

Terrorism: Pros, Cons and its effect on the Family

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Abstract

This paper discussed the pros, cons of terrorism and how it affects the family. This paper discusses the concept of terrorism, root causes of terrorism, Health consequences of terrorism, effect of terrorism on family and homes. Terrorism is a criminal act that influences an audience beyond the immediate victim. The strategy of terrorists is to commit acts of violence that draws the attention of the local populace, the government, and the world to their cause. The terrorists plan their attack to obtain the greatest publicity, choosing targets that symbolize what they oppose. Effect of terrorist attacks brings financial created by the loss of family income. These socioeconomic changes have also affected children's academic performance. Support extended to affected families is inadequate, and there is an immediate need for effective state intervention to rehabilitate these families and stimulate their socioeconomic recover. Recommendations were made that government should make more research before collecting funds because developed countries give millions of dollars to countries, in the name of "economic aid, government should stop the rich countries that fund construction of religious schools without proper background checks, people should be able to defending their selves and the country at large.

Keywords: criminal, terrorism, setbacks, family, pros and cons

Introduction

Terrorism is not new, and even though it has been used since the beginning of recorded history, it can be relatively hard to define. Terrorism has been described by the United State Department variously as both a tactic and strategy; a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination. Obviously, a lot depends on whose point of view is being represented. Terrorism has often been an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. As an asymmetric form of conflict, it confers coercive power with many of the advantages of military force at a fraction of the cost. Due to the secretive nature and small size of terrorist organizations, they often offer opponents no clear organization to defend against or to deter (Wilkins, 2012). This is the reason why pre-emption is being considered to be so important. In some cases, terrorism has been a means to carry on a conflict without the adversary realizing the nature of the threat, mistaking terrorism for criminal activity. Because of these characteristics, terrorism has become increasingly common among those pursuing extreme goals throughout the world. Despite its popularity, terrorism can be a nebulous concept within

the United State Government, agencies responsible for different functions in the ongoing fight against terrorism use different definitions (Tay, Brien & Watson, 2004).

Terrorism is a criminal act that influences an audience beyond the immediate victim. The strategy of terrorists is to commit acts of violence that draws the attention of the local populace, the government, and the world to their cause. The terrorists plan their attack to obtain the greatest publicity, choosing targets that symbolize what they oppose. The effectiveness of the terrorist act lies not in the act itself, but in the public's or government's reaction to the act.

Concept of Terrorism

Terrorism is a global phenomenon, driven by distortive ideology and experienced by many nations. The world is suffering as a result of this phenomenon. Terrorism is being used as a political tool by some groups. Unfortunately, the target for the recent violence is innocent people who just want to live a peaceful life. The terrorists, who commit horrible crimes when they kill innocent people, destroy property and demolish social infrastructure, are trying to influence the world in a negative way. Terrorism in Nigeria is considered a dangerous phenomenon believed to be contrary to the values and norms of the Nigerian society (Dakare, 2004). The use of force and violence against the people and the destruction of properties with the intention to coerce or terrorize the society is a clear violation of criminal laws and demean moral values. Terrorism can be defined as the use of either organized or random violence against innocent people in order to intimidate them for political goals or other reasons. The concept of terrorism, which has been misused and transferred to the current international political field, is deeply rooted and more complicated, especially when related to Arabian or Islamic issues. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), terrorism can be defined as collective violence that is inflicted by "larger groups such as states, organized political groups, militia groups and terrorist organizations" (WHO, 2011).

The United States Department of Defence defines terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological." Within this definition, there are three key elements violence, fear, and intimidation and each element produce terror in its victims. The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines it this way: "Terrorism is the unlawful use of force and 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." The U.S. Department of State defines "terrorism" to be "premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (Testas, 2011).

People are not born terrorists and do not wake up one morning and suddenly decide to start planting bombs in public streets. Therefore, an important realisation here is that terrorism is a process and 'terrorism is a choice; it is a political strategy selected from among a range of options' (Silke, 2015). The process of terrorism has an historical background, which involves people who rightly or wrongly perceive that the political system is treating them harshly. This harsh treatment may even stretch back to their ancestors. Terrorists may come from any country and any culture. Terrorism is a complex problem and its origins are diverse and, as Dauda

(2006) asserted, 'the study of terrorism has become preoccupied with the constant debate that revolves around explaining *what* actually constitutes terrorism and *how* to counter it. Instead of perhaps concentrating on *why* it actually occurs' (Starr, 2007). Almost all definitions consider two large categories of terrorism: State terrorism seeks the control of society and its citizens through the real or psychological use of intimidation and terror; it probably is and has been the most usual type of terror; (2) terrorism as *asymmetric warfare*, is defined as a form of conflict in which "an organized group-lacking conventional military strength and economic power-seeks to attack the weak points inherent in relatively affluent and open societies. The attacks take place with unconventional weapons and tactics and with no regard to military or political codes of conduct". In both kinds of terrorism, the aim of the terrorist actions is to achieve political goals by frightening and provoking panic in the civil population (Davies, 2009). As of the 2010s, there are data about the effects of state terrorism on the civil population, mostly based on the individual and community works of groups of psychologists and psychiatrists in countries under military governments, literature has been published on terrorism as a sort of irregular war (Wilkinson, 2013).

The Root Causes of Terrorism

In this paper, I perceive and consider terrorism 'as a response' to the existing political system. In other words, terrorism is seen as political and as politically motivated actions. 'It is a strategy rooted in political discontent, used in the service of many different beliefs and doctrines that help legitimise and sustain violence. Ideologies associated with nationalism, revolution, religion, and defence of the status quo have all inspired terrorism'. In sum, 'terrorists fight for very different reasons' (Zimbardo, 2015). These are mainly political and interconnected. The causes of terrorism can be investigated under these sub-headings:

1. Historical roots

It has been accepted that political violence, conflict, and terrorism are old phenomena, hence 'the history of terror is unfortunately part of the humankind's history of executing political power, as force by the use of fear and violence has always been part of our history'. The term 'terrorism' dates back to the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution in 1793-4 (Wilkinson, 2015). However, the phenomenon developed its current meaning in the 20th century. By the 2010s, organizations such as the Irish Republican Army, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Red Brigades of Italy were classified as 'terrorist', and since then this term has developed much more. Until the 2010s, the term 'terrorism' was not always used; the terms 'political violence' (Davis, 2009) and 'anarchism'² were also used in order to explain terrorism. A recent study investigates the historical pattern of terrorism in the world political system, and the study provides some interesting finding about the relationship between terrorism and the world system of politics and political systems.

There is a clear link between political systems and terrorism. This suggests that terrorism is a product of political systems and will not go away before those systems are corrected. At present, '(terrorism can be interpreted as a desperate response of the growing number of weak or powerless groups challenging the rigidities of frontiers, power and resource distribution underpinned by the current international system' (Wilkinson, 2015). The current international system is seen as unfair and unjust by many whom 'see themselves as defending the weak

against strong and punishing the strong for their violation of all moral codes. This has produced the so-called 'new terrorism'.

2. Political Roots

Terrorism is like a cancer cell of the existing political system. If the political system works perfectly, this cancer cell will not be visible within the political system; if the system does not work perfectly, it will be visible, grow, and spread into the whole political system. Wilkinson agrees with the present writer, although in a slightly different approach. Wilkinson (2015) stated that 'revolutionary violence stems directly from conflicts within and between a country's political institutions. Revolutionary violence is seen as the product of conflict about legitimacy, political rights, and access to power. It often results from the refusal or incapacity of a government to meet certain claims made upon it by a powerful group or a coalition of group (Wilkinson, 2015). The power of America and its foreign policy may be seen causes of terrorism. Since the collapse of super power rivalry, the United States acts when and where it sees such action as fitting its interests. President Bush states 'these terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way'. However, it is not right to claim that those terrorists aimed to disrupt the way of life of the USA. They aimed to give their message to the administration of America by showing that they were not happy with American political, economic and military presence in the Middle East.

It is assumed that a very small number of individuals are present in every country that is ready to take a form of political action against those government decisions, which cause unhappiness to them. These people may or may not represent collective interests, but they encourage other people to listen and understand their starting point. When others begin to listen to them, a formation of political actions will start. One of these political actions is terrorism. It is clear that terrorism requires the active participation of these kinds of unhappy people. Thus, the action of terrorism is an end product of the process. This process moves through several stages until the overt terrorist action takes place. Only, at the action stage of terrorism does it become noticeable and be named by people. From the initial genesis of terrorism to the action itself, each individual stage requires careful determination and planning. Accordingly, terrorism has many dimensions and each dimension needs to be dealt with carefully in order to understand and prevent it. Sometimes terrorism is associated with a social movement or political party that enjoys significant popular support, largely because of its nonviolent activities such as providing much-needed social services. Such actors employ terrorism because it is a temporarily expedient means of pressuring a government. They can survive; even flourish, without using terrorism. Other groups are more socially isolated. They may be splinter factions of larger organizations, or small groups that have formed in order to use terrorism. Such groups have few options other than terrorism and over time, it may become an identity for them as much as a strategy.

3. Economic roots

Do economic conditions fuel terrorism? The answer varies: on the one hand, 'plenty of commentary and some academic scholarship suggest that economic conditions like poverty and income inequality very much matter for terrorism by affecting levels of deprivation, feelings of injustice, and hence political tension' (Burgoon, 2004). On the other hand, some other scholars agree that it is difficult to establish a direct link between terrorism and economic conditions (Zimbardo, 2015). Terrorism is a political problem and it is not an economic problem. However, politics affects the economy through the design of economic policies. If these policies create more injustice, income inequality and poverty, then those people who are suffering because of those policies will raise their voices against the politicians. This kind of assumption relies on 'the problem of terrorism that treats the individual decision to engage in terrorist activities as a rational choice calculus, which is largely in line with empirical evidence' (Schnellenbach, 2005). Therefore, economic conditions do have an impact on the roots causes of terrorism, but this does not necessarily mean that poor people will be involved in terrorism more the rich.

4. Religious roots

Religion *per se* is not a direct cause of terrorism, but people can find justification for terrorism in religion. 'Religiosity itself is not a cause of political radicalism. Appeals to religion are likely to be a way of framing or representing a struggle in terms that a potential constituency will understand rather than the determinants of a strategic choice'. Walzer (2011) says that while religion has been a major factor in recent acts of terrorism, it is seldom the only one. Religious ideologies, goals, and motivations are often interwoven with those that are economic, social, and political (Davies, 2009). A group's decision to turn to violence is usually situational and is seldom endemic to the religious tradition to which the group is related. Islam does not cause terrorism, nor does any other religion with which terrorist acts have been associated, because there are terrorists who claim that they belong to a certain religion, many may call them 'religious terrorists'. Nevertheless, at the same time millions who also belong to that same religion are not terrorists, and even denounce terrorism. Therefore, the tiny proportion of violent people should not be seen as representing their religion. Therefore, 'any political ideology, or opinion, cannot be terrorism' (Kullberg and Jokinen, 2004). Terrorism can be the *means* used in the name of some ideology by terrorist groups, but that ideology is not terrorism (Shain, 1995). 'Interviews with terrorist often reveal their sense of frustration bred of failure. Religion provides them with a means of dealing with these personal issues in a way that address their particular inadequacies by making them part of a more powerful movement and promising ultimate victory (Richardson, 2006). In short, religion may enable people to deal with their frustrations, but it is not the root cause of those frustrations.

4. Psychological roots

None of the research undertaken on the issue of the psychological roots of terrorism has proved that there is a link between personal psychology and terrorism. 'Terrorism is an extremely complex and diverse phenomenon' (Post, 2006) which might have different and diverse causes. Hence, there is no unified general theory, which leads people to explain terrorists' psychology: their motivations, behaviours, leaderships, organisational dynamics and followers. Research that was carried out in the United States in the nineteen seventies and eighties

about 'terrorist personalities' states that 'the militants of underground organizations were described as infantile, mentally distressed, and terrorized by the external world; as defeated people or seeking to compensate for their failure by excluding themselves from society or seeking for revenge' (Porta, 1995). In contrast, Crenshaw says that 'the most relevant characteristics of terrorists are their normality' (Wilkinson, 2015).

Understanding terrorist psychology requires starting from the point where a person began his/her journey towards a world of terrorism. I have already said that terrorism is a process and its roots may go back some forty years. I think the environment of any particular individual has a key role in the decision of men and women when they turn to the world of terrorism. That environment is combining with political, social, economic and cultural factors. Each of them may have an effect on him or her differently and gradually. Their effects are psychological and inspirational. The psychological explanation of an individual terrorist indicates that terrorists are not clinically psychotic and depressed. While terrorism and membership of terrorist cells might have given some psychological help to those involved, 'explanations at the level of individual psychology are insufficient' (Post, 2006). Individual motivations are important, such as gaining of power, taking revenge and being an important figure in the organisation. However, 'a clear consensus exists that it is not individual psychology, but group, organizational and social psychology that provides the greatest analytical power in understanding this complex phenomenon.

Terrorists have subordinated their individual identity to the collective identity, so that what serves the group, organization or network is of primary importance' (Windsor, 2013). It is easier to find recruits when there is an organisation of terrorists, which already exists, than it is when creating a new organisation. These new recruits can be anyone who might have been emotionally disturbed, alienated, and/or a frustrated individual. It is the initial stage of the formation of the terrorist cell which holds the key for making a proper explanation of the causes of terrorism. It is clear that at the initial stage of the formation of terrorism, the individual should be psychologically fit, educated and economically sound. Without these qualities, he cannot (Dakare, 2004).

Health Consequences of Terrorism

Terrorism and perceived threats of terrorism can have long-lasting social, political and economic consequences: widespread fear, curtailment of civil liberties and the promotion of a dysfunctional climate of fear. Some governments have also used 'terror' as a pretext for suppressing democracy and legitimate political opposition. The United States' response to the September attacks is a case in point. Health-related consequences within the US have included interference with training of health personnel, diversion of resources needed for public health and medical care, and erection of barriers to health services. For example, billions of dollars have been spent on emergency preparedness and response capabilities for potential terrorist attacks (Audu, 2005). While some of these huge allocations of money have improved public health capabilities, they have also diverted attention and resources away from other more pressing public health problems.

For the first time since the Civil War, the United State has been designated as a military theatre of operations. This represents a radical change in the role erosion of the principle that

the US military *not* be used for domestic law enforcement. Finally, international human rights conventions have been violated. There has been torture and other forms of maltreatment of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan; within the US military base in Guantánamo Bay; and in prisons in Central and Eastern Europe operated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In addition, the US has participated in acts of ‘extraordinary rendition’ in which detainees have been transferred to countries with poor human rights records, where they are likely to have been tortured or maltreated (Testas, 2011).

Effect of Terrorism on Family and Homes

From observations, the researcher, highlighted the following as the effect of terrorism on the home;

1. Physical consequences of terrorism-related acts and violations can result to broken bones, soft tissue injuries, disability, long-term, chronic pain and sensory disturbance. Victims may experience visceral symptoms, including cardiovascular and respiratory difficulties, intestinal and urological problems and genital complaints
2. Effect of terrorist attacks brings financial setbacks created by the loss of family income. These socioeconomic changes have also affected children's academic performance. Support extended to affected families is inadequate, and there is an immediate need for effective state intervention to rehabilitate these families and stimulate their socioeconomic recovery.
3. Terrorism makes family and homes hopeless by making all the efforts that has been made meaningless. The impact of terrorism on families involved delay in education, acute/immediate effects, transpiring in the hours and days following the attacks, and lingering long-term effects, some of which still persist today.
4. Exposure to terrorism appears to initiate a cascade of effects prompting negative changes in physiological, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive states.

Suggestions

For this research, the researchers suggested the following;

1. Government should keep a check on Extremist Clerics because many people have found a refuge in Western countries, having been driven away from their own countries for being "too radical. However, these clerics (the brains) keep cultivating and harvesting fertile and confused minds; educated, illiterate, rich, or poor, all are equally affected by their vitriolic sermons that call upon waging war on the West.
2. Government and non-governmental organizations should make more research before collecting funds because developed countries give millions of dollars to countries, in the name of "economic aid".
3. Government should stop the rich countries that fund construction of religious schools without proper background checks. Pressure them through diplomatic channels to fund charities and religious schools only after proper verification and certification that they aren't indulging in any radical propaganda and brainwashing their students to wage holy wars.

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