THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM:
WHAT MAKES THEM BEHAVE LIKE THEY DO?

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Abstract
This paper discusses about the concept of terrorism and their motives with the psychological approach in order for society to comprehend what does terrorism mean and what are the real motives of terrorists. Terrorists often commit egregious acts, they would rarely be considered classic 'psychopaths'. Thus terrorists typically have some connection to principles or ideology as well as to other people who share them. However, psychopaths do not form such connections, nor would they be likely to sacrifice themselves for a cause. Research on the psychology of terrorism has been nearly unanimous. As acknowledged by all researcher, terrorism is indeed a very complicated social object to study. In facts, terrorism remains a strategy, attractive to a variety of disenfranchised actors, groups, and movements who decide violence is the only appropriate response for exerting social and political control. As a base line in this research, there are six objectives were achieved and discussed in this study, such as the psychological approaches, the psychological mind-set, the characteristics, the factors effectuate and the strategies of terrorism. Results indicated that the objectives in this study considered were positively preferred and discussed.

Keywords: Psychology, Terrorism, Behaviour, Terrorist.

INTRODUCTION

No country has ever succeeded in defeating terrorism, and that will not change. This day, terrorism is one of the most hard social problems of our time. It is too often an issue that is so alienating, it can feel challenging to even discuss it, let alone plunge deeper into its multitude social, political, religious, and other factors that cause terrorism, and, no less significant, drive our responses to it [1]. Defining terrorism is a task no less mind-boggling. As we knew, there are hundreds of definitions of terrorism [20], but none dominate. But, we can at least say that terrorism as an act of violence involves a vast and multi-factorial network of socio-political causes. Definitions of 'violence' in the social science literature are at least as plentiful as definitions of terrorism. Mainly focus on causing harms to others, but some also include suicide and self-mutilation as forms of 'violence to self' [2]. Terrorist violence most often is deliberate (not impulsive), strategic, and instrumental; it is linked to and justified by ideological (e.g. political, religious) objectives and almost always involves a group or multiple supporters. These issues all add difficulty to the construction of terrorism as a form of violence and challenge the disclosure of a unifying explanatory theory. Unsurprisingly, efforts to understand terrorism abound in every academic discipline [12]. Percase surprisingly, the researchers with a psychology background have been a "very minor contributor and one that has arguably grown less active and vigorous over time" [22]. Systematic literature reviews, such as Borum [3][4] and Victoroff [23] confirm this.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Nowadays, the concept of terrorism is mingling around the society. What terrorism is or which acts are to be qualified as terrorist is a difficult question [6][14]. What terrorism exactly is has also changed over time and place resulting in a complex history in which many different people have served many different goals with many different means [7]. As psychologists, we tried to explain the defining of terrorism, the reasons why terrorist seem able to recruit new people for their purpose. Perhaps, this paper also explain what is the psychological approaches of terrorism and the characteristics of terrorism. This paper provided a short review of psychological mind-set of terrorists and what is brings about terrorism in the field of psychology. Moreover, researchers focus on recent studies proposing that applying analytical cum descriptive method for this study. In fact, we do not ignore here that it is a particular form of terrorism; on the contrary, this is the very reason why we believe that this issue is of very crucial importance for psychological research, be it at an individual, social or societal level of analysis, and that it undeniably constitutes a vital challenge for the future. Furthermore, people as lay observers have a twisted vision of what terrorism is. In this sense the difficulty to separate terrorism from war particularly illustrates this process. This study is needed to internalize and to increase the awareness of society about terrorism in the field of psychology. In this paper an attempt has been made to recognize, comprehend, find out, analyse, evaluate and critically examine the dominant factors effectuate for terrorism. This study may help the society to understand and to solve the problem of education more efficiently.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:
- a) To define what terrorism really is and their motives.
- b) To comprehend the psychological approach of terrorism.
- c) To analyze the psychological mind-set of terrorist.
- d) To recognize the characteristics of terrorism.
- e) To critical examine factors effectuate of terrorism.
- f) To counter the terrorism strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is descriptive in nature. It is mainly based on secondary data and is largely collected from different sources like books, journals, articles, and periodicals. Within mind, this study is conducted mostly by applying analytical cum descriptive method for the research. Researchers has made effort to express terrorism.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The concept, meaning, and principles in the term of terrorism have been dealt with clarity and deep insight. As a base line in this research, there are six objectives were achieved and discussed in this study, which is concept of terrorism, the psychological approaches, the psychological mind-set, the characteristics, the factors effectuate and the strategies of terrorism. Results indicated that the six objectives in this study considered were positively preferred and discussed with the defining, comprehending, analysing, recognizing and examining critically. The objectives and discussions addressing as followed:

a) *Terrorism and Their Motives*

Terrorism is complex, but whether anyone, even scholars, truly appreciates what that means, is debatable. From the beginning of the 19th century to the present, terrorism has been plaguing the world. A simple look at the Global Terrorism Database [15] has a compilation of data on terrorist

incidents since 1970. Hence, it is important for the general public to understand what does terrorism actually means, as well as to comprehend what are the motives of terrorists. In general, terrorism refers to the act of violence that is politically driven, carried out by individuals, groups, or agents hired by any states. The motives of every terrorist attack is to inject feelings of fear, helplessness and/or hopelessness on a targeted population, in order to influence decision making and/or change behavior, especially those concerning government or state policies [13]. Psychology cannot currently offer clear answers as to why some people become involved in terrorism when most do not. Reviews of the literature Borum [3][4] would suggest this is not likely to change any time soon. Whether it is realistic to expect satisfactory answers to such a complex question, our collective failure (which extend beyond psychology) to provide a good answer to this question has led some to conclude that the study of terrorism more broadly has become stagnant [19].

Be that is it may, are there any distinctions between terrorism and other forms of violence such as guerilla warfare, criminal violence, or those who are suffering from psychopathology, or are they just the same? In recent years, terrorist psychology is no longer just about the question of why someone becomes involved, but it appears to be making way for new and exciting developments that encompass the entire "arc" of terrorism—from involvement, to engagement, to disengagement [11]. We still know little about the psychological consequences of engaging in terroristic violence. Ganor [10] propose that the motives behind these acts are not similar. While a terrorist seeks symbolic political consequences, guerilla warfare aims to disrupt the stability of the security forces. As criminals may seek material gains while persons who are psychopath may have no comprehensible reason to behave violently. The key here is the end result tend to be achieved by these violent groups. One of the common ways in distinguishing terrorism from other forms of violence is the intentional and systematic use of coercive or forceful intimidation [24]. In other words, terrorists instill fear in people to force them to do what they want [10]. This means that terrorists aim to form fear among a wider audience than the targets themselves. In this case, terrorists do not pay attention to the number of casualties they could cause, but to manifest the wild mind's eye and fear of the population in order to disrupt social stability.

With this being the case, terrorists do not ask something specific from their victims, rather terrorize these people, by killing, injuring, and damaging their property - to create an environment in which they can ask for political changes, typically from the government [5][10]. Hence, terrorism activities can be perceived as a tool to create psychological instability and fear, in which we can agree upon that it is a psychological war. Now that we have established some understanding of terrorism and its motives, the next section will underline the psychological approach in understanding terrorism.

b) The Psychological Approach of Terrorism

The first generation of psychological research on terrorism is not officially designated or bounded by any time period, but for purposes of this discussion, will roughly encompass a term from a term from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s. terrorism was pathologized as manifestation of psychological and behavioral deviance [2]. There are several theories or approaches with regards to understanding terrorism (i.e. the instrumental approach, organizational approach, the political approach, economic approach, and psychological approach). However, this chapter will only focus on the psychological approach on terrorism. In general, the psychological approaches on the study of terrorism mainly focus on the profiling of terrorists (i.e. their personality), how individuals are recruited into terrorist organizations, their beliefs, and their motivation [17].

There are two approaches within the psychological standpoint of terrorism. The first approach beliefs that terrorists are individuals who are mentally ill, in which those who commit such atrocity are labeled as abnormal [17]. Hence, this approach argues that individuals who commit acts of terrorism mainly possessed violent characteristics or personality traits. However, this approach is not comprehensive enough to be able to defined terrorism acts as it discredit the influence of various factors such as the economic, political, sociological, and political factors. Another approach under the psychological standpoint is the one which characterized terrorists as

individuals who are fanatics. This particular approach defined terrorists as individuals who are rational, calm, and analytical (i.e. properly planned operations), in which they seek political and ideological outcomes [17]. With this being the case, terrorist are individuals who are well-educated and complex, capable of utilizing advance political analysis.

Within mind, there are two types of fanatics, the religious fanatics, and the single-issue fanatics [24]. The religious fanatics normally employ terrorism for their ideological purposes, commonly to overthrow evil rulers and replaced them with religious ones. On the contrary, single-issue fanatics are individuals who are normally obsessed with certain things, usually government policies such as animal rights, abortion rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and alike [17], [24]. The obsession, consequently to change or challenge certain policies serve as a fuel for such violent actions, not pathological disorders. Be that as it may, either terrorists are individuals who are mentally ill, or those who are obsessed with certain issues, the psychological standpoint alone is inadequate in explaining terrorist behaviors. It cannot be emphasize enough that other approaches should be taken into considerations. The subsequent section will detail the psychological mind-set of terrorist.

c) Psychological Mind-Set of Terrorist

Now that we have established a clear understanding of what terrorism really is, the motives of terrorists, and the psychological viewpoint of terrorism, it is imperative for us to dive deeper in to the mind-set of terrorists. Normally, individuals who are attracted to radical groups and acts of terrorism are those who felt that their opinions and ideologies are rejected by the society. This situations has led to terrorist leaders being able to exploit such individuals to direct their aggressions onto other individuals or organizations [14]. Other than that, Moghaddam has stated that the culture of a terrorist organization is defined by obedience and conformity, in order to attain the organization's ultimate goal (i.e. to achieve political reformation). Such as, the organization will display a dominant and assertive characteristics, in which disobedient will be met by extreme punishment. Moreover, recruited members of a terrorist organization are forced to obey the rules of the organization through isolation and intimidation [14].

Perhaps, that individuals have been contaminated with terrorist ideologies are most likely to perceived violence against the general population are justifiable as they are viewed as comrades of the enemy. This casualties occurred during any part of terrorist attack will not invoke any sense of guilt amongst terrorist members. As a result, they believe those who are not actively supporting their mission is considered as a threat. Terrorists, normally, isolate themselves psychologically from the normal population in order to achieve their objectives [14]. In order to better understand the concept of terrorism, it is crucial to understand it's characteristics, which will be presented in the subsequent section. To characterize terrorism as an expression of psychological disturbance is problematic. At the very least, it might appear to belittle the social and political context in which terrorism flourishes while also cloaking the psychological development of the terrorist in unwarranted and misleading ideological baggage [21], [23].

d) Characteristics of Terrorism

On a wider viewpoint, terrorism is viewed as a product of various dysfunctions or conflicts in the social system. Generally speaking, terrorism is associated with several root causes such as authoritarian or oppressive rulers, poverty, or cultural and/or religious practices, which gave rise to various political violence such as street protests, riots, civil wars, international armed conflicts, and revolutions [8]. However, the various root causes listed are yet to be confirmed as the leading factors to terrorism [9], [16]. Due to the fact that acts of terrorism are often perpetrated by minorities, in which their worldview are severely twisted.

The most common psychological perspectives on terrorism is that terrorists are individuals with psychopathological traits, such as aggressive or impulsive. But, most individuals who participate in a similar terrorist organization possess differing personalities and purposes [8]. Notwithstanding, common psychological characteristics among terrorist members include low

empathy towards their victim, extreme ideology or mentality, and a narrow perspectives on life. Despite that, it is important to take note that most psychological categorizations are based on terrorists who are high in ranking. Since a terrorist organization is comprised of various functions. For example, logistical support, fund raising, recruiting, spreading ideologies, attacking, et cetera. It is logical that the organization is inhabited by individuals with varying capabilities and psychological traits. Hence, due to the inability to link any psychological traits towards acts of terrorism, psycho-social perspectives are more comprehensive in characterizing terrorism. This perspective includes:

- Terrorism is not a syndrome (i.e. psychopathology) but a tool for social-political reform.
- Terrorism traits are developed through social interaction.
- Terrorist organizations may be linked to various social movements.
- Terrorism only mobilizes if terrorists have access to key resources.
- A terrorist campaign is always accompanied by extreme ideologies.
- Although terrorists have logical goals, their implementation are irrational.

For a more in-depth understanding on the psychosocial perspectives presented above, please refer De la Corte [8] as the paper has presented a very comprehensive explanation with regards to those perspectives. In a nutshell, terrorism should not be defined through a single lens. Instead, a dynamic of social and psychological factors should be taken into considerations.

e) *Effectuates of Terrorism*

Now that we have established that the root cause of terrorism is not due to individuals psychopathology, but a product of dissatisfaction on the political system and various social interactions [8], various external factors should be considered. This will be the focus of this particular section. One factor that is important to take note of is that terrorism could be a product of life experiences. Based on the investigation conducted by [2], terrorism often manifest when there is abuse, humiliation. And abuse whether it is experienced during childhood or in the later years. This means that those who are punished unjustly and treated inadequately will resort to vengeance, in which if they are provided assistance by groups who are reacting against an oppressive government will lead to terrorism. Childhood trauma is not only the leading factor of terrorism as unpleasant experiences during adulthood (e.g. injustice or humiliation) is also a major contributing factor [2], [18].

Social relationships and socioeconomic condition are also relevant factors to be considered as these could be related to discrimination, abuse, inequality, and humiliation. For instance, individuals who are involved with violent groups might want to seek a sense of belongingness, better life or might have been neglected by family members. Marginalized or minority groups, normally, have a lower capability to conform with societal standards [22]. The differences in the privileged and the non-privileged social groups may result in those who are under-privileged to participate in violent groups (e.g. gangs), in order to attain resources and social recognition. Hence, those who are oppressed or marginalized are most likely to be involved with terrorist organization in order to achieve social reformation.

f) *Terrorism Strategies*

The understanding of terrorism, its root causes. For all, the factors that lead to terrorism is essential to formulate relevant counter-terrorism strategies. It has been achieved throughout this chapter. One key factor forwarded by [13] is that preventive measures should be applied towards individuals before they are attracted by terrorist groups. In this case, the early identification of at-risk individuals of being involved with terrorist organizations means better prevention in terms of inhibiting their participation in terrorist groups. Other than that, we have establish that terrorism mainly emerged due to social inequality, and oppression, which means terrorism often seek political reformation, promoting social equality is crucial. This is because by having social equality, voices

of minority groups can be projected and acknowledged. As acknowledge, we know the voices of minority groups will enable society to comprehend the oppression experienced by these groups, as well as to take relevant actions to adapt to the needs of these groups.

Changing the mindset of the society could also be an effective step. Prejudice and discrimination are normal phenomena in our society. We often conform with our own group and devalue or isolate those that does not belong to the same social group. This differentiation has led to the feeling of inferiority in certain groups, in which if they resort to terrorism, will not invoke any sense of guilt from their violent actions [13]. This is because for those who are involved with acts of terrorism, they strongly believe that they are carrying out deeds of justice, and their actions are justifiable. Consequently, better education to promote intercultural understanding and equality is essential. Better education and understanding will open an opportunity to a civilized discourse, in which we are able to identify the faults in our society and fix them.

CONCLUSION

Results indicated that the objectives in this study considered were positively preferred and discussed. In conclusion, terrorism is any forms of violence perpetrated by any groups in order to achieve political reformation. Based on this statement, any social groups or movement who have experienced inequality, injustice, or oppression are at risk of being a terrorist organization if given the necessary resources and desperation. Hence, advocating for equality (e.g. equal rights, equal opportunity, equal justice), is a very urgent requirement. In order to create a peaceful and flourishing society. In times of great social and political upheaval, it might appear an unpopular sentiment to express that terrorism is inevitable. Hopefully, these contributions will encourage greater engagement to psychologists on the psychology of terrorism. Nevertheless, it enhances a better understanding and educate to society about terrorism.

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