as possible.

1.4. Literature review

I believe that including the literature review section will help readers to get familiar with the research topic per se, and it will also be easier to see the distinction of my research from the others, dealing with the concepts of discourse and terrorism. Researches on terrorism discourse and discourse per se are popular in social and political sciences, and the whole literature is too extensive to be listed here, that is why I only intend to mention the most relevant core works in these fields.

Many qualitative studies have been conducted on terrorism, and the events of September 11, 2001 have generated the interest in the 'war on terror' discourse even more. Focusing on different aspects of the phenomenon, scholars have studied both its reasons and consequences. Works written both before and after 9/11 describe violence, used by terrorists, as a manipulative tool to get an attention of the public and media, taking benefits of the worldwide communication networks. Contemporary researches on terrorism focus not only on its reasons, but also on counter-measures, applied by governments. The view on media as an instrument of warfare and public opinion construction tool in the aftermath of the 2001 attacks, picturing terrorism as a global problem, has been also thoroughly examined by many authors. Hinckley, for example, uses public opinion data of the 1980s and 1990s to analyze American attitudes about terrorism, which in the first months of 1985 was not even mentioned as the primary problem facing the US (1992, p. 92). Chomsky discusses the media frames that coincide with the government doctrine and argues that the main media agenda-setting institutions are in fact profitable corporations that are linked to even bigger conglomerates representing certain political interests (1988, cited in Mitchell and Schoeffel, 2002).

There are plenty of studies with the focus on the relationship between terrorism and media, emphasizing its different aspects. For example, Nacos (1994) writes about impact of international terrorism on America's mindset, mass media and the politics, however, focusing on the acts, committed against US citizens overseas. "It is hard to find something that had a more profound impact on the United States in the 1980s than terrorism" (Hinckley, 1992, p. 91). Hachten and Scotton (2002) write about globalization of media in an era of terrorism, taking September 11, 2001 as its starting point and analyze the changing role of transnational news media. However, the main emphasis throughout their work is on new challenges of the news reporting per se at the international level, although American experience is taken as a ground for the analysis.

Some scholars discuss the relationship between terrorism and media, examining their exploitation of each other to achieve their goals (Hoffman, 1998; Hachten and Scotton, 2002; Thussu, 2006). Reflecting upon the news coverage of terrorism, Norris, Kern and Just discuss how terrorism frames are generated in terms of 'truth', 'balance' and 'objectivity', again referring to the US foreign policy and 9/11 as an event, symbolizing a critical culture shift in the news rhetoric and altering perceptions of risk at home and threats abroad (2003, pp. 3-4). Joosse (2012) in his article examines media coverage of the ELF, focusing on its leaderless resistance aspect. However, after September 11, 2001 researchers have mostly been focusing on the changes, these events have brought to the media sphere in the new globalized world, where new

media has increased terrorists' ability to present their messages directly to various audiences (Klopfenstein, 2006, p. 108).

Other scholars have focused on September 11, 2001 as the starting point for the development of the 'war on terror' discourse (Hoge and Rose, 2001; Etzoni and Marsh, 2003). For example, Chang (2002) explores the overall evolution of the US policy in the sphere of domestic terrorism. She examines the influence of antiterrorism measures, adopted after September 11, 2001 on the civil liberties in the USA. As well as the present thesis, Chang's study reviews the historical changes, using it as a background for the analysis of political consequences. Yet still, the focus of her research is on constitutional rights in general.

Among the various studies on terrorism, which primarily focus on terrorist events per se, some authors have studied its linguistic component. Jackson (2005) discusses the manipulation of public by the language used. He examines the public language of 'the war on terror' as a tool, used by the American administration to reach social consensus. He argues that authorities constitute the reality of counter-terrorism, creating a certain public discourse, designed to achieve a number of political goals. As well as Fairclough (2001), he considers the deployment of a certain language by politicians as an exercise of power. Jackson's work presents general considerations on 'the war on terror' discourse, examining the nature of the narrative itself, with the focus on American foreign policy since 2001 and its 'external enemy'. Hodges and Nilep (2007) provide a collection of works, dealing with the use of language. They study terrorism discourse aftermath 9/11 to understand new sociopolitical reality. Fairclough (1992) explores broader aspect of language, focusing on social and cultural processes. Referring to Gramsci, Foulcault, Habermas and Giddens, he examines discourse analysis as an approach to investigate social changes in a synthesis with social theory. His approach to discourse analysis differs from Foucault's model, focusing on the relationship between discourse and power.

Radical environmental movements have also been studied in the academia. Some scholars study the leaderless resistance aspect, and some focus on the threat assessment and political violence (Leader and Probst, 2003). Vanderheiden (2005) examines the difference between eco-terrorism and resistance through the war theory and nonviolent civil disobedience. Although very few studies have examined the relationship between radical environmentalism and terrorism from the discursive perspective. Thus, Vanderheiden (2008) writes about radical environmentalism in an age of antiterrorism, stressing the moral boundary between "ecotage" and genuine terrorism. He studies the general influence of anti-terrorism legislation on the tactic of "ecotage" and discusses its moral dilemma, referring to both Greenpeace and ELF. And Likar (2011), for example, explores environmentally linked terrorism, studying the nexus between

environment, terror tactics and security. But his main focus is on the security assessment, not the discourses applied.

My application of discourse as a certain way of talking and perception of a phenomenon, using a linguistic perspective, coincides with Jackson's approach. However, unlike him I focus on the US domestic dimension, which is one of the delimitations of my research, explained in Section 1.3. I discuss the complexity of the discourse concept and my view on it as a tool to interpret definitions and terms in Chapters 2 and 3. My understanding of discourse reminds Foucault's approach to discourse analysis that is not necessarily equated with purely linguistic analysis.

> "Discourse analysis is about "specifying sociohistorically variable discursive formations (sometimes referred to as 'discourses'), systems of rules which make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur at particular times, places and institutional locations" (Foucault cited in Fairclough, 1992, p. 40).

My research attempts to elaborate the theories, mentioned above, answering the question "how", when analyzing the rhetoric, used by the US mainstream discourse, regarding environmentalists. Traditionally, text analysis and discourse analysis do not share the limitation of linguistic analysis to sentences or smaller grammatical units (Fairclough, 1992, p. 3). As well as Fairclough, I do not consider discourse as a purely linguistic approach. I also share his understanding of discourse in a social-theoretical sense, used in a linguistically-oriented discourse analysis. He emphasizes the role of institutional and organizational components, which shape the nature of the discursive practice. However, 'institutions', producing discourse, are not a part of my research.

Bringing together contributions from the above-mentioned literature, where the reflections on terrorism only partially fit the topic of the present research, the distinctions of my thesis might be the following. Whereas most of the works after 2001 focus on the US foreign policy as a case-study, I focus on its domestic aspect. However, the perception of September 11, 2001 as a point of major changes in the application of the terrorism concept falls within the frames of the research. As well as an argument, expressed in the work by Norris, Kern and Just, regarding the theoretical perspective that the news frames are often used to picture terrorist events, simplifying, prioritizing and structuring their narratives (2003, p. 10). Thus, the concept of framing is applied in the thesis, when discussing the media's perspective on the ELF activity.

1.5. Overview of the chapters

The thesis begins with the introduction chapter, where I briefly talk about the background of the topic that is being studied, aim of the study and the research questions. It is followed by the discussion on the delimitations of the research. And finally in the "Literature review" Section I present the works, done in the fields of discourse and terrorism, to draw out the core distinctions of the present research.

From there, theoretical and analytical framework of the thesis is presented in Chapter 2. Since I use discourse analysis as the basis for both theory and methodology, to avoid repetition I mostly present general theoretical concepts applied throughout the paper in the second chapter. In Section 2.1, "Operationalization and conceptualization", I discuss relevant definitions with an aim to define the concept of terrorism in operational terms and reflect upon existing terrorism discourses.

Chapter 3, "Methodology", provides readers with the information on analytical approaches that I use in the research. Different sections of the chapter deal with various aspects of the analysis. Thus, Section 3.1 demonstrates the application of triangulation concept regarding the data sources. Section 3.2 focuses on the discussion of qualitative research and its relevance for the interpretation of social phenomena. Moving to the discussion on the method in Section 3.3, I write about my choice of discourse analysis as the main analytical tool for the research. Discourse analysis of political rhetoric with an aim to analyze the US authorities' position, and media discourse analysis as a supportive methodological tool are presented in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 correspondingly.

In Chapter 4, "Historical considerations on terrorism labeling", I examine the ambiguity of the terrorism concept, by providing the views of the US authorities on terrorism from the historical perspective. I survey the application of 'terrorism' label in the second half of the XX century with an aim to compare it with the tendencies regarding ELF.

Chapter 5, "Official perspectives of the US authorities and mainstream media", discusses the techniques, applied in the mainstream discourse, while labeling non-killing environmentalists as 'terrorists'. In Section 5.1 I mainly refer to FBI, speaking of the of the US authorities position. And in Section 5.2 I analyze the linguistic aspect of the ELF image, highlighted in media of both conservative and liberal stances.

The next chapter, "Rhetoric of the Earth Liberation Front", presents the perception of 'terrorism' and 'violence' discourses by the ELF movement. The reflection upon the correlation between these notions and ELF actions from the environmentalists' perspective helps to analyze the mainstream discourse in the previous chapter.

Thesis ends with Chapter 7, where I provide the conclusions, based on the analysis of my sources. Answering the research questions, I have come up to the list of techniques, used by the US authorities and mainstream media, when applying 'terrorism' label to the non-killing environmental movement on the one hand. And on the other hand I also analyze the defensive discourses, used by the Earth Liberation Front, trying to avoid the application of 'terrorism' label regarding their movement.

Chapter 2. Theoretical and analytical framework

As a researcher I need to answer the question about analytical tools and approaches, which are appropriate and relevant for the analysis. This and the next chapter explain the choices I have made in this regard. Here I am going to define and reflect upon the theoretical concepts that are to be used, while doing the research. It is of high importance to mention that I am going to consider discourse analysis as the basis of both theory and method components. However, to avoid repetition, in this chapter I put a focus on the overall concepts that are going to be referred to throughout the thesis, whereas discourse analysis per se and its application for the sources analysis is specifically presented in Chapter 3.

Taking into account Berg's statement that theory is a set of interrelated ideas, statements and propositions, describing different aspects of some phenomena (2009, p. 21), the following considerations are meant to represent an attempt to describe the reality of the studied phenomenon. The concepts presented below, or as Turner call them – "basic building blocks of theory" (cited in Berg, 2009, p. 22), provide the core information on the issue and serve as the basis for the theory used. Theoretical concepts provide the framework, within which I do the research.

2.1. Operationalization and conceptualization

> *One man's terrorist is another's holy warrior.*
> *One man's heretic and unbeliever is another man's fighter for the true faith.*
> (Cooley, 2000)

Since the thesis examines an extremely illusive concept of terrorism, it is important to provide some definitions and images, and specify the meanings used, when referring to the concept. While analyzing the US mainstream rhetoric towards terrorists in different historical periods, I interpret one of the myths about terrorism, identified by M. Stohl as "all terrorists are madmen". This image of mad people, undertaking 'evil' actions is often embodied in official statements and media coverage. Thus, right after 9/11 attacks President George W. Bush claimed: "Today, our nation saw evil; the very worst of human nature", "enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country" (2001). Then, it is reasonable to suppose that picturing terrorists exclusively as 'evildoers' and 'enemies' in a way manipulates audience's perceptions of them, especially when the political meanings of their actions are misrepresented or are lacking at all. This is to a certain degree biased approach if we accept that so-called

'terrorist acts' are committed, aiming to deliver a 'message' to the authorities and the public. I do not mean the 'messages of fear and political demands' that are broadly covered by media, but their ideology, social background that lead to the actions. As Stohl argues, the terrorists' actions are rarely presented as part of an ongoing political struggle, related to any particular goals or presented as reasonable or even meaningful" (Stohl, 2008, p.7). Terrorism "is a context in which the threat of terrorism has often been overplayed by politicians for political gain" (Mueller, 2006 and Kassimeris, 2007, cited in Smyth, et al., 2008, p. 2).

The ambiguity and illusiveness of the concept is demonstratively obvious when the same action can be classified either as a terrorist attack or an activists' act of emancipation. Thus, it is necessary to get to the bottom of the definition of terrorism, although it seems almost impossible to find a consensus on the topic neither in the field of international law nor in the academic community. The terms 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' have their roots in the French Revolution and since that time have been used to refer to almost every imaginable form of violence (Wardlaw, 1989, p. 18). 'Terrorism' is a term that is difficult to define. "Dictionary of Terrorism" provides over seventy definitions, ranging from "the use of violence against innocent individuals for a political reason" to "a tool of political violence to gain attention" (Thackrah, 2004). Thus, it is quite tricky to argue whether an act is an act of terror or not, since the term is lacking the universally accepted definition. As a result, it is hard to measure this phenomenon adequately without well-accepted definition, since different measurements will classify different incidents in different ways (Wardlaw, 1989, p. 50). Therefore, tracking discourses of the terrorism concept, that are being used by the opposing sides, is crucial for this research to be able to draw the line between a terrorist act and an act of economic sabotage or property destruction.

It is remarkable that the argument that terrorism can be used by governments is not considered to be compelling enough for the UN and its members, thereby restricting terrorist acts being committed to a large extent by non-state actors only (UN General Assembly, 2004, p. 48). "Some experts in the field criticize that governmental decision makers, journalists, and scholars are preoccupied with what they see as a relatively minor problem of international terrorism against the United States and its citizens and ignore the much greater problem of state terrorism" (Nacos, 1994, p. x) that is given a great attention in Chomsky's works (1988). Wardlaw identifies the problem of terrorism definition as the unwillingness of many to acknowledge that terrorism is as much a tool of states as of political extremists (1989, p. 9). It is now necessary to examine who is usually considered being a 'terrorist'. On the one hand, the criterion can be an act itself and the methods employed, but on the other hand its certain consequences can be an argument of whether an act can or can not be categorized as a terrorist act. Stohl mentions former Senator H. Jackson's statement that

> "The idea that one person's 'terrorist' is another's 'freedom fighter' cannot be sanctioned. Freedom fighters or revolutionaries don't blow up buses containing non-combatants; terrorist murderers do. <…> Freedom fighters don't assassinate innocent businessmen, or hijack and hold hostage innocent men, women, and children; terrorist murderers do. It is a disgrace that democracies would allow the treasured word 'freedom' to be associated with acts of terrorism" (cited in Stohl, 2008, p. 9).

It is traditionally obvious to expect a terrorist act result in innocent victims. But then the dilemma is why the mainstream discourse labels ELF activists' actions as 'terrorist acts' if they do not cause any human victims? What is the reason for this divergence? I tend to agree with Stohl's assumptions that we often witness a situation when all the actions of people that are labeled as terrorists are automatically tied the notion of terrorism (Stohl, 2008, p. 10). For example, "when al-Qaeda uses the internet to post videos, many characterize the act as 'cyber terrorism" (Stohl, 2008, p. 10).

It might be possible that the US authorities use the word 'domestic' as a smear, when talking about ELF actions in the rhetoric of terrorism. Thus, Domestic Terrorism Section Chief James F. Jarboe claims that "The FBI divides the terrorist threat facing the United States into two broad categories, international and domestic", defining the last one as

> "the unlawful use, or threatened use, of violence by a group or individual based and operating entirely within the United States (or its territories) without foreign direction, committed against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (2002).

The inclusion of such words as "unlawful use" and "violence committed against property" in the definition of domestic terrorism makes it possible to attach this label to ELF.

Thus, "…the labeling of a particular act as terroristic tells less about that act than it does about the labeller's political perspective, …it is more of a formulation of a social judgment than a description of a set of phenomena" (Williamson, 2009, p. 37). In the following chapters I reflect upon whether the tendency to label the Earth Liberation Front as a terrorist threat for the USA is the result of American policy change (both international and domestic) that came into force after 9/11 attacks. "It is a commonplace for commentators as well as governments to portray regime opponents as terrorists and all their actions as terrorism" (Stohl, 2008, p. 10). The trend to refer to ELF members as 'eco-terrorists' is on the increase since 2001. In that case, 9/11 events and its aftermath caused not only the discussions about the 'wars on terror' abroad, but the change of domestic policy agenda as well.

As it is obvious from the above, the concept of terrorism per se is not easy to operationalize. However, defining concepts in operational terms is of minor importance for the present thesis, since my aim is to reflect upon the rhetoric, arising in opposing environments (the US mainstream discourse and ELF). To eliminate biased considerations a researcher should not perceive the actors that are being examined solely as 'terrorists' or 'activists' without analyzing the social and political background and the motives of their actions.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

While developing research design, I used the following framework that is the basis of the data collection and analysis. To provide an adequate analytical framework and a substantive picture of the researched phenomenon I have decided to use discourse analysis as the main methodological tool of the research. I believe it is important to apply triangulation concept, but only as a research tool, when we speak of the sources, in order to deal with their selection, which was identified by Denzin as data triangulation (cited in Patton, 2002, p. 247). Data sources of the research are: 1) official statements and publications by the US officials (primarily, the FBI) on the one hand and the Earth Liberation Front on the other hand; 2) media reports, covering the studied topic, as an additional tool to reflect upon the rhetoric towards ELF by the mainstream media; 3) analysis of the documentary film 'If a tree falls: a story of the Earth Liberation Front' as an additional source to present the perspective on the ELF movement. Moreover, all three types of sources are possible to analyze with the help of discourse analysis. Thus, I see triangulation exclusively as a way to cover the research object in a better way in terms of the sources used for its analysis. Two main perspectives the research is to be analyzed from are the US mainstream discourse (the authorities and media) and the Earth Liberation Front. Since "methods impose certain perspectives on reality", and "each method, thus, reveals slightly different facets of the same symbolic reality" (Berg, 2009, p. 5), the analysis of the phenomenon from opposing perspectives, using different sources gives me an opportunity to observe it thoroughly, trying to avoid bias.

Thus, the above-mentioned approaches are used as guiding tools and perspectives from which the data is analyzed. Taking into account Bryman's definition of epistemological issue as "the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline" (2008, p.13), I am going to conduct the research from the interpretivist epistemological position. By claiming the adherence to interpretivism, I mean that "social reality has a meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful – that is, it has a meaning for them and they act on the basis of the meanings of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others" (Bryman, 2008, p. 16). However, since there is no single truth, I have decided to analyze the perception of terrorism concept from both perspectives to avoid over-interpretivism and bias, while applying the chosen methodological tools.

3.2. Qualitative research

Sticking to the statement that certain experiences cannot be meaningfully expressed by quantitative approach (Berg, 2009, p. 3), I have chosen to do the research, using qualitative method, being guided by one of the aims of the thesis, which is to research the ambiguity of the concept of terrorism with the focus on domestic environmental radicalism in the USA, contributing to the existing studies in the field.

Application of qualitative studies, while analyzing meanings, concepts and definitions with an aim to interpret social phenomena coincides with the objectives of my research. Qualitative approach provides an opportunity not only to research and describe the phenomenon, but also to reflect upon and share its 'construction' and meaning-making processes. "The quality of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher" (Patton, 2002, p. 5). It is logical to assume that solid examination of the social phenomenon background is of great importance to be able to interpret the meanings, referring to them in the right contexts. Therefore, in Chapter 4 I examine the changes in the application of 'terrorism' labels from the historical perspective.

3.3. The use of discourse analysis in the research

Discourse is what makes us human.
(Graesser, cited in Wodak, 2008, p.4)

My choice of discourse analysis to be the main analytical tool for the research deserves a discussion on the method. It is important to reflect upon discourse studies per se. Taking into consideration the statement that everything is socially constructed, I use this method to analyze the discursive rhetoric regarding the Earth Liberation Front by the US authorities and the activists themselves. The analysis of the documentary film and the statements, made by both activists and officials, allows me to examine and compare the rhetoric of the discourses they produce. Being driven from various disciplines including rhetoric, text linguistics and psychology, discourse analysis is a quite complex methodology to use (Goldman & Wiley, 2008). "Discourse is a difficult concept, largely because there are so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 3). However, complex character of modern social phenomena, its variability and flexibility allows applying discourse analysis in the most appropriate way. As Wodak claims "*discourse* means anything from a historical monument, a *lieu de mémoire*, a

policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversations, to language *per se"*, however, "we rarely find *systematic definition* and *operationalizations*" of the concept (Wodak, 2008, p. 1). Linguistic dimension of discourse analysis plays an important role. But unlike Jackson, who understands constructed discourse as "deliberately and meticulously composed set of words, assumptions, metaphors, grammatical forms, myths and forms of knowledge" (2005, p. 2), I apply discourse analysis in the realm of rhetoric to be able to interpret social phenomena. My interpretation of discourse is close to Foucault's view on discourse as a structure of rhetoric rules and tactics. I discuss the distinction of my understanding of discourse concept in comparison with other authors in Section 1.4.

I use the following Van Dijk's argument as the foundation for the discourse analysis approach: "A text creates no sense in itself but only in connection with knowledge of the world and of the text" (cited in Wodak**,** 2008, p. 8). "…When we want to look at patterns, commonality, relationships that embrace different texts and occasions, we can speak of discourse" that is portrayed as an image and can use a text as its specific and unique realization (Wodak**,** 2008, p. 5). Thus, discourse analysis "provides a general framework to *problem-oriented social research*" (ibid., p. 2). Etymologically '*discourse analysis'* stems from the Greek verb *analueim* 'to deconstruct' and the Latin verb *discurrere* 'to run back and forth (ibid., p. 4)**.** Indeed the word 'deconstruction' seems to be appropriate while analyzing rhetoric, implied by the terms used in a specific field. The meaning-making process suits here as well, since "…every text necessarily addresses an audience, is thus by nature dialogic…" (ibid., p. 8). The meanings implied are to be analyzed to get the full and, to a maximum possible extent, correct picture of the studied topic.

3.4. Discourse analysis of political rhetoric

Since the analysis of the US authorities' perspective on the actions by the Earth Liberation Front is a part of the research, it is necessary to reflect upon the political rhetoric and the meanings of the terms the officials use, while referring to the activists as 'terrorists'. According to Reisigl, "policy rhetoric is frequently bureaucratic <…> and often programmatic" (cited in Wodak, 2008, p. 98). Therefore, it is obvious to suppose that the government aims to popularize and promote beneficial point of view, picturing their opponents in a negative way. The following so-called 'political fields' are at the same time the tools, the officials use to achieve this aim, and the origin of political discourse per se:

-	law-making procedure (for example relating to the manufacturing or amendment of specific acts),

-	formation of public attitudes, opinions and will (for example relating to confrontations of political opponents in TV discussions) (Reisigl, cited in Wodak, 2008, p. 98-99).

As Jackson argues, "the enactment of any large-scale project <…> requires a significant degree of political and social consensus and consensus is not possible without language" (2005, p. 1). The power relations concept is worth mentioning in regard to political rhetoric analysis, if we understand it as "the process whereby social groupings with different interests engage with one another" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 28). If "discourse conventions constitute the social in particular ways, then control of these constitutive processes would be a powerful covert mechanism of domination" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 9). As it was already mentioned above, the linguistic dimension of discourse analysis is the basis of the research, and being combined with the discourse analysis of political rhetoric, it helps to reflect upon application of the language. While doing the research, I stick to Fairclough's statement that "language contributes to the domination of some people by others" (2001, p. 1). Considering language as a socially conditioned process and as a discourse, a researcher is able not only analyze texts, but also examine their situational context (Fairclough, 2001, p. 21).

However, it is important to remember that discourse analysis is rather a general cross-discipline approach, which is to be carefully adapted, accurately interpreted and reflected upon, depending on the fields it is applied to, and supplemented with thorough study of the social phenomena background.

3.5. Media discourse analysis

Media is a powerful tool, being able to construct and influence public's perception of various social issues. Since I reflect upon the concept of terrorism, which is one of the most frequently covered topics in media; its analysis is of interest, while reflecting upon media framing. Media discourse analysis is a supportive methodological tool to trace the rhetoric regarding the Earth Liberation Front. However, it is important to emphasize that I use media as an additional source for the analysis of the discourse, applied by the US authorities. I use discourse analysis to show how "language is instrumental in constructing a view and to challenge it through deconstruction" (Mautner cited in Wodak, 2008, p. 33). Thus, I am able to trace the messages and reflect upon the rhetoric and contexts, used to deliver them. It is then of

importance to consider the style of media texts in general and the words used in particular (negative or positive, blaming or praising, etc.).

Power relations aspect in mainstream media discourse is obvious, since its 'owners' exercise power over consumers, having exclusive production rights and can therefore determine what is included and excluded, how events are represented (Fairclough, 2001, p. 42). "The myths circulated <…> help consumers of mass media to construct a worldview" (Thussu, 2006, p. 4). Therefore, definitions and language, popularized through media sources and used to highlight the social phenomenon, are in need to be interpreted, since "what we call things, the themes and discourse we employ, and how we frame and allude to experience is crucial for what we take for granted and assume to be true" (Altheide, 1996, p. 69). It is important to mention that for a solid study I analyze media of both conservative and liberal stances. More detailed criteria of the media sources choice are presented in Section 5.2 on a par with the results, gained after the linguistic analysis of the media sources.

Thus, the linguistic dimension of discourse analysis covers, according to Mautner, such aspect as transitivity ('who does what to whom'; types of verbal processes, for example 'doing' versus 'happening'), modality (expressing certainty vs. vagueness; 'high' vs. 'low' commitment to propositions on the part of the speaker as expressed, for example, through modal verbs and modal adverbials), nonverbal message components (cited in Wodak, 2008, p. 44). Two out of four reasons, suggested by Allan Bell about the increasing importance of media and its analysis, are of interest for this research. Thus, media use can tell us a great deal of social meanings and stereotypes, projected through language and communication; and the media reflect and influence the formation and expression of culture, politics and social life" (Bell and Garrett, 1998). To apply discourse analysis in the most effective way I use specific and conceptually suitable search terms, while analyzing media. Mainly, I intend to study the correlation between the terms 'activism' and 'terrorism' regarding the Earth Liberation Front. Therefore, when analyzing news reports and newspaper articles, I reflect upon the language used, general rhetoric of texts and the meanings, created by the stories.

In Section 6.2 I discuss the documentary 'If a tree falls: a story of the Earth Liberation Front', which can also be considered as a media source. Playing a significant role in producing public opinion and images of different kinds, it is quite a specific genre to apply discourse approach to. According to Pollak, documentaries are to be treated as documents that reflect their time and also as representations of particular contexts of production, can contribute to the understanding of past and present developments and societal forms of expression (cited in Wodak, 2008, p. 77).

Chapter 4. Historical considerations on terrorism labeling

The ambiguity and illusiveness of the terrorism concept was already described above in the Chapter 2, dealing with theoretical framework of the thesis. However, it is of high importance to have a closer look at the historical perspectives of the term 'terrorism'. This chapter considers the US authorities' views on terrorism and the application of the terrorism concept in researches on media, and is more of a descriptive character. I aim at reflecting upon application of the terrorism concept in the US history to be able to compare its general trends with nowadays tendencies regarding the Earth Liberation Front. The intention here is to research the relevance of the concept from the historical perspective. The main limitation of the present chapter is the same as of the whole thesis: I look at the US domestic perspective. This chapter studies the trends in the understandings of the term 'terrorism' (in a way constructing a discursive struggle) through the examination of the groups (both of left-wing and right-wing political views) that were classified as terrorist and extremist organizations in the second half of the XX century.

Speaking of domestic oriented violence-prone political groups, the far-left Black Panthers (1960s – 1980s) are to be mentioned. Referring to the causes of the Black Panthers' protests, US officials (The Kerner and Eisenhower commissions) explained the Black riots in terms of 'the deprivation-frustration-aggression model of violence', however, some scholars argue that their riots are to be considered as "not a deviant occurrence but part of a common syndrome of violence in democracies" (Miller and Schaen, 2000). Being interested in terrorism labeling and its overall perception by the officials, it is worth mentioning FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's description of the Panthers as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" (US Senate, 1976) that coincides with the FBI's perception of the Earth Liberation Front. However, militant nature of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was widely accepted and its members were often imprisoned for a variety of crimes, thus, the Defense Minister of the Panthers, Huey Newton, was arrested in 1967 for killing an Oakland cop (Baggins, 2002). However, he was projected as a hero: "He has paid his dues. He has paid his dues. How many white folks did you kill today?" (Pearson, 1994, p. 152). For its part FBI, leaded by J. E. Hoover, launched the COINTELPRO program, aiming at the destruction of what the Bureau characterized as "Black Nationalist Hate Groups" (US Senate, 1976) and began so-called "surgical assassinations" of the party's leading members (Baggins, 2002).

To be able to compare the contradiction between the US officials' perception of the group, considered to be of extremist nature, and the group's perception itself, it is worth mentioning that the Black Panthers viewed their party as a political organization of black and

poor for social change, admitting its revolutionary nature. It is notable that the co-founder of the Black Panther party Huey Newton described it as a powerful and competitive political force, challenging the traditional policies and posing a threat to the US government (1980). By contrast, according to the official report, the rioters were considered rather as victims, people driven by social forces beyond their control, than as criminals (Miller and Schaen, 2000, p. 350). However, President Johnson rejected the Kerner Commission report, and thereby its views on the nature of the examined events had little to do with the actual policy towards the Panthers. It is proved by the FBI record on The Black Panther Party as an "extremist organization, advocating the use of violence and guerilla tactics to overthrow the US government" (FBI, n.d.), thus considering their activity as a form of political violence.

The next group I am going to look at, that was also classified as a domestic terrorism threat, is the far-right Militia movement active in the USA in the 1990s. In summary, its supporters stood for the gun rights, opposed what they call the New World Order (because of the United Nations influence on the US domestic affairs), being the adherents of the conspiracies theories, and saw the powers, exercised by the government (gun control, taxes), as the violations of their liberties. "The movement's ideology has lead some adherents to commit criminal acts, including stockpiling illegal weapons and plotting to destroy buildings or assassinate public officials" (Pitcavage, 2001, p. 957). The view of the Militia by the FBI is now to be referred to. According to the US Department of Justice assessment of the potential domestic terrorism threat, the majority of the Militia movement is non-violent, however, its small segment is inclined to carry out acts of violence and/or domestic terrorism, therefore "officials at the FBI Academy classify militia groups within four categories, ranging from moderate groups who do not engage in criminal activity to radical cells which commit violent acts of terrorism" (FBI, 1999, p. 21-22). However, in 1996 the FBI report stated that "current domestic terrorist threat stems in part from the rise of the militia movement" (National Security Division, 1996, p. 16). Pro-gun rights activist Timothy McVeigh, considered to be a supporter of the Militia movement, was accused and later sentenced to death for being responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, which resulted in numerous human victims and extreme financial damage. Being the most destructive terrorist act in the USA apart from the September 11, 2001 attacks, it is, therefore, was linked to the Militia movement. Describing them as anti-government domestic extremists and terrorists, the Bureau indicates law enforcement personnel and other public officials as the Militia's targets apart from federal buildings (FBI, 2011). The following example is a demonstration of opposing views of the movement's adherents and the authorities on the same action. Beauregard, the Militia movement's person of prominence, was arrested in 1999, since, according to the indictment, he had identified various targets he wanted to destroy, including a

nuclear power plant; but at the same time the movement's leaders proclaimed him being a patriot (Pitcavage, 2001, p. 957).

It is also necessary to examine the application of the terrorism concept, applied in the US official documents in the above-mentioned time period. According to the Code of Federal Regulations, in the 1990s the FBI defined terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (National Security Division, 1996, p. 3), but making the distinction between domestic and international terrorism later on, it is said that "domestic terrorism involves groups or individuals who are based and operate entirely within the United States and Puerto Rico without foreign direction and whose violent acts are directed at elements of the U.S. Government or population" (ibid.). Thus, the 'property' section as a target is left for the definition of international terrorism and terrorist act per se. The FBI report on terrorism in 1998 first included section about violence, committed against property, in the definition of domestic terrorism (National Security Division, 1998, p. ii). In the 1999 FBI report environmentalists were pictured as an increased threat in the field of domestic terrorism (National Security Division, 1999, p.27). A terrorist incident per se is considered as a violent act or an act dangerous to human life in violation of the US criminal laws (National Security Division, 1997, p. ii). According to the analysis of the available sources, it is possible to say that in most cases FBI reports define terrorism as an act of violence against human beings, sometimes including the section about property damage.

I am now going to include a brief 'media section' to be able to see how terrorism discourse in general has been applied as a concept in the media field. Relying on the analysis of researches on media and terrorism, I can state that "news has increasingly become a powerful political and diplomatic force" (Hachten and Scotton, 2002, p. xv) that is used as a tool to convince American public opinion of certain events. Nacos, for example, describes terrorism concept as activity, perpetrated by demagogues, speculating on people's passions, not reasons and manipulating their target audiences through various media tools (1994). According to the opinion polls, most Americans in the 1980s perceived terrorists as irrational fanatics as a result of images, popularized through media (Hinckley, 1992). Besides the discussions on the concept of terrorism, many works in the second half of the XX century raised a question about the necessity to cover terrorist acts by the media, seeing it as a powerful tool with damaging effects, which terrorists use to achieve their goals. However, most of them conclude that restrictions on reporting would be a much greater loss for the freedom per se (Wardlaw, 1989; Hinckley, 1992; Nacos, 1994; Hoffman, 1998). In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 researchers have paid more attention to the terrorism contextualization and mythologizing of media discourses, while

referring to the terrorism narratives (Thussu, 2006, p. 5). Norris, Kern and Just (2003) argue that the images constructed by the media frames influence public's perception of terrorism and 'the truth' that can merely present the US corporate media interests and political interests, they represent (Thussu, 2006, pp. 7-8). One of the tendencies obvious in the terrorism studies after 2001 is the analysis of international cooperation in combating terrorism, taking September 11, 2001 as a starting point for new global threat. Another salience of post-2001 literature is attempts to deconstruct the concept of 'terrorism'. If we conceptualize terrorism as "the systematic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals" (Norris, Kern and Just, 2003, p. 6), we thereby connect this definition with the concept that should be assessed in terms of the theory that flow from its understanding.

The purpose of this chapter is not to enter into the debate over the detailed terrorism history and considerations upon the activities of the groups, mentioned above, but to see a general pattern of perception and interpretation of the terrorism concept. Using the two above-mentioned movements as examples, I have come up to the following conclusions. The Black Panther hard-liners "considered it an honor to be arrested, and a real right of redress to injure a police officer"; "from the fall of 1967 through the end of 1969, across the nation, nine police officers were killed and fifty-six wounded in confrontations with the Panthers" (Pearson, 1994, pp. 205-206). Hostile interpretation of the government powers as a tyranny served as the ground for the justifications of the extreme actions by the Militia movement's activists and their supporters. Thus, referring to a man, involved in an accident, resulted in two state troopers dead, J. Johnson (former spokesperson for the Ohio Unorganized Militia) said: "Yes, they eventually killed this guy, but he left a few less folks for us to deal with" (Pitcavage, 2001, p. 966). Timothy McVeigh in his letter to Fox News, explaining his motivations that lead to the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, accepted that he intentionally bombed the government employees within the building, considering his act as morally and strategically equivalent to the US, hitting a government building in Serbia, Iraq, or other nations (2001). Thus, without going into particulars and deep analysis of his reasons, it seems that McVeigh considered human victims as possible and/or desirable to achieve his goal.

The lack of the universal pattern of terrorism 'standards' leads to the variety of definitions and their applications, depending on the circumstances. Terms of 'extremism' and 'violence' are often used interchangeably with the term of 'domestic terrorism'. "Some experts criticize a lack of consistency in the way U.S. domestic terrorism laws are applied, which can lead to dissimilar procedures and outcomes for similar cases" (Masters, 2011). The analysis of the above brief historical review allows me to state that the groups, considered as terrorist and linguistically referred to as 'paramilitary', 'militant', 'nationalist', 'violent' and 'extremist'

organizations, can sometimes coincide in their tactics or manner of action, but it is hardly possible to apply the same characteristics, while discussing their ideological underlying background. Therefore, it seems over-simplified, when the same term 'terrorism' is applied to the groups that differ in their aims, ideology and background.

Absence of the widely acceptable definition of terrorism allows attaching its existing variations, operating with the term 'violence', and labeling groups and individuals distinctively different from each other. Thus, the labels and terms, the US authorities used, while addressing the radical groups, may be the reason to state that the ambiguity of the concept is used for the benefits of the government that uses its illusiveness against its enemies, choosing the most acceptable terms and notions, changing in time. Such a tendency already existed before 2001, however, since that year this trend has become much easier to apply, due to strengthening of the US federal law enforcement in the fight against terrorism. It has lead to the situation, where there are practically no legal boundaries, preventing from labeling 'unwanted' groups as 'terrorists' and 'aggressors', and those, which are useful for a political regime, as 'activists' and 'victims'. Therefore, the above-shown tendency has proven Jackson's argument that the building of a concept "requires more than just propaganda or 'public diplomacy'; it actually requires the construction of a whole new language, or a kind of public narrative, that manufactures approval while simultaneously suppressing individual doubts and wider political protest" (2005, p.1).

Thus, creation of the new reality, picturing someone as a 'terrorist', is to a great extent a 'technical question'. After the USA Patriot Act of 2001 was enacted in direct response to the terrorist attack of September 11 (still with the major focus on international terrorism), domestic terrorism was defined in Section 802 as "activities that involve acts dangerous to human life violating the US criminal laws and occurring primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the USA intending to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping" (USA Patriot Act, 2001). It "stretches beyond recognition of the common understanding of the term "terrorism" as premeditated and politically motivated violence targeted against a civilian population" (Chang, 2002, p. 112). The application of this definition by the authorities regarding the Earth Liberation Front is to be referred to in the following chapters. The broadened definition of domestic terrorism, using loose terms, has provided solid law background for persecution of the activists, since their activity per se can easily be classified as attempts to affect the US policy. Hence, I intend to study whether ELF aims at committing its acts with a fear-producing outcome, seeking for a political change (as terrorists often do), and, therefore, compare this with the groups, examined in this chapter.

According to the FBI, 'eco-terrorist' groups like the Earth Liberation Front have committed over two thousand crimes and caused losses of over $110 million since the 1970s (Gibson, 2005). Ecological extremism gained particular notoriety in the 1990s, and in 2001 the FBI declared these groups the No. 1 domestic terrorism threat. How equitably the legal definition of domestic terrorism is applied according to the changes in the application of terrorism concepts after 2001 is discussed in the following chapters, when analyzing the discursive rhetoric by the US authorities and mainstream media regarding the Earth Liberation Front. Terrorism is hard to define since "attempts at definition often are predicated on the assumption that some classes of political violence are justifiable whereas others are not" (Wardlaw, 1989, p. 4). But unlike Thackrah, who argues that terrorism "should be defined by focusing on the nature of the act, rather than on the identity of the perpetrators, or the nature of their cause" (2004, p. 75), I think that an act of violence per se should not be equated to an act of terror. The US authorities claim that as long as violence is viewed by some as a viable means to attain political and social goals, extremists will engage in terrorism (National Security Division, 1996, p. 22). Risk and potential danger are referred to as the main arguments against ELF, which I study in Chapter 5 in more detail.

Chapter 5. Official perspectives of the US authorities and mainstream media

5.1. Response of the authorities: FBI Perspective

I mainly refer to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, while discussing the perspective of the US authorities, since it is the threat-focused national security organization, given the authority to deal with terrorism, whose mission is to uphold and enforce the criminal laws of the USA and defend the United States against terrorist threats.

In 2001 the Earth Liberation Front was classified by the FBI as the top domestic terrorism threat in the United States (Property Rights Foundation of America, 2001). James F. Jarboe, the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Chief, started his speech before the House Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health in 2002 with the general FBI approach to terrorism, meaning the distinction between international and domestic terrorist threat, defining the latter as "the unlawful use, or threatened use, of violence by a group or individual based and operating entirely within the United States (or its territories) without foreign direction, committed against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (2002). On the basis of this definition the criterion of the domestic area of functioning does not contradict with the ELF 'field of action'. While later focusing on eco-terrorism, Jarboe refers to ELF as "special interest extremism as a serious terrorist threat" (ibid.).

> "FBI defines eco-terrorism as the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally-oriented, sub-national group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature" (Jarboe, 2002).

The rhetoric applied, while referring to "special interest terrorism", is of high importance to trace the discursive tool, used by the FBI officials. Thus, when speaking of the outcomes of the activists' actions, Jarboe only refers to economic loss and property destruction: "ALF/ELF have committed more than 600 criminal acts in the United States since 1996, resulting in damages in excess of 43 million dollars"; their actions are classified as "politically motivated violence", "vandalism and terrorist activity", aiming at the destruction of "victims' company operations" (2002).

The understanding of 'victims' is worth the discussion here. In the report of the US Department of Justice (n.d.) they list international corporations, fur farmers, retailers, research laboratories, circuses, zoos, fast food restaurants and forestry services as the victims of the environmental extremists. Taking into account that there have never been any human victims as a result of ELF actions, such an approach, however, creates an opportunity to apply the 'victims' term to those, who only suffered property and economic loss. The understanding of victims per se are different for the two opposing sides: labeling ELF as terrorists, the FBI, therefore, consider the above-mentioned companies of various types being an affected party, whereas eco-activists consider the same corporations being the Earth's exploiters when the latter one is a truly victim.

According to the analysis of the discursive rhetoric examples, the FBI classification is based on the equation of 'violence' to 'property damage' and 'victims' to 'corporations'. Considering the above, I can refer to the question regarding the analysis of the political rhetoric and the arguments, used to justify picturing of ELF as a 'terrorist group'. By using the statement 'terrorist acts' FBI draw the line between activism and terrorism, referring to the means, used by the Earth Liberation Front. Emphasizing the risky nature of their tactics (mainly, arsons), the officials see the hypothetic potential of danger as a ground to put eco-activists in a 'terrorists' realm. "As a country, we must not only condemn terrorism, but we must also <…> take a look at the culture and climate of support for criminally based activism like ELF", - stated Inhofe, chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (Committee on Environment and Public Works, 2005). The USA Patriot Act (2001), that has created a broad crime of 'domestic terrorism', has resulted in the situation, when any act of civil disobedience (especially direct actions tactics applied by environmentalists) can be prosecuted as 'domestic terrorism' act. Therefore, we witness the situation, when the loose borders of terrorism definition and legal precedents can be used to classify acts of property damage as 'terrorist acts', determined by the atmosphere of terrorism hysteria started in 2001. Obviously, ELF would be classified differently in case of their cooperation with the mainstream environmental movements that operate within the existing law system. It is in fact easier to control the movement, which main activities are mainly about writing concerned letters and holding peaceful demonstrations. However, the fact of ELF being an outsider of the official decision-making process is probably caused by both the means, used by activists (property destruction), and their classification as terrorists by the FBI. It might result in the Earth Liberation Front being marginalized. ELF is considered to be a great domestic terrorist threat on a par with the Black Panthers Party and the Militia movement. However, in spite of this fact, the distinction of ELF from the other groups, classified as terrorists, is remarkable. Here, the core difference lies not in the labels applied by

the US authorities, but in the movement's members' overall philosophy and ideology. As I have shown in Chapter 4, both the Black Panthers and Militia activists admitted the revolutionary and militant nature of their movements and considered themselves as a threat to the US government. Even assassinations of the officials were considered acceptable by some of their members as a possible tool of influence and confrontation. However, the FBI officials apply the nouns of negative connotation, using the same terms of 'violence' and 'domestic terrorism' regarding both eco-activists and the members of the above-mentioned movements, who see human victims possible to achieve their goals.

Thus, in post-2001 era investigation of eco-terrorism matters has been made a priority of domestic terrorism realm, and "special interest terrorism" section was included in the definition of domestic terrorism. Classifying their actions as politically motivated violence "to force segments of society, including the general public, to change attitudes about issues considered important to the extremists' causes", the FBI point that since 2002 eco-activists' philosophy not to harm "any animal, human and nonhuman" has been overshadowed by an escalation in violent rhetoric referring to language used in their communiqués (Lewis, 2004). In 2004 the federal government initiated Operation 'Backfire', aiming at the investigation of domestic terrorism acts, committed on behalf of eco-activists. Its results of activists' indictments faced condemnation by a part of American society. The National Lawyers Guild condemned the Operation as an "unconstitutional abuse of authority", referring to the inconsistency of severe and unprecedented sanctions for property crimes (US National Lawyers Guild, 2006). Moreover, "both the State Department's and the UN Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004), which helps codify international law concerning acts of terrorism, do not include violence against property" (Boghosian, 2007).

> "In 2006, Congress passed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA), a draconian piece of legislation that classifies as terrorism civil disobedience actions - such as blockades, trespassing, property damage and the freeing of captive animals - taken against businesses that use or sell animals. Several states have also passed related "eco-terrorism" legislation. What has been left unanswered since the word "eco-terrorism" entered the public vocabulary 17 years ago is the question of who the real criminals are. Are they the corporations that destroy the natural world for private gain? Or, rather the people who sabotage the tools used to carry out this destruction?" (The Indypendent, 2007).

Studying a linguistic image of ELF, constructed by the US authorities, the analysis of the sources allows stating that throughout the official documents and statements the tendency to use the following terms is easily traced. Such nouns as 'violence', 'victims', 'vandalism', 'harassment', 'extremism', 'violation', 'threat' are used as synonyms of the ELF activity. It

seems that such a variety of terms, used to classify a non-killing group as terrorists, is justified by the necessity to cover the lack of the universally accepted definition of terrorism. While referring to the ELF actions and tactics, the authorities use such verbs as 'undermine', 'intimidate', 'impede', 'disrupt', 'destroy'. There is no doubt that political rhetoric pictures eco-activists to a large extent in unfavorable notions. Consequently, an extremely negative and dangerous image is created among general public. "Terrorism is terrorism" (Mueller, 2006) - "regardless of their political or social message, their actions were criminal and violated federal laws" (FBI, 2008).

To answer the question how it is possible to label a non-killing environmental movement as 'terrorists' in the US mainstream discourse, I specifically indicate the rhetoric tactics, used by the authorities and media, in the final chapter of the thesis.

5.2. Perspective of the US media

Facts don't really matter. In politics, perception is reality.

(Arnold, 1991 cited in Burke, 1993)

By labeling an action or a news event, the public is forced to adopt the media created
stigma, either positive or negative in response to that label.

(Earth Liberation Front, 2001, p. 19)

In this chapter I reflect upon discursive rhetoric, used by the US mainstream media, while referring to the Earth Liberation Front. "When language changes and new or revised frameworks of meaning become part of the public domain and are routinely used, then social life has been changed, even in a small way. This is why the topic of discourse – or the kinds of framing, inclusion, and exclusion of certain points of view – is important" (Altheide, 1996, p. 69). I describe the application of discourse analysis, while analyzing media framing in Section 3.5. My intention is to examine language, terms, definitions and overall style, used to highlight the ELF connected events. To study linguistic dimension of discourse analysis I use specific search terms, while examining media sources, mainly aiming to compare relevance between the terms 'activism' and 'terrorism' regarding ELF.

My media sources here are newspaper articles available on-line, and social and political science on-line databases. The main data-collection criterion is the examination of specific search terms during the qualitative analysis. I mainly study the connection and correlation of the words 'terrorism' and 'ELF' in newspaper headlines and bodies of the articles. My aim is to

reflect upon the frequency of the following linguistic combinations: 'ELF and terrorism' and 'ELF and activism'. This allows me to draw a conclusion about the prevailing media discursive rhetoric regarding the Earth Liberation Front. For a solid analysis I research popular mainstream media sources of both conservative and liberal political slants. However, I do not intend to compare the results from the publications of different political orientations between each other, since they are used to avoid possible bias in representation. I use 'Washington Times' and 'New York Post' of a conservative stance, and 'New York Times' and 'Washington Post' of a liberal stance as the sources for my analysis.

Generally, discursive media rhetoric of news reports, connected with the Earth Liberation Front, can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, relying on the FBI definition of eco-terrorism as "criminal violence" (The Washington Times, 2004), they mainly cover property destruction aspect of the ELF actions, considering this as a reasonable ground for labeling ELF as 'eco-terrorists'.

> "As fire bombings and arson attacks have increased in frequency and seriousness, eco-terrorist attacks on fast-food restaurants, leather stores, medical research labs and fur industry facilities have become a high priority for federal, state and local law enforcement" (The Washington Times, 2001).

Another trend is the use of extremely condemnatory and ridiculing rhetoric, referring to the ELF members:

> "They are bomb-throwing Birkenstock brats. Wolves in hemp clothing. Enemies of scientific progress. Inveterate haters of humanity. They are environmental extremists and animal rights zealots. They are running loose. And they are endangering us all" (The Washington Times, 2003).

Quoting ELF statement about the absence of human victims as a result of their actions, 'New York Post' emphasizes the word "yet", therefore, picturing them as a dangerous for people group (Friedman, 2001). This statement is confirmed by the application of such terms and phrases to characterize ELF as "zealots", "eco-nuts", "the Earth Liberation Front – the new and *nasty* face of environmentalism" (Friedman, 2001); and such headlines as "Terrorists with tofu breath" (The Washington Times, 2003) or "Radical environmental groups break law to make their points" (The Washington Times, 2001).

Relying on the above-mentioned examples, it seems that 'guilt by association' is used as the main rhetoric tool by the media. My assumption is that such a linguistic approach, applied in the articles and headlines, most likely creates a negative image of ELF either as a dangerous criminal group or simply as inadequate people, who try to achieve their idealistic goals by the

methods of vandalism and violence. Liberal media differs by providing a bit more detailed background, when reporting on ELF connected cases and present generally more neutral coverage of environmental topics (Sullivan, 1998).

Even though, ELF is primarily pictured as a domestic terrorist organization, employing violent actions. To be able to catch the dominant media rhetoric I have used the combinations of 'ELF and terrorism', 'ELF and activism' and 'property destruction and terrorism' as the main search terms. The following tendencies are typical for both conservative and liberal media. The use of the term 'activism' in correlation with ELF is about twice rarely used in comparison with the 'terrorism'/'vandalism'/'radicalism' and ELF allusion. However, even in such articles the main emphasis is put on activism as something opposite to vandalism. Therefore, even the use of positive term 'activism' in correlation with ELF does not guarantee its presentation as a non-violent environmental group. The most popular expressions used are: 'eco terrorists', 'domestic terrorists', 'environmental terrorists' and 'radical environmentalists'. The linguistic links between ELF and 'terrorism' terms are much more deeply rooted in the media coverage. It is also notable that even though eco-terrorism topics have been highlighted in the media before 2001, the tendency to relate ELF connected cases to terrorism has risen since that year.

The analysis of the databases[1] demonstrates the use of the following terms combinations in the headlines, referring to ELF: eco-terrorism (1997), ELF and radical environmentalism (1998), eco-vandals (2000), ELF and environmental terrorism (2003), eco-extremists and violence (2004). Although from 1997 till 2001 there is a tendency to mention that labels 'violent' or 'terrorist' are not apt descriptions for the movement and a thorough interpretation is needed. Moreover, during this time span publication titles mostly consist of general words like 'eco-terrorism' without direct links to ELF. The situation is different since 2001, when there is a notable increase in direct references to EFL as "domestic terrorism threat" (CBS News, 2001); and emphasis on the great difference between vandalism (often used as a synonym or a form of terrorism) and activism.

> "How do you look the American people in the eye and say, "We're a non-violent violent organization. We're not going to hurt anybody. We're just going to burn down your buildings." That's absurd." (Zady, 2001).

This confirms the tendency of the mainstream discourse to describe ELF and its actions mainly in negative terms such as 'vandalism', 'crime', 'charges', 'eco-terrorism', etc., practically opposing them to 'activism', and putting acts of property destruction and economic sabotage

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[1] International Bibliography of the Social Sciences database (IBSS), International Political Science Abstracts database (EBSCO), Factiva database.

beyond its framework. While researching the above-mentioned databases and other media sources, I intended to examine how the mainstream discourse is applied, by making general comparison between the links of ELF with negative ('terrorism', 'violence') and positive ('activism') discourses. Using these words as the search terms for the analysis, I have reached the following results. Searching for the 'ELF' and 'terrorism/violence/radicalism' combinations has resulted in circa 1500 publications, whereas the 'ELF' and 'activism' combination resulted in circa 120 publications. Moreover, even when words as 'activists' are used in connection with ELF, these articles are often rich in such terms and phrases as 'being criticized', 'facing charges', etc. Thus, the references to ELF in negative terms are about ten times more often. Although I use qualitative approach throughout the thesis, this quantitative index allows getting the overall understanding of the main rhetoric, popularized through the studied media sources.

There is a tendency to frame the studied topic within a context of binary opposition, using an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, by portraying the ELF activists as 'extremists' and 'terrorists'. It is interesting that 'eco-terrorism' term is even believed being a PR tool, created by Ron Arnold (Executive Vice-President of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise). Using the rejection of vandalism and sabotage by the mainstream environmentalists, he has blurred the boundaries between nonviolent civil disobedience and these more contentious tactics and elevated property damage to equal terrorism as a societal threat (SourceWatch, n.d.).

Since media possess pervasive and powerful influence in social reproduction, working through the repetition of particular ways of positioning the reader and so forth (Fairclough, 2001, p. 45), its analysis may tell us about dominant social meanings and stereotypes, projected through its language. Coverage of ELF connected cases in the modality of certainty confirms an argument, expressed in the work by Norris, Kern and Just that the news frames are often used to picture terrorist events, simplifying, prioritizing and structuring their narratives (2003, p. 10).

The aforesaid facts allow me to agree with the statement that media generally adopted the rhetoric of "war on terror" (Jackson, 2005). I would also refer to the argument, mentioned in Section 5.1 about ELF being marginalized from the official political process, which is relevant here as well. Media obviously plays an important role in the process of reducing the legitimacy of ELF, by linking their actions to the criminal acts and acts of vandalism, and, therefore, spreading the fear of terrorism, by labeling them as a terrorist and criminal threat. According to my analysis, the US mainstream media "has grown too close to the sources of power in this nation, making it largely the communication mechanism of the government" (Bennet, 2007 cited in Stohl, 2008, p. 8). Thus, media discourse serves as the reflection of the dominant discursive rhetoric regarding ELF.

"The slant they give by deciding what to report and how to report it can create a climate of public support, apathy, or anger" (Cohen-Almagor, 2000 cited in Stohl, 2008, p. 7). Taking into account the potential influence of media on public's perception, it is possible to assume that the shift to cover ELF connected events in the terrorism oriented rhetoric is likely to change the image of the movement from idealists to irresponsible criminals.

Chapter 6. Rhetoric of the Earth Liberation Front

6.1. ELF perspective

Now it is time to reflect upon how the adherents of the Earth Liberation Front understand their group's nature per se and how they correlate it with the terrorism discourse in general. Taking into account the underground nature of ELF, it is quite difficult to find factual information on their actions that does not face biased opinions. However, I mainly rely on the information, provided by the official ELF web site as the guideline, and people, who are considered to be authoritative and reliable sources by ELF itself.

The original ELF movement (Environmental Life Force) was founded in 1977 by John Hanna, and has laid the foundation of the direct action philosophy and eco-guerilla tactics to defense the Earth, later adopted by today's ELF (the Earth Liberation Front), founded in the early 1990s in the UK, ELF spread to North America by the mid 1990s. The Earth Liberation Front advocates the direct actions tactics, explaining this choice with the fact that "with one night's work, a few individuals can accomplish what years of legal battles and millions of dollars most likely did not" (2001). Hanna claims that even while using direct actions as a tool of so-called 'guerilla theatre',

> "ELF took extraordinary measures to avoid loss of life or injury. <…> I waited nearby until all the detonators exploded. If someone would have happened by, I was prepared to warn him or her off, even at the risk of capture" (Hanna, n.d. cited in Environmental Life Force, n.d.). Moreover, ELF listed viable alternatives to the excessive and inappropriate use of pesticides on food after the incident in 1977: "You rarely hear of bombers and activists offering alternatives to their grievances. Usually, they just rant" (Hanna, n.d. cited in Environmental Life Force, n.d.).

Speaking of the movement structure, its core is leaderless resistance, performed by autonomous cells without any central command or leader. Economic sabotage and destruction of property are the tactics employed. These methods of direct actions and eco-guerilla warfare are claimed to be a tool to stop the exploitation and destruction of the environment. Since membership in ELF is open, it might be easy for anyone to perform an action on the movement's behalf. Therefore, for a leaderless movement the overall control is hardly possible, that may result in opposing and controversial statements. Thus, Pickering (described on the official ELF web site as a self-proclaimed spokesman) calls for radical environmentalism: "Every successful

social justice movement throughout history has had an element of radical activism or radical engagement" (Cecil-Cockwell, 2008). Unlike him, Hanna claims that

> "ELF needs to abandon arson as a tactic and stop filling up the prisons. Working within the system gets the best results. Winning one for Mother Earth without lowering yourself to your adversary's level will be your reward and the ranks of ELF will expand" (2008 cited in Cecil-Cockwell, 2008).

The Earth Liberation Front background and the overall aim to eradicate the exploitation of the Earth are presented in the following core guidelines:

1.   Causing economic damage to industries, making profits by exploiting the environment.

> "The ELF does not engage in state sanctioned tactics or those which physically harm people or life in general due to the group's belief that economic sabotage is the best, most direct way to take the profit motive out of destroying the planet" (Earth Liberation Front, 2001).

2.   Minimizing the risks to harm any animal or human. In other words, life per se is sacred.

3.   Education of general public about the committed crimes against environment.

Since 1996, the Earth Liberation Front has claimed responsibility for over $40 million in damages to individuals, corporations and government agencies that profit from the destruction of life on Earth (Pickering, 2002). Pickering considers their direct actions as a struggle of people, rising in self defense in the world which values profits and property over life (2002). It is of great importance that the official ELF web site sticks to a pretty neutral and constructive approach that

> "...regardless of the frustration we all feel about the enormous perils facing our Mother Earth, engaging the perceived wrong-doers with threats, intimidation and destructive tactics will always fail" (Earth Liberation Front, n.d.).

In the previous chapter, while discussing the perception of ELF by the US authorities, I tried to find if there are any important changes in the discourse, being used while referring to ELF, after the events of September 11, 2001. It is worth doing in this section as well. It is natural to assume that possible changes in the ELF perspective could be the results of new legislation regulations and acts of the government after this watershed period. "From 1997 through 2000, not a single person was arrested and charged with an ELF related crime in North America" (Earth Liberation Front, 2001). Pickering's view remains to be quite revolutionary-minded:

"Those who struggle for revolutionary change in North America will not be intimidated by the system's alleged 'War on Terrorism', it's so-called 'Patriot Act' or their 'House Subcommittee hearing on Eco-Terrorism'. If anything, these only exemplify the dire need for a revolutionary movement struggling on the side of the people here in North America" (2002). However, on the official ELF web site such radical rhetoric is considered to be inflammatory:

> "Truculent, rehashed political tirades puked out by self-appointed, unofficial ELF "spokesmen" who have never been convicted for alleged ELF actions offer nothing to an independent, intelligent eco-activist. Their real agenda is to foment insurrection by duping the gullible into believing the Earth can be saved through violence. Then, when the elves get busted, these parasites get busy, profiting off the true activists' misfortune. Only convicted ELF activists that have served or are serving their prison sentences honorably (without snitching), can make official comments and speak as a legitimate ELF spokesperson. Prison validates an ELF spokesperson's credentials; they've earned their stripes" (Earth Liberation Front, n.d.).

To reflect upon the ELF's understanding of terrorism discourse and see how the activists explain the reasons not to label their actions as 'terrorism', I believe it is necessary first to reflect upon how the concept of violence is understood by eco-activists. Referring to their actions and methods, activists use such notions as 'eco-guerilla', 'sabotage' and 'property damage'. Unlike the mainstream rhetoric, they see violence, coming from the industries, which destroy the environment:

> "Very often by labeling the ELF as violent it is a means by which mainstream society, government, and big business can attempt to forget about the real true violence which occurs every day, the violence against life" (Earth Liberation Front, 2001).

> "I don't see any sort of terrorism about it. Terrorism is what I consider something that is violent towards people and nature. It is something that threatens the lives of people. The Earth Liberation Front I don't consider a violent group whatsoever. They are not threatening individuals. They're threatening individuals' property" (Rosebrow, 2001).

As it was already mentioned above, there have never been any human victims as a result of ELF actions: "The fact that nobody was ever injured in any of the actions that I've been accused of is not a coincidence (Coronado cited in Cecil-Cockwell, 2008). The official ELF web site provides critical evaluation on its past actions and the tactics applied:

> "Torching <…> releases of huge amounts of toxic gasses into the atmosphere - creating far more greenhouse gasses than if the targets were left alone. The end result: everything is rebuilt, replaced or repaired. This *doubles* the burden on the environment and taxpayers! An exercise in futility and self-defeat." (Earth Liberation Front, n.d.).

The ELF activists point out false rhetoric, popularized by federal authorities and mainstream media, while highlighting ELF connected events. They argue that an automatic labeling of any action, taken by ELF, as 'eco-terrorism' prevents the fair perspective, honestly revealing the entire story including the motives for taking that action (Earth Liberation Front, 2001). The ELF movement aim to defend and protect the Earth for future generations, removing the profit motive from the exploitation of the environment. Some eco-activists claim that "working within the system gets the best results" (Hanna, 2008 cited in Cecil-Cockwell, 2008) and cooperation with federal government can be something necessary to gain the support of the public, built on mutual compromise. Although ELF explains its underground nature by the facts that

> "State sanctioned means of social change rarely on their own have and will have any real effect on obtaining the desired results. This is due to the obvious fact that the legal means of protest in solving grievances do little more than reinforce the same system which is a root of the problem" (2001).

According to my analysis of the sources presented above, terror is not acceptable for ELF as a tool to achieve their aims. "There is no tolerance for terrorism in the environmental movement - never has been and never will be. A terrorist and environmentalist cannot live within the same skin" (Environmental Life Force, n.d.). But because of the so-called open membership and leaderless structure of the movement, it is possible for some 'parts' of ELF proclaim radical tactics and acts as acceptable. I have demonstrated this above, by showing the problematic link between the official ELF position and self-proclaimed spokesmen's statements. However, the labels of 'terrorism' and 'domestic threat' tend to be applied in the US mainstream discourse regarding the entire ELF movement.

It is also impossible not to notice obvious distinctions between ELF and the other movements and organizations, classified as terrorists, discussed in Chapter 4. Above all things, members' attitude to terror and violence as ineffective is to be paid attention to. A great number of the ELF activists regret the use of such tactics: "I definitely have regrets... that I employed arson as a tactic. I wish I had people in my life at the time to kind of guide me back to a different path" (McGowan, 2007 cited in Earth Liberation Front, n.d.). However, unlike the official ELF rhetoric, McGowan uses the term 'arson', when classifying his methods. It might be caused by

the fact that at that time he was on the trial and most likely used this word as a law-term. Hanna, who is considered to be one of the most reliable sources of environmentalist activism, also no longer advocates the tactics of militant environmentalism, considering them as counter-productive to environmental movement.

Thus, the core controversy of the discourse studied is obvious now. While referring to environmentalists in general and ELF in particular, the FBI officials primarily use the expression "violence against innocent victims and property", whereas this partly contradicts with the ELF philosophy per se, since innocent victims hardly seem acceptable for those, who dedicate themselves to the protection of the Earth and all forms of life. It is also remarkable that ELF often speaks in many different and sometimes contradictory voices, taking into account its structure. And it is much easier for consistent in that sense FBI to deliver its message for the public. This advantage is maximized by the significant support of the authorities by the US mainstream media, creating disproportion in coverage of ELF connected events. Therefore, it seems that the rhetoric, used by ELF in form of defensive discourses to protect the movement from the undesirable labeling, is of little influence. It is most probably caused by its underground nature and therefore absence of access to the official decision-making process; and different voices, speaking on behalf of the movement. Moreover, "while a primary purpose of terrorism <…> is the production of chaos" (Stohl, 2008, p. 6), intimidation of the public is not their aim, even though their tactics in particular are referred to while labeling the ELF as 'terrorists'.

Speaking of direct action method, advocated by ELF, we face the word play: whether destruction of the environment by a businessman, or of business by an environmentalist, it is still destruction (Cecil-Cockwell, 2008) and it seems that the fact, whether we accept it or not, tends to depend on our perception of the concept of violence per se. As I have demonstrated above, ELF does not classify economic sabotage and property destruction as violence or terror. Their targets are 1) inanimate, and are never directed at humans or other living forms; 2) property destruction tactics aim at specific locations, with a goal to resolve specific problems. Thus, there are a number of features that distinguish acts, committed on behalf of environmentalism, from the conventional acts of terror, aiming to cause numerous victims and therefore create the environment of fear. The definitional borders of the term 'terrorism' can not be widened every time we face a new menace.

6.2.   'If a tree falls: a story of the Earth Liberation Front' documentary

…When you are screaming out of the tops of your lungs and no one hears you,

<…> what are you supposed to do?

(McGowan, cited in 'If a tree falls…', 2011)

As it was explained above, I analyze documentary 'If a tree falls: a story of the Earth Liberation Front' (2011) by M. Curry and S. Cullman as an additional source of media. As I have demonstrated in Section 6.1, the Earth Liberation Front is lacking clear voices, unlike the US authorities. That is why I have decided to reflect upon the documentary, which does not answer the question whether it is acceptable to use violence as a tool of environmental movement, but it does, however, discuss its complexity per se, taking D. McGowan's case as an example. It seems valuable to include an opinion on the discourses of terrorism and violence of an eco-activist, convicted for the actions, classified as 'terrorism'. The vagueness whether property damage with no human victims should be classified as a 'terrorist act' was already discussed in previous chapters. However, the archive materials and interviews of the ELF activists in 'If a tree falls: a story of the Earth Liberation Front' provide an insight perspective on these issues. All the quotations in this section are from the documentary film if not stated different.

Explaining his motives that lead to the participation in a multi-million dollar arson, McGowan refers to his previous "hippy style" approach to protest (letter writing, peaceful demonstrations) that did not help to achieve any of the claimed goals, unlike sabotage, using which "in one night they'd accomplished what years of letter-writing and picketing have never been able to do". K. Engdall (Assistant US Attorney) on behalf of the government makes a remark that "mainstream legitimate environment activists were absolutely shocked with the fire as a public relations disaster". McGowan later agrees that whereas "no real social change has happened without pressure, without force", "all people are going to focus on the fact that things were destroyed, and all they care about is catching the people that did it".

The argument that is actively lobbied by the US authorities is the necessity for the environmental activists to work within the system, not against it. However, the tactics, used by the police towards activists, often contradicts with the afore-said. Referring to the incident in 1997, when eco-activists were trying to protest the decision to cut heritage trees and build a corporate parking lot on their place, T. Lewis also claims that "the argument that you need to work within a system was pretty well dashed by what the cops did on that day" (when pepper sprayed the environmentalists who were using peaceful and non-violent approach of protest).

Since I reflect upon the 'terrorism' labels, the following opinion by B. Barton from Native Forest Council is of interest: "The industry tends to call environmentalists radical; the reality is that 95 % of the forests in the US have been cut down. It's not radical to try and safe the last 5 %, what radical is logging 95 %". Thus, those who are considered to be representatives of justice and/or victims of these radical acts can on the contrary be defined as terrorists, depending on the definitional borders of a 'terrorist act': "When you got big oil companies with the big oil spills that cost billions and billions and billions of dollars, they are not being threatened with life in prison. All they do is just paying a fine" (Tim Lewis).

Turning to the discursive rhetoric, used by ELF in defense against 'terrorism' labeling, I would like to present McGowan's lawyer's opinion first:

> "The word terrorism to me is about killing humans, it's about ending innocent life. And that is the antithesis of what these people did. Concern for life was a very big part of the plan and implementations of these actions and is why no one was ever harmed or injured in them. 1200 incidents are being credited to the ELF and ALF in the US and not a single injury or death. Those statistics don't happen by accident" (Regan).

> "Monkeywrenching is nonviolent resistance to the destruction of natural diversity and wilderness. It is never directed against human beings or other forms of life. It is aimed at inanimate machines and tools that are destroying life. Care is always taken to minimize any possible threat to people, including the monkeywrenchers themselves" (Foreman, 1985).

Relying on the analysis of the arguments, presented in the documentary, it is of high possibility that the main criterion for classification of a non-killing political group as a 'terrorists' is based on the understanding whether property destruction is a sufficient ground for such a label. Thus, representatives of the US authorities argue that this is a substantial ground for 'terrorism' classification: "There is no requirement for purposes of terrorism that you physically endanger another person's life. You don't have to be al-Qaeda to be a terrorist" (S. Peifer). While the ELF activists claim that their overall aim and agenda is not to harm any form of life, seeing this harm as the main component of a 'terrorist act'. Since the terms and labels applied determine a type of a crime and consequently terms of imprisonment, the activists advocate fair evaluation of a case merits, emphasizing the distinction between property destruction and terrorism acts. Daniel McGowan's view on the morphing definition of terrorism returns us to the thesis introduction, where I have discussed its ambiguity: "people need to question this buzz word and how it's being used. It's a bogeyman word" (McGowan).

Chapter 7. Conclusion

I want to begin this chapter with the final thesis statement that captures the overall argument of my research and refers to the statement made in the introduction. While both the US authorities and the Earth Liberation Front refer to the concept of terrorism, the authorities classify the Earth Liberation Front as a domestic security terrorist threat, emphasizing the violent nature of their acts; whereas ELF estimates terror tactics as unacceptable, distinguishing between terror and economic sabotage. Below I present the main issues drawn, while studying the ambiguity of the terrorism concept with the environmental focus through the discourse analysis of the narratives.

Terrorism in the name of environment has found a remarkable response in many spheres of the modern globalized world. Environmental movement the Earth Liberation Front is famous for its methods of 'direct actions'. And although no one has ever been injured or killed as the result of ELF actions, the nature of the acts per se has lead to the classification of the movement as 'domestic terrorism'. The conventional boundaries of what constitutes 'terrorism' have been profoundly widened since 2001. Despite the fact that label 'terrorism' was applied to different radical groups throughout the second half of the XX century, the tendency to attach this label to non-killing activists has sharply risen since that year.

This trend might be caused by the implementation of loose borders of a 'terrorism' definition due to the strengthening of the US legislation after September 11, 2001 and generated rhetoric of fear. Cases of 'eco-terrorism' have become domestic terrorism investigative priority, falling within "special interest terrorism" section, which was also included in the definition of 'domestic terrorism'. After the implementation of the USA Patriot Act and classification of the Earth Liberation Front by the FBI as the top of domestic terrorism threat, the following tendency seem as dominant: if the mainstream discourse is applied and uses 'terrorism' labels and rhetoric more widely, environmentalists of non-killing character are likely to be prosecuted and equated to the terrorist groups, killing innocent civilians.

I have done this study with an aim to examine how it is possible to apply labels of 'terrorism' in the US mainstream discourse, regarding non-killing environmentalists. The following list of rhetoric tactics indicates how the 'terrorism' discourses, used by the US authorities and mainstream media, incorporate this label in ELF image:

1. Guilt by association.

Drawing a parallel between ELF actions of property damage and human victims, they make the ground for classification of the environmentalists as 'terrorists'. Moreover, the broadened definition of 'domestic terrorism' has provided the background for persecution of

activists as terrorists, since their activity per se can be classified as attempts to affect the US policy. This technique is closely connected with the application of the following approach.

2. Blurring the line between radical activism and terrorism, by mixing these notions and emphasizing potential danger of the environmentalists' tactics.

The leaderless structure and controversial statements, made on behalf of ELF by different people, lead to labeling of the whole movement by the same term. Therefore, the popularized ELF image, presented from such perspective, results in taking for granted its 'terrorist component'.

3. Application of terms of negative connotations regarding ELF and their activity.

This is used to justify the previous point. Description of actions of the Earth Liberation Front as "politically motivated violence" leads to the loss of the environmentalists' influence and level of credibility.

4.   Extension of the conventional definition of terrorism.

This concluding and overall point embraces three above-mentioned interconnected trends. The US mainstream discourse equates acts with no violence against humans, committed in the name of environment, and terror (traditionally understood as involving violence and threats towards people).

The rhetoric, applied by the Earth Liberation Front in form of defensive discourse, is summarized below:

1. Emphasis on the distinction between economic sabotage and property destruction tactics and acts of terror.

According to the official ELF guidelines, terror is not considered possible. The environmentalists distinguish their tactics from the methods of terror, which, as they emphasize, traditionally aims at numerous victims and, therefore, creation of the environment of fear. Whereas aim of the Earth Liberation Front is to avoid any victims and minimize potential destruction, targeting specific inanimate objects. Moreover, the historical analysis, presented in Chapter 4, has demonstrated the significant distinction of ELF from other groups, also classified as terrorists by the US officials. Here, the core difference lies in the members' attitude to violence regarding people, which I have discussed above in Chapter 6.

2. The vagueness of 'radicalism' and 'terrorism' terms, used in the mainstream discourse to merge them into terrorism category, faces contradiction on the part of ELF.

There are a number of limitations (also presented in Chapter 6), which are not visible for public, when the whole movement is labeled as 'terrorists'. Thus, the image of ELF would differ in case of a remark that there are some individuals within the movement, committing acts of violence in the name of environment, which is not approved by the ELF official position.

3. Explanation of the ELF aims. According to my analysis of the available sources, there is no sign that the environmentalists consider intimidation of the public as their aim and/or method of influence. They claim that their actions are directed only against property, considered being destructive for both environment and people.

Taking into account the lists of rhetoric techniques, presented above, and summing up the analysis of linguistically constructed ELF image in the US mainstream discourse, it seems that there is the prevailing tendency to use words of negative association, consequently creating the link between ELF and such terms as 'violence', 'extremism', 'violation', 'threat', etc. Thus, a negative image is being popularized and is likely to be 'received' by the public. The loose borders of the legal definition of terrorism allow interpretation of economic sabotage actions as 'terrorist acts'. I claim that the terms of a terrorist act and an act of economic sabotage, including property destruction, should not be used interchangeably and be equated to each other. The outcomes of an act (presence or absence of victims) are of importance. The fact of ELF, being excluded from the existing legitimate decision-making process by the means of 'terrorism' labeling, leads to the uneven representation of ELF actions among the public. Mainly negative rhetoric regarding ELF, applied in the US mainstream discourse, and might result in the loss of their potential influence on public and media. Thus, not only ELF actions per se, but also the discourses used, while referring to the movement, set the tone to its perception and overall image. Therefore, the US authorities exclude the Earth Liberation Front from the decision-making process by means of 'terrorism' labeling. However, the definitional borders of the term 'terrorism' can not be widened every time we face a new menace.

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