

A Critical Analysis on the Sociology of Terrorism

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Abstract

Terrorism is one of the hazardous developments in the current scenario of modernity and development. Humans are passively suffering from its adverse and malicious impacts throughout the globe. At one hand it has become a matter of concern for the international community while at the other hand it is proving as a monster for the third world countries. In this context, the current research study has been designed with the basic objective to illuminate the various causal factors that are persevering to augment the ignition of terrorism and its in-depth prevalence. This article primarily attempts to highlight the practical mercenaries that are playing behind the prevalence of terrorism in Pakistan. Such causes have been planned with reference to the socio-economic and political causes that are supposedly supporting the existence of such a monster. The factual data for this study has been undertaken through qualitative analysis that has been derived from different sources including journals, books, magazines, newspapers and reviews etc while a very possible link has been tried to be highlighted among the different variables and existence of militancy. The methods and procedures used in the research are purely qualitative in nature that is based on secondary information. The article concludes that the intensive poverty, the scarcity of income resources and job opportunities, poor foreign policy, instable governance and disloyal leadership in Pakistan are among the most practical causes of terrorism. Furthermore, the research study recommends that enhancement of quality education, provision of employment opportunities and honest and stabilized governance may overcome the issue and could lead the nation towards prosperity and development.

Key Words: Terrorism, Militancy, Radicalization, Poverty, Globalization, Capitalism, Jihad, Politics

Background of the Study

Humans have invented so many things but war is one of the most disastrous inventions among them where its younger version may be called as terrorism. The difference between war and terrorism is that in the later the enemy is hidden and is not known to the victims as well as the saviors. In addition, terrorism is ‘a violence or threat of violence following the purpose for the achievement of some political goals’ (Jenkins, 2001), which include kidnapping, killing of hostages, gaining hold over the power structure, creation of panic and distress among the public. In this regard, Collins (2002) regard the concept of terrorism as ‘Radicalism’ because the group who favor revolutionary change in social settlements believe in radical thoughts, which is not a new phenomena or unique tone faith, religion or region of the world and can be traced back to thousands of years (Hoffman, 1999).

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Motives and the causal factors of militancy or radicalization tend to change over time (Laqueur, 2003) however its use is growing more sophisticated (Loza, 2009). Terrorism or radicalism are the relative concepts that are asymmetrical or non-conventional in nature where few other labels like the freedom fighters, liberators, revolutionary, vigilante, militant, Para mil, guerrilla, rebel, Jihadi, *Mujahidin*, or *Fedayeen* etc (Kazmi and Parvez, 2011). In addition, the relativity of terrorism has also been used by a broad array of political organizations while preceding their objectives where they are exploited and utilized for personal and attainment of other gains (Hudson, 2002).

History in this regard is witness that most of the militants have been exploited and utilized for different purposes which is somehow a very complex psycho-social and geo-political trend (Kazmi and Parvez, 2011). The history reveals that in 11th century, the assassins or *Fadaeen* were trained comprising of the young individuals who were forcibly drugged with hashish who were always found as extremely obedient for offering any kind of anti-social task assigned to them (Nahid 1994). Besides, in the modern age the similar type of militancy and self-sacrifice zeal for the assigned missions were observed in the Japanese attack in Pearl Harbor during World War-II (Fukudome, 1955). It got fame in 1981 by Tamil tigers of Sri Lanka while the attacks on USA embassies in 1983 through car bombing in Iraq, Beirut, Kuwait etc added fuel to the fire while in worsening the militant condition (Wright, 2001). Furthermore, the suicide bombing was seen as a popular maneuver since 1993, amongst some Palestinian freedom fighter groups, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (Ernest, 2005).

The fact is blatant that militancy is not single-state problem rather it is a multidimensional and multivariate phenomena that is prevalent almost all over the world. In addition, many international organizations have got fame in past due to their “terrorist activities” and inspiration through auspiciousness from one another such as Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Armenians, the Ustasha, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the German Rote Armee Fraktion, the Italian Brigade Rosse, and the Neo-Fascist Ordine Nuove, the French Action Directe and the Basque ETA (Pasquino, 1989).

The social philosophers and intellectuals view such kind of inspiration among the terrorist organizations, their solidarity and prevalence because of an imbalance of power, external aggression, political, economical injustice and suppression (Tomes, 2004). In addition, the other aspect such prevalence on the terrestrial surface in the underdeveloped countries is higher due to the aggression of developed states and economic suppression of the undeveloped or underdeveloped states lead to a new form of militancy in shape of suicide bombings in order to achieve their designed objectives (Kazmi and Parvez, 2011). Besides, the end of cold war between two economic systems of the world is also considered responsible for the expansion of radicalism / terrorism in the world. Victoroff, & Kruglanski (2009) has viewed that the frequency of interstate wars has declined since the end of the Second World War, terrible violence against innocent civilians has increased by non-state groups with extreme agendas and virtually no restraints.

In this connection, analysis of global economic perspective indicates that the militancy among the *Madrassa* students aroused in the shape of ‘Taliban’ from the ashes of left wing of Afghanistan as a result of war between Capitalism and Communism (Agha, 2010). Many other countries are also facing right wing extremism after the end of war between two political systems like, in Germany, right-wing extremist groups and violence has increased since the reunification in 1990 (Kazmi and Parvez, 2011). Mostly extremist youth centered on racism, neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia (Shapiro, 2000; Coester, 2010). Similarly, in Central Asian republics, where *Madrassa* aliban not only fought war against USSR but also helped the Islamic opposition movements in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These linkages made religious extremism a

potent source of de-stabilization for the region (Mann, 2001). In the same period Islamic militancy also grew up in Bangladesh and Pakistan (Ahmed, 2009; Gupta, 2002). It is strange that after USSR attack on Afghanistan, *Madrassas* grew significantly in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Up to 2002, the number of *Madrassas* raised from few thousands to 64,000 in Bangladesh and 45,000 in Pakistan and similarly strength of students in these *Madrassas* also raised from a few hundred students to several thousand (Gupta, 2002).

Resultantly, the above mentioned discussion reflects that militancy is not a uni-caused issue rather some multi-based phenomena are persevering to grow the seeds of antisocial activities. Besides, militancy has become a global concern these days, which is regarded as among the most blistering issues in the third world while specifically in Pakistan. Pakistan is connected with the longest territorial border with Afghanistan which is considered as the nucleus of almost all the evils since its inception where the blizzard of militancy is approached quite smoothly due to the poor law enforcement.

Statement of the Problem

With varying motives, using the newest weapons, engulfing a wider area, and claiming more lives, terrorism in Pakistan has attracted considerable local and global attention (Hussain, 2010). Radicalization and militancy in Pakistan has occupied the center stage in debates and has become a big concern for governments at national and international levels (Azam, 2009). The global determinants in last sixty years have led the complex processes of socio-cultural transformation in Pakistan. The current research study primarily aims to illuminate the various causes and impacts of militancy in Pakistan while that has been particularized to the most affected areas including Swat. In this connection, the dynamics of social transformation in Pakistan reflects four types of conflicts: (a) between culture and ideology (b) between subcultures and national culture (c) between economic development and cultural preservation and (d) between Islamization and moderation (Azam, 2009). Evidences reveal that such conflicts are not new observable facts. Religion and politics have been intertwined since the dawn of Islamic history, in accordance with the dictum that Islam is in its essence both “religion and state” (Bachar, Bar, & Machtiger, 2006).

Throughout the globe, Pakistan has been declared as the nucleus of terrorist and antisocial activities due to its geographical connections as well as the political organization. Most countries have a perception (that may be positive or negative) that the ultimate control of the jihadi organizations is active inside the boundaries of Pakistan. In this regard extensive literature has been produced to represent Pakistan as a terrorist state that has led to the hypothetical proposition that the root causes of militancy are found in Pakistan (Asal, Fair, and Shellman, 2008; Looney, 2004). In addition, the literature palpably reflects some other concernfull nomenclature that includes, Pakistan’s Jihad Culture (Stern, 2000); *Madrassa* Culture (Schaffer, 2008); sectarian terrorism (Grare, 2007); Pakistan’s counterterrorism efforts (Riedel, 2008); Pakistan as sponsor of terrorism (Williams, 2008); and Pakistan’s performance as an ally of the U.S.A in its war against terrorism (Tellis, 2008). These mentioned codes refer to a scenario of misbelieve and misinterpretation that exaggerates the roots of such havoc in the area.

Consequently, the determinants of radicalization in Pakistan are present in socio- economic and political culture of the region that has been imposed without addressing all these factors through grave errors in the so called war on terrorism (Kazmi and Parvez, 2011). Pakistan’s socio-cultural structure is changing where complex processes of social transformation are underway. In such a run, the problem is the direction of change which is positive only partly, and negative in general where something has gone wrong with the process of change (Azam, 2009). In this context, change tends to be more in favor of the radical forces than peaceful socio-

cultural agents. Increase in the levels of radicalization over the decades shows that social change overall has been in favor of radicalism. Pakistani society is changing very rapidly; changes caused by globalization are among reasons behind radicalization (Rahman, 2008).

Resultantly, the above stated discussion patently elucidates that the problem of terrorism and radicalization has been deeply rooted in the social structure and social organization. In addition, Pakistan is one of the major affectees of terrorist attacks while its scope has also been jeopardized throughout the globe. Such a vulnerable condition predominantly leads to social stigma and social apathies both for the government and inhabitants.

Objectives of the Study

This study is based on the following objectives;

- To highlight the socially constructed factors behind the existence of terrorism
- To illuminate the deeply-rooted economic causes in the prevalence of terrorism
- To assess the political bases with respect to the initiation of terrorism

Methodology

The current research study emphasizes over those factors and causes that give birth to the blistering flames of revolt in shape of socio-political crimes; particularly terrorism in Pakistan. The study has been framed in the framework of qualitative approach of research. The information has been collected through secondary sources that predominantly include books, journals, newspapers, magazines, articles and internet sources. The collected information reveals a generalist view about the phenomenon that is further being confined to the research area where a comprehensive and literary link has been created between the global and local scenario about the issue undertaken.

In addition, the different causes have been enumerated and elaborated under two major headings that are titled as “socio-economic” and “political causes”. Both the titles represent the explicit and factual scenario regarding the issue concerned and emphasize the in-depth link among the other variables that are hidden and are unexplored yet. In last, few of the lucrative recommendations have been suggested to overcome the issue and destabilize the anti-social and destructive movement in regard of Pakistan’s national instability.

Causes of Terrorism

Terrorism, however, is an extremely complex set of phenomena, covering a great diversity of groups with different origins and causes (Bjorgo, 2005). The aim should rather be to provide a more nuanced discussion on the causes of terrorism and, it is hoped, indicate some possibilities for influencing factors that may actually have an impact on the level of terrorism. Identifying these root causes is a complex task, for several reasons. The many failed attempts to find one common definition of terrorism have been frustrated by the fact that the label ‘terrorism’ is used to cover a wide range of rather different phenomena (Bjorgo, 2005). In this context, the various factors that instigate the process of terrorist activities have been enumerated with respect to illumination of the igniting forces and supporting factors. The coming paragraphs explicitly show a categorical explanation of these forces that cause terrorism.

Socio-Economic Causes

History witnesses that economy has been a source of pride, prestige and hold over the resources. It channelizes the social life and directs the socio-political activities while on the other hand it is the source of

discrimination and exploitation. Such exploitation leads to different types of conflicts and lead the society in a passive direction (Engels, 1970). In addition, globalization may be the reason of terrorism because some countries may lag behind and this resentment may compel them to terrorist activities. Secondly due to the invention of modern means of transportation and communication, the terrorist activities can be carried out very easily (Crenshaw, 1981). Poverty cannot be the only reason of terrorism as terrorist does not belong to the poor countries alone, rather the educated and well-off persons are also involved in terrorist activities, the example is Osama Bin laden who belonged to a rich and well educated family of Saudi Arabia (Crenshaw, 1981:21).

Contrary to this Syed Ejaz Hussain (2010) mentions that the capitalism becomes more relevant to terrorism in Pakistan because the US invasion of Afghanistan had three objectives, these were, access to the oil reserves in Central Asia, encircling China and to fight *Al Qaeda*. The battle between Communism and Capitalism was fought in this region and due to this battle, Pakistan was filled with *Mullas*, Kalashnikov and drugs, which completely eroded the Pakistani society. Contradicting to the Capitalism as a cause of Terrorism Tocqueville quoted in Brynjar and Katja (2000), mentions that social inequality is responsible for terrorism in society.

The conflicts often linked do not represent any global struggle against the West and their connections to one another are spurious at best. There are real economic and political reasons for the conflicts explored in this book. Solving them would do much to take the ideological wind out of the sails of those who call for a global jihad (Pape, 2005). Looking at the alleged nexus between poverty and terrorism in statistical terms Schmid (2005) tried to combine indicators of poverty with indicators of terrorism for some 70 countries that palpably elaborates the progressive relation between the prevalence of terrorism and economic forces. On the other hand, countries with a 'youth bulge', a relatively open system of higher education and high unemployment rates among university graduates, would seem to be at a higher risk of seeing young men attracted to political violence, including terrorism (Cembrero 2003). In addition, poverty might also indirectly contribute to terrorism, in that some relatively well to-do young men and women strongly identifying with the fate of the poor begin to act as self-appointed champions of their cause, without being part of their class or ethnic group and often without asking them whether it is in their best interest. They then recruit young people on the margins of society from impoverished shanty towns, some of them petty criminals, and indoctrinate them and use them for their purposes (Cembrero 2003).

An individual is, perhaps, more likely to become a terrorist or militant in a repressive society in which exposure to violence, poverty, and political disempowerment is a regular occurrence than in a relatively free society in which legitimate outlets for rage and frustration and prospects for a better life exist. Yet majorities of people, even in the harshest of socio-political circumstances, do not become terrorists or give moral or financial support to terrorist organizations (Kenrick, 2009). In this run of the terrorist activities; the developing countries are far beyond the limits and are striving to win the race with the production of more militants or terrorists with regard to their economic scarcities and low income opportunities.

Pakistan is among the third world countries that are persevering to develop its income oriented resources. Pakistan is a developing country and is considered to be a semi-industrialized nation comprises 170 million people, out of which almost 20 percent live below the poverty line. The Gross Domestic Product or GDP for Pakistan in 2010 stood at 167 billion dollars, constituting only 0.27 % of the world economy. Terrorism has cost Pakistan 6% of its GDP in 2009–2010. Pakistan is also considered to be the world's 27th largest economy, based on its purchasing power. The economy is deteriorating day by day, as core inflation has now reached 12%, according to the economic survey conducted by the government (Ahmad, 2009). In such a run, the fact can't be repudiated altogether; however, the potential for militancy and extremism already did exist

in Pakistan due to its fragile social structure since independence in terms of poverty, unemployment, ignorance, economic stagnation, radical ideologies, bad governance, injustice and rigid culture. Pakistan ranks highly in some of the poorest countries of the world. The per capita income is drastically low and the state of some basic human resources is extremely disappointing. The people have been deprived of modern facilities in education, health, communication and good food. Such people are worried due to the lack of income resources and they are unable to fulfill their needs to live a life parallel to their neighbors. In this age of competition they feel deprived of their rights and inferiority complex prevails upon them (Nasir & Hyder, 1988:474).

The mentioned factual information best exemplifies that terrorism in a country like Pakistan is mainly and deeply rooted in the race of economic growth. In this context, the economic forces like poverty, unemployment, low standard of life and scarcity of income resources leads to anti social activities that further augment in the shape of socio-political crimes like terrorism and militancy.

Political Causes

Terrorism has a long history, but its systematic analysis has a short past. Within this relatively brief period of time, spanning perhaps not much longer than three decades, analytical literature on the causes of terrorism has mushroomed (Feierabend, 1969). Empirical evidence suggests (Gupta et al. 1993) that the relationship between government coercion and political violence is essentially shaped like an inverted U; lower levels of coercion only add fuel to the fire of dissent, while dissident activities can be brought down beyond a certain point of high violence and high coercion by resorting to extreme forces of brutality (Moore, 1998).

Terrorism has been an issue of concern at the global scenario where the developed countries are suffering from the ignition of militant and anti social activities. In addition, the blistering effects have been explicitly observed in the developing countries while more particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In such a run, Pakistan has become the centre of emphasis in the present war on terrorism that has almost suffered excessively in the field of its social, economic and political aspects. In this regard, numerous forces are persevering behind the prevalence of such a menace that includes the social, economic and more evidently the political factors. A more objective list of state sponsors of terrorism would include Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, both allies of the USA and both sponsors of more terrorism than any governments on the list, except arguably Iran (Richardson, 2005). Most of the 19 hijackers on 9/11 came from Saudi Arabia, indeed none of the hijackers came from any of the states on the list of state sponsored terrorism. Saudi Arabia has harbored militant Islamic fundamentalists for years and has funded terrorists groups overseas in an effort to ensure domestic stability. Pakistan has sponsored Kashmiri terrorist groups and several *Jihadi* groups have operated from Pakistani soil. The USA has not placed either country on the list for fear of jeopardizing relations with them (Richardson, 2005).

The relationships between states and terrorist movements might more objectively be considered in terms of the use of terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy rather than the more loaded term 'state sponsorship'. It is not hard to see the attraction for any government of sponsoring terrorism abroad (Richardson, 2005). There is now a substantial body of case study literature which has documented the use of repression and terrorism by states against their own populations. Most of these studies concentrate on the most egregious violators of human rights and the most terroristic of states. There is thus a substantial body of literature on the use of state terror by the Communist Eastern European regimes of the twentieth century, the Nazis, the state terror of the Southern Cone and Central American right-wing regimes of the 1960s and 1970s and the 'fragile states' of Africa and Asia in the post independence era (Valentino 2004; Krain 1997; Rummel 1995; Hayner 2001; Ball et al. 1999).

An expected utility approach provides useful insights into the process of understanding why a government might choose terrorism as a tactic or strategy. In a previous work (Duvall and Stohl, 1986), Raymond Duvall and Richardson argued that an expected utility model is useful for understanding a government's choice of terrorism as a tactic or strategy in domestic affairs. In a later work (Stohl, 1986) and Richardson argued that it could be applied to state behaviors in the international realm as well. Underlying this approach is an argument that people who employ terrorism as a tactic or a strategy consider three things in making a decision. The first is the preferred outcome they seek. The second is their calculation that what they would choose to do will likely bring about the preferred outcome. The third is the cost of engaging in the action to bring about the preferred outcome. This approach does not require the analyst to believe that the actor who chooses to employ terrorism is a fanatic; merely that he is a 'rational actor' who has calculated that a terrorist action will bring about a desired outcome.

The defining characteristic of coercive diplomacy as distinct from both diplomacy and traditional military activity is that the force of coercive diplomacy is used '... in an exemplary, demonstrative manner, in discrete and controlled increments, to induce the opponent to revise his calculations and agree to a mutually acceptable termination of the conflict' (George 1971). When coercive diplomacy is in the nature of the traditional gunboat-diplomacy mode, when in principle gunboats face off against gunboats, we have what Schelling (1966) described as brute force to overcome strength.

In addition, absence of democracy may also be a cause of terrorism as if security is not assured during the transition period; democracy will be associated with chaos in society (Crenshaw, 1981). Continuing with the causes, violent conflicts can also be a cause of terrorism as is the case between Pakistan and India on the issue of Kashmir and waters. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is the source of Palestinian radicalism, and to some even the root of Al-Qaeda's hatred of the United States of America. The war in Iraq similarly generates opposition to U.S. policy (Crenshaw, 1981:21).

The empirical information along-with the factual data reveals that poor governance and weak law enforcement lead to anti-state and anti social activities. Furthermore, the unsuccessful democracy and somehow the dictatorship in the state cause such kinds of hazardous acts. Researches and factual data show a strong relationship between the political factors including poor leadership and poor governance with that of the initiation of terrorism and militancy.

Conclusion

Terrorism is the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a person or an organized group against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing societies or governments, often for ideological or political reasons. This research study focuses on those possible causes that are responsible for the prevalence of terrorism in Pakistan. The information gathered through secondary sources reveal that some socio-economic and political forces are persevering behind the screen and have become the root causes for the initiation of the militancy and terrorism. The course of socio-economic forces comprises of the low level of education, ignorance and illiteracy are the compelling and driving forces in the prevalence of terrorism. In addition, the level of poverty and scarce opportunities for income and unemployment are also the striving forces to accumulate the masses into the mire of terrorism.

Politics or political structure that has been the source of social control and bringing order in the society is confronting some mishaps. Such misunderstanding and poor implementation of laws also drive the masses towards immoral activities in shape of terrorism and militancy. The study concludes that the democratic system

of Pakistan is at the verge of failure and instability that has very less space for masses' facilitation. Such a lack of facilitation and sophistication of the political institution has led to political apathy and instability that has lost control over the territory. The masses are becoming the insurgent and are trying to find out some other ways for satisfaction of their basic and dire needs.

It is obvious that the acts of violence and terrorism communicate a threat to government or social groups and to seek power by toppling a weak government. The recent wave of terrorism has forced the people to abandon their homes and shift to other safer places. These are not the unique feats of terrorism in Pakistan alone, UK, USA, Iran, Egypt, and Afghanistan have also been subjected to acts of violence since 1965. The sources of contemporary terrorism are globalization, lack of democratic culture, social injustice, United State's hegemonic policy, violent political conflict and ideology.

The research study reveals in the nutshell that Pakistan is suffering due to its defective foreign policy towards US and the war on terror. Although terrorism cannot be wiped out from the society at once, however it can be minimized through concerted efforts both at national and international level.

Recommendations

Education can be regarded as among the best controlling and progressing units of a society. Most of the third world countries including Pakistan are lagging behind in the run of education and its easy availability to the masses. In this regard, the easy, soft and lucrative educational facilities should be made available to the masses that would bring a positive change in the mindset as well as the social and economic well being of the masses.

Economy plays a pivotal role in the course of abatement or augmentation of development. People with low standard of life along-with poor and inadequate employment opportunities struggle to attain their livelihood and daily needs through anti social ways. In this connection, easy and affordable employment schemes should be made available to the masses as the quote indicates that "the idle man brain is the workshop of devil", that should be washed and made pro-social.

The leadership of Pakistan has been proved at the lowest level in respect of policy making and governance. Most of the regimes have been failed to accomplish their tenure successfully and those who have completed were unable to achieve the goal of national development. The stable and pro-social leadership and government is the dire need of Pakistan that can alter the fate of masses.

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