Message from National Coordinator

Terrorism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon affecting the modern-day societies. The push factors of extremism and terrorism are categorized as lack of socio-economic opportunities, marginalization, discrimination, prolonged and unresolved conflicts, radicalization, inequality, political motivation, and limited access to education and violations of human rights. NACTA’s vision is to strive for a safer tomorrow by countering terrorism in all its manifestations. NACTA Act 2013, specifically mandates the authority to “carry out research on topics relevant to terrorism and extremism”. The publication of PJTR manifests NACTA’s continued pledge to quality research as per the authority’s mandate.

I am pleased to introduce Volume 03, issue 02, of “Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research (PJTR)”. PJTR is a double-blind, peer-reviewed, bi-annual journal. The journal provides a multi-disciplinary forum for scholarship and discussion of security issues drawing from the fields of terrorism, counter-terrorism, and countering extremism.

PJTR encourages diversity in theoretical foundations, research methods and approaches. This edition offers both quantitative and qualitative perspectives on different manifestations of terrorism in Pakistan. PJTR continues to attract leading subject experts and practitioners from the field of terrorism studies and beyond.

As the only terrorism specific journal in Pakistan, PJTR provides research-based platform for sharing experiences and highlighting successes and gaps in counter-terrorism policies. I am indebted to all contributors, peer-reviewers, and editorial team without which the publication would have not been a reality.

The present edition of PJTR covers a diverse range of subjects that will attract the attention of academics, policy-makers, and practitioners. The current edition is yet another constructive step towards realizing the ambitions of NACTA. I pray that the journal goes further in its journey and flourishes in the times to come.

Mehr Khaliq Dad Lak
National Coordinator, NACTA
Editor’s Note

Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism and extremism since 9/11 which has been impacting Pakistan's peace indexation. Despite constraints, Pakistan has fought extremism and terrorism with perseverance. Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Counter-Terrorism Departments (CTDs) have responded to the challenge of terrorism with unparalleled sacrifices and professional commitment.

Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research (PJTR) is the first journal in the field of counter-terrorism and extremism in Pakistan that provides a platform that primarily bridges the gap between researchers, academics, practitioners and helps to improve the understanding of the dynamics of extremism and terrorism. The objective of PJTR is to reach out to the national and international audience, coverage of NACTA’s mandate as per the NACTA Act 2013.

Volume.03, issue-2 of ‘Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research’ (PJTR) for the year 2021 is the sixth bi-annual issue of PJTR. Without Patron-in-Chief’s support and encouragement, this achievement would not have been possible. I appreciate the contributions of the writers, the editorial staff, and the advisory board.

This issue contains seven articles that provide a comprehensive picture of terrorism, counter-terrorism, and countering extremism landscapes. Dr. Mossarat Qadeem’s article titled “Peace Education: A remedy for preventing violent extremism in Pakistan”, proposes peace education as a part of the overall curriculum in Pakistan for youth to teach the importance of tolerance, human rights and inter-faith harmony. Mr. Shehryar Khan takes on the topic “Disengagement and Deradicalization Programs in
Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis”, the main focus of the study is rehabilitation and de-radicalization programs to disengage the former militants in compliance with NISP-II (2018-2023).

Ms. Mehr-un-nisa Waheed contributes “Misconceptions about the relationship between Militancy and Madrassahs in Swat”, the author analyzes the push factors of militancy among the youth in Swat and tried to dig out facts about the role of Madrassahs in militancy. Dr. Dayyab Gillani’s article “Academic Failure to define terrorism: An ontological investigation” describes terrorism in its broader historical concepts which makes general understanding of terrorism through the study of its theoretical and conceptual background.

The paper of Mr. Zaheer Abbas Chohan et.al is titled “The Kabul Take Over: Emerging Threats to the Region” in which the author assesses the emerging threats emanating from non-state actors to the region after the Kabul takeover by the Taliban. Ms. Haleema Zia contributes “Information Revolution and Cyber Warfare: Role of Artificial Intelligence in combating Terrorist Propaganda” in which she explains the information revolution and its implications on cyber security. It gives an insight into the role of social media in spreading agenda of non-state actors and the significance of Artificial Intelligence in military domains to disrupt terrorist propaganda.

Mr. Ahmet Yiğitalp TULGA’s paper titled “Explanation of Hard and Soft Terrorism Concepts with ISIS Case” elaborates the two emerging concepts of Hard and Soft terrorism by taking up the case of the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

By disseminating knowledge, NACTA is trying to play a positive role in counter-terrorism and extremism research. With each publication, this journal gets closer to realising its goals and advances our collective national commitment to counter-terrorism and extremism.
Disclaimer

The views and opinion expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of NACTA.
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Contents

i. Peace Education: A Remedy for Preventing Violent Extremism in Pakistan 1
   Mossarat Qadeem

ii. Disengagement and Deradicalization Programs in Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis 26
    Sheharyar Khan

iii. Misconceptions about the Relationship Between Militancy and Madrassahs in Swat 53
     Mehr-un-Nisa Waheed
     Feriha N. Peracha,
     Raafia Raees Khan
     Andleeb Zahra

iv. Academic Failure to Define Terrorism: An Ontological Investigation 76
    Dayyab Gillani

v. Hard and Soft Terrorism Concepts: The Case of ISIS 109
    Ahmet Yiğitalp TULGA

vi. Information Revolution and Cyber Warfare: Role of Artificial Intelligence in Combating Terrorist Propaganda 133
    Haleema Zia

vii. The Kabul Take Over: Emerging Threats to the Region. 158
     Zaheer Abbas Chohan
     Dost Muhammad Barrech
     Naveed Anjum Naru
Peace Education: A Remedy for Preventing Violent Extremism in Pakistan

Mossarat Qadeem

Abstract

The paper discusses Peace Education as a critical instrument for addressing violent extremism and building socially cohesive Pakistan. The research question addresses the absence of peace education in our education institutions, the importance of it and best practices from the implementation of peace curriculum in some education institutions; two research questions were addressed. Hate, intolerance and biases have divided the societies resultanty a culture of violence has become pervasive. Education institutions are not immune and the disorder of the society surfaces in school in many ways. Existing curriculum and education programs in Societies have been inadequate to address the types of division, hate and violent extremism tendencies within educational institutions and society. Peace education is one of the most important areas where long-term measures to reduce violence can be implemented¹ and harmful impact can be reduced. However, realization of the importance of inclusive peace education material for developing a positive mindset in youth is limited in our education system. The paper will elaborate that peace education must become part of overall curriculum in Pakistan to provide youth with competencies needed to resolve conflicts without violence, teach them the importance of tolerance, human rights and interfaith harmony so that the values of community, helpfulness, creativity, pluralism be infused in their

¹ http://www.disarmsecure.org/Peace_Education_in_Schools.pdf
minds. The same values are those that can contribute to a state where justice, peace and care for all are made a priority.

**Key Words:** Inclusive Peace Education, Critical Thinking, Transformation of Mind and Heart.

**Introduction**

Violent religious extremism is affecting communities across the globe in multiple ways. Our counter-terrorism policy primarily remained reactive\(^2\) in nature. We have always acted in response to a crisis situation after it has happened, rather than creating a situation to prevent it from happening in the first place. This paper elucidates that for prevention of violent tendencies in youth peace education should be made an important part of education curriculum that not only would be able to make students resilient citizens but can also address the psychological, emotional and intellectual appeal of narratives – *soft power* – that extremists purport\(^3\) through networking with youth and influencing their minds through their ideological messages. Responding to extremist application of soft power through soft power will, the state will provide a conducive environment to induce value of pluralism, inclusivity and social harmony among the students. There are varied forms and types of peace education but this article focuses on adopting aspects of peace education in our curriculum or as supplementary reading material in our educational institutions.

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\(^2\)We have always acted in response to a crisis situation after it has happened, rather than creating situation to prevent it from happening in the first place.

\(^3\)https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2017/12/01/peace-education-in-schools-has-the-potential-for-transforming-minds-and-hearts/
Peace education in formal and informal education is the best tools for mainstreaming peace in the society. Education is a lifelong learning process for the individual and the community through various socialization avenues. Education for peace as a transformative learning process can help develop in students constructive and critical ways of thinking so as to consciously give meaning to their lives and contribute to their communities as active citizens with positive attitude. Exposure to peace education will transform students’ world view as a result of a shift in thoughtless or unconditional acceptance of available information into a conscious and reflective way of learning that supports real change.

Peace Education

The concept of peace education relates to peace building, conflict resolution, valuing tolerance, pluralism within education institutions, as Fountain, S. (1999) defined it as “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.” In addition Deutsch, M. (1993), asserts that that Peace education revolves around the idea of conflict resolution. It usually focuses on social and behavioural aspects of conflicts.

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4 https://www.tojned.net/journals/tojcam/articles/v01i01/v01i01-03.pdf
5 https://www.toolshero.com › Personal Development
6 https://www.toolshero.com/personal-development/transformative-learning-theory/
7 student papers from 08-Oct-2017) Submitted to Online Education Services on 2017-10-08
It’s major technique for resolving conflicts and bringing peace is through negotiation and mediation⁹.

According to UNESCO peace education is “the process of promoting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes to enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, to resolve conflict peacefully and to create conditions conducive to peace”¹⁰. In addition to its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 anchors Peace Education in a recognized international policy framework as a peace and development tool.

The overall goal of peace education is to bring about peaceful individuals who can live in harmony with themselves, other human beings, and the environment.¹¹

Peace education focuses on imparting knowledge on the importance of social harmony, pluralism and peacebuilding skills. Then, teachers teach the values of respect, understanding and non-distortion, provide skills for analyzing situations, conflict resolution like mediation and use democratic and participatory pedagogy.

**Research Question**

1. How Peace Education in education institutions in Pakistan can help develop non-violent, positive and tolerant attitude amongst the students?

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¹⁰Ibid

2. In what ways peace education can support students’ capacity for resilience and provide learning opportunities that will lead to a more peaceful future and healthy living in Pakistan?

The articles addresses the above research questions and will derive most of the findings from the peace education curriculum implemented in selected schools and Madaris in Peshawar as well as the author’s own experience of working on this subject.

**Our Environment and its Impact on Youth**

Exposure to violence is usually a traumatic experience for people of all ages and can severely affect individual’s developmentally, academic functioning, and coping skills etc\(^\text{12}\). Unfortunately, youth in Pakistan is not only being exposed to violent extremism within their communities at a much higher rate, but in their schools and also through technology. The advent of social media has exposed youth to more violent extremist contents online which in turn leads to extremist and violent behaviour.\(^\text{13}\) Youth in Pakistan have no doubt become more aggressive because of their environment. Secondly, youth are living in an uncertain situation and the securitization of schools after the December 16, 2016 incident has badly affected the psyche and behaviour of the majority of the students. *Every day when I pass through the detecting gate? And then the scanner, “I feel I am not entering into an educational institute to seek education but a high security risk area. The watch men armed with Kalashnikovs standing on the four corners are the daily reminder of an uncertain insecure*

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\(^{12}\)Shannon Reinhart and Elizabeth Cipolone, ‘Exposure to Community Violence and Its Impact on Our Youth’, A blog by pediatric experts, Jan 25, 2018

\(^{13}\)http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/download/30643/31482
“environment”, said Sameer an O’ Level student of a private school in Peshawar

Children and youth not only carry the trauma of such an environment throughout their lives but is also reflected in the development of negative personality traits. There is a direct relationship between trauma and cognitive skills of children involving attention, perception, memory, and executive functioning. Psychological security is as crucial as physical security to the well-being and normal growth of children.

The impacts of exposure to violent extremism on youth are complex, far-reaching and insidious. Their homes, schools and streets are not safe anymore. Physical Injuries can be cured but exposure to violent extremism on a continuous basis impacts the psyche and thinking of youth. Its effects reverberate through a child's social and developmental ecology which manifest itself later in life on proximal and distal effects on family interactions, peer relations, educational outcomes and general life satisfaction.

Prevalent Culture of Violence:

A culture of violence is prevalent in our society today that we are witnessing in the form of hate speech, sectarian and minority-related violence, aggressive behaviour, intolerance, and religion-political violence that

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14 In an interview with the author, Sameer shared his feelings.
further add to acceptance of violence as a normal way of life and thinking. As said earlier, exposure to violence has a severe impact on a number of aspects of an individual’s life.

Male seem to dominate the category of violent crimes. One study in Peshawar reports that 62% of the reported violent crimes were committed by males between the ages 20-39\(^\text{17}\). In Karachi, the numbers are even higher, 74% for male between the ages 20-40\(^\text{18}\). These two categories, although can be termed youth but a more youth focused study in Rawalpindi reported 41% male participation in violent crimes between the ages 16-20\(^\text{19}\).

Sociologically, Pakistan is a family-controlled society, i.e. family dominates almost all aspects of an individual’s life. Nonetheless, it shares a high level of diversity in violence. Collective, group, or mob violence erupts then and now owing to many reasons. \(^\text{20}\) Society doesn’t give importance to such extreme behaviours and it continues to permeate into the minds of every woman, men, girl, young boys and children. Unfortunately, superiority, especially over opponents, is an important part of life in our social setup and it is maintained through violence. People maintain aggressive behaviour so that they may show their authority over others. This thinking is penetrated within the social stratum and youth follows and adopts this pattern of behaviour so aggression becomes a part of youth normal way of life.

\(^{17}\) http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/download/30643/31482
\(^{19}\) Muhammad Zaman and Imran Sabir, Youth Violence in Pakistan: The Social Structure and Culture of Violence, July 2013, pg 8
Additionally, the local religious and political elites as well as some international actors (as investors) have been playing a crucial role in generating a ‘culture of violence’, and similarly causing a culture of intolerance and extremism, in Pakistan. In this way, a new social culture has emerged over the past few decades where violence has become an integral part of social life.

While studying the behaviour of students we observed strong gender-based differences in aggression in schools and Madrassas. In comparison to girls, who use indirect or less aggressive ways, we observed that boys showed more physical aggression. Nonetheless, we also observed that both girls and boys respond to insults and provocation with aggression. The gender difference in expression of violence reduces when girls or boys are faced with frustration, insult, or threat. Graham and Wells confirmed the same that “men and women seem to use similar amounts of verbal aggression”.

In our country we are witnessing that we as a whole have legitimised the use of violence as the only means of resolving conflicts and differences and transmitting the same to our younger generation. We have forgotten the nonviolent ways of mediation, negotiations, reconciliation rooted in our culture and religion. At the societal level it is not preferred to engage youth

22PAIMAN carried out a survey in two schools and one Madrassas in Peshawar to study the behavior, attitude and response of girls and boys students to given situation both violent and non-violent. This study was carried out in 2009 before implementation of Peace Education program in these target institutions.
in a discourse and debate regarding violent extremism, its negative impact and sources of violent extremism etc

A crucial challenge facing schools in our country is to address topics of violence, hate speech, bullying and disruptive images which children and youth are increasingly confronted at younger ages through social media. Their communities and within school settings that are also not generally observed as neutral spaces.

While digital literacy slowly but increasingly finds its way into school curricula, the focus on peace and emotional literacy is yet often underrepresented and not dealt with as part of regular school activities in Pakistan.

**Education and Culture**

Education curriculum in Pakistan somehow doesn’t respond to the needs of today’s students who are exposed to multiple avenues of information and knowledge. We in Pakistan unfortunately have not focused on the importance of inclusion of our rich culture of love, accommodation, and peaceful co-existence in our curriculum. Education is much more than teaching curriculum, examination or grades. It encompasses development of student’s personality, love for its value and culture, positive attitude so they become productive citizens. Culture and education are interdependent because it is through education that we transmit our cultural value to our next generation so it is important that our education and learning environment is in accordance with our culture.

The younger generation in our country today has little or no information of our rich history and tradition and lack understanding of the importance of
positive relationships between the various ethnic, sectarian, cultural and other faith groups for cohesive and united Pakistan. The individualistic tendency in our society as a whole has affected the culture of harmonious interpersonal relationship social harmony. Therefore, peacebuilding starts with individual education\textsuperscript{25}.

The Need for Peace Education in Formal School System in Pakistan

From PAIMAN’s\textsuperscript{26} decade long experience it is obvious that introduction of inclusive peace education concepts in the target schools and Madaris has transformed students’ behaviour from aggression to non-aggression, from intolerance to tolerance and have become more accommodative of differences and diversities. Curriculum, teachers and school environment play a transformative role in building character, attitude and behaviour of students. It is therefore crucial to focus on developing a culture of peace, pluralism and inclusivity within our educational institutions. Whatever our students learn and practice in their education institutions become part of their personalities which is then depicted in their working modalities, decision making, interaction with others throughout their existence.

Peace education should aspire to develop individuals who:

- are inclusive in their approach with positive thinking having social, emotional, and interpersonal skills and can contribute to the building of social cohesion in Pakistan;

\textsuperscript{25} http://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/download/30643/31482

\textsuperscript{26} PAIMAN Alumni Trust is a non governmental national organization working across Pakistan in different sectors including Governance and democracy, Gender and Development, Women Peace and Security, Inclusive peacebuilding, Emergency and Relief, Livelihood development, Health and education since 8th March, 2004. See http://www.paimantrust.org
are compassionate, empathetic and value diversity for a balanced and stable society.; and
are able to deconstruct foundations of violence (such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, racial injustice, gender disparity, ecological degradation) and take action to advance the prospects of peace.

Education for peace is pre-requisite for building peaceful communities. Peace education has a transformative impact on student’s attitude and behaviour. The outcome can only be evaluated through continuous observation of student’s behaviours, attitudes and individual interaction with each other. Peace education is not only teaching youth to value peaceful co-existence but also equip them with skills to resolve conflict in non-violently, help build a society where relationships are valued, well-being of every members matter and equality and inclusivity are pattern of the whole society.

Through the introduction of peace education in our education institutions we can address many aspects of violent behaviour, intolerance and bigotry. It is necessary to critically address the environment and practices within the classroom for advances in peace education. Structural violence needs to be replaced with peace ideals, values, and techniques within the schools. Peace education thus is not only about the content but also about building healthy school environments in which the values and principles enshrined in the concept of peace education – and a culture of pluralism and tolerance are transmitted. This could be achieved by developing peace ethos within the

Peace Education

In 2010, PAIMAN in collaboration with Qadim’s Lumiere, a well known private school in Peshawar introduced an innovative an indigenous model of inclusive peace education in Qadim’s Lumiere and a madrassa. The idea was to bring together students of the two distinct and different streams of education and socio-economic background expose students of both institutions to the concept of tolerance, interfaith harmony, peace and its importance for themselves, their families and communities and to remove misconceptions vis-a-vis each other that breed hatred, biases and leads to extremist attitudes. In 2012 the program was extended to 6 private schools and 4 madrassas in Peshawar.

A child-centred ‘peace education’ curriculum, visual aids was developed as resource material for teachers. It is innovative, integrating various disciplines and focuses on pedagogy teaching methods. The content of

29Peacekeeping: How can we keep children safe in schools and eliminate direct violence in ways that do not have unintended consequences that might be harmful to young people’s wellbeing, mental health and thriving? Peacemaking: When a conflict has occurred, how can we respond to it using more child-centred methods, rather than punitive and authoritarian methods? (Examples of peacemaking measures are: restorative approaches to discipline, peer mediation and circle learning.) Peacebuilding: How can we proactively reduce barriers to learning and tackle issues of wellbeing and equity, and move towards achieving an inclusive and cohesive school community?
This peace education kit is unique as it stands on four pillars of common cultural heritage, Islamic faith, modalities of conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence in our country and Peace and Religion of the world. Capacity of Madrassa and school teachers was built around the concept of inclusivity, pluralism, diversity and inter/intra-faith harmony, peaceful resolution of conflict, human rights and active citizenship. Parents were also trained on some aspects of peace education to supervise and support students community activities so as to help develop a future generation who can contribute effectively to building peaceful communities. Using the cooperative learning technique\textsuperscript{31} student from Madaris and Schools work in groups to learn, interact, share and complete their assigned work collectively. This technique paved the way for a better understanding between students of two different institutions, helped them in overcoming misconceptions vis à vis each other, build friendship and contribute to a more conducive environment for learning. This Peace education kit is used as part of curriculum and students are assessed through the practical assignments. Besides, the values associated with peace education is reinforced not only through teaching but through various activities.

Both teachers and students then work together to develop an environment of tolerance and accommodation through awareness raising, creative art, creative writing, sports and interactive theatre regarding the importance of human rights, tolerance, active citizenship, non-violent ways of conflict resolution, mediation, interfaith and intra-faith harmony. The students of both institutions are being engaged in healthy and creative activities where they learn and act together. The aim is to build bridges of understanding and

friendship between students of the two institutions and to see through peace education the development of youth who value social justice, pluralism and peaceful coexistence. Students hold local sports and debate competitions within their diverse communities with the support of teachers and parents, for social cohesion. They visit worship places of other faiths on their festivals to show solidarity and exchange gifts. The teachers ensure continual progress review of behaviour change in the target students and teachers.

This program helps children to understand the value of pluralism, acceptance of differences, respect for non-violent ways of resolving and importance of inclusive and tolerant communities. “Students learn and practice these skills in relationship to their peers, teachers, and family members”. The multidimensional approach of our Inclusive peace education is shown in this diagram below:

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32 https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/15/12/making-peace
The program ensures that peace education is a school wide effort that involves not only students and teachers but school administrators as well where every staff apply various aspects of peace education in their daily work practices so as to create a healthy environment for the students to be:

❖ “Creative thinker, supportive, tolerant and grow leadership abilities.
❖ Be non-violent (use models of restorative justice to help them understand the effects of their actions and how they can repair any damage done.)
❖ Use experiential learning
❖ Encourage collaboration in diverse groups (Emphasize collaboration and teamwork and deemphasize competition and self-interests.)
❖ Discuss controversial issues (Facilitate discussions about divisive civic and ethical issues for children of all ages.)
❖ Integrate service learning (to make them responsible and active citizens students are taught how to resolve conflicts through dialogue, negotiations and mediation among the students in the school and outside in their communities.

This program helps build the basic skills of communication, speaking, listening, cooperation, self-esteem, and valuing yourself, and others as well. To develop social and emotional skills in students, they are assigned the tasks to identify issues, discuss and find solutions together. This helps

34 Ibid
in building confidence, self-esteem and sense of responsibility among the students at a very early stage. These skills help students in their later years to be pragmatic, inclusive and independent in their thinking and approaches.

The outcome and impact of this program is impressive. Around 3,730 Students of these schools and Madrassas who received inclusive peace education today value the importance of tolerance, acceptance of diversity and peaceful resolution of conflicts as an effective way of building social harmony within their educational institutions and communities. They respect race, gender, religion, appreciating diversity, unity, tolerance, cooperation and which is not only visible in their daily interaction with each but in the whole environment of the institutions as well. This learning environment helped students of schools and madrassas in understanding each other better, helped to develop positive image of each other and also led to the formation of strong bonds between the young generations of two different socio-economic backgrounds.

Similarly, teachers in schools and madrassas now have the ability to communicate the meaning and purpose of peace, pluralism and diversity to the students and contribute in celebrating International Peace Day, holding interactive theatre performances, artistic endeavour and expressing a vision of an inclusive and peaceful Pakistan.

The impact of inclusive peace education program is the transformation of heart and mind, particularly of madrassas’ students who would never sit with students of elite school to carry out sports, interactive theatre or creative art and writing together. Our evaluation shows that the 23 female, 31 male madrassa teachers and 930 students, while 100 female, 37 male
teachers and 2800 students of private schools underwent this program and learned to value diversity of view, pluralism, became more confident, resolved conflict dialogically, and reflected critically. For instance, Muneer Afridi, a Madrassa teachers said, “when the peace education training started, we were not ready to embrace the new ideas and methodology of teaching peace education and thought that it would not work in the environment of the madrassa. But after applying it in the madrassa we found out that the concepts were a practical application of our theoretical teachings of Islam. It has not only widened our outlook but has really transformed the behaviour and attitude of our students that we could not imagine.”

“Our students have understood the meaning of extremism and can now recognize and stop such elements in society”, a teacher of a private school reports. “Some of our class 9th students reported that their friends were preparing to go for jihad to Myanmar because their Qari sahib had told them to join a group that trained young boys to fight jihad. When my students came to know of these developments, they shared the information with me. I discussed it with my principal and we got in touch with the parents of the young boys. The parents had no idea of what was going on. After taking them in confidence, the young boys were made to attend our peace education classes and the classes did a great job both for the young future radicals and my own students. If my students had not received peace education lessons they would not have been able to detect the early warning signs and we would have lost four young men to extremist ideology.”

One of the major impacts is that madrassas teachers who refrain from teaching anything to do with extremism, but have adopted PAIMAN’s
designed a peace education curriculum as part of their regular curriculum today. Generally, parents of Madrassa students do not allow their girls to engage in any extracurricular activity but girls enthusiastically participated in this program along with their mothers. ‘This transformative learning of reflection and dialogue has transformed the way students see themselves, their communities, the world, and their agency within existing structures.

**Teacher Training, Capacity and Resources:** Peace education rests upon the capacities of teachers\(^3^6\). It is therefore crucial to develop the capacity of teachers in aspects of the peace education curriculum. Teachers should be able to and have the capacity to counter violent behaviours and tendencies within the school environment and within their students. However, to bring an effective change within the classroom, teachers need to have internalized and be able to model the types of behaviours and values that are at the heart of peace education approaches. For teaching peace education teachers training in various aspects of peace education, use of participatory teaching methods, critical thinking development is very important so they themselves model whatever value of empathy, tolerance, pluralism and peaceful ways of handling relations and issues.

**Peace Education: Antidote to Violent Extremism**

The UN’s Global Counter Terrorism Strategy acknowledges the importance of peace education as a measure to address the spread of terrorism and in prevention of violent extremism. Studies have also shown a direct link between VE and education\(^3^7\). Recent studies on the Prevention of Violent


\(^3^7\) https://www.cgdev.org/blog/can-education-prevent-violent-extremism
Extremism (PVE) are calling for stronger attention to education. They observed that even though young people are the most vulnerable to VE, the role of school and family is not given due importance in CVE policies. The major focus of CVE policies seem to be on Human Rights and Citizenship education (United Nations, 2015). It is not education that can counter VE but the peace education. I believe that the implementation of principles of peace education into the newly introduced Single Curriculum is the crucial need of our country today. Integrating concepts of peace education in subjects like social studies, Urdu, history and Islamiyat will help in building national unity, love for our common heritage and tradition and acceptance of different ethnicities, sects, faith groups living in Pakistan. Extremist narratives and propaganda messages can be countered through an inclusive peace education.

Education in democracy, human rights and critical awareness is not a primary characteristic of the majority of public and private schools in Pakistan. While the degree of harshness and repression within education institutions varies in public and private schools and Madaris. This whole is decided by the Ministry of Education/departments, head teachers and teachers. In public schools in particular physical/corporal punishment and harsh treatments of teachers are the common practice that lead to the

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39 SDG 4.7states: by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development
40 https://www.cgdev.org/blog/can-education-prevent-violent-extremism
development of aggressive and non-social behaviour in students. This also creates an environment of fear and mistrust in the schools which is harmful for productive learning of students.

As mentioned earlier, in order for students to not be vulnerable to radical ideologies, they must be equipped with the skill of critical thinking. Cognitive skills such as thinking, learning and the ability to discuss and criticize constructively away from taboos are imperative for students to be more committed to logical reasoning and not to be susceptible to any attempts of polarization. The most effective way to prevent violence is to invest in building a resilient culture of pluralism, peace and tolerance within the school and in our communities. Peace education waters the seeds for a culture of peace to flourish.

There is no single pathway to radicalization or violent extremism but educating youth on the harmful impact of violent extremism, its indicators and inculcating value of non-violence and tolerance can help prevent radical tendencies within our youth.

Peace education for peace is the key to building a peaceful culture in Pakistan. The United Nations has called on each country "to ensure that children from a very early age receive educational benefits so that they can resolve any dispute peacefully and with respect for human dignity and tolerance." To prevent the younger generation from becoming intolerant and violent we must pay serious attention to our curriculum and teachers training. It is time to introduce inclusive peace education in our education

43 https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/91262/1/MPRA_paper_91262.pdf
institutions to strengthen students ability to build healthy relationships, be resilient, respectful of other human’s dignity and be collaborative and cooperative so they can contribute to peacebuilding and social harmony in the long run. It helps develop social responsibility which is needed in the 21st century and provides hope for a better future for the younger members of our society, because it indicates that their society is aware of its ills and is striving to cure them in order to build a better place to live.\textsuperscript{44}

Peace education is an evolutionary step towards changing people’s perception and behaviours to nurture a culture of peace. Peace educators transform the minds of students which ultimately culminate in changing of knowledge, values, skills and behaviours. This process of transformation is essential to provide a firm foundation to the terror or violence affected culture\textsuperscript{45} and society of Pakistan. Prolong exposure to terrorism and violent extremism has rendered children and adult both psychologically depressed, socially disintegrated, economically devastated and morally discouraged. In such a situation it is crucial to infuse confidence in the younger generation and not only teach them the value of unity, nationhood but also skill to resolve their conflicts, interpersonal disputes through non-violence, dialogue, negotiations and mediations. Since the method of peace education is collaborative, cooperative, participatory and active\textsuperscript{46}, it will help the younger generation to understand the importance of pluralism, peaceful co-existence, and peace for tranquility and development of Pakistan.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid  
\textsuperscript{45} http://www.isca.in/rjrs/archive/v3/i2/11.ISCA-RJRS-2013-450.pdf  
\textsuperscript{46} http://www.asc-centralasia.edu.pk/Issue_70/04_role_of_peace_edu.html
Schools are important avenues for educating, reforming and influencing youth minds and hearts to address the culture of violence, lack of respect for each other, intolerance and prejudices that we witness in Pakistan today. Therefore, schools, teachers and parents also should be involved and make them understand that they have to work collectively for building a peaceful, fear free society for their children. The aim of our peace education should be to restore that culture of tolerance, interfaith/intra-faith harmony and pluralism that we had a few decades ago. It should be considered as a shared responsibility shouldered by everyone: the state, parents, community workers, media, teachers and students together. Individual handling of the issue will not bear results. An environment of trust and mutual ownership of the problem is needed. Sustainable peace and peaceful society can only be made possible with the time-tested tool of education. People’s minds and behaviours can be shaped and reshaped positively with education. This will ultimately lead to harmony and extension of cooperation in Pakistan.

**Way Forward**

Undoubtedly, there are constraints on what schools can do but it is time to re-think our education curriculum, teachers teaching and students handling skills.

We need a school system with its educational objectives and curricula completely overhauled. Textbooks will have to be rewritten to take out content that fosters hatred and intolerance, and we will need to develop instructional materials that enable teachers to disseminate knowledge in such an environment. Developing new curriculum and the re-writing of textbooks will not be a short-term task — mainly because
both processes are politicised — but nevertheless our education ministries need to revisit their strategies to incorporate a planned and organized component of peace education at the school level acceptable to public and private schools. In the new centralized curriculum, it becomes easier to have a peace education subject or to begin with having supplementary reading material on the subject.

Peace education should be integrated with other subjects like Islamiat, Social Studies, Urdu and English, so that all of them begin to include values related to tolerance, active citizenship, human rights and interfaith understanding. If carried out effectively, this will help ensure that today’s children grow up to be responsible, peaceful and tolerant Pakistani citizens.

Mainstreaming peace education is not a simple process. The space for peace education needs to be found within existing systems, where complementary work can be undertaken.

Advancing peace education within a formal school context requires a multifaceted approach and process. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but there are some key principles and approaches that are necessary:

1. Promoting healthy relationships and a peaceful school culture;
2. Addressing structural and cultural violence within schools;
3. Taking account of the way education is delivered in the classroom;
4. Connecting peace education approaches focused on the individual as well as wider socio-political outcomes;
5. Connecting peace education within schools to wider community practices and non-formal actors, such as nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations; and
6. Where possible having education policies and legislation that support peace education to achieve full integration into formal school settings.47

Conclusion
The prescription to deal with the disease of extremism is inoculating48 all of the children of Pakistan with peace education. As the Preamble to UNESCO's mandate states: "Since wars (and violence) begin in the minds of men, it is the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." The Hague Appeal for Peace has launched a campaign to train teachers and to influence ministries of education to consider adding peace to the core curriculum. Everywhere in the world children who go to school... learn the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.49 Inclusion of peace education is crucial for Pakistani education at this time so that students learn how to overcome aggressive behaviour, their prejudices, be more tolerant and equipped with the skills of addressing violence through non-violent ways. Inclusive Peace education curriculum of Qadim’s Lumiere program can be replicated or adapted in any public and private school in Pakistan. We may hear that there are no or little resources for this. If we want to prevent violent extremism and help build peaceful Pakistan, we must find the resources as well as innovative ways for developing healthy young minds with a positive attitude. For example, it is suggested

48http://peace.ca/10minutesolution.htm
49http://peace.ca/10minutesolution.htm
that a ' School Peace Achievement Program' helping schools achieve this very important mandate.\textsuperscript{50} A public-private partnership policy should be developed so that any entity in the private sector can adopt a school peace program.

The bottom line is that peace in our families, communities and in the world is achievable. The Carnegie Institute conducted a study on Preventing Deadly Conflict that concluded, "It is not that we do not know what to do ... it is that we do not act."\textsuperscript{51} The reason that prevention of violent extremism has not been achieved is one of motivation: world and political leaders have not been motivated to raise their awareness and work together in co-operation to achieve this goal of PVE. Education, awareness and knowledge of how each can make a difference will motivate people and get them to demand action from government institutions.\textsuperscript{52}

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\textsuperscript{50} Ibid
\textsuperscript{51} Preventing Deadly Conflict book by Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, p. 35. Published by Carnegie Corp New York July 1998
\textsuperscript{52} http://peace.ca/10minutesolution.htm
Disengagement and Deradicalization Programs in Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis

Sheharyar Khan

Abstract

In the recent past, countries have used different models and programs to persuade extremists to give up their extremist views, or at least, embark on the route of violence. In the course of the last ten years, the arena of peace-building has witnessed an expanded understanding of the drivers of violent extremism (VE). Research has demonstrated that there are a variety of factors at play, mainly grievances at the state society level, human rights abuses, perceptions of social and economic marginalization or deprivation, lack of access to justice, sense of purpose in life have shown to be motivating factors that push an individual towards the path of extremist violence. Many countries are undertaking disengagement and deradicalization programs to prevent and counter violent extremism and rehabilitate former extremists and other offenders back into society. Many of such programs are undertaken in detention centres, which makes an independent assessment of these projects difficult.

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PVE/CVE) programs involve a broad range of non-coercive and preventative activities that are combined to counteract the key drivers of violent extremism specific to the locations/contexts in which the programs are taking place. The National Internal Security Policy 2018 (NISP-II) places particular focus on developing incentive structures to provide a way out to militants stuck in the cycle of violence. Development and implementation of deradicalization
and rehabilitation programs were also recommended to help "at-risk" individuals to shun violence and build resilience towards violent narratives.

There have been various disengagement and deradicalization programs in Pakistan such as Sabawoon, Rastoon, Mashal, Paiman, and UNDP’s Local-level Disengagement and Rehabilitation Program. The purpose of this research paper is to conduct a comparative analysis of various programs implemented by the state and development sector, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches and future directions.

**Keywords:** Deradicalization, Preventing Violent Extremism, Countering Violent Extremism, Rehabilitation, Disengagement, Mainstreaming.

**Introduction:**

Since 2001, Violent Extremism (VE) is being widely identified as one of the most significant security challenges facing the global community. While the impact of violent extremism has been felt in many countries, globally there is little consensus on how to define, discuss, and respond to violent extremism. Additionally, even though the U.S. with support of its international partners since 9/11 devoted tremendous resources in Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Counter-Insurgency programmes, violent extremist organisations and groups showed even greater growth and expansion. The Global War Against Terror and its associated security-centred approaches often subverted human rights while fighting violent extremism. Most CT approaches placed significant focus on dissuading, countering, and globally isolating individuals or organizations that used terrorist activities as modus operandi. These approaches highlighted the need of capacity building, training and equipping security forces of the state to launch operations
against terrorist groups and consequently this led to enhancement of state's ability in the field of counter terrorism and counter insurgency. In the early years after 9/11 widespread human rights cases of abuse became integral to the CT approach. The impact of such approaches on radicalization and violent extremism is summed up by a key USAID report: “Cruel, degrading treatment by police or security forces, or being closely connected to someone who suffered at their hands, for example, can be significant risk factors [for radicalization].”

By 2010 it was becoming abundantly clear to practitioners and thought-leaders that a whole-of-society approach was required and purely security-centric approaches were unable to counter rising violent extremism. A successful and effective CVE strategy would only be viable if it would aim to mitigate central socio-political enablers of extremism, including but not limited to human rights infractions by the states as well as the international community. Responding to this global challenge of violent extremism the United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council in Oct 2015 adopted Resolution 30/15 “Human Rights and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism”2. The Resolution underscored the important fact that the: “Objectives of countering violent extremism and countering terrorism and of the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and rule of law are mutually reinforcing.”

Resolution 30/15 and the subsequent Secretary-General Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, launched in Jan. 2016 emphasized upon the

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2Resolution 30/15 “Human Rights and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism”
international community and states to adopt a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. Such an approach would go beyond "law enforcement, military or security measures to address development, good governance, human rights, and humanitarian concerns".  

The plan of action also included a gender dimension of the issue, which captured growing evidence that exclusion and intolerance against women, religious minorities, and vulnerable segments create an environment that supports violent extremism. There is now mounting evidence that demonstrates that gender equality and women empowerment are crucial factors that serve as bulwarks against violent extremism: “Violent extremism is most effectively countered through increased education, better critical thinking and enhanced opportunities for women”. Current research and a growing body of literature demonstrate that women’s empowerment has positive outcomes on mitigating CVE indicators. This is the reason that promotion of gender equality was a key pillar of the recommendations that came forward in the UN’s Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action.

Moreover, literature categorizes women’s involvement in violent extremism and terrorism as a reaction against unequal gender roles, discrimination and violence perpetrated against them, and denial of rights.

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3 Ibid
and opportunities for upward growth and mobility. Oudraat\textsuperscript{6} cites a study into the relationship between gender inequalities and terrorist groups: it found that “gender inequality provides fertile ground for terrorist groups who readily exploit to their advantage the victimization of women in patriarchal societies”. This is extremely relevant to the Local Level Disengagement & Rehabilitation (LLDR) project in Swat valley and for the study of violent extremism in Pakistan generally. While most CVE studies have focused on Women in Pakistan as victims of terrorism and violent extremism there is little empirical research on their role as active agents in extremist movements as well as agents of change in preventing/countering violent extremism.

Pakistan’s own Policy frameworks \textit{National Action Plan 2014}, \textit{National Internal Security Policy (2014-2018)}, and \textit{National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines, 2018}, all \textit{pledge to} ‘the social, economic and political uplift of marginalized groups such as youth, women, and minorities” \textsuperscript{7}as a means to counter the spread of violent extremism. NISP (2018) particularly lists gender equality and women's development, the inclusion of vulnerable segments, interfaith harmony, and acceptance of religious diversity, as a means to prevent violent extremism (VE) and terrorism. Importantly it urges the state to “also create an enabling environment for the economic and political empowerment of young men and women to make them resilient against extremist narratives and help them become active

Particularly relevant to disengagement initiatives, *National Counter Extremism Policy (NCEP) Guidelines 2018* issued by NACTA\(^8\) places a strong focus on community resilience. It introduces the concept of “*Local Area Committees for Peace and Welfare: Ilaqa Committee Baraye Aman wa Behbud*”\(^9\). According to NCEP, Assistant Commissioner in collaboration with an equivalent Elected Representative (Union Councilor) at Union Council level may form the Committees. These local area committees may include local notables, local public, local cleric, local teachers, local lady health workers, local Social Welfare Department (SWD) officers at tehsil level, with the Secretary Union Council as subordinate convener of these committees at union council/basic equivalent level.

The paper attempts to offer a comparative analysis of the disengagement and deradicalization programs in Pakistan. There is a dearth of research on the success of preventive initiatives. The study also identifies major loopholes in the state-centred interventions and puts forth some policy recommendations to strengthen the functioning of deradicalization mechanisms.

**Risk Reduction, Disengagement, and De-radicalization Practices: A Literature Review**

For years, various countries have employed different models and initiatives

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\(^8\) Ibid p.52  
\(^10\) Ibid. p.19.
to persuade extremists for abandoning extremist views, or at the very least embarking the route of violence. During the last ten years, the peace-building arena has witnessed an expanded understanding of the drivers of VE. Research demonstrates that “a mixture of grievances linked to state and security force human rights abuses, perceptions of marginalization and injustice, relative economic and social deprivation, and desire for justice and purpose most consistently underpin mobilization to extremist violence”\(^\text{11}\).

Preventing (PVE) and countering violent extremism (CVE) programs involve a broad range of non-coercive and preventative activities that are combined to counteract the key drivers of violent extremism specific to the locations/contexts in which the programs are taking place. In academic terms, “prevention” is denoted as “deradicalization”, while “countering violent extremism” is referred to as ‘disengagement’. The literature review suggests ‘disengagement and deradicalization’ are distinct psychological and social processes:

*De-radicalization* is defined as the “social/psychological process whereby an individual’s commitment to, and involvement in, violent radicalization is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity”\(^\text{12}\). Meanwhile, *Disengagement* is defined as the “process involving a change in role or function that is usually associated with a reduction of violent participation”\(^\text{13}\). According to

\(^{12}\)Kate Barrelle, ‘Disengagement from violent extremism’, Global Terrorism Research Centre and Politics Department Monash University, p.2.
Horgan, “disengagement alone may not guarantee deradicalization, nor is disengagement a necessary accompaniment to disengagement”. However, disengagement remains a prerequisite for deradicalization”\(^\text{14}\).

Khalil and Zeuthan\(^\text{15}\) have preferred to use the term 'Risk Reduction' instead of deradicalization and disengagement as it allows for more flexibility both in the terms of who can be included in the programs and the desired outcome as not all violent extremists have radical views. Despite these conceptual differences in meanings, *Risk Reduction (RR), disengagement, and Radicalization* are processes that deal with the threat of violence. Appropriate risk assessment protocols are necessary to assess the levels of risk of individuals who have been convicted, charged, or incarcerated in association with violent extremism\(^\text{16}\). The risk of violence is thoroughly assessed for two main reasons; first is to conduct an evaluation of risk associated with the person to commit violent activities, and secondly, to develop relevant risk mitigation strategies and interventions to alleviate that risk.

According to Horgan the process of disengagement varies from person to person. Disengagement in no way guarantees that the person has been de-radicalized or S/he won’t engage in violent activities again. Moreover, disengaging physically from violence does not mean that the individual has


also given up ideological support to the cause. Motivating factors or drivers of violence (if not addressed) are likely to further push the individual towards radicalization. The factors that are favourable or contribute towards disengagement may involve both psychological factors (ideology, priority alteration, change in leadership at the top level) and physical factors (incarceration by law enforcement agencies (LEAs), or departure from the extremist organization whether voluntary or involuntary or modification of individuals' role within the organization).

Alternatively, Bjorgo\textsuperscript{17} has identified various push and pull factors that enable an individual to disengage from violent activities. Factors that make an individual reassess his or her decision to join a violent organization are categorized as “Push factors”, while “pull factors” enable the individual to prefer alternative & more lucrative options overstaying in the organization and eventually exiting. Moreover, Bjorgo\textsuperscript{18} also identifies “negative social sanctions, losing faith or confidence in the group, changes in views regarding the use of violence, disillusionment with the group, and exhaustion as push factors, in addition to a desire for a ‘normal’ professional career, and establishing a family, as examples of pull factors”\textsuperscript{19}. Other motivating factors which may facilitate disengagement from violent activities are inner mental struggles, family commitments, and future occupational considerations, and 'burnout' due to emotional and mental commitment and stress from violent activities of the organization.

\textsuperscript{17}Tore Bjørgo, Counter-terrorism as crime prevention: a holistic approach: can be accessed at: https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/486798/mod_resource/content/1/bjrgo2015.pdf

\textsuperscript{18}ibid

\textsuperscript{19}ibid
Various countries globally are undertaking disengagement and deradicalization programs intending to prevent and counter violent extremism and rehabilitate former extremists or offenders back into society\textsuperscript{20}. Mostly, these programs have been implemented in detention centres across the world; independent evaluation of these programs determining their success or failure has been a challenge. However, in recent years such programs are targeting ex-offenders and other at-risk groups. One such example is exit programs for members of neo-Nazi, white supremacist groups, formed in Norway in 1997 and later expanded their influence to Sweden, Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands\textsuperscript{21}. Other programs such as those in Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia also offer a mix of physical, psychological, educational, vocational, and community support interventions, which are designed to work along with the push and pull factors in the individuals’ environments to support his or her disengagement from violence\textsuperscript{22}.

**Disengagement and De-radicalization Programs in Pakistan:**

Substantial insights exist in the form of literature on deradicalization programs implemented in various countries in the Muslim countries around the world mainly Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, and other countries such as Singapore which have a significant Muslim population. However, in the case of Pakistan, there has been no significant research or


\textsuperscript{21} Tore Bjorgo “Counterterrorism as crime Prevention: A Holistic Approach” Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2015.1108352

independent evaluation of the deradicalization or disengagement programs implemented on its soil. This is primarily because the programs have largely been implemented under strict state administrative control, which curbs access to the former militants.

Pakistan’s first deradicalization programme ‘De-radicalization and Emancipation Program (DREP)’ was initiated in September 2009, after the successful conclusion of the military’s counter-terrorism kinetic operation against the Pakistani Taliban in Swat. Most of the militants detained and taken under custody were under the age of 18 and trained to be suicide bombers. The overwhelming presence of youth among the detainees forced the security forces to revisit the traditional kinetic counter-terrorism approaches and introduce a militant rehabilitation programme. To start the programme, four school buildings in Swat were used as deradicalization centres. These included ‘Sabawoon’ for ages between 12-18 years, Rastoon (for youth between 19-25 years) and Mashal centres.

In September 2009, Sabawoon has launched its operations with a total count of twenty-two children retained in a rehabilitation centre in Malakand Division for susceptible youth at-risk of conducting violent activities. The main aim of this initiative was to undertake a pilot project and once it's off the ground, it could be handed over to a non-profit organization named

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SWAat. At present, Hum Pakistani, a Lahore based NGO is managing the rehabilitation centre.

The initial cost of the project was PKR 4.4 million and the site chosen for establishing the Sabawoon rehabilitation facility was Malakand Public School\textsuperscript{27}. The various stages of the project involved development of classroom facilities, common rooms, student dorms, mosques or prayer rooms, auditorium, and lodging facilities for the staff. The programme was launched in September 2009 and in terms of induction of at-risk youth, 34\% of the total individuals were turned in by their parents on a voluntary basis. Moreover, 39\% were detained and inducted by law enforcement agencies and 25\% turned themselves in before the programme was formally launched. Furthermore, the initial assessment of this youth cohort showed that at least 50\% (40 in terms of absolute number) of the members were characterized as low-risk; 38\% (45 in terms of absolute number) were characterized as medium-risk and 12\% (12) termed as high-risk. The members undertook education modules recognized and affiliated with the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Board of Secondary Education and appeared in formal examinations conducted in March 2010. Moreover, they had a chance to attend the technical and vocational education (TVET) modules recognized and affiliated with Khyber Institute of Technical Education. They were also taught modules focusing on peacebuilding and deradicalization. These modules were further enhanced by inclusion of “Familial Engagement Programme”, sporting activities, physical training, co-curricular activities, psycho-social support programmes.

Although, it was widely believed that the De-Radicalization and Emancipation Programs (DREPs) were run in collaboration with the civilian sector, especially with Hum Pakistan Foundation (HPF). According to ISPR, since 2009 these centres have rehabilitated close to 2500 militants.\textsuperscript{28}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disengagement &amp; Rehabilitation Centers</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabawoon-1</td>
<td>Juveniles (14-19 years)</td>
<td>Malakand Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</td>
<td>2009 - 2016 discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabawoon</td>
<td>Adult males of all ages</td>
<td>Bara, Khyber Agency</td>
<td>2016 – Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rastoon</td>
<td>Juveniles (19-25 years)</td>
<td>Malakand Agency</td>
<td>2009 - discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishal</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Mingora, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</td>
<td>2009 - discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAST</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</td>
<td>discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPARLAY</td>
<td>Families of militants</td>
<td>Tank, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</td>
<td>2009 - discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navi Sahar</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Bajaur Agency, former FATA</td>
<td>2012 - discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khyber Program (2 centers)</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Khyber Agency, former FATA</td>
<td>2016 - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab Rehabilitation Program (CTD/TEVTA)</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>2011 - 2012 discontinued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Disengagement and Deradicalization Programs in Pakistan

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
According to Amir Rana\(^\text{29}\) the Swat deradicalization program is based on the Saudi Arabian deradicalization programs. Abdul Basit describes the program as having four components: Psychological rehabilitation, religious counselling, formal education, and vocational training. The program also included family meetings, sports, and cultural events.\(^\text{30}\)

Azam and Bareeha in their study maintain that the State planners of the program also looked into other deradicalization models while developing the program. Also, the study points to serious shortcomings in the program related to the sensitization or the “religious module”\(^\text{31}\), which is a strong component in the Saudi Arabian model. In the Mishal case, the reliance was on regular clerics instead of including national religious figures or popular scholars in deradicalization programs, who enjoy more credibility and respect. Resultantly, this shortcoming limited the impact of the religious module and as such brought reservations over the effectiveness of such modules.

Sabawoon program’s relative success could be attributed to continued military presence and surveillance of at-risk individuals, a task beyond the implementing capacity of the local police.

Dr. Feriha Paracha (Executive Director Sabawoon) identified critical learning components within the education module used in the Sabawoon

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\(^{29}\) Mohammad Amir Rana "Swat De-Radicalization model: Prospects for rehabilitating Militants: Pak Institute of Peace Studies, April-June 2011


Disengagement and Deradicalization

center as key to the success of the program. However current knowledge and research on VE (Violent Extremism) downplays the role of education as a structural or individual key Push or pull factor determining either participation or disengagement from VE. Moreover, findings from this study do not apply to adult militants.\footnote{Peracha, F. N., Khan, R. R. & Savage, S. 2016. Sabawoon: Educational Methods Successfully Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism. In Expanding Research on Countering Violent Extremism [Online]. Retrieved February 19, 2019, from http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-410201685227.pdf}

Current Civilian Led Disengagement and Rehabilitation Projects in Pakistan: A Brief Comparative Analysis:

There are primarily three different models of civilian-led disengagement programs that have been implemented in Pakistan. Following is a brief description and critique of each of the models:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civilian DDR Projects in Pak</th>
<th>Implementing organization</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabawoon 1&amp;11</td>
<td>HUM, SWaT</td>
<td>Youth 14-25</td>
<td>Swat, Malakand</td>
<td>2009-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paiman</td>
<td>Paiman Trust</td>
<td>Mothers, At-risk Youth</td>
<td>Tribal Districts, KPK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Level Disengagement and Rehabilitation Programme (LLDR)</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Ex-offenders, At-Risk Youth, Men, and Women, At-Risk Communities, Local government officials and families</td>
<td>Swat Phase I, And 11, Karachi, and Multan</td>
<td>2017-present/ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Civilian led Disengagement Models in Pakistan
In her research article for Hedayah, Dr. Feriha Peracha identified critical learning components within the education module used in the Sabawoon centre as key to the success of the program. However current knowledge and research on VE downplays the role of education as a structural or individual key push or pull factor determining either participation or disengagement from VE. Moreover, findings from Dr. Peracha’s research do not apply to adult militants. Similarly, most of the beneficiaries of Sabawoon Center were between the ages of 14-19 years. The applicability of the model to an older age group or women is not established.

In 2018 Dr. Feriha Piracha as part of a Netherlands-funded applied research initiative has developed an Integrative Complexity (IC) course, ‘Sabawoon Course’, consisting of eight sessions (16 contact hours) with contextualized themes. The focus of this applied research initiative is to adapt, deliver and assess educational methodologies pioneered by Dr. Sara Savage “IC Thinking” and Neuro-clinical Psychologist Dr. Feriha Peracha along with her team of psychologists. A total of 64 male pupils participated in the course. The beneficiaries underwent learning sessions, which enabled them to resolve conflict using critical thinking skills, particularly in areas with a high risk of radicalization in KPK. This includes the inducted at Sabawoon, the reintegrated, and the Preventive Violent Extremist (PVE) group. The beneficiaries included (a) youth detained by the military from the Sabawoon Centre (b) vulnerable or at-risk youth enrolled at Sabawoon centre and (c) graduates of Sabawoon or Reintegrated individuals.

The Mean age of this cohort was 19.77 years but the age group ranged from 16-25 years. The cohort of 64 youth received the IC-related
interventions in an institutionalized setting. Most of the youth selected were either inductees at the Sabawoon centre or other at-risk individuals, which were enrolled at Sabawoon and those who had been already reintegrated. Dr. Feriha has shared her results from the above study which show how increasing levels of Integrated and Complex thinking in beneficiaries correlated with reduced levels of Violent extremist behaviour and cognition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>Reintegrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batch – 1</td>
<td>Aug – Nov 2010</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batch – 2</td>
<td>Dec 2010 – March 2011</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batch – 4</td>
<td>June – Sept 2011</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batch – 5</td>
<td>July – Oct 2011</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batch – 6</td>
<td>Sept-Dec 2011</td>
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<td>Batch – 7</td>
<td>Jan – April 2012</td>
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<td>Batch – 8</td>
<td>June – Sept 2012</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>Batch – 9</td>
<td>Jan – April 2013</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>Batch – 10</td>
<td>May – Aug 2013</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>Batch – 11</td>
<td>Feb – May 2014</td>
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<td>Batch – 12</td>
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<td>Batch – 13</td>
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<td>Batch – 14</td>
<td>March – June 2015</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Available data on the number of beneficiaries of Mishal deradicalization program from 2010-2015

33 Azam & Bareeha (2017) Mishal: A Case Study of a Deradicalization and Emancipation Program in SWAT Valley, Pakistan
Critical Analysis of Sabawoon Model

Following are key shortcomings of the Model:

- There is little evidence that education or lack of critical thinking is a valid push or pull factor for VE in youth. Low-income groups of youth in backward areas of Pakistan generally have low IC skills but proportionately only a small number join VE organizations. This is not to diminish the importance of IC learning in youth—there is value in inculcating IC tools and methodologies in all Pakistani public and private schooling.

- Moreover, as explained above the beneficiaries were already individuals, which were associated and exposed to Sabawoon system and disengagement centre. Their receptivity to the IC interventions is also impacted by earlier exposure to the Sabawoon’s methods. This may not be the case if the interventions are applied to wider demographics and beneficiaries who have never been exposed to the classroom-style learning methods, which Sabawoon largely relies on. Considering various demographic, class, and gender profiles of VE offenders and at-risk individuals in Pakistan many are with low literacy levels and unable to adapt to classroom stale learning environments in the mandated 8 sessions and may need a much longer period of exposure to the interventions to show any results.

- Also, current knowledge and evidence in large studies around the world suggest the importance of social factors, in the process of radicalization, de-radicalization, and violent extremist behaviour. The individualized classroom learning methodologies while focusing on neuropathic pathways of learning critical thinking skills and empathetic
response or what Sara Savage calls non-binary Integrated and Complex thought process, do not impact the wider social environments of the beneficiaries. Such a social environment influences critical choices, which determine why some people with radical ideas will undertake violent acts, and some do not. Individual-level mechanisms (such as love, risk and status, slippery slope, and un-freezing) and group-level mechanisms (polarization, competition, isolation, and threat) can bring radical action in the absence of radical ideas.

- Sabawoon beneficiaries were individuals, who had been arrested and detained by the military. The legal status of these detainees and detention facilities has attracted the attention of human rights activists and groups.

- The Institution centred focus of the Model means that the model is not deeply embedded in the local context. Detainees may come from far-off areas, which are at a great distance from the Rehabilitation centre and other than a few family members (father, brother) the communities if the detainees cannot be involved in the post-release rehabilitation. This weakens the rehabilitation component of the program. Post-release and training the beneficiaries are returned to the families and communities with little community-level participation. There are some family-related interventions but these do not cover the wider community or other peers of the beneficiaries, which leave them vulnerable post return to recidivism.

**An Overview of PAIMAN Trust Initiatives in Pakistan:**

Another widely known disengagement model that has functioned in the civilian space in Pakistan is PAIMAN Trust: ‘Let’s Live in Peace Project’.
The project targets mothers as key agents of disengagement of at-risk youth and community sensitization.

PAIMAN Alumni Trust (PAIMAN) started it “Let’s Live in Peace” initiative. One important aspect of this programme was to empower mothers of extremists and other women in the community to help in the prevention of radicalization.

PAIMAN acknowledged that to get male members of the household (in traditional and patriarchal societies) to listen to women, it is very difficult in that conservative setting to make the voice of women heard. This according to PAIMAN can only be achieved by empowering the women and raising their status in the family and society. This was done mainly through economic empowerment which included capacity building and training initiatives, imparting livelihood skills, which could be put to practical use, and help in contributing to family household income providing them with a seat on the table. This was coupled with enhancing women’s critical thinking skills and enabling them to identify indicators of radicalization or violent extremism in individuals as well as their communities and counter these factors through dialogue and building community resilience against violent extremism through peacebuilding.

Paiman disengagement methodology consists of naming Youth and mothers as PAIMAN peace practitioners. After receiving capacity-building training, they become members of male and female Tolanas (‘together’ in the Pashto language) in their area. These Tolanas have been operating at the community level in former FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province since 2008.

According to Paiman, 65 male and 35 female Tolanas have carried out
community meetings to sensitize their respective communities identified and responded to early signs of violent extremism in individuals and communities. Disengaged youth by Tolana’s are constantly engaged and supported through PAIMAN’s “youth engagement and deradicalization programme”. They also form “Youth Tolana”, on the same framework as “Mothers Tolana”, engaging with other youngsters in their communities and building resilience of the community against violent narratives. According to PAIMAN self-reporting, till 2017 it had been able to reach out to 45,000 males and 17,500 females directly in different parts of KPK and former FATA.

Critical Analysis of PAIMAN Model:

Though limited, CVE programming centred on women has started to gain momentum. Globally, civil-society initiatives are focusing on women’s capacity to spot and react to extremism in their families or on tackling root causes of violent extremism, including gender. Government programs in various countries have also been explicit including women.

There are however several important shortcomings of the PAIMAN model of P/CVE. The two more serious ones related to:

- Inherent model Coherence of the Model and Methodology
- Lack of evidence of model success and third-party assessment of Project

Recent studies and literature on women and especially Mother’ role in countering Violent Extremism have been debated in various studies. There is little evidence that suggests that CVE approaches that focus on mothers as
agents of CVE are successful or that there is no definitive evidence that mothers can spot and address increased radicalization to violence in their children. Mothers are also considered inherently peaceful or have innate maternal abilities to spot the signs of radicalization in their children. These assumptions have been seriously questioned in recent studies especially when we consider the role of women in tribal patriarchal societies and contexts.

Although the PAIMAN Project has been implemented since 2008 there is little published data, evidence, or third-party qualitative or quantitative assessment to substantiate the success of the model. The Paiman Project team has released limited information to substantiate its claims of success or evidence that its interventions have worked.

**UNDP: Local Level Disengagement and Rehabilitation (LLDR) Project: An Overview**

Till to date, however, there has been no civilian/government-initiated process of restorative justice, disengagement, and rehabilitation of ex-offenders or at-risk youth, which would allow local communities to deal with the collective trauma of the conflict in Swat. Ex-offenders released by the military, or families of those that have been killed in operations, are still living side by side in villages and communities, creating a tremendous amount of stress and mutual suspicion.

Against this backdrop, UNDP implemented the first pilot of the “Local Level Disengagement and Rehabilitation Project” (LLDR) in the province

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of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Swat District in 2018. The key project goal of the LLDR was to build resilience and create tolerance in the communities and segments of the population vulnerable to involvement in (religious) extremist activity as a result of the area’s post-conflict environment.

UNDP conducted an impact study in Swat to measure the implications and impact of Phase I of the Local Disengagement and Rehabilitation Project. The assessment study aimed to evaluate the impact of project interventions on at-risk Youth in Swat and study the process of the LLDR Project. Through the LLDR Project, UNDP aimed to support the reintegration of ex-offenders in Swat and ensure that they did not suffer discrimination, and religious profiling post their internment. The reintegration process developed under the project offers a replicable mechanism through which radicalized youth offenders once released are not stigmatized and excluded from re-entering into all aspects of life. The Local Level Reintegration project aims to promote peace and security by ensuring that the fundamental human rights of ex-offenders are protected.

UNDP’s approach to preventing/countering violent extremism is embedded in the understanding that protection of human rights, individual liberties, and rule of law are mutually reinforcing. Theory of Change of the LLDR Project is aligned with the current knowledge and growing evidence, that violations of human rights are among the grievances that lead to the creation of an environment in which people, especially youth, become vulnerable to radicalization. The key findings of this assessment support and validate core principles enshrined in key UN Human Rights Resolutions, especially those that urge constructive engagement with at-risk communities and encourage PVE/CVE programs to develop community-based strategies for collective
security and resilience. LLDR Project demonstrates that a rights-based CVE strategy can successively minimize societal divisions, decreasing the propensity for violent extremism.

Pakistan, a high-risk country is also a key contributor and signatory to the Human Rights Council Resolution on Countering violent extremism. LLDR project presents an opportunity for UNDP to pilot a successful community-supported PVE/CVE Program in Pakistan that demonstrates to the Pakistani government, policy enclaves, and civil society, that it is entirely possible to build successful community-led programs that counter violent extremism while protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The assessment found LLDR project is also well aligned with Pakistan's country-level policy frameworks on countering violent extremism and counter-terrorism. *National Action Plan (2014), National Internal Security Policy 2014 and 2018 (NISP)* and *National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines Jan. 2018* issued by National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) include guidelines for government agencies to develop community and youth engagement strategies to counter violent extremism (VE). This increases opportunities for project sustainability, scaling up, and creating government ownership for the program.

**Key Findings and Recommendations:**

- Pakistan has limited trained human resources to undertake rehabilitation activities, especially in terms of adopting a non-securitized approach to the subject. There is a need for a trained workforce specializing in rehabilitation to sustain the programs in the long term.
• Furthermore, there is a need to develop international partnerships to undertake capacity building programs to train local resources in this field mainly psycho-social support.

• Current initiatives both by the government, civil society, and international development partners are being implemented on an ad-hoc project basis, there is a dire need for a long-term institutional-based approach to this problem.

• Most of the initiatives implemented by the government have used a top-down approach in which communities have not been involved. Communities are important stakeholders and should be included rather than excluded.

• Learning from new ideas and exchanging experiences is important for innovation and continuously improving the programming. Pakistan has demonstrated enormous success in dealing with the scourge of terrorism and it's time that the country shares its experiences with international stakeholders and organizations working or conducting research in this field. Taking part in international conferences and moots is therefore important for not only sharing local experiences but learning from experiences from practitioners and researchers from various countries and different backgrounds on their approach to rehabilitation and disengagement. Looking for new innovative ideas and models is hence important for the improvement and evolution of the current programs as opposed to the closed and opaque approach being implemented by the government.

• Keeping in view the opaqueness of Pakistan's deradicalization efforts, there is a potential of overstepping mandate and any violation of
fundamental human rights has to be best avoided. Hence all deradicalization projects must follow international best practices with full transparency.

Conclusion

Pakistan still lacks a comprehensive counter-radicalization policy at the national level that should provide a holistic framework for militant rehabilitation and reintegration into society. There is a need for a "whole of a society" approach to foster an environment that is conducive to the propagation of tolerant and inclusive culture which plays a positive role in curbing extremism in the society. Given that the state has given due importance and funds for counter-terrorism efforts, initiatives on the non-kinetic prevention side are limited.

Most of the initiatives undertaken by the government of Pakistan are carried out on an impromptu basis, which creates limitations in ensuring the successful implementation of the disengagement and deradicalization programs. There is no 'one-size-fits-all approach for pursuing such programs and without employing a tailored approach, the programs’ outcomes remain questionable. For any deradicalization program to succeed, drivers or motivational factors behind joining violent organizations must be investigated and treated, otherwise, such initiatives can even lead to further radicalization and recidivism.

Understanding the target audience’s context and modifying the initiatives as per the cultural, religious, psychological, and economic needs of the targeted individuals will produce effective outcomes. Importantly, applying a securitized approach towards such programs is counterproductive. For the program to be viable and effective, there is a need to expand the human
resource and employ a non-securitized approach. On the other hand, it is critical to establish trust between the targeted individuals and the law enforcement agencies, whose absence will only embolden their radical motivations. Promoting skills-based training for the inductees is essential in spearheading their reintegration within the community. Despite the numerous challenges and potential pitfalls, the benefits of well-designed programs are extensive only if the interventions are carefully considered, professionally managed, and rigorously monitored.

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Misconceptions about the Relationship Between Militancy and Madrassahs in Swat

Mehr-un-Nisa Waheed, Feriha N. Peracha, Raafia Raees Khan and Andleeb Zahra

Abstract:

The paper aimed to analyse the determinants of young militants’ recruitment by the Taliban in Swat, Pakistan from 2007-2009. The research evaluated whether madrassas played a pivotal role in militant recruitment, as often quoted by the media or if recruitment was an outcome of multifaceted processes with various causes. The case files and detailed histories of 76 ex-militants belonging to Sabaoon (a rehabilitation and deradicalization centre based in Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) were studied using a mixed method approach. A content analysis was initially performed after which the qualitative data was statistically analysed to produce results. The findings revealed that madrassas were not significantly involved in militant recruitment and other factors like family and social group influence as well as personal inclination also determined youth recruitment into the terrorist organization.

Keywords: Youth, Militancy, Radicalization, Madrassahs, Taliban, Swat

Introduction

Among the challenges faced by Pakistan was the mounting terrorist activity in district Swat which has a population of approximately 1.2 million and remained unstable since the 1990’s when religious cleric Sufi Muhammad’s Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) began to rebel against
the provincial government.\(^1\) Although TNSM was outlawed by President Pervez Musharraf in 2001, Sufi Muhammad’s son-in-law, Mullah Fazlullah, took control of TNSM and led the Taliban to take over Swat.\(^2\) The Taliban caused unrest in Swat for several years and recruited and abducted children to strengthen their movement. After several failed peace agreements between the provincial government and the Taliban, in 2009, a military operation was started in Swat which eventually regained control of the district.\(^3\) Several civilians from Swat became internally displaced people (IDP’s) and a significant number of children were implicated and apprehended for their involvement in militancy.

Militancy has become a global concern. Its effects are wide-ranging and pose ramification for Pakistan, its neighbouring states and beyond.\(^4\) Militancy has badly affected Pakistan and stands in comparison to the strife found in countries like Sudan and Iraq.\(^5\) Madrassahs or religious seminaries are increasingly implicated in the war against militancy. In fact, they were branded as “Weapons of Mass Instruction” in the early 2000’s.\(^6\) Following 9/11, the association between these schools and militancy became stronger.\(^7\) Although none of the 9/11 attackers were educated at madrassahs, the link between terrorism and madrassahs soon became a part of political

\(^2\) Luras, 1.
\(^3\) Luras, 1.
\(^5\) Winthrop, 7.
Misconceptions about the relationship discourse. An important point to consider is that madrassahs did not grow out of nowhere. Madrassahs were scarce during Pakistan’s independence and began to increase exponentially after the Afghan-Soviet war because they were utilized as breeding grounds for training of the mujahideen. Around 1000 madrassahs were founded during the 1980’s where jihadis sprouted to fight against the Soviets.

Several assertions have been put forward to account for the rise of militancy in Pakistan. Increasingly highlighted is the assumption that Pakistan’s lack of funding for the education sector has led to the growth of militancy. To mitigate this threat, the United States (US) endowed more than a $100 million dollars to Pakistan’s education sector. Nonetheless, concerns about madrassahs and their supposed link to militancy continue to worry US policy makers today.

The controversy surrounding madrassahs is undeniable and the debate that madrassahs contribute to violence cannot be dismissed altogether. Madrassahs were undoubtedly involved in the creation of the mujahidin in Afghanistan during the 1980’s. It is also likely that a few madrassahs may have been involved in militancy in tribal areas. Madrassahs are also considered to be significant sources of suicide attackers, especially in

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8 Bergen, 117.
10 Winthrop, 1.
11 Fair, The enduring madrasa myth, 135.
12 Fair, The enduring madrasa myth, 135.
13 Winthrop, 18.
14 Winthrop, 18.
Afghanistan and Pakistan. For some militant groups like the Taliban and those propagating sectarian differences, madrassah students seem to be advantageous to their cause. Although most madrassahs are not linked to militancy, some religious seminaries do act as gathering places for militant groups to recruit participants.

In addition to this, madrassahs and modern society cannot merge writ large. It is recognized that madrassahs do not inculcate modern values and education in their students. Furthermore, a minority of madrassahs are known to foster illogicality in students and engage in hate speeches. It is also likely that madrassah students hold views that would encourage them to participate in militancy. Tariq Rahman’s study on intolerance in Pakistani society adds to this viewpoint after conducting a survey on tenth grade students from public schools, private schools and madrassahs. He assessed their views about militant groups in the country, Pakistan’s conflict with India and religious minorities’ rights. Rahman discovered that madrassah-going students were more likely to support war and militancy while disregarding equal rights for religious minorities.

16 Fair, Who are Pakistan’s militants and their families?, 59.
18 Bergen, 118.
19 Fair, Militant recruitment in Pakistan, 108.
20 Fair, Who are Pakistan’s militants and their families?, 62.
22 Rahman, 29.
Several studies have sought to debunk the various assumptions associated with madrassahs. For example, Bergen and Pandey\textsuperscript{23} examined 79 terrorists who were responsible for anti-West attacks (September 11 attacks, Africa embassy bombings, Bali nightclub bombings and London bombings). Their findings revealed that the individuals were highly educated and rarely belonged to madrassahs. In fact, madrassah enrolment accounted for only 11\% of the sample.\textsuperscript{24} Bergen and Pandey\textsuperscript{25} found that some of the terrorists had either completed their doctoral degrees or were in the process of obtaining one, and most of them went to universities in the West. Most university-educated terrorists had opted to study Engineering, suggesting that initiating terrorist attacks involves technical knowledge and skills which are rare in madrassah students.\textsuperscript{26} This is reiterated by Fair\textsuperscript{27} who studied the notebooks of militants in Kashmir, which were mostly written in English, and found technical and mathematical instructions about making explosives. Such technical dexterity could not have possibly been the work of a madrassah-going student.

Bergen and Pandey’s (2006) findings are similar to the results assimilated by researchers such as Krueger and Maleckova\textsuperscript{28}, and Berrebi.\textsuperscript{29} Krueger

\textsuperscript{23} Bergen, 117.  
\textsuperscript{24} Bergen, 118.  
\textsuperscript{25} Bergen, 118.  
\textsuperscript{26} Bergen, 118.  
\textsuperscript{27} Fair, Militant recruitment in Pakistan, 121.  
and Maleckova\textsuperscript{30} examined the correlation between lack of education, poverty and inclination towards terrorist activity by assessing the biographical data of slain Hezbollah members. They discovered that participation in Hezbollah was determined by higher education and higher standards of living. They concluded that terrorist groups prefer those who have university degrees because high educational attainment shows an individual’s determination and motivation to succeed in their cause.\textsuperscript{31} Berrebi\textsuperscript{32} examined whether lack of education could determine an individual’s inclination towards terrorism by analyzing the biographies of Hamas members in Israel. He found that individuals who became suicide bomb attackers were more likely to be educated and concluded that individuals who are highly educated tend to join terrorist groups.\textsuperscript{33} Further findings by Marc Sageman\textsuperscript{34} also add to the literature. He suggests that students studying in the West are more likely to become terrorists because they feel isolated and discriminated against in their countries.

These findings stand in stark contrast to assertions that higher education and higher standards of living should stop individuals from engaging in violence. Beuno de Mesquita’s\textsuperscript{35} theoretical model provides an explanation for all conflicting findings regarding madrassahs. He suggests that militant groups require certain attributes from their militants and recruit only those whose qualities match their needs. Such attributes include a potential militants’ educational attainment, previous work experience and social

\textsuperscript{30} Krueger, 120.
\textsuperscript{31} Krueger, 122.
\textsuperscript{32} Berrebi, 1.
\textsuperscript{33} Berrebi, 38.
\textsuperscript{34} Sageman, M. "Understanding Terror Networks., University of Pennsylvania." (2004).
standing in their communities. Militant groups choose higher-quality recruits when there is more supply than demand and in times of national economic crises, more high-quality recruits apply for positions in militant groups because they seldom find employment opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, even if madrassah students are interested in jihad, militant groups will only select individuals who they deem better-suited to their needs, and this may exclude madrassah students from the equation altogether. Hence, rather than questioning whether madrassahs produce terrorists or not, it is better to analyze the militant groups themselves and assess the conditions under which they operate, and instead of associating all madrassahs with militancy, it is far more constructive to first consider the requirements of militant groups.

Madrassahs are heavily misconstrued even when it comes to their definition. For example, madrassahs display significant differences between various cities and countries, madrassah students can be day scholars or boarders and madrassahs can have a general syllabus or they can solely be religious and attached to mosques. Most analysts researching the militancy-madrassah connection do not take such diversity into account and erroneous assumptions and data are twofold in such research. For example, Jessica Stern (2000) claimed that Pakistan’s madrassahs are terrorist factories, although her data was solely based on Deobandi madrassahs who are known to have jihadist sympathies. Misconceptions further arise with

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36 De Mesquita, 515.
37 De Mesquita, 515.
38 Fair, Militant recruitment in Pakistan, 119.
39 Fair, Militant recruitment in Pakistan, 120.
40 Bergen, 119.
41 Bergen, 120.
42 Fair, The enduring madrasa myth, 135.
regard to the number of madrassahs existing across the country. Following 9/11, the International Crisis Group estimated one-third of Pakistani students to be enrolled at madrassahs. The ICG’s claim was based on flawed data provided by Pakistan’s Minister of Religious Affairs who could not have possibly known the enrollment rates for madrassah students because no such calculations have been formally conducted. The popular media has estimated madrassah enrollment in Pakistan to range from 500,000 to two million children and such estimates have been established without any empirical backing. However, Winthrop and Graff assert that there are definitely fewer madrassahs in Pakistan than previously speculated.

**Growing Youth Militancy in Pakistan**

Concerning the madrassah-militancy connection, it is asserted that Pakistan is increasingly challenged by growing youth militancy. The population surge in developing countries has led to an increase in the recruitment of vulnerable young militants. Pakistan’s youth cohort accounts for 60% of the country’s entire population which makes increasing militancy in this age group an alarming prospect. Terrorist groups prefer young militants for their operations mainly because of monetary advantages like the low-cost associated with recruiting and training children. Furthermore, children are considered to be compliant and controllable, and are more likely to be loyal.

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43 Fair, The enduring madrasa myth, 136.
44 Fair, Militant Recruitment in Pakistan, 111.
45 Winthrop, 16.
towards group leaders which makes their recruitment easier. Such alarming prospects of youth militancy make it imperative for effective counter extremism strategies and prevention measures to be employed for this age group.

SWAaT (Social Welfare, Academic and Training) for Pakistan is a non-profit organization that promotes initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism among youth living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The organization has rehabilitated young males from Swat at a rehabilitation centre called Sabaoon (Pashto word translating to “first ray of light at dawn”). Initiated by the Pakistan army, Sabaoon aimed to deradicalize young militants who had been recruited by the Taliban in Swat. SWAaT launched its project, the Monitoring Centre (MC), in Mingora, Swat during November 2011 to deliver reintegration support to Sabaoon graduates who had been involved in militancy. The MC was established to ensure that reengagement into violent extremism would not occur. By December 2018, Sabaoon was successful in reintegrating 211 individuals and by May 2019 the MC discontinued monitoring of 39 of these reintegrated youth. The current study researched a sample from Sabaoon’s reintegrated population to analyse why the youth in Swat joined the Taliban. The study aimed to evaluate whether madrassah enrolment played a significant role in youth militant recruitment or if recruitment was a multifaceted process with various causes.

Methodology

A mixed methods approach was utilised for this research, including a qualitative content analysis and quantitative frequency analysis. A mixed methods approach was preferred due to the descriptive nature of the data being analysed. In addition to this, it was decided that combining the two approaches would yield more comprehensive and in-depth findings.

Participants

Data from 76 individuals were recruited from a population of 211 reintegrated individuals. The inclusion criterion was madrassah attendance. The mean age of the participants was 15.26 years at the time of induction to Sabaoon. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured for this study and participants’ names are not revealed.

Materials

Information about the participants such as their age, education, socioeconomic status, father’s presence, mode of involvement, type of training at camp and reasons for joining militancy were extracted from their individual case files which detailed their histories.

Strategy of Analysis

A content analysis was initially conducted for this research. The researcher extracted information from individual case files. Each reintegrated individual’s age, education, socio-economic status, father’s presence, mode of involvement, type of training at camp and reasons for joining the
militants, was noted next to their code. The data was put into statistical analysis software (SPSS) and a frequency analysis was performed.

Results

The militants’ socio-economic status (SES) was divided into three categories. 50 militants belonged to a low SES, 26 belonged to a middle SES and no militants belonged to the high SES category (See Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Socio-economic Status](image)
Father’s presence was divided into two categories. 32 militants had fathers who were present in their households during the militants’ involvement and 44 militants had fathers who were absent during the militants’ involvement (See Table 2).

Table 2: Father’s Presence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s Presence</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The militants’ mode of involvement was divided into three categories. Abducted included those individuals who had been forced into militancy unwillingly, voluntary included those who had joined militancy willingly and passive involvement included those individuals who had no active involvement in militancy but were vulnerable. Out of the sample, only nine
individuals had been abducted by the Taliban militants whereas 58 individuals had joined the militants voluntarily. Nine individuals had no active involvement in militancy (See Table 3).

Table 3: Mode of Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abducted</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Involvement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The type of training the militants had received at camp was divided into five categories. 28 individuals had performed menial tasks such as cooking, washing dishes and clothes, cleaning rooms and collecting food. 16 individuals had received physical and weapon training which also included
suicide bombing training for some individuals. 13 militants had performed guard duties which involved patrolling various camps and stations of the Taliban with weapons. One militant was an informant for the Taliban. 18 individuals’ type of training remained unknown due to unavailable data (See Table 4).

Table 4: Type of Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menial Task</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Weapon Training</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard Duty</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reasons behind why the militants joined the Taliban were divided into five major categories which were then separated into subcategories. 17 individuals had been either impressed by the Taliban’s style, power and ideology or convinced by the messages they conveyed through F.M. Radio and sermons. The other 17 individuals were influenced by their social group into joining militancy. Nine of them were influenced by their peers, five were influenced by their community members and three were influenced by their relatives. 20 individuals joined militancy because of their families. 14 were influenced by their family members to join the militant organization whereas six had joined the militants because of discord with their families. Nine individuals had been abducted and were forced to join hands with the militants. Only 13 individuals had joined militancy because of influence from the teachings at their madrassahs (See Table 5).

**Table 5: Reasons for Joining Militant Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convinced/Impressed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of social group</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of peers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of community</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of relatives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family influence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discord with family</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abducted</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Madrassah</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of those individuals who were convinced by the Taliban’s message or impressed by their style, 17 individuals had joined the militants voluntarily. Out of those who were influenced by their social group to join the militants, 14 had voluntary involvement, two were abducted and only one was not actively involved. Out of those who joined the militants because of their families, 12 had joined voluntarily and eight were not actively involved. All 13 of those who had joined the militants under influence from their madrassah had done so voluntarily (See Table 6).

Table 6: Mode of Involvement in Relation to Reasons for Joining the Militants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Abducted</th>
<th>Voluntary</th>
<th>Passive Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convinced/Impressed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of social group</td>
<td>2 (11.8%)</td>
<td>14 (82.4%)</td>
<td>1 (5.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12 (60%)</td>
<td>8 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Madrassah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13 (100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of those individuals who were convinced by the Taliban’s message or impressed by their style, five had performed menial tasks, five had received physical or weapon training, five had performed guard duty, one was an informant and one individual’s type of training remained unknown. Out of those who were influenced by their social group into joining militancy, five had performed menial tasks, two had received physical or weapon training, five had performed guard duties and five individual’s type of training remained unknown. Out of those who joined militancy because of their families, five had performed menial tasks, six had received physical or
weapon training, one had performed guard duty and eight individual’s type of training remained unknown. Out of those who were abducted or joined because of fear, seven had performed menial tasks, one had performed guard duty and one individual’s type of training remained unknown. Out of those who had joined militancy under influence from their madrassah, six had performed menial tasks, three had received physical or weapon training, one had performed guard duty and three individual’s type of training remained unknown (See Table 7).

Table 7: Type of Training in Relation to Reasons for Joining Militancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Menial Task</th>
<th>Physical/Weapon Training</th>
<th>Guard Duty</th>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convinced/Impressed</td>
<td>5(29.4%)</td>
<td>5(29.4%)</td>
<td>5(29.4%)</td>
<td>1(5.9%)</td>
<td>1(5.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of social group</td>
<td>5(29.4%)</td>
<td>2(11.8%)</td>
<td>5(29.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5(29.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of family</td>
<td>5(25%)</td>
<td>6(30%)</td>
<td>1(5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8(40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abducted</td>
<td>7(77.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1(11.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1(11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Madrassah</td>
<td>6(46.2%)</td>
<td>3 (23.1%)</td>
<td>1(7.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3(23.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion, Data Analysis and Findings of the Study

Do Madrassahs Lead to Militancy?

The purpose of analysing this data was to assess the causes of militancy in young militants and to ascertain whether madrassah played a conclusive role in propagating terrorism. It was found that madrassahs were not significantly linked to militancy as only 13 (17.1%) individuals from our sample of 76 militants who had attended madrassah joined the Taliban.
because of influence from their respective madrassahs. Although all thirteen of these militants had joined militancy voluntarily, their involvement was not serious, and they were mostly involved in trivial menial tasks or guard duties. Only three individuals from these thirteen militants had serious involvement like weapon training. The study’s findings are consistent with previous research. For example, Fair\textsuperscript{50} surveyed 141 families of slain militants who had been waging jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir. She discovered that most of the slain militants had been recruited through their peer group, followed by religious gatherings and relatives. Madrassahs were the source of recruitment for only 13\% of militants and had the same percentage as public schools and it was also found that only 23\% of the slain militants had attended madrassah.\textsuperscript{51}

Furthermore, Bergen and Pandey\textsuperscript{52}, in their examination of the 79 terrorists involved in terrorist attacks, discovered that only 11\% of the 79 terrorists had attended madrassahs, most of them were university graduates, and two had doctorate degrees. Of those who were university graduates, 48\% attended universities in the West and 58\% received scientific degrees.\textsuperscript{53} Bergen and Pandey\textsuperscript{54} concluded that madrassah-going students lack the skills required to orchestrate terrorist attacks or lead terrorist groups.

The Family: An Important Agent of Recruitment

In our sample, the militants’ families played the most important role in promoting militancy, with 20 (26.3\%) individuals being influenced into

\textsuperscript{50} Fair, Who are Pakistan’s militants and their families?, 49.

\textsuperscript{51} Fair, Who are Pakistan’s militants and their families?, 54.

\textsuperscript{52} Bergen, 118.

\textsuperscript{53} Bergen, 118.

\textsuperscript{54} Bergen, 118.
joining the Taliban because of their families. This is consistent with previous research with Mariam Abou Zahab, an eminent academic researching militancy, positing the family to be an important contributing factor in militant recruitment. She discovered that most militants belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba refused to join the organization without their family’s consent.

57.9% of the participants in the present study had grown up without a father figure. This was shown in Botha’s study who interviewed 285 members of al-Shabaab, Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Lords’ Resistance Army (LRA) in Kenya and Uganda to assess the root causes of militant recruitment. 44% of ADF members, 38% of LRA members, 18% of al-Shabaab members and 31% of MRC members had grown up without the presence of their fathers. Botha posited the family to play an important role in an individual’s life, especially during the early years and considered the family to instil essential fundamental beliefs in its members. She also suggested that the parental bond is essential in formulating a child’s identity and that negative value formation has the capacity to carry far into adulthood. Absent fathers, in particular, can make youth vulnerable towards militancy.

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57 Botha, 6.
58 Botha, 6.
When Terrorism is Appealing

17 militants in our sample were either impressed by the Taliban’s style, power and ideology or convinced by the messages they conveyed through F.M. Radio and sermons. Aziz\textsuperscript{59} conducted a survey with district officials, community leaders and households to examine the causes of militancy in Swat. 68\% of participants agreed that the sermons transmitted through F.M. Radio garnered support for militancy.\textsuperscript{60} Aziz\textsuperscript{61} found that F.M. Radio successfully radicalized the population of Swat, causing a surge in donations for the Taliban. According to Botha\textsuperscript{62}, secondary socialization through the media does promote militancy. She noticed in her study that several vulnerable individuals adopted the views of al-Shabaab after hearing the terrorist group’s audio recordings.

Previous research explains why young militants are more likely to be impressed or convinced by terrorist activity. According to Botha\textsuperscript{63}, young individuals in their early and late teens are more influenceable and inclined towards radicalization and it is easier to draw the youth into nonconformist political actions because they are idealistically willing to initiate change and reform. Furthermore, some young individuals want to join a terrorist organization just for the thrill of it or because they seek adventure.\textsuperscript{64} Joining a terrorist group also instils feelings of belonging, security and pride in young members. It has also been suggested that potential terrorist recruits

\textsuperscript{60} Aziz, the main causes of the breakdown of governance and rise of militancy, 18.
\textsuperscript{61} Aziz, the main causes of the breakdown of governance and rise of militancy, 18.
\textsuperscript{62} Botha, 7.
\textsuperscript{63} Botha, 11.
are young individuals who exhibit low self-esteem and are willing to adopt new identities.\(^{65}\) Moreover, novelty-seeking and impulsivity are significant aspects of adolescent growth which can be linked to altering neural activity in young people.\(^{66}\)

**Influence of the Social Group**

The militants’ social groups were also important agents of recruitment, with nine (11.8\%) individuals being recruited through their peer group. Similar to this, Botha\(^{67}\) found in her study that friends introduced 66\% of MRC members, 38\% of al-Shabaab members, 35\% of ADF members and 31\% of LRA members to their militant organizations. Nine (11.8\%) militants in our sample were forced into militancy by the Taliban through either abduction or threats. According to the Office of the Special Representation of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict\(^{68}\), children are forced into militancy through various ways like abduction and physical abuse. In fact, abduction seems to be a prominent method of recruitment that is routinely used by terrorist organizations.

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\(^{67}\) Botha, 7.

Conclusion

The findings of this research revealed various causes of young militants’ recruitment in Swat by the Taliban. More importantly, it suggested how the youth militancy phenomenon cannot be generalized to one, often misunderstood, source like madrassahs. The results showed that madrassahs did not play a decisive role in militant recruitment in the current sample and there were more important agents of militant recruitment such as the family, the social group and the individual’s own inclination and predisposition. It is essential to study all facets of a phenomenon in greater depth before making assumptions about the role of certain institutions like religious seminaries. Where certain madrassahs have spread militancy, it is imperative to assess and evaluate the underlying ideologies that led them towards it. This will facilitate us in gaining a more thorough understanding of the madrassah-militancy connection and limit irrational generalizations which ultimately do more harm than good.

Policy Recommendations

The youth of Pakistan are the nation’s most important resource that militant organizations continue to hijack for malevolent purposes. It is important to understand the education system in vulnerable areas like Swat and reform deficits in the system accordingly. Students who join militant organizations are more likely to be school dropouts. They lack a sense of belonging and do not possess concrete goals. Militant organizations offer an alternative “in-group” for school dropouts to inculcate feelings of belonging. It is of utmost importance for schools to report dropouts to local authorities in vulnerable areas, especially if the students are absent after repeated
warnings. In addition to this, more technical training options should be made available in schools for children who are not academically oriented to decrease the dropout rate. Furthermore, schools should encourage activities such as sports’ clubs and matches to keep students grounded and interested. Undoubtedly, the majority of school dropouts are routinely seen loitering in their communities out of boredom which makes them susceptible to being recruited by militant commanders and groups. Offering healthier and more productive alternatives at schools can decrease this risk substantially and aid young people to become responsible citizens of Pakistan.

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Academic Failure to Define Terrorism: An Ontological Investigation

Dayyab Gillani

Abstract:

Attempts to define terrorism typically isolate the term from its historical roots and have a tendency to ignore its ontological basis. With the advent of terms such as new terrorism, this practice has become even more prevalent. A near total disregard of history and ontology has subsequently generated a discourse that views terrorism as an enigma or a mystery. Meanwhile the phenomenon of terrorism continues to resist any attempts of theorizing and conceptualizing. Since most contemporary efforts to define terrorism effectively divorce it from its past and fail to account for how the term came about, they have proven to be largely inadequate and mostly unhelpful. It is necessary therefore to put terrorism in a broader historical context, understand its usage through the ages, and bring to light its ontological roots. Such an analysis will not only allow us to understand the existing academic discord over the definition of terrorism but will also greatly contribute towards the general understanding of the term as well.

Key Words: Academic Failure, Terrorism, Ontology, Philosophy, Theorizing, Conceptualizing, Constructivism

1 This article has been adopted from my Masters thesis that was submitted at the University of Warwick. It has, however, not been published before.
Introduction

The definitional dilemma of terrorism has been lingering on political and academic fronts for decades now. With the global war on terror far from over, many desperately cling on to the hope of unravelling the mystery of terrorism. The numerous UN and academic deliberations have resolved little, if at all any confusion. Almost every book and article on the subject is scourged with the forecast that the concept of terrorism is indefinable. Policy makers and academicians alike are at odds with the term and with each other. Amidst all this, terrorism sadly has become an enigma that overshadows everything yet manages to stay as ambiguous as ever. Many see the definitional pursuit of terrorism as a quest for ‘holy grail’\(^2\), where so many eager souls set out to unravel the mystery, only to fail miserably in the end.

The literature on terrorism, despite being fairly extensive (with more than six thousand academic titles), is ‘less than impressive’.\(^3\) Moreover, the literature has done very little to enhance the general understanding of terrorism, let alone its definition.\(^4\) Under this pessimism eclipsing the phenomenon of terrorism, any endeavour to take up its definitional dilemma is indeed very daring.

Typically, attempts to define terrorism tend to view the concept within its contemporary context and largely ignore its historical and ontological roots. All such approaches argue that the phenomenon of terrorism has changed

\(^2\) See e.g. Levit (1986), Wardlaw (1989).
\(^4\) Ibid
drastically and therefore all past references are unimportant if not entirely irrelevant. This paper challenges this popular notion and argues that the nature of terrorism is essentially the same, and any definitional pursuit of terrorism must not ignore the term’s ontological roots.

Although it is commonly argued that terrorism is a unique form of violence but the tendency of academic literature to view terrorism in all other forms of violence never permitted this uniqueness to surface. Arguably if terrorism can be isolated from other forms of violence then its definition could potentially emerge. This paper will therefore emphasize the uniqueness of terrorism and will aim at isolating it from other forms of violence.

The problem of defining terrorism can never be resolved at the UN and for that matter any other political platform as long as it stays contested in the academic community. It is for this reason the central contention of this paper that the academic confusion over defining terrorism must be resolved. By means of taking up a historically grounded approach that traces the ontological roots of the term terrorism, this paper will demonstrate that it is indeed possible to resolve the problem at least on the academic front.

This paper relies primarily on the constructivist school of thought to analyze the academic failure thus far. For analytical purposes, the paper is divided into three parts. The first part traces the ontological roots of the term terrorism, what the word implies and how and why it was created in the first place. It provides a brief history of the usage of the term and sets the stage

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5 See e.g. Laqueur (1987, 2004).
for the discussion to follow. The second part highlights the academic failures by pointing out nine main reasons why academic scholars have repeatedly failed to understand and define terrorism. The final part of the paper includes a detailed and critical analysis of the definitional dilemma and proposes solutions for all major academic discords in light of the ontological roots of the term terrorism.

Part 1

The Ontology of Terrorism

In the study of social sciences, ontology refers to the way the social world is seen and the nature and reality of the social phenomenon.\(^6\) Constructivism, an ontological outlook, suggests that the social phenomenon (making up the social world) is only real in the sense that it is a constructed idea, which is continually being reviewed and reworked by the social actors (Human Beings). Interpretivism, which can also be viewed as an epistemological extension of constructivism, emphasizes that the social phenomenon and the world are social constructions; therefore, the subject matter of social sciences is fundamentally different from that of natural sciences. This approach is at odds with the other ontological position, objectivism. Objectivism, with its epistemological extension, Positivism, holds that social phenomena should be treated as external facts that are beyond the reach of influence and interference. It therefore

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advocates the application of natural science methods in the study of social realities.\textsuperscript{7}

Both sides of the spectrum have respectively approached the phenomenon of terrorism. A deep study of terrorism reveals that it has never been ‘the exclusive province of scholars or the preserve of a single academic discipline’.\textsuperscript{8} Despite the fact that terrorism has been studied and analyzed by various disciplines, it does however tend to draw heavily on the constructivist side of the argument. A scientific approach to terrorism, based on the positivist practices, has been fairly limited. Furthermore, a positivist and scientific approach to terrorism has proven to be a futile exercise and has yielded very little, if at all, any fruitful results.\textsuperscript{9} This does not, however, go on to say that the interpretivists have had any substantial success. In order to understand the ontological roots of the term terrorism and the definitional challenges it poses, it is important first to trace its origin and usage through history.

\textit{Origins of Terrorism}

The word “terror” comes from the Latin word “\textit{terrere}” which means ‘to frighten’. It entered the European languages through French and was first used in English in 1528.\textsuperscript{10} The word terrorism was first coined to describe the acts of ‘\textit{régime de la terreur}’ between 1793 and 1794 during post-

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{8}] Martha Crenshaw, \textit{Explaining Terrorism, Causes, Processes and Consequences} (London: Routledge, 2011), 1.
  \item[\textsuperscript{9}] See e. g. Laqueur (2004).
\end{itemize}
revolutionary France.\(^\text{11}\) This ‘regime of terror’, under Robespierre, the most influential personality of the movement,\(^\text{12}\) reached ‘terrible heights of savagery’ and executed around forty thousand people.\(^\text{13}\) The purpose behind the acts of violence was to capture and execute government conspirators and to create a general ‘atmosphere of fear’ for instituting strict obedience to the revolutionary government among common citizens. The word terrorism, thus, came into existence to refer to actions committed by the state. This first usage of the term is in stark contrast with latter usages, where the word terrorism was mainly used for ‘non-state actors’.\(^\text{14}\)

It is often argued in academic discourse that even though the word terrorism was coined at the turn of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century, the phenomenon, in itself, was not new.\(^\text{15}\) Historians of terrorism typically trace the phenomenon back to ‘Zealots’ and ‘Assassins’. The Zealots were a Jewish religious sect that was active in the Palestine region during the first century.\(^\text{16}\) They directed their violence against the Roman invaders and even against members of their own Jewish community (whom they considered traitors) by resorting to a ‘strategy of terror-based psychology’.\(^\text{17}\) The Assassins, on the other hand, belonged to the Ismaili sect and targeted various religious and political opponents, particularly the ruling Seljuqs during the eleventh and thirteenth century.\(^\text{18}\) Although the targets of Assassins were mostly high-profile political opponents, they were, just like their predecessor Zealots, able to


\(^{12}\) Ibid.


\(^{14}\) See e.g. Laqueur (1987), Chaliand and Blin (2007).

\(^{15}\) See e.g. Chaliand and Blin (2007).

\(^{16}\) Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: theory*,..., 18.

\(^{17}\) Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism From*,..., 58.

\(^{18}\) Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: theory*,..., 18.
create a general environment of fear. Both the Zealots and the Assassins, therefore, in a sense, were non-state actors that lacked popular support and tried to create an atmosphere of fear to coerce the state into conceding to their demands.

This study will briefly discuss the history of usage of the term terrorism after the French reign of terror.

**Brief History of Usage**

Following the French reign of terror, the term terrorism was next used for Russian revolutionaries and for the various violent anarchist movements that started in Europe and America in the late nineteenth century.\(^{19}\) ‘*Narondnaya Volya*’, which operated in Russia during the later half of the 19\(^{th}\) century, is often credited for being the most important of all historical terrorist movements.\(^{20}\) Historians often draw strong parallels between the revolutionary Russian movements (to overthrow the Tsarist regime) and the contemporary terrorist movements.\(^{21}\)

The Russian revolutionaries enjoyed substantial popular support mainly because of widespread dissent against the political elites, and also because the revolutionaries usually limited their targets to political elites.\(^{22}\) The same however was not true for the Anarchists, who were more random in their target selection and rigid in their ideology. This movement believed that all states were corrupt and exploitative and the only way to cleanse the

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\(^{19}\) Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism From…*


\(^{21}\) See e.g. Wardlaw (1989), Crenshaw (2011).

society was through violence and bloodshed. Twenty-three Both the Anarchist and the Russian revolutionary movements represented violence from below directed against the status quo (as opposed to the French regime of terror, which was aimed at maintaining the status quo).

The term terrorism was next applied to colonial violence that erupted after the Second World War. This era is particularly important in the recent history of terrorism as during this period, the words ‘terrorist’ and ‘terrorism’ became everyday phrases and entered into common usage. The colonial violence was mainly triggered by the Western ideals of ‘nationalism’ and ‘self-determination’. Soon organizations such as, FLN, PLO, IRA etc. emerged to challenge the status quo and launched violent campaigns against their respective governments. Twenty-four It was around this time that the term terrorism somewhat lost its meaning as the line between terrorism and freedom movements grew thinner and one man’s terrorist became another’s freedom fighter.

Even though remnants of colonial violence are still present today in the form of various ‘separatist’ and ‘irredentist’ movements, in the last decade of the 20th century, the world ushered into yet another age of terrorism. After the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the world was soon engulfed into a new ordeal that was largely deemed novel and unprecedented. This novelty was largely associated with Islamic radicalization and fundamentalism. Twenty-five At the dawn of the 21st Century, the events of September 11 particularly
transformed terrorism into the most widely known phenomenon of contemporary times.\footnote{See e.g. Laqueur (2004), Hoffman (2006), O’kane (2007).}

\textit{The Social Construction and ‘ism’ of Terrorism}

An analysis of the origin of terrorism reveals how the word has been used to describe different acts of violence through the course of history. Various parallels can be drawn between these different acts of violence. First and foremost, all these movements, from Zealots to modern day acts of terrorism, were \textit{politically} motivated. Secondly, the perpetrators of all these acts intended to generate an \textit{atmosphere of fear} to coerce either the government or the public into changing or maintaining the status quo.

The historical evidence also surprisingly reveals that the term terrorism was first used (during the French reign of terror) to describe ‘violence from above’\footnote{Adrian Guelke, \textit{The new age of terrorism and the international political system} (IB Tauris, 2008).} \textit{i.e.} state terrorism. In all the major developments that followed, the word terrorism was mainly reserved for ‘violence from below’.\footnote{Although in the contemporary literature, the term terrorism is often frequently used to describe the actions of various past states, such as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia (e.g. see Laqueur, 1987, 2004; Hoffman, 2006; Crenshaw, 2011). However, such usage of the term came into existence only recently, after the collapse of the regimes.} Even the historical references to Zealots and Assassins, which pre-date the French reign of terror, primarily refer to violence from below. Unlike how terrorism is commonly understood today, the French reign of terror was an ‘instrument of governance’\footnote{Hoffman, \textit{Inside Terrorism}, 3.} not revolutions.
‘The ‘ism’ of terrorism clearly implies the existence of an underlying philosophy’. It is this underlying philosophy that transforms the simple term ‘terror’ into a monstrous phenomenon that overshadows the modern global political agenda.

The word terror alone merely means ‘to frighten’ or a ‘state of chronic fear’, however, when it is attached with ‘ism’, it takes a whole new dimension. Although some authors believe that the main problem in defining terrorism lies in the ‘subjective nature of terror’ since every individual has a different threshold of fear. And because of this ‘complex interplay of subjective forces’ and different individual responses, it is fairly difficult to define terror and eventually terrorism.

Although it is true that the term terror is quite subjective, but so is almost every term in the social world. Happiness, for instance, is a relatively subjective term, and can have different meanings for different people. Yet, it does not mean that we do not know what happiness entails. Likewise, irrespective of what subjected meanings are attributed to terror, its underlying meaning of ‘fear’ will always entail.

The various historical stages of terrorism described above do bring out the ‘ism’ of terrorism and reflect an underlying common philosophy. As pointed earlier, all the different historical stages of terrorism share two distinguishing features; firstly, underlying political ideology and secondly generation of fear. These two features bring out the philosophy of terrorism.

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30 Guelke, *The new age of terrorism and the international political system*, 16.
The ‘ism’ of terrorism can helpfully be explained by ‘propaganda by deed’, a term coined by a French activist, Paul Brousse. Although this term first appeared during the later half of the 19th century, it does give an insight into all terrorist acts. Paul Brousse argued that the propaganda disseminated through newspapers and pamphlets was very less effective. Majority of the masses were illiterate and too busy with their lives to pay attention to this mode of propaganda. Moreover, such a medium of communication could be countered and disoriented by the ruling elites. The message of the revolutionaries would therefore never reach its intended audience and will be lost forever. What was necessary therefore was a practical demonstration, which would catch immediate attention of the masses and awaken their conscience. Through propaganda by deed, the revolutionaries hoped that their violent actions would ‘transform them from a small conspiratorial club into massive revolutionary movement’.

Propaganda by deed, thus, brings out an important element of the philosophy of terrorism. It provides an insight into the motivation that drives the terrorists. It gives a general explanation for the seemingly irrational and meaningless terrorist violence. Although this phrase is used primarily for violence from below, as different agitation groups try to change/challenge the status quo, the philosophy behind the phrase can also be applied to state actors that aim at maintaining the status quo.

36 Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism From…*, 33.
Propaganda by deed primarily entails utilizing violence for catching the attention of the masses and thereby mobilizing them accordingly. In the case of state terrorism, the state wants to maintain status quo and utilizes violence to propagate its ideals, when other modes of propaganda prove ineffective. In this context, the French reign of terror provides a good example. Under Robespierre, the revolutionary council initiated a series of violent campaigns to protect the revolutionary ideals and in extension retaining the existing status quo of the government.

Throughout the course of history and even in the contemporary age, the word terrorism has readily been used to describe the actions of non-state actors. On the other hand, there is a slight reluctance to use it for describing state actions even though state terrorism is more dangerous and causes more casualties. As May points out that the ‘reign of terror’ (state terrorism) is more important than ‘siege of terror’ (non-state terrorism), but it is the later that actually grasps our attention. One of the reasons for this lack of attention to state terrorism can be traced back to the process of ‘constructing social realities’.

The concept of state, since its inception, represents an official authority, designated with the responsibility of maintaining law and order within its territories. On the other hand, the non-state terrorist actors are often portrayed as lunatics with no moral considerations. The international system also gives the states the right of legitimate violence within their own territories for maintaining law and order.

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38 Wardlaw, Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics..., 11.
39 Guelke, The new age of terrorism and the international political system.
Thus, the way in which the image of a state and individual is constructed has important bearing on the utilization of the word terrorism. Moreover, even though state terrorism may be more dangerous and atrocious, the public, in most instances are aware of the activities that they need to avoid in order to escape state persecution. On the other hand, non-state terrorism ‘bears no necessary relation to one’s own behavior’. ⁴⁰

Nevertheless, whether state or non-state the historical usage of the word terrorism suggests that the phenomenon has been socially constructed to account for *unpopular politically motivated acts of violence that generated an atmosphere of fear* (to challenge or maintain status quo). This reality, vivid in all state and non-state terrorist actions, reflects the ontological basis of the term terrorism, where people witnessed systematic acts of violence (or the threat of it) that were politically motivated and resulted in creating a general atmosphere of fear. Thus, irrespective of whether the terrorist violence is instigated by state or non-state actors it will always have these core elements, which outline the ontological basis of terrorism.

Figure 1.0

The Ontology of Terrorism

- Act of Violence
  - Politically Motivated
    - Generation of an Atmosphere of Fear
      - Lack of Popular Support
        - Deemed Illegitimate and Immoral
          - Maintain Status Quo (State Actor)
          - Change/Challenge Status Quo (Non-State Actor)

Terrorism
Part 2

The Academic Failure

The existing literature on terrorism is fairly extensive, even though ‘more than 85 percent of all books on the topic have been written since 1968’.\(^{41}\) The subject of terrorism has not been the sole domain of political science and international relations; on the contrary, scholars from different academic fields such as sociology, history, psychology, criminology etc have contributed to it. Despite these diverse contributions, the vast volume of terrorism literature is less than impressive and lacks any coherent thought.\(^{42}\)

This failure owes largely to the discord among academic scholars. Terrorism is one area of social studies where the academic dissension is most pronounced. A complete list of this dissension will be too long and exhausting. However, some of the most contentious issues that have seriously impaired the understanding and definitional development of terrorism are outlined below. They will be discussed and scrutinized thoroughly in the final part of the paper.

**Definable or Indefinable?**

The Academic literature of terrorism at its very base can be divided into two distinct camps. There are those who believe that terrorism can be defined and a pursuit of a universal definition of terrorism should never be abandoned.\(^{43}\) This camp holds that without a universal definition of

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\(^{41}\) Schmid and Jongman, *Political Terrorism*, 177.

\(^{42}\) Ibid, 177-185.

terrorism, the term will have no boundaries and will be misused, which can have severe consequences. In the current context of ‘global war against terrorism’, this side argues that a definition of terrorism is essential so that people can know what they are fighting and its absence is likely to encourage future acts of terrorism.44

On the other hand, the other camp holds that a universal definition of terrorism is not possible and any such pursuit is a futile and wasteful exercise. 45 This side holds that even if there is no general definition of terrorism, it should not discourage academic scholars from studying the subject. They believe that instead of trying to define terrorism, the academics and the policy makers should focus on countering the threat of terrorism. 46 They mainly argue that even though terrorism cannot be defined, it can still be identified and hence countered accordingly.

This disagreement at the very basic level casts a dark shadow on the prospects of any definitional development.

‘Terror’ and Terrorism

The academic literature has sadly not been able to formally distinguish between terror and terrorism. Although it is frequently said that terror simply means ‘a state of anxiety or fear’ (as already pointed out in the first chapter), many authors have not been able to isolate terror from terrorism.

44 Alex Schmid. 'Terrorism -The Definitional Problem,' Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law 36, no. 2 & 3 (2004).
46 See e.g. Laqueur (1987, 2004).
Most of the authors frequently ‘use the terms interchangeably’, which seriously hampers the cause of definitional development.47

The word terror itself is a very generic term and when used on its own, can imply a range of different things. Certain criminals or psychopaths may employ terror tactics for personal gains or satisfaction48 and in the absence of proper distinction between terror and terrorism, it will be difficult to label their acts appropriately.

Some scholars emphasize that for an act of terror to be terrorism, it needs to be politically motivated.49 Likewise, other scholars argue that terrorism, at its most basic level, is a ‘system of terror’.50 However, a universal academic acknowledgement of this distinction is still non-existent and the definitional pursuit of terrorism can never be successful without academic consensus on this issue.

The Moral Problem

Most of the academic literature emphasizes that terrorism is a ‘pejorative term’.51 Hoffman states that almost everyone agrees on the pejorative notion of the term terrorism.52 Most of the scholars consider this as a stumbling block to understating and defining terrorism. There are, however,
few scholars who believe that the term terrorism is a particular type of activity that does not necessarily imply any opinion or judgment.\textsuperscript{53}

The pejorative connotation of terrorism has its roots in the moral underpinning of terrorism. Wardlaw believes that the major obstacle in the study of terrorism is that, ‘at base, terrorism is a moral problem’.\textsuperscript{54} Jenkins similarly states that the ‘Use of the term (terrorism) implies a moral judgment’.\textsuperscript{55} This moral judgment brings out the fact that the term terrorism is an emotionally charged word that carries a negative connotation, which when used, gives a moral verdict.\textsuperscript{56} The use of the term terrorism thus tends to delegitimize the rationale it serves.

It is overly emphasized in academic literature that this moral underpinning, which reduces terrorism to a pejorative term, is wrong and prevents the scholars from arriving at a ‘neutral definition’ of terrorism.\textsuperscript{57} Chaliand and Blin, for instance point out that ‘terrorism may be correctly described as an illegal form of warfare, but characterizing it as an immoral one is meaningless’.\textsuperscript{58} It is also argued that this moral dilemma allows the term to be used for relative gains, as Jenkins points out, ‘if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint’.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{53} See e.g. Neumann (2009): 6.
\textsuperscript{54} Wardlaw, \textit{Political Terrorism: Theory…}, 4.
\textsuperscript{55} Brian Michael Jenkins, \textit{The Study of Terrorism: Definitional Problems} (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1980), 63.
\textsuperscript{56} See e.g. Guelke (2009), Hoffman (2006).
\textsuperscript{57} Crenshaw, \textit{Explaining Terrorism, Causes…}
\textsuperscript{58} Chaliand and Blin, \textit{The History of Terrorism From…}, 30.
\textsuperscript{59} Jenkins, \textit{The Study of Terrorism…}, 63.
In the light of all this, most of the scholars insist that the proper study and understanding of terrorism ‘should seek to explain the phenomenon, not justify it’.\textsuperscript{60} Despite the fact that so many authors insist on observing ‘value-neutrality’ in studying terrorism, the problem remains, largely, unresolved.

\textbf{Justified or Unjustified?}

The roots of justification of terrorism are often sought in ‘identification’. Wardlaw points out that if one identifies with the perpetrator of a terrorist act, then that person will see the act as legitimate and if the identification is with the victim of the attack, then the act will be viewed as illegitimate.\textsuperscript{61} It is also argued that terrorism appears more legitimate if the ends and not the means are emphasized.\textsuperscript{62} Moreover, many scholars tend to view terrorism in the context of freedom movements (against foreign occupation and dictatorial regimes) as legitimate, provided no peaceful means to protest are available.\textsuperscript{63}

This approach of seeing terrorism as legitimate in special circumstances, combined with the negative connotation of ‘direct condemnation’ the word carries, complicates the meaning of terrorism. It also appears to be contradictory with the academic claims that terrorism is a pejorative term (which according to Hoffman, is something everyone agrees upon). For if the academic community agrees that terrorism is a pejorative term, which when used implies some wrongdoing, then how can it also be justified?

\textsuperscript{60} Wardlaw, \textit{Political Terrorism: Theory...}, 5.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 7-8.
\textsuperscript{62} See e.g. Guelke (2009).
\textsuperscript{63} See e.g. Chaliand and Blin (2007), Crenshaw (2011).
Inherently Political?

Considering the use of the term terrorism since its inception and its underlying political ideology, it is somewhat surprising that there is confusion on whether terrorism is inherently political or not.

Although most of the academic community emphasizes the importance of underlying political ideology, the classification of various other forms of non-political terrorism raises questions. The fact that some of the leading academic books on terrorism are titled Political Terrorism implies that there are other forms of terrorism that are not politically motivated. Leading academic scholars in the field, such as Paul Wilkinson, Grant Wardlaw and Alex, P. Schmid, have all titled their books Political Terrorism.65

Repetition and Isolated Acts

Most of the existing definitions on terrorism emphasize the importance of ‘repetition’ of terrorist acts of violence. Schmid’s popular definition, for instance, points out that ‘terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action’.66 Although such a claim is backed by most of the academic literature, there is still a question mark over isolated and individual acts of violence, which are often referred to as acts of terrorism.

The shooting at a summer camp and bombing of a civilian and government building in Norway by a Norwegian national, Anders Breivik in 2011, provides a good example.67 After the attacker was taken into custody, it was

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65 See bibliography for full details.
66 Schmid and Jongman, Political Terrorism, 28.
67 Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14260205
revealed that he had no organizational ties and had acted alone.\textsuperscript{68} Thus, assuming that he acted alone and had no organizational ties implies that the attacks will not be repeated. However, many would still regard this as a terrorist attack. Thus, for better understanding and definitional development of terrorism, more clarity on isolated acts of violence is required, which unfortunately is not clearly provided by academic literature.

\textbf{Method or a Social Phenomenon}

Another important element that divides the academic community is, whether terrorism should be treated as a method or a social phenomenon. The phrase, terrorism is ‘extremism of ends and not means’ is emphasized in almost the entire academic literature.\textsuperscript{69} It is primarily the act of violence itself that makes terrorism what it is, if the act is removed, there will perhaps be nothing left to discuss. Crenshaw, for instance, argues that for terrorism, ‘the violent act is essential’.\textsuperscript{70}

This vital importance of the act is the reason why so many authors tend to see terrorism purely as a method or a tactic, which can be employed by anyone. Moreover, some scholars, for the sake of definitional convenience, approach terrorism purely as a method of violence. Neumann, for instance, avoids the definitional dilemma of terrorism by treating it as a method of violence.\textsuperscript{71} Crenshaw insists that ‘the method, not the identity or ideology of the user, determines whether or not an action can be defined as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} The perpetrator’s own statement clearly suggests that he acted alone. Available at: http://articles.cnn.com/2011-07-24/world/norway.manifesto.highlights_1_muslims-marxists-gunshot-wounds?_s=PM:WORLD
\item \textsuperscript{69} See e.g. Guelke (2009), Laqueur (1987), Hoffman (2006).
\item \textsuperscript{70} Crenshaw, \textit{Explaining Terrorism, Causes...}, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Peter Neumann, \textit{Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries} (ICSR, King’s College London, 2010), 8.
\end{itemize}
terrorism’. This tendency to view terrorism, more as a method than as a social phenomenon, creates problems in defining terrorism as the term could virtually be applied to anything and everything.

The experts that see terrorism as a phenomenon, with an underlying ideology and philosophy and not merely a tactic, although the distinction is not always clear. The literature on terrorism in this regard is fairly puzzling with some authors using terrorism as a method or a tool (which can virtually be used by anyone) and others seeing it as a social phenomenon and treating it accordingly.

**Terrorism and other Forms of Violence**

Another area where the scholars have failed repeatedly is in ‘distinguishing terrorism from other forms of violence.’ It is argued throughout the literature that terrorism is a unique form of violence, yet this uniqueness has never surfaced comprehensively.

The fact that many authors tend to treat terrorism as a method, allows them to view terrorism in the context all other forms of violence, such as, insurgency, guerilla fighting, communal violence, wars and even freedom movements. Viewing terrorism in the context of other forms of violence has, to a great extent, diminished the difference between terrorism and different kinds of violence. Although many authors have tried to isolate terrorism from other forms of violence, the distinction is often

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72 Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism, Causes...*, 206.
73 See e.g. Guelke (2009), Schmid (2011).
75 The works of Bruce Hoffman, Adrian Guelke and Alex P. Schmid are particularly notable in this context. See e.g. Fletcher (2006), Schmid (2008, 2011).
contradictory and unclear. This thin line between terrorism and other forms of violence (and the academic inability to elucidate on the matter) is a serious obstacle in the way of definitional development.

**Old vs. New Terrorism**

Lastly, there is a stark disagreement on whether modern day terrorism is new/different from that of the past. Many leading academics insist that modern day terrorism is unique and different. Laqueur, for instance, points out that the character of terrorism has ‘changed over time and from country to country’.

He argues that old terrorism was discriminate, had a well-defined command and control structure and also enjoyed some popular support. On the other hand, new terrorism is increasingly indiscriminate, inconsiderate and has no proper hierarchal structure. Wardlaw observes that there is now a ‘significant departure from the tradition’. Hoffman also believes that the ‘meaning and usage of the word have changed over time’.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are scholars that challenge this notion of ‘newness’ and argue that although there are some visible changes in the character of terrorism, it is, however, not necessarily new. Neumann, for instance, argues that instead of considering modern day terrorism as something new, it should be seen within the context of ‘evolutionary change’. Spencer also believes that the phenomenon of terrorism, despite some changes, is essentially the same. He points out that most of the changes observed in modern day terrorism owe largely to technological

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76 Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism*..., 22.
77 See e.g. Laqueur (1987, 2004).
78 Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory*...
changes and advancements.\textsuperscript{81} Spencer regards the difference between old and new terrorism as artificial and to some extent dangerous as this difference could be ‘used to justify a whole new set of rushed restrictive governmental counter-measures’.\textsuperscript{82}

This academic conflict over ‘old-new terrorism’ is a serious impediment in the understanding of terrorism as one side believes that modern-day terrorism is essentially different and should, therefore, be isolated from the past and studied in its own context. On the other hand, others consider modern terrorism as a continuation of past and advocate its study within the historical context. These divergent positions seriously hamper the cause of definitional development and understanding of terrorism.

\textbf{Part 3}

\textbf{The Way Forward}

In light of the identified academic failures, I will now highlight some key factors that can help in overcoming these obstacles.

It has been pointed out earlier that the moral dilemma of terrorism, reduces the phenomenon to a pejorative term, which implies direct condemnation and prevents scholars from formulating a neutral definition.\textsuperscript{83} This obsession of academic scholars with formulating a neutral and value-free definition of terrorism is rooted in the positivist school of thought, which

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{83} See e.g. Guelke (2009), Crenshaw (2011).
(as discussed in the first chapter) emphasizes on inducing objectivity in the social world.84

Looking at the ontological roots of the term terrorism, the word was initially coined to describe illegitimate actions of the post-revolutionary French government. The word was clearly produced to describe some ‘wrongdoing’ in the social world. The term therefore carries a negative connotation as it was created to account for a social occurrence that was deemed wrong by the observers.

Drawing on the constructivist approach, it can be safely argued that viewing terrorism objectively is not possible. Since the term was initially constructed to account for some wrongdoing in the society, it will therefore always carry a flavour of negativity. The term terrorism in other words can never be isolated from the ‘emotional baggage’ it carries. This does not, however, mean that the academic scholars have to be biased. It merely implies that the term terrorism has been created in such a way that it cannot be isolated from the moral judgment it carries. Hence, when used and generally accepted, it will always give a verdict of condemnation on the act under question. This verity is often neglected by academic scholars, who in their attempt to view the phenomenon objectively, ignore the term’s ontological roots.

Once it is generally agreed that the term terrorism carries a negative connotation and when used, will give a judgment of disapproval and condemnation, it will automatically solve the problem of legitimacy. As

84 See e.g. Bryman (2008), Mathews and Ross (2010).
pointed out earlier, there is disagreement over whether terrorism can be justified in special circumstances. The literature, in this context, often points to the Russian revolutionaries and colonial struggles and it is argued that terrorism done in the context of legitimate civil wars should not be treated as illegitimate.

Walter Laqueur, one of the most cited authors on terrorism, is highly respected in the academic circles because ‘he places terrorism in an historical context’. Laqueur mainly argues that defining terrorism is a futile exercise because it can have many different meanings and its nature and character has completely changed over time.

To support his position, Laqueur compares the Russian revolutionaries to modern day terrorists. He points out that the Russian terrorists of the nineteenth century were ‘selfless young people without personal ambition they were sad that they had to kill, and they went out of their way not to hurt innocent people Given the selfless character of the terrorist movement, that it had wide sympathies in Russian society and frequently received help was not surprising,’ this characteristic of the Russian revolutionaries, is also pointed out by others. Wardlaw, for instance, states that ‘Such niceties is rarely observed today’. Laqueur also draws parallels with modern day terrorism, which he believes is driven by ‘religious fanaticism’ that aims at maximum destruction and has no regard for human life.

85 Schmid and Jongman, Political Terrorism, 181.
86 See e.g. Laqueur (1987, 2004).
87 Wardlaw, Political Terrorism: Theory..., 30.
88 Laqueur, No End to War: Terrorism..., 24.
The argument sounds convincing and has been emphasized by many other academics as well. An analysis of the current understanding of terrorism in the light of its ontology would, however, reveal serious loopholes in this comparison. It is commonly argued in the literature that if acts of violence are committed to get freedom from an authoritarian regime, provided no peaceful means are available, then the actions are legitimate. Furthermore, it is almost universally agreed in the discourse that terrorism generates fear in the society, whereas in case of the Russian revolutionaries, Laqueur emphasizes that the terrorists had popular support and sympathies of the people. It may be true that at the initial stage of the revolution the actions of the revolutionaries generated fear, but eventually, this initial fear transformed into applause and the condemnation of actions changed into popular support. Thus, if the actions of the revolutionaries were for self-determination, had popular support and did not generate fear in the society, is it really appropriate to label their actions as terrorism?

It becomes obvious that such actions were not acts of terrorism and it is wrong to say otherwise. This particular historical reference is misleading and therefore needs to be corrected. The reference to Russian revolutionaries as terrorists and all other such movements only creates confusion and undermines all normative efforts to understand and define terrorism. Thus, the argument that terrorism in the context of national liberations and popular freedom movements should be considered as legitimate is inherently flawed, since the acts of violence committed during such movements is not terrorism. The 2011 national liberation movement in Libya provides a good example. The rebels, with the support of NATO,

89 All such movements that have popular support of their society and their actions generate public applause and approval rather than fear.
were engaged in an arms struggle against the country’s former dictator Muammar Gaddafi. There were incidents when civilians accidentally became victims of rebel and NATO attacks. It is neither right nor is there any likelihood that anyone (politicians or academics) would refer to these incidents as acts of terrorism.

Although it is true that certain national liberations can eventually grow into terrorism. It is, however, important to see how and when such transitions can happen. When the actions of national movements start generating fear in the public and as a result begin losing popular support of their society, then their actions can be termed as acts of terrorism. For instance, if the rebels in Libya had started losing popular support of the Libyan people (and consequently also the support of other countries) and their actions had begun generating fear in the Libyan population then their actions would indeed be considered as acts of terrorism. Likewise, certain terrorist movements can transform into other forms of violence such as insurgency and freedom movements. This happens when the actions of the perpetrators start generating applause rather than fear and they succeed in gaining popular support (as it happened in case of the Russian revolutionaries).

Partly, this problem is also because of treating terrorism as a method rather than a social phenomenon. As pointed earlier, the tendency of scholars to see terrorism as a method rather than a social occurrence, allows them to view terrorism in all other forms of violence. This practice is also one of the reasons why terrorism is often isolated from its underlying political

90 Available at:
http://english.aljazeera.net/video/africa/2011/06/201161920139227219.html
ideology, which not only contradicts the term’s ontological roots but also removes the obvious difference between terrorism and criminal violence.

Although the academic literature brings out certain distinct characteristics of terrorism as a unique form of violence, such as the element of surprise, random selection of targets from a target population (where the perpetrators want to generate a message), underlying political ideology, theatrical aspect (psychological impact of the act beyond the immediate victims), repetition and most importantly generation of fear. However the tendency to treat terrorism as a method renders such distinction inadequate if not entirely useless, since it eliminates all boundaries and the word becomes a common denominator for all sorts of activities. Furthermore, these distinctions are also not entirely accurate, because they are missing two essential ingredients of terrorism, illegitimacy and lack of popular support.

For an act to qualify as terrorism, it must first be deemed illegitimate, has to be politically motivated and no justification should be sought for it. In the contemporary context, the acts which are deemed illegitimate, are politically motivated and lack popular support (combined with the capacity to generate fear in the society), can easily be labelled terrorist acts. The politically motivated 9/11 attacks, for instance, were unanimously deemed illegitimate and did not have popular support (and were also able to generate fear in the society). Therefore, no one had any trouble labelling them as terrorist attacks (insofar as the academic community is concerned). Terrorism, therefore, must be seen as a ‘social phenomenon’ rather than a tactic, so that it can readily be isolated from other forms of violence.

91 See e.g. Fletcher (2006).
One further contradiction that needs attention is the characteristic of repetition of acts of violence, which are often considered fundamental to terrorism. Certain individual and isolated acts of violence are also referred to as acts of terrorism. It is mainly because these isolated acts of violence are firstly, politically motivated, generate fear, are deemed illegitimate and have no popular support. However, there is one element missing which if identified will complete the equation. That element is the ‘threat of future violence.’ Although the element of threat of violence is emphasized in academic literature, Crenshaw for instance points out that ‘the single act of terrorism within its context is a combination of use and threat’.\textsuperscript{92} However, there appears to be more emphasis on repetition of violence, rather than the threat of violence.

If an isolated act of violence is successful in generating a threat of future violence (provided all other elements are kept constant), it will be labelled as a terrorist attack. This is the reason why the Norwegian massacre (discussed earlier) can be referred to as a terrorist attack. The attack was politically motivated, generated fear, was deemed illegitimate and invited widespread disapproval. Furthermore, the attacker was motivated by an extreme right-wing political ideology and called upon likeminded people to follow suit, which consequently generated a threat of possible future attacks. Hence, it is not the act of repetition itself, but the mere threat of it that makes terrorism what it is.

Lastly, the dilemma of old and new terrorism must be resolved. Terrorism cannot be isolated from its ontological roots. There are obvious changes in

\textsuperscript{92} Crenshaw, \textit{Explaining Terrorism, Causes...}, 23.
the character of terrorism, but these are either cosmetic or due to technological advances and international political changes. Any change observed in the nature of terrorism must not be isolated from its historical and ontological roots. The essential characteristics of terrorism (inherently political, generation of fear, public disapproval and condemnation, threat of repetition of violence) essentially remain the same.

The academic community must, therefore, shun this attitude (which I would call ‘Laqueur’s fallacy’) so that terrorism can, once and for all, be isolated from other forms of violence. They should particularly refrain from seeking justification for certain acts of terrorism and accept (through the ontological roots of terrorism) that it cannot be justified. If terrorism was indeed justified, then why would so many scholars, including Laqueur, trace it back to Zealots and Assassins, who were clearly engaged in unpopular and immoral activities? Why do they not instead seek historical inferences from various legitimate freedom movements before the French revolution?

The answer is obvious, legitimate freedom movements cannot be seen as terrorism and because despite contrary claims, terrorism can only be applied to actions that are deemed morally wrong and lack popular support. Thus, some of the historical inferences we draw are essentially flawed, not to mention gravely misleading, and therefore must be corrected. At the same time, terrorism must not be isolated from its ontology, the roots of which can be traced back to the French revolution from where the word originated.

In the light of the discussion above and the ontological roots of terrorism, I propose the following definition of terrorism,

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93 See e.g. Laqueur (1987), Chaliand and Blin (2007).
Politically motivated acts of violence, lacking popular support, employed to instil fear in a target population through the threat of violence for maintaining or changing the status-quo.94

Conclusion

The starting point for finding solutions to the definitional problem can be sought at the ontological level. The ontological roots of the term terrorism reveal inherent immorality and illegitimacy as the word was first constructed to describe a social wrongdoing. The term terrorism, therefore, can never be a neutral term and whenever used, will give a moral judgment on the act under question. Terrorism, because of its ontological roots, can never be isolated from the emotional baggage it carries and will always carry the weight of illegitimacy.

Most of the academic efforts to define and understand terrorism, isolate the phenomenon from its ontological and historical roots, which allows them to seek justification for something that was constructed to describe illegitimate, immoral and unjustified acts. This has led to confusion and contradiction as many in their attempt to view the justified side of terrorism, draw on various historical and recent freedom struggles- an inherently flawed approach that ignores the ontological roots of terrorism. Separating terrorism from its roots also allows the academics to ignore the ‘ism’ (underlying philosophy) of terrorism and view it as a method, which eliminates any and all distinction between terrorism and other forms of violence.

94 The definition does not include words such as, immoral or unjustified because use of these words would require a full elaboration. Moreover, lack of popular support and generation fear do bring out the immorality of the act. ‘Maintaining or changing the status quo’ has been included in the definition to account for both state and non-state actors. Effort has been made to keep the definition as comprehensive as possible.
The right way to define terrorism, therefore, would be to see it within the context of historical and ontological frameworks and through accepting terrorism as an illegitimate and immoral act of violence. This acceptance will allow the academics to isolate the phenomenon of terrorism from other forms of violence. If this reality is not realized, terrorism will never be identified as a unique form of violence and the line between terrorism and other forms of violence will always remain obscure.

The academics should also stop viewing terrorism as a method, which permits them to see terrorism in the context of all other forms of violence, causing further obscurity and lack of clarity. Rather than suggesting that terrorism can happen in all forms of violence, they should instead try to see how other forms of violence transform into terrorism and vice versa.

Any potential universal definition of terrorism cannot ignore the term’s essential characteristics; inherently political, generation of fear, public disapproval and condemnation, essentially illegitimate and threat of repetition of violence. These features (that have been drawn from the ontology of terrorism) were vivid in the French reign of terror and make no exception for any modern day act of terrorism.

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Hard and Soft Terrorism Concepts: The Case of ISIS

Ahmet Yiğitalp TULGA

Abstract

Nowadays, the development of technology has influenced daily life and caused many innovations. Social media, which is one of the most important developments of recent years, has increased the speed of news and people's access to information has sped up on many issues. Over the last few years, progress in technology, and especially the development of social media, has also influenced terrorist organizations. This effect has changed the methods, strategies, and visions of terrorist organizations. The technological innovations and advancements in modes of communication and social media have produced two distinct yet interrelated facets of terrorism, namely the hard and soft terrorism concepts. In this paper, I will elaborate on these two emerging concepts by taking up the case of the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This study is based on qualitative research methods. I analyze Google Trends to support my qualitative research. Based on this qualitative research, the paper aims to make some key observations and hopes to provide some thought-provoking analysis.

Keywords: ISIS, The Hard Terrorism Concept, The Soft Terrorism Concept, Social Media, Media

Introduction

Terrorism is one of the major problems in the contemporary world, which directly or indirectly affects many regions and countries across the globe. Especially after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the problem of terrorism
has become eye-catching for the media and academia. Following that incident, many governments around the world launched a war against terrorism\(^1\). The prolonged war against terrorism is still in progress and after the U.S. force withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan entered a new phase.

To understand the widespread impact of terrorism and the ongoing threat it poses, we should evaluate the definition of terrorism. There is little consensus on the definition of terrorism, as the United Nations (UN), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), academics, and experts have defined it differently. Broadly, terrorism means “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” \(^2\). As it is too difficult to define terrorism in a way that covers all its aspects, the UN chose instead to condemn “acts of terror” because violent acts planned or designed to cause a state of terror in the public, a group of persons or individuals for political purposes are unjustifiable, regardless of the political, economic, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other factors which may be used to justify them\(^3\). As seen in different definitions, terrorism is a complicated phenomenon that cannot be explained by just one case or event. Regarding terrorism, the devil is in the details\(^4\).

Güzel contends that modern terrorism began with the French Revolution in 1789 \(^5\). Rapoport believes modern terrorism started in Russia at the end of

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1880 and posits the theory that modern terrorism manifested in four major waves: anarchist, anti-colonial, new left, and religious waves. Twenty-first-century terrorism, however, has exploited modern technological advancements and developed beyond the confines of Rapoport’s four waves to enter the fifth wave of its evolution. This current form of terrorism differs from past acts of terrorism. Terrorist organizations and individual terrorists can now easily use sophisticated communication technologies, such as social media and mass media, to create and sustain fear. While twenty-first-century terrorist organizations use technologies to instill fear in the world, they know they are not strong enough to fight a veritable war against conventional armies. This has not stopped them from making use of current technological developments more than ever before. Even though the use of software in modern counter-terrorism tactics has made it difficult for terrorist organizations to take over social media and mass media for their nefarious objectives, they remain undeterred and have become more violent than ever.

Modern-day terrorist organizations differ from previous ones. Especially, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is representative of the new type of terrorist organization in the twenty-first century. ISIS has embraced and integrated new technologies, such as social media and smartphones, effectively in its activities. Terrorist organizations like ISIS have benefited from the increasing ubiquity of social media. Today, terrorist organizations

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disseminate their propaganda through social media and mass media. This is that the reason why Wilkinson posits there is a relationship between mass media and terrorist organizations based on “mutual benefit”\(^9\).

It cannot be denied that terrorist organizations have changed and adapted to our rapidly changing world. As there is currently no universal legal definition of terrorism, it may be difficult to fully explain contemporary terrorism. However, we can work around this difficulty by looking at the features of contemporary terrorism. The present-day new wave of terrorism seeks to achieve its goals through the use of not only guns, lone wolf attacks, or suicide attacks but also with propaganda through social media and mass media.

In recent years, many terrorism-related scholarly articles and opinion pieces have been published. These touch on terrorism’s relationship with social media and mass media as well as its effects on the psychology of people. Despite numerous articles and opinions, there is still no consensus as to the best approach to analyze all the aspects of terrorism and how these aspects of terror could be strategically fought. Unfortunately, a gap still exists in the literature due to the lack of understanding of the relationship between physical terrorism, media, and psychology. I have tried to overcome this gap by proposing the notions of hard and soft terrorism concepts. In this study, I use the qualitative research method. I support the qualitative method with the Google Trends analysis I made with the R computer program.

Theoretical Framework

David Rapoport analyzed modern terrorism into four waves. According to Rapoport, the first wave of modern terrorism is the anarchist wave between 1878 and 1919\textsuperscript{10}. The second wave of modern terrorism is the anti-colonial wave. This wave started in the 1920s and lasted until the 1960s. The third wave is the new left wave, and this wave started during the 1960s and it ended during the 1990s. The fourth wave is the religious wave, and this wave started in 1979. The terrorism we encounter today is unlike Rapoport's "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism" and it is more complicated. Especially developing technologies have caused terrorist organizations to become more complex.

Nowadays, the development of technology has influenced daily life and caused many innovations. Social media, which is one of the most important developments of recent years, has increased the speed of news, and people's access to information has sped up. In recent years, progress in technology, and especially the development of social media, has also affected terrorist organizations. This effect has changed the methods, strategies, and visions of terrorist organizations.

Today's terrorist organizations could create a general feeling of anxiety and fear among people\textsuperscript{11}, which is one of the main purposes of terrorism, using no weapons or with a small-scale attack. For instance, thousands and millions of people in Japan, Canada, and South Africa can access much information and images that will create fear and anxiety about a terrorist


attack in France. Among these people, because of the news of the atrocities and social media posts they see, emotions such as fear and horror emerge, and in other words, they are affected by these attacks even though they are not directly affected\textsuperscript{12}. The reason behind all this is the technological innovations and the popularity of social media.

However, the existing literature is far from a concept that can explain today's terrorist organizations that have become more complex. Existing literature generally compares today's terrorist organizations with terrorist groups inside Rapoport's 4th wave of modern terrorism. It acknowledges that today's terrorist organizations are different. However, little researches conducted so far to explain how and why they are different. The number of studies that try to formulate the methods of existing terrorism are few and far between.

Therefore, the study in hand is projected to explore the methods used by today's terrorist organizations within two basic concepts. These are hard and soft terrorism concepts. Before going through these two concepts at length, it is essential to state that Joseph S. Nye's soft power concept influences these concepts.

Joseph Nye reminds that over-reliance on military or economic policy instruments can often trigger reactions that are detrimental to the nation's interests in the long run\textsuperscript{13}. Soft power refers to the capacity to get what countries want by appealing and influencing people to share their


Hard and Soft Terrorism

Hard and Soft Terrorism

objectives\textsuperscript{14}. It's not the same as hard power, which is the capacity to compel others to do what countries want using the incentives and sticks of economic and military force. Instead of coercing people to embrace countries' aims or buying their cooperation with economic incentives, Nye argues that the countries should get what they want because others share their interests. He defines soft power as more than just persuasion or influence, and he says that soft power is also the ability to draw attention, and attraction frequently leads to acquiescence. On the other hand, Nye defines hard power as coercive power used through threats or inducements. Military involvement, aggressive or forcible diplomacy, and economic embargo are examples of hard power\textsuperscript{15} that rely on physical power resources, such as armed power or economic power\textsuperscript{16}.

**Hard Terrorism Concept**

Hard terrorism is a concept in which terrorist organizations use arms to attain their purposes. The most important elements of the hard terrorism concept are bombings, suicide attacks, coordinated attacks, and unexpected attacks. The best examples of the hard terrorism concept are suicide attacks, coordinated attacks, and "lone wolf" attacks. For example, the effects of the 2014 Peshawar terrorist attack in Pakistan were felt even in 2020\textsuperscript{17}. As a result of the face-to-face interviews with the students, Ashraf, Rafique, and

\textsuperscript{17} Stern, Jessica, and J. M. Berger. "ISIS: The state of terror (First ECCO paperback edition)." (2016).
Yasmin\(^{18}\) found that the students became psychologically unstable due to terrorist attacks and that terrorism adversely affected their emotional health.

**Soft Terrorism Concept**

In the soft terrorism concept, terrorist organizations affect people's psychology with social media posts, propaganda messages, videos, and fake news. The soft terrorism concept also plays an important role in the recruitment of terrorist organizations.

The most important elements of this concept are social media and mass media. The best example of the soft terrorism concept is the violent pictures and false and exaggerated news shared on social media. ISIS and its attacks could be shown as an example of the soft terrorism concept.

ISIS employs a highly effective strategy of having an online unit or battalion, also known as "the mujtahidun (industrious)," which is likely a small group of 500-2,000 active users who post and retweet specific tweets to make ISIS posts trend\(^{19}\), increasing the group's visibility and outreach\(^{20}\). For example, when ISIS invaded Mosul in 2014, members tweeted up to 44,000 times a day\(^{21}\). Most of these tweets contained violent messages, and some tweets contained fake news\(^{22}\). Because of the atmosphere of fear that resulted from these tweets, the Iraqi government tried to shut down internet

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\(^{21}\) Berger, John M. "How Isis Games Twitter." The Atlantic 16, no. 06 (2014).

access in the areas occupied by ISIS and reduce one-third of internet traffic across Iraq\textsuperscript{23}. Also, images of the killing of hundreds of Iraqi troops tweeted on Twitter as ISIS stormed into Iraq were caused fear and worry throughout the world\textsuperscript{24}. An hour-long video posted on YouTube during the invasion of Iraq shows the brutal house invasion of an Iraqi police chief. In the video, the police chief was blindfolded first and then beheaded. ISIS tweeted a picture taken from this video with the comment, "This is our ball... it has skin on it"\textsuperscript{25}. These were all part of a calculated plan to make people fearful.

Another example is the terrorist attack organized by Al Shabab at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Kenya, which started on September 21 and ended on September 23 in 2013. Al Shabab broadcasted that terrorist attack live on Twitter. Al Shabab's real-time tweets became almost as a big news story as the incident itself\textsuperscript{26}. To get as many people as possible to read their hate-filled misinformation, the organization utilized the hashtag, #Westgate\textsuperscript{27}. People who died and were injured could be seen in the videos and pictures, and terrorists tweeted a picture with the comment of "Westgate, a 14-hour standoff conveyed with 1400 bullets and 140 characters of vengeance and still going on. Good morning Kenya"\textsuperscript{28}. These


violent posts are created extremely densely, using vivid language and images to describe negative outcomes\textsuperscript{29}, and such posts increase attention as well as anxiety and fear in viewers from all around the world\textsuperscript{30}. Such posts, which make terrorist attacks sensational, causes increased stress and panic among people in many countries and regions of the world\textsuperscript{31}. It is the soft terrorism concept that causes such effects.

The combination of these two concepts enables terrorist organizations to achieve their goals of negatively affecting people's psychology. A terrorist attack that takes place in a distant point of the world has a negative impact on people in many parts of the world through the soft terrorism concept. Today, these two concepts complement each other. Terrorist organizations on the basis of these strategies effectively reach their goals faster than before.

This study is an attempt to explain the hard and soft terrorism concepts with the case of ISIS. In the next section, this study will be explained in light of the history of ISIS and how this organization uses hard and soft terrorism concepts.

\textsuperscript{29} Michaela, Martin, and Hussein Solomon "Islamic State: Understanding the Nature of the Beast and Its Funding." Contemporary Review of the Middle East 4, no. 1 (2017): 18-49.
Historical Background of ISIS

Although ISIS caught the attention of the media in 2014, its history dates back to the 2000s. As a historical background, it is possible to separate the history of ISIS into four periods. The first period, which lasted from the 1990s until 2006, was defined under the leadership of al-Zarqawi. During this period, the organization relocated from Afghanistan's training camps to Iraq, where it gained prominence for conducting a deadly sectarian insurgency under the name Jama-at al-Tawhid wa-l-Jihad. In 2004, Zarqawi swore allegiance to Al-Qaeda and founded Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in response to the USA and its alliance invasion of Iraq.

The power vacuum produced by the war and the overthrow of ex-Iraqi President Saddam Hussein provided ideal conditions for extremist organizations to flourish. In 2006, al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) came together with several Sunni extremist groups against the occupation of the USA and its allied forces, becoming the “Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).”

The connection between Al-Qaeda and its Iraqi affiliates, on the other hand, quickly became turbulent. In contrast to fundamental al-Qaeda’s direction, 

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35 Byman, Daniel L. "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary Do We Understand Our Enemy?". World Politics 56, no. 1 (2003): 139-63.
Zarqawi advocated sectarian conflict, that is, attacks against the Shia population. Insurgent commanders were worried about Zarqawi’s increasing assault against Shia, believing that attacks on Muslim civilians would erode much-needed popular help for the resistance. Fundamental doctrinal and strategic differences between the two organizations were spelled out early on, in 2005, and could be inferred from al-Qaeda leadership’s contact with Zarqawi. The distinctions between Zarqawi and al-Qaeda are concentrated on three key points: the enemy’s emphasis, the role of violence, and the function of institution creation and governance.

The formation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in October 2006 marked the start of the organization’s second period. It was also a time when Abu Hamza al-Muhajir and Abu Umar al-Baghdadi were in charge and dedicatedly wanted to regain the glory of the organization. After the deaths of ‘Umar al-Baghdadi and al-Masri in April 2010, the Shura Council appointed Abu Bakr al Baghdadi as ISI’s new Emir, ushering in a new era in the relationship with al-Qaeda, with resultant schisms in terms of loyalty. The third era of the movement’s existence, which runs from 2011 to 2016, is marked by global expansion.

The decision of the American army to withdraw from Iraq in December 2011, the Arab Spring in the region, the death of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and the oppressive policy of the Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki towards the Sunni community in Iraq provided a significant opportunity to extremist organizations to increase their military-financial

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potential and the regional scope of their influence\textsuperscript{39}. In addition to these, the Syrian conflict enabled ISI to develop its presence in Raqqa by 2011.

The third period in ISIS’ history started in 2013. In April 2013, Abu Umar al-Baghdadi claimed that ISI had expanded to Syria. In 2013, the group changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and shortly after capturing Mosul in June 2014, it declared a caliphate and changed its name once more, this time to the Islamic State (IS).

For a variety of reasons, the Islamic State stood apart from other terrorist organizations. First, the Caliphate’s size and scope of authority were unprecedented: at its peak in late 2014, the Caliphate was home to over 11 million people and ruled over a territory of over 100,000 square kilometers in Iraq and Syria\textsuperscript{40}, including major cities and provincial capitals like Mosul, Raqqa, and the majority of Deir Ezzor\textsuperscript{41}. Second, The Islamic State devised an efficient method of extracting oil from the regions it controlled between 2014 and 2015, administering its oil production similarly to international oil firms\textsuperscript{42}. This allowed the organization to not only support its aggressive activities but also to create a "welfare state."

Strong financial backup made ISIS to capture the cities that served as the major source of revenue. Because of the attack on Syria, 60 percent of the

\textsuperscript{39} Ingram, Haroro J. "Learning from Isis's Virtual Propaganda War for Western Muslims: A Comparison of Inspire and Dabiq." In Terrorists' Use of the Internet, 170-81: IOS Press, 2017.


\textsuperscript{41} Humud, Carla E., Christopher M. Blanchard, and Mary Beth D. Nikitin. "Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and Us Response." (2016).

nation's oilfields in the east part of the country were taken over, allowing ISIS to expand recruitment of foreigners and weaponry purchases\textsuperscript{43}. The most daring move, however, was the seizure of a Mosul bank, when 420 million dollars were seized. Besides unrefined selling oil during its heyday, the Islamic State could fund itself through a system of levies and taxes imposed in its held regions, which may provide ISIS an income of about 3 million dollars each day\textsuperscript{44}.

The fourth period of the Islamic State's history, from 2016 to 2019, was marked by collapse, as the group lost all territorial control in Syria and Iraq and swiftly fell into the combat patterns of a long-running insurgency\textsuperscript{45}. ISIS' instability and inevitable decline, sparked by military setbacks, has sparked a discussion about the group's fundamental existence\textsuperscript{46}.

**Rise and Fall of ISIS: Shuttling in between Hard and Soft Terrorism Concepts**

The communication strategy adopted by ISIS differed from earlier terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda\textsuperscript{47}. Unlike previous terrorist groups, ISIS uses not only traditional media channels but also actively uses many communication channels with the opportunity provided by new

\textsuperscript{43} Tinnes, Judith. "Bibliography: Islamic State (Is, Isis, Isil, Daesh)[Part 4]." Perspectives on Terrorism 12, no. 2 (2018): 140-75.
\textsuperscript{45} Ingram, Haroro J. "Learning from Isis's Virtual Propaganda War for Western Muslims: A Comparison of Inspire and Dabiq." In Terrorists' Use of the Internet, 170-81: IOS Press, 2017.
\textsuperscript{47} Ceron, Andrea, Luigi Curini, and Stefano M. Iacus. "Isis at its apogee: The arabic discourse on twitter and what we can learn from that about isis support and foreign fighters." Sage open 9.1 (2019): 2158244018789229.
technologies. In short, ISIS's soft terrorism concept strategies show that this group is waging a new Jihad that goes beyond what new internet technologies offer and make it far more productive and powerful than traditional terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda.

ISIS differs from other terrorist organizations on "Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures". The ISIS leadership, unlike al-Qaeda, encouraged its supporters to engage in "jihad at home" if they cannot afford to be in Syria and Iraq. With this strategy, ISIS wants Muslims living in non-Muslim lands to "attack, kill and terrorize the crusaders in their streets and homes".

From all these perspectives, the rise and fall of ISIS certainly represents one of the most prominent political issues of the past few years. Particularly in the summer of 2014, ISIS' occupation of cities such as Mosul and Tikrit and its advance to other cities in Iraq and seizing more land during the month shocked the world. The world focused on ISIS' ongoing regional advances and atrocities, and the group's name was heard on TV screens around the world almost daily. The highly professional executions of ISIS both shocked the world and caused many people to fear. Images of brutality, beheadings, and executions are intended to intimidate opponents. Because

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of these execution images and messages containing extreme violence, ISIS even negatively affected people in areas where it was inactive. In this direction, ISIS is fully exploiting various media platforms to spread messages of fear and have an impact on their recipients. It is important to note that the shocking images and videos of beheadings and killings spread by ISIS are intended to raise awareness about the group and its activities, similar to the shock advertising techniques used by some commercial companies\(^5\).

With this strategy of ISIS, it is aimed to demoralize the enemy armies and police forces, to deepen the sectarian conflict, and to spread fear. ISIS' perverted massacre campaign is a carefully orchestrated strategy designed to create fear among its enemies and attract supporters.

Twitter plays an important role in this strategy. The average ISIS supporter on Twitter is much more active than the ordinary average user on Twitter. For example, from October 2014 to November 2014, about 8 percent of ISIS supporters tweeted over 50 tweets per day, and almost 3 percent of supporters tweeted more than 150 per day\(^5\). Thus, supporters tweeted to 44,000 times a day during the march to Mosul. Klausen argues that ISIS uses social media sites as a global cyber warfare tactic in places like Syria\(^5\). Klausen's study of social media networks found that Twitter is used by ISIS members as a tool to create the illusion that the group is stronger than it is. For example, ISIS fighters reportedly used Twitter to post images of

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54 Berger, John M. "How Isis Games Twitter." The Atlantic. 16, no. 06 (2014).
beheadings. In such a situation, ISIS sympathizers and fighters were using the hashtag #WorldCup with the following words: "This is our ball... it's got skin on it"56.

The military decline of ISIS has not caused a decline in social media activity, and the fact that ISIS seems successful in inspiring low-level attacks in Europe despite its territorial losses indicates that its messaging for the "lone call for jihad" continues to potentially resonate in this sense57. The frequency of individual attacks in the West increased markedly between July and August 2015, after ISIS called for lone wolves to continue the attacks58. After each attack on a Western target, pro-ISIS users on Telegram and Twitter used hashtags like #NiceAttack, #Nice, #Brussels59. After taking over the hashtags, it is overflowing with images and posts mass-produced by online e-jihadist celebrating these attacks.

PEW60 Research Center's 2017 survey revealed how effectively ISIS uses the hard and soft terrorism concepts. According to the results, ISIS and climate change are the most important security risks in most of the 38 countries where the survey was conducted61.

57 Ceron, Andrea, Luigi Curini, and Stefano M. Iacus. "Iisis at its apogee: The arabic discourse on twitter and what we can learn from that about isis support and foreign fighters." Sage open 9.1 (2019): 2158244018789229.
60 PEW research center organizes public opinion polls, sociological research, content analysis, and other data-driven social science studies.
61 PEW Research Center, August, 2017, “Globally, People Point to ISIS and Climate Change as Leading
Considering the general results in the countries where the survey was conducted, ISIS is seen as the biggest threat by 62% of participants. Similarly, when analyzed regionally, it is concluded that ISIS is seen as the biggest threat in Europe and Asia-Pacific regions, and it is seen as the second biggest threat in Africa.

Security Threats”
When we look at the country results, it is seen that the rate of seeing ISIS as the biggest and most dangerous threat is quite high even in countries such as Greece, Poland, Japan, South Korea, Argentina, and Brazil, where ISIS has almost never attacked.
### Hard and Soft Terrorism

**PAKISTAN JOURNAL OF TERRORISM RESEARCH, VOL-03, ISSUE-2**

**ISIS is top concern in Europe, Middle East; climate change in Africa, Latin America**

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Top threat</th>
<th>The Islamic militant group known as ISIS</th>
<th>Global climate change</th>
<th>Cyberattacks from other countries</th>
<th>The condition of the global economy</th>
<th>Large number of refugees leaving countries such as Iraq/Syria</th>
<th>The United States’ power and influence</th>
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| Argentina| Climate    | 54%                                    | 76%                  | 54%                             | 66%                              | 32%                                                      | 49%                              | 24%                      | 30%                      |
| Brazil   | Climate    | 52%                                    | 67%                  | 52%                             | 57%                              | 36%                                                      | 47%                              | 31%                      | 34%                      |
| Chile    | Climate    | 50%                                    | 86%                  | 64%                             | 71%                              | 29%                                                      | 57%                              | 30%                      | 36%                      |
| Colombia | Climate    | 37%                                    | 74%                  | 51%                             | 61%                              | 33%                                                      | 32%                              | 19%                      | 25%                      |
| Mexico   | Climate    | 40%                                    | 72%                  | 54%                             | 65%                              | 31%                                                      | 61%                              | 23%                      | 22%                      |
| Peru     | Climate    | 37%                                    | 79%                  | 42%                             | 50%                              | 27%                                                      | 30%                              | 19%                      | 23%                      |
| Venezuela| Economy    | 36%                                    | 55%                  | 44%                             | 56%                              | 27%                                                      | 32%                              | 19%                      | 22%                      |

* Question not asked in country.

Note: Bolded figures note the top concern in each country. Underlined figures note the second-highest concern in each country.

Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey, Q.17a-e.
As these results show, ISIS has negatively affected public opinion even in non-targeted countries with the soft and hard terrorism concepts that it uses effectively. In addition, these results show that, as the soft terrorism concept suggests, terrorist attacks carried out in countries such as France negatively affect the public in very distant geographies of the world through social media and traditional media with no terrorist attacks.

Finally, I conduct Google Trends analysis due to the general interest of the entire world against ISIS attacks. As a result of the examination, it is seen that the most searched date about ISIS on Google is November 2015. In November 2015, ISIS organized the terrorist attacks in Paris, France. The second-highest number of searches regarding ISIS was September 2014, and on this date, the march of ISIS in Iraq and Syria continued, and the brutality videos released by ISIS attracted considerable attention.

Source: Author
The most searched countries about ISIS are Ethiopia, Pakistan, Mauritius, and Kenya. Looking at the 15 most searched words about ISIS, news about ISIS, ISIS’ video(s), ISIS attack and ISIS beheading are the most searched words on Google.

Sources: Author

In line with all these results, we see that ISIS uses the hard and soft terrorism concepts effectively and it has succeeded in influencing public opinion in most parts of the world with this strategy. In addition, all these results show that the brutal images and videos posted by ISIS attracted the attention of people.
Conclusion

Terrorism is one of the most important problems that the world has faced for many years, and this problem has become more complicated with the development of technology, and the methods used in the examination of old terrorist organizations are still used while examining modern terrorist organizations in the literature. However, it is very difficult to examine today's terrorist organizations with old-style methods. In this respect, most of the studies in the current literature are insufficient and cannot contribute to the advancement of terrorism studies. For this reason, a concept that can explain the methods of current terrorist organizations is important for literature.

Considering the effective use of technological tools by modern terrorist organizations, it is seen that they differ from previous terrorist groups in terms of the method they use. By examining the methods used by current terrorist organizations, especially ISIS, the hard and soft terrorism concepts have been developed, and I use these concepts in this research. Terminologically, hard and soft terrorism concepts, which benefit from Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power", provide a new perspective in interpreting the methods of modern-day terrorist groups.

ISIS has used the hard and soft terrorism concepts effectively and has become the most lethal terrorist organization the world has ever seen. However, the effectiveness of the hard and soft terrorism concepts emerges with its reflection in the public. In this direction, the 2017 survey of the PEW research Centre and Google Trends analysis revealed that ISIS uses
the hard and soft terrorism concepts effectively and that people in different countries of the world are afraid of ISIS.

In conclusion, terrorist organizations such as ISIS have become more complicated with the developing technologies and have influenced the public in many places in the world through social media. For all these reasons, it is very important to consider the hard and soft terrorism concepts when examining current terrorist organizations.

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Information Revolution and Cyber Warfare: Role of Artificial Intelligence in Combatting Terrorist Propaganda

Haleema Zia

Abstract

Advancement in the Information Technology (IT) field has revolutionized the ways of communication in today’s world. The present age of information revolution has changed the nature of supremacy and has amplified its diffusion. Power over information is widely distributed to government, large corporations, informal ad hoc groups, non-profits and non-state actors. Digital inclusion has brought visible and concrete revolution to modern society and has also induced challenges related to transparency, security, privacy, confidentiality and protection of cyberspace. Cyber issues are not new but are widely spreading due to the information revolution and advanced social media applications. Social media has become an important platform for non-state actors to spread propaganda and fake warfare. There is a dire need to harness emerging and disruptive technologies to overcome challenges posed by cyber warfare. The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques provided advanced capabilities to military for improve national security. This paper is based on qualitative research methodology to describe the information revolution and its implications on cyber security. It gives an insight to the role of social media in spreading agenda of non-state actors and the significance of AI in military domains to disrupt terrorist propaganda.

Keywords: Information Revolution, Cyber Warfare, Artificial Intelligence, Terrorism, Propaganda
Introduction

Technology has changed the way we look at art and science. The combination of art, science and technology is used as an interpreting phenomenon to develop a real analysis of our planet from a disciplinary viewpoint. Advanced information concepts and computer technologies are being used by the complex system theories of artificial life to study life in abstract. With the rise of interaction between machines and human beings, modern life is acting as a link between computers and humans. However, artificial life is creating challenges and problems including the nature of life itself.\(^1\) It is important to understand the relation between art, media and technology. In this era of globalization, developments in the field of computer sciences and communication technology have revolutionized society. These technologies are making significant changes and are creating deep rooted impacts on economic and social developments. This has also transformed the nature of war and fighting styles, as the emphasis has shifted towards information gathering, processing, analysis, and distribution.

Information revolution is not a new concept and history reveals dramatic impacts of the printing press in the 16\(^{th}\) century, but this revolution has changed the nature of supremacy and authority and has also furthered its diffusion. This revolution comes with an increased role of soft power as many actors have become competitors in this realm. Soft power refers to the ability of any state or non-state actors to achieve desired outcomes through

\(^1\) José-Carlos, Mariátegui, "Techno-revolution: False evolution?," *Third Text* 13, no. 47 (1999): 71-76.
attraction and persuasion instead of coercion, oppression and payment.² The extensive use of technology and latest modes of communication has created threats and privacy issues in cyberspace. Latest technologies are being used by the non-state actors for spreading their propaganda and normalizing their ideological thoughts among the public. In the modern world, there is a blur line between peace and war because of the hybrid technologies of warfare i.e. combination of traditional methods of war and computer technologies as well as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Researchers, academicians and practitioners have not yet agreed on a clear definition of cyber warfare. Throughout the history of mankind, the power and authority game is constantly driven to evolve and shift through technology. Because of the continuous innovation in technology, the emergence of cyberspace has unlocked entirely new strategic possibilities as well as threats.³ Cyber warfare refers to the actions and events in the cyber world. According to Alford, cyber warfare is defined as;

“All act intended to compel an opponent to fulfil our national will, executed against the software controlling processes within an opponent’s system.”⁴

Jeffrey Carr has offered another definition of cyber warfare;

“Cyber warfare is the art and science of fighting without fighting; of defeating an opponent without spilling their blood.”⁵

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The concept of cyber warfare became popular from 2008-2010, after overriding the previous information warfare concept that was launched in the 1990s. It started with the efforts of Hezbollah for leveraging cyber assets as a fundamental share of their information campaign in 1996 and launched “hizbollah.org”. Other related websites for information warfare launched by Hezbollah included www.almanar.com.lb and a homepage for Hassan Nasrallah. Targeting worldwide and antagonistic media by Hezbollah became a regular practice by the war with Israel in 2006. The organization started reporting the tactical position rapidly and precisely and started generating professional media products which were distributed through different means, including their websites and social media especially YouTube. Cyber war is launched in the virtual domain and is considered to be the counterpart of conventional ‘kinetic’ warfare. Due to commercialization of Information Technology and its easy access to everyone, it has become convenient for the non-state actors to use latest technological methods for launching cyber-attacks. In order to confront these attacks different state actors and military domains have counter acted such threats. Cyber warfare is steered by both state as well as non-state actors. The state actors, in this type of warfare, employ proxies for evading detection. Cyber warfare by the non-state actors is considered as an effort to damage and destroy different computer systems, important websites, and information networks with the help of hacking, computer viruses, and


cyber-attacks. The cyberspace is a man-made domain which is established through electronic technology software as well as hardware and firmware programs, which are designed particularly to manipulate and convert electromagnetic energy to encoded signals. Cyberspace can be characterized by four factors including; Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA).

There is an interdisciplinary interaction between cyber warfare and AI. AI includes such digital technologies that are capable of performing several tasks of complex nature that require intelligence. AI is about using advanced computer technologies and machines that can think and act like humans. The impact of AI technologies on cyber warfare can be studied by understanding different stages. There are three stages of AI development;

1. Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI) – is commonly known as machine learning and it specializes in one area and one problem at a time. It is generally used to complete tasks related to product recommendation and weather forecast. In cyber warfare, it might be used to predict human trends on social media regarding certain social and political issues. ANI includes machine learning and deep learning.

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2. Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) – is next level up from ANI and denotes “human level of cognitive function”. For a smooth and successful operation, AGI is connected to thousands of ANI systems together in order to imitate human behaviour.\textsuperscript{13}

3. Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) – has the ability to surpass any kind of human intelligence. It includes being creative, building relationships and making rational decisions regarding certain issues. If machines start coming up with their own innovative concepts with AGI, a super intelligent system would become the next logical step.\textsuperscript{14}

Artificial Super Intelligence technology is widely available and has significant implications on cyber warfare and cybersecurity. AI can benefit state actors for identification of relevant threshold, setting of realistic goals for detection, and making relevant strategies. AI based technologies including deep learning could be beneficial for state actors and military domains when introduced into the cyber security environment, as they will help to create models to implement intrusion detection, malware classification, and threat intelligence sensing. However, AI systems will face various cyber threats from non-state actors in order to destroy their sample, learning, and decision making.\textsuperscript{15}. It is very challenging for the military domains and intelligence-based organizations to timely detect cyber threats to launch relevant operational methodologies and strategies for disrupting and neutralizing them. The advanced capabilities of armed

forces are creating new prospects for the kinetic as well as non-kinetic power and authority usage in cyberspace. Cyber technologies make it possible to function in the non-linear hybrid battle-space as it is important to integrate manned as well as unmanned platforms in cyberspace, in the air, and over and below the surface. New systems with the help of AI technologies are capable of detecting, identifying and tracking targets in a better way.

**Cyber Warfare and Cybersecurity**

Today, advanced computer and networking technologies including; fog computing, software-defined networking, big data, and bots have drastically transformed the cyberspace. With the swift use of advanced networking systems, the cyber security has become a very important issue in the cyberspace. Cyber security has also impacted several critical infrastructures. As a result of continuous technological transformation and a need for improved efficiency, the critical infrastructures of any nation are becoming progressively interlinked and automated. As these infrastructures show a large number of dependencies which has amplified the infrastructures’ complexity and related risks to our societies. The technological advancements have created novel susceptibilities to

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equipment failure, human error, and weather and various natural causes, and cyber as well as physical threats.\textsuperscript{18}

The traditional security measures rely on static control of various security devices including; Intrusion Prevention Systems (IPS), Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS), and firewalls which are positioned on special nodes and edges for the monitoring of network security as per the preset rules. Conversely, these traditional methodologies of protection are not helpful in detecting and preventing novel threats related to cyber security, which includes APT - Advanced Persistent Threats. For maximizing the security and protection level of the core system assets, it is important to cultivate defense methodologies related to intelligent and innovative security that are capable of coping with sustainable and diversified threats.\textsuperscript{19}

Cybersecurity refers to development, governance, management and usage of the IT security techniques and tools, information security and operations security for protecting sensitive information systems and networks.\textsuperscript{20} Cybersecurity systems are also helpful in tracking command troops and guiding the weapon systems in order to achieve desired outcomes. Time and information are important factors in this cyber warfare environment, as the command process also demands timely and precise information to implement centralized command action and to protect cyber battle-space. Present warfare largely depends on Command, Control, Computers,


Communication, Cyber-defense, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C5ISR system). For controlling, coordinating and communicating the military operations in a better way, it is important to have a deep understanding and correct implementation of C5ISR.21

**Cybersecurity Risk Management**

Although state actors have an edge of using AI technologies for countering cyber-attacks, but they are also becoming commercialized, as several companies worldwide are pouring money for research and development of AI. This commercialization has created immense challenges for the military domains and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to supersede enemies in usage of AI technologies and neutralizing cyber warfare.22 Cyber defence is very important in order to disrupt terrorist attacks on cyberspace. It includes detection, prevention and provision of timely responses to cyber threats and attacks. Cybersecurity risk management is a fundamental real-time factor to win the battle against cyber breach. It is, therefore, imperative to understand various components of the cybersecurity risk management system. This can be done by combining all the related indicators as well as partial views of cybersecurity threats, which will help in developing risk-based management and clear visibility in regards with cybersecurity.23

Protecting cyberspace of social media users and making them understand terrorist propaganda is crucial to win battle against the hybrid non-state

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actors. Social media is used to spread the narrative of terrorist groups to a particular social group of true followers through imposing and actively supervising the trend. It relies on four important factors; 1) a message that perfectly fits the prevailing narrative, 2) a cluster of true followers inclined to that message, 3) a group of cyber warriors agents, and 4) automated bot accounts network. Terrorist groups use their cyber teams to craft the specific message for dissemination. Fake news, videos and memes are generated often in collusion with the true followers. Cyber teams, bot accounts as well as social media users are equally responsible for effective spread of propaganda. For instance, social media trends are initiated by the cyber teams through the use of bot accounts and then they are spread on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube etc. General social media users keep on spreading such trends and messages without confirmation of fake news or messages being disseminated. Through this, messages could be spread to a wide group that is outside their social network. Furthermore, terrorist networks spread such messages through social media platforms with the definitive aim of getting coverage in the mainstream media. Therefore, it is important to spread awareness regarding cyberspace protection and to build counter narrative against such trends and propagandas.

**Hybrid Terrorist Organizations**

Researchers and military establishments have started to debate over the nature of future warfare. There are several aspects of this debate including characterization and conceptualization of potential threats. These aspects

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are unclear, but have potential to get influenced by the globalization, advanced technology, the existence of global as well as local terrorist organizations, and the co-existence of state as well as non-state actors. Contextually, the military experts conceive that conflicts in the future will be multi-variant or multi-modal— which means that the terrorist organizations will shift their focus on hybrid warfare and cyber-attacks instead of using traditional modes of war. According to UoD - United States Department of Defense, hybrid warfare is a combination of irregular as well as conventional warfare approaches.

According to Frank Hoffman hybrid threat includes various warfare modes including; conventional capabilities, irregular formations and tactics, use of advanced technology, traditional terrorists’ acts i.e. coercion, indiscriminate violence, and criminal disorder. Baoz Ganor has explained hybrid terrorist organizations as the new entity that is capable to play an ever superior role in the modern warfare i.e. hybrid and cyber warfare. He explained a hybrid terrorist organization by emphasizing on three core areas including; Classic Terrorist Organization – refers to a paramilitary or a military organization which is engaged in terrorism, committing outrages which are considered terrorists acts for operating and winning the proscribed arena of terrorism as well as genuine arena of media. Secondly, Political Organization – refers to the political branch of a hybrid terrorist organization, whose purpose is merely to represent its ideology on several

forums or to compete in free, legitimate, and democratic elections and campaigns. This is done in order to freely spread their ideology, change mindsets of people and for narrative building to engage in warfare against the state. Thirdly, *Realm of legitimate* – this refers to state-sponsored services with the help of affiliated organizations in order to provide social welfare services to actual or potential constituencies. The hybrid factor of the terrorist organizations has created challenges for policy makers, researchers, and military establishments to use Artificial Intelligence including machine and deep learning techniques in order to timely detect and disrupt terrorist ideologies and possible attacks.

**Social Media as a Tool of Fake Warfare**

In this era of digitalization, social media has become a significant tool for the non-state actors and hybrid terrorist organizations to spread their agenda and ideology in order to wage war against the state. There is a growing research on radicalization and its counter measures but there is rarity of academic research on social media’s role in radicalization of people, especially students and young generation. Through the use of different social media apps and forums including Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, and WhatsApp, the youth has become an easy target for the hybrid terrorist organizations. The social media users are becoming part of terrorist propaganda in disguise. This has created a serious challenge for the military domains and LEAs to keep on neutralizing terrorist propaganda through

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social media regulations, check and balance, and scrutiny with the help of Artificial Intelligence systems.

According to a study conducted in 2017 by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), social media and the internet can act as architects within the wider processes of religious radicalization. Social media also plays a vital role in spreading *fake warfare*, extremism, creating divide within different ethnic groups in order to achieve political agenda of the terrorist organizations. It exposes that violent extremists and radicalized groups use social media platforms as channels for identifying potential participants, attracting young generation, disseminating extremist, violent, and criminal content and fostering one-on-one dialogue. Radicalization among students and young generation correlates to the proliferation of the social media platforms and internet. The threat of online radicalization has become a clear danger both locally and globally. As the extremist groups and hybrid terrorist organizations continue to instigate, support, and inspire violent actions and activities through the opening of advanced virtual networks and exceeding state boundaries for promotion of recruitment and indoctrination worldwide.

Social media platforms are widely used by the extremist groups for spreading fake news to achieve political and ideological objectives. The term *fake news* refers to fabrication, manipulation, advertising, parody,

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satire, and propaganda. The phenomenon of spreading false stories and news for economic or political gain is not new\textsuperscript{34} but the AI enabled technologies and increased availability of internet and social media applications has made it more convenient to spread propaganda. In the past people were able to understand the fake news controversy, but today’s digital era has blurred the line between truth and fake information. This is because articles, blogs, and other text messages are published on social media forums and websites in the news articles style in order to create legitimacy.\textsuperscript{35}

The hybrid terrorist organizations use special skilful and educated social media teams, which are focused to create content for social media. After a certain incident or any kind of political or religious disturbance these social media teams start spreading fake information, text, audio, and video messages in order to create division among various ethnic and social groups and to instigate extremism. They spread their ideology and create chaos among the public by posting fake information on Facebook or any other social media platform and linking it to third party sites with fabricated graphic videos, audio messages, and other violent content. AI-enabled technologies are used by these non-state actors to manipulate information availability and AI based bots are also used for swamping information channels with disinformation noise, so that people may not find correct and authentic information. This helps them build a particular narrative and change public opinion in order to achieve their ideological objectives.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Linda, Monsees, ‘‘A war against truth’’-understanding the fake news controversy,” Critical Studies on Security} 8, no. 2 (2020): 116-129.

without launching traditional warfare against state which includes; using weapons, terrorist attacks, and suicide bombings.

**Implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a briskly emerging branch of computer science that is involved in research and development of theories, methodologies, application systems and techniques in order to stimulate, expand, and extend human intelligence. The emergence of deep learning and the progression of ultra-performance computing technologies, the AI technologies have made great progress. In particular, deep learning has enabled different individuals, government organizations and other state actors to get advantage from data, attain improved results and to improve the present potential. It has drastically transformed lives of people and also helped shaping the traditional AI technology. In the military domain, AI has an extensive array of applications including voice recognition, facial recognition, truth detection, and robotics. However, its implications go far beyond image, voice, and behaviour. Earlier, machine learning played a crucial part to deal with cyberspace threats, but as machine learning relies on feature extraction which becomes a glaring flaw when it applies to cyber security. AI has many outstanding applications in the cyber security and to counter cyber warfare, for instance, through the use of malware monitoring and intrusion detection.\(^\text{36}\)

AI enabled systems at the strategic decision making level, are capable to avoid any shortcomings related to strategic decision making of human

during the fog of war e.g. the susceptibility of investing in sunk accounts, skewed risk judgement, cognitive heuristics and group thinking.\textsuperscript{37} For instance, the United States’ intelligence is vigorously trailing various publicly documented research projects related to AI to reduce the human-factors burden, improve military decision making, enhance actionable military intelligence, and predict national security threats and future attacks.\textsuperscript{38} AI systems have the capability to alter the status-quo in technology used by military with highly destabilizing and capricious strategic inferences. Even if AI-augmented systems and weapons could not yield better resolutions than humans, LEAs that are using AI enabled systems could undoubtedly gain substantial advantages in the battlefield. For instance, AI-enabled systems would help them in situational awareness, battlefield manoeuvre, remote-sensing, and a compressed decision-making loop.\textsuperscript{39}

There are many approaches for the implementation of AI systems and technologies. Scientists have designed such patterns in which AI systems are capable of extracting a model from raw data and statistics, and this ability is termed as machine learning. It has deep implications for identification and detection of suspects in criminal and terrorism cases. For example, advanced machine learning techniques are capable of analyzing Call Data Record (CDR) and linking different contact numbers used for correspondence and coordination to launch different terrorism incidents. Machine learning algorithms comprise of statistical mechanism, for


\textsuperscript{38} Tucker, Patrick, "What the CIA’s tech director wants from AI", \textit{Defense One} (2017).

instance, function approximation (logistics and linear regression), Bayesian algorithms, and decision trees.\textsuperscript{40} Algorithms of machine learning are very powerful and could be used in several complex circumstances but their methodologies are restricted in regards with accuracy, which could lead to reduced performance on big as well as complex data representation.\textsuperscript{41} In order to address this issue of accuracy, deep learning is a relatively new mechanism of AI. Deep learning is capable of imitating the human neurons process and building the neutral architect with multifaceted interconnections. Deep learning includes \textit{supervised learning}\textsuperscript{42} – which requires labelled input data, \textit{unsupervised learning} – which requires unlabelled data, and \textit{reinforcement learning} – which is based on rewarding smart agents’ actions.\textsuperscript{43}

**Machine Learning Vs. Deep Learning: Practical Applications**

In order to combat various cyber-attacks and disrupt terrorist propaganda it is important to implement traditional machine learning schemes as well as advanced deep learning schemes. Traditional machine learning solution consists of four main steps; firstly, extracting main features, secondly, selecting the appropriate machine learning algorithm, thirdly, training and selecting the relevant model through evaluation of algorithms and

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\textsuperscript{41} Anil Johny, Dr KN, Dr Nallikuzhy, and J. Tom, ”Optimization of CNN Model With Hyper Parameter Tuning for Enhancing Sturdiness in Classification of Histopathological Image,” \textit{Tom J, Optimization of CNN Model With Hyper Parameter Tuning for Enhancing Sturdiness in Classification of Histopathological Images (November 23, 2020)} (2020).


adjustment of parameters, and finally, predicting and classifying the unknown data through trained model.\textsuperscript{44} Common \textit{machine learning solutions} include the following:

i. \textit{k-} Nearest Neighbor (\textit{k-NN}) based cyber security – in which data and labels should be known and then comparison of test data characteristics is made with those of training datasets.\textsuperscript{45} An intrusion detection scheme was also proposed using \textit{k-NN} algorithms and Practical Swarm Optimization (PSO).\textsuperscript{46} These \textit{k-NN} algorithms have enabled the development of knowledge-based alert verification technique and alarm filters, which are helpful for military domains and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in order to identify non-critical and false alarms.\textsuperscript{47}

ii. \textit{Support Vector Machine (SVM)} based cyber security – is a learning algorithm which requires supervision and it has superior performance capability including vector support regression and support vector classification. The main idea of SVM is to detach different datasets. SVM was helpful in constructing real-time malware Uniform Resource Locator

(URL) classifier by identification and evaluation of invidious structures of malware URLs.\textsuperscript{48}

iii. Decision tree based cyber security – uses decision tree mechanism for classification of data through different rules. Decision tree was used for generation of simple rules of detection, which are used for defending against command injection attacks and denial of service attacks on robotic vehicles.\textsuperscript{49}

iv. Machine learning applications are also widely used for analysis of big data and CDR analysis in order to resolve certain terrorism cases and to create linkages between different terrorists suspected to be involved in launching certain attacks.

Deep learning is an advanced AI mechanism, which is used in autonomous systems. There are several deep learning solutions that are widely used for cyber security purposes, some of which are as follows;

i. Deep learning technology is helpful in video and image recognition. This is the significant area of deep learning in today’s era of information revolution and fake warfare – spreading fake propaganda and misinformation to build a particular narrative.\textsuperscript{50}


ii. With the advancements in mobile internet and social networking, massive data is being created as a result of human interaction. There are many deep learning applications and, for instance, Stanford CoreNLP toolkit for text analysis and natural language processing.\(^\text{51}\)

iii. Intrusion Detection System (IDS) is used for incident detection after a hacker’s attack. IDS works by analyzing network traffic, classifying it as indiscreet or normal and sending a notification in the event of endangerment. IDS method is often slow and expensive, therefore, Support Vector Machine (SVM) – a machine learning application is often used for IDS support.\(^\text{52}\)

iv. Artificial Neutral Networks (ANNs) are prevailing because of their laser-like focus. Their processing units are divided into three layers including; input layer, hidden layer and output layer. The input layer corresponds to photoreceptors present in the retina. The hidden layer acts like a neuron, processes signals from the retina and passes them to the visual cortex. The output layer is responsible to correspond to the visual cortex. Simple ANNs consist of a single hidden layer whereas, ANNs comprising of two or more hidden layers can process more complex datasets and are capable of deep learning.\(^\text{53}\)

\(^{51}\) Christopher D. Manning, Mihai Surdeanu, John Bauer, Jenny Rose Finkel, Steven Bethard, and David McClosky, “The Stanford CoreNLP natural language processing toolkit,” In Proceedings of 52nd annual meeting of the association for computational linguistics: system demonstrations, pp. 55-60. 2014.

\(^{52}\) Bistron, Marta, and Zbigniew Piotrowski, "Artificial Intelligence Applications in Military Systems and Their Influence on Sense of Security of Citizens," Electronics 10, no. 7 (2021): 871.

v. Deep learning provides effective solutions to complications in speech and image recognition as well as in Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP is used for interacting with humans in natural language. It is capable of taking orders without using keyboard and can also translate different documents. Access to large and high quality datasets to train ANNs is a key to deep learning. 54

vi. ‘Deep Flow’ application is capable of directly detecting malware from the Android applications’ data flows, as it is grounded on the belief network based attack defense mechanism. 55

vii. AI based bots are useful in understanding trends and mindset of people using different social media applications. This is helpful in predicting several events and political happenings as well as extremist propagandas.

viii. AI enabled deep learning technologies are capable of manipulating information availability, as it enables search engines to provide personalized search results for different social media users according to the actions performed by them on different networking apps. This bias in the algorithm of search engines is hard to detect and can be used for manipulation of information for long lasting effects.


ix. AI has the ability to evolve in such ways in which frozen software cannot progress. Frozen software is restricted to human knowledge that is used to develop them. Therefore, replacing frozen software with AI enabled systems which do not require regular refreshing, generates a great potential for generation of more nimble systems, perhaps at low cost. Its integration with different training systems is also possible e.g. it can offer adaptive and unpredictable adversaries to train fighter pilots.56

x. Computer Vision – a software ability to recognize videos and photos is capable of processing huge data from various surveillance systems or for pattern-of-life surveillance. AIs related to facial recognition are very important especially in military domains. Augmented reality is used to narrow down the skills gap in complex maintenance, and is actively being used by many airlines.57

AI when combined with information campaigns offers massive, covert, and autonomous means of carrying out political propaganda and launching psychological warfare to bring division in the society. Deep understanding and implementation of machine learning as well as deep learning applications is crucial in order to win cyber warfare and identify terrorist propagandas.

Recommendations

This research study has focused on the following imperative recommendations to aid state actors and LEAs for making relevant policies to disrupt extremist elements and terrorist propaganda;

i. There is a need for strict scrutiny of social media applications and users in order to identify extremist groups and fake information networks. Social media regulations should be implemented in letter and spirit through experts within the military domains, think tanks, and LEAs should work actively to identify and correct fake information.

ii. A national level policy related to cybersecurity should clout the government’s strengths for the progression of standard security practices used by general public, research centers, multi-nationals, and security organizations in their daily use of cyberspace.

iii. AI-enabled deep learning methodology should be used and cyber security risk management tools should be developed to measure the risk and threats status and to achieve cyber resiliency success.

iv. In order to sensitize public especially young generation and students about hybrid warfare, cyber warfare and role of hybrid terrorist organizations, there is a dire need of coordination of LEAs and Government through Ministry of Information Technology with the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and academic sectors. The focus should be on reaching to a large population of youngsters and students through training sessions, workshops, and seminars.
v. Coordination of LEAs with academia and AI practitioners should be made in order to highlight the importance of AI-enabled technologies and relevant research in national security issues. A combined task force including academic researchers, AI practitioners and LEAs should be made in order to give research a new direction to cope with modern warfare.

vi. The commercialization of AI-enabled systems could be beneficial for terrorist organizations as they may improvise the same AI-based systems for disruptive purposes. Therefore, there is a need for dialogue between the government and companies working on AI technologies, in order to make relevant policy guidelines for national security purposes.

Conclusion

In this era of technological advancement and globalization, the information revolution has transformed the ways of communication. Today, the information flow has become much faster through advanced technologies and use of social media. This has benefited the government organizations, policy makers, as well as military domains and general public, but has also created challenges of privacy and protection of cyberspace. The use of AI-enabled technologies has blurred the line between peace and war as they have made the wars bitter, slower and indecisive which created chaos among the societies. This has also created serious challenges for the state actors to disrupt terrorist propaganda.

The hybrid terrorist organizations are using advanced technologies, AI-enabled systems, and social media platforms to lodge cyber and fake warfare against the state. It has infused a great competition for dominance and control of important data, statistics and sensitive information.
Information warfare and building narrative through social media has become a significant factor in deciding the defeat or victory of state as well as non-state actors in the modern warfare. The fast communication channels including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp have helped spreading propaganda of terrorist organizations through deployment of automated and impression accounts. This has also helped in radicalization of social media users especially students and young generation which misguided general public. Hybrid terrorist organizations, with the help of AI-enabled technologies, launch cyber-attacks to destroy information networks and to attain sensitive information. Advanced cybersecurity management tools and an operation-based approach are crucial for government and military establishment in order to achieve specific results. It is important to focus on AI-enabled technologies along with human insight to neutralize hybrid terrorist organizations and extremist groups and remain on the winning edge in cyber warfare.

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The Kabul Takeover: Emerging Threats to the Region

Zaheer Abbas Chohan, Dost Muhammad Barrech and Naveed Anjum Naru

Abstract

The Kabul takeover on August 15, 2021, by the Taliban has attracted the world's attention towards the region in general and Afghanistan in particular. The Taliban appear to be disinterested in adhering to the Doha Agreement signed between the US and the Taliban in February 2020. The Taliban interim government shows that there is no room for an inclusive government, resulting in further political polarization, ethnic division, and human rights violations. It is too early to say that the Taliban would live up to their commitments of not giving sanctuaries to the terrorist groups. The takeover of Kabul, by and large, emboldens Al-Qaeda, Islamic State (also known as ISIS), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM). Afghanistan is likely to emerge as an epicenter for the militant groups mentioned. Ideologically speaking, the Taliban tend to support Islamic groups. Most considerably, in the 21st-century, states that eschew symmetric warfare are obsessed with asymmetric war by supporting non-state actors presumably, Afghanistan would remain a battlefield for the non-state actors and there is possibility of a new wave of terrorism. However, there is a need for a proactive role to be played by the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in the current scenario to syndicate the capabilities and efforts of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to eliminate terrorism and extremism. This paper, thus, would assess the emerging threats emanating from non-state actors to the region after the Kabul takeover.
Keywords: Doha Agreement, Inclusive Government, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, TTP, ETIM, RATS

Introduction

The fall of Kabul on August 15, 2021, after the hasty withdrawal of US, is believed to have been changing the region's geopolitical landscape. Global and regional players are in the quest of accelerating their ascendency in war-torn Afghanistan. Due to divergences in the interests among regional and global players, Afghanistan is prognosticated to become a new battlefield. Currently, the country's evolving situation is tumultuous; the country is in the shackles of global and regional players’ rivalry. There is a growing fear that Afghanistan under the Taliban regime will become a safe haven for militants’ perpetuating conflict in the region.\(^1\) The resurgence of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, also known as ISIS and Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP) in Afghanistan, would pose a grave threat to the region. The matter of grave concern is that ISIS’s divergence with the Taliban would further cause destruction. A newsletter issued by ISIS slammed the Taliban for making a new alliance with the US and termed the Doha Agreement as a conspiracy against ISIS. The ISIS newsletter further reiterates that the deal is “a cover for the standing alliance between the apostate Taliban militia and the Crusaders.”\(^2\)

The growing differences between the Taliban and ISIS would have severe ramifications for the region. An attack on Kabul airport in August,

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\(^2\) Ibid.
2021 carried out by ISIS, killing 170 people, including 13 US troops, is a tangible manifestation of ISIS intention to launch further attacks in the foreseeable future. The region is unlikely to remain immune to the attacks of ISIS. The presence of the ETIM in Afghanistan wishing to establish a separate country named 'East Turkistan’ in China increased Beijing’s concerns. Zhang Jiadong, a professor working at the Center for American Studies of Fudan University maintains that though ETIM has limited influence in Afghanistan, it is an uphill task for the Taliban to eliminate ETIM "Even if the Taliban wanted to make good on their promise, it's hard since it is difficult for the Taliban to fully control the militants at the grass route level and tribe leaders. We cannot rule out the possibility that the ETIM may find better soil to grow in the country ruled by Sharia law." The current humanitarian crisis is another dilemma that Afghanistan has to withstand, resulting in a chaotic situation and affecting the whole region in the near future.

**Implications of the US Withdrawal for the Region**

The Taliban took over Kabul even before the withdrawal of the US forces from the country and the latter faced the music just five days before leaving in shape of airport bombing by the ISKP. The withdrawal has a couple of other implications too. Legitimacy, capacity and acceptability of the Taliban are main hurdles creating instability in the country. Inclusive

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5 Ibid.
Afghan government must be the top priority of the US that could not be fulfilled before leaving, thus it can be termed as a hasty withdrawal.

**US Hasty Withdrawal**

The irresponsible US troops' pull-out from Afghanistan has triggered an interesting debate among the experts. Some regard the US withdrawal as its defeat, while others view it as a calculated move to contain China. The US in Doha Agreement bypassing its strategic ally India, adopting appeasement policy towards the Taliban, then irresponsible exit, and abrupt takeover of Kabul stunned the analysts. It is a *fait accompli* that a great power competition between the US and China is in full swing. The US withdrawal is likely to be a part of a great power competition in which the US tends to create troubles for China in its periphery. The existing developments in Afghanistan are a new chapter to accelerate worries of the former. It is pertinent to mention here the book of Michel Chossudovsky, titled "The Globalization of War: America's "Long War" against Humanity " in which he had argued that the concept of peace was undermined by the U.S. and war had become peace. He further in his book, blamed the U.S. for creating non-state actors such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. The emergence of Al-Qaeda and ISIS in Afghanistan after the U.S. presence for 20 years in the country justifies the claims of Chossudovsky. The resurgence of the aforementioned groups is attributed to creating troubles for China in its west. In this context, China’s top expert on Afghanistan, Zhao Huashengarticulates
that "To a great extent, Xinjiang's security and stability is the starting point for China's Afghanistan policy."\(^6\)

There is a great deal of similarity in the views of Chossudovsky and Hamid Karzai, a former president of Afghanistan. Like Chossudovsky, Karzai had also accused the US of creating ISIS in Afghanistan aimed at perpetuating the war on the soil of Afghanistan.\(^7\) The US in the containment of China supports its allies in Quad Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (AUKUS), generating problems for China in South China Sea, instigating Taiwan has now created another dilemma of Afghanistan in China’s periphery. An Unstable Afghanistan goes in the US favour, making obstacles for China in its Belt and Road Initiative BRI weakening the latter economically and politically.\(^8\) China is fully cognizant of the evolving situation of Afghanistan. Unlike the US, Beijing shunned direct interference and has been trying to engage with the Taliban for re-building of the war-torn country.

**Afghan Inclusive Government Conundrum**

In international politics recognition and legitimacy is prerequisite for the state. Without recognition and legitimacy, a state somewhat would be termed as a rogue state posing a threat to international peace. Currently, the Taliban confront with the dilemma of recognition and legitimacy for their

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\(^8\) Ibid.
government. Though the Taliban have stressed upon the international community to recognize their government without adhering to Doha Agreement, they would be unable to be recognized by the international community.\(^9\) Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan during his recent visit to Pakistan once again reiterated the recognition and legitimacy of their government by the international community. Admittedly, without an inclusive government the recognition and legitimacy of the Taliban government may be counterproductive.

**Cross-Border Terrorism**

Analysts are expecting infiltration of terrorists from the western border as the Taliban takeover might embolden extremists. If it happens, Pakistan and China will be the most affected countries in the region. Al-Qaeda, ISIS and TTP will be the leading terrorist outfits benefitting from the evolving scenario.

**Re-emergence of Al-Qaeda**

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan is meant to create internal instability due to their lack of capacity and legitimacy to govern the masses as well as challenges for external affairs. Al-Qaeda, the main reason for the US invasion of Afghanistan 20 years back, might not be on the same page with the Taliban. It remained a close ally of the Taliban since their government in the 1990s, and its leader Osama Bin Laden and his successors openly showed allegiance with the Taliban leadership. The current Taliban’s

government is an opportunity for Al-Qaeda resurgence. Although the Taliban agreed in Doha Deal in February 2020 not to allow any terrorist outfit, including Al-Qaeda, to operate in their controlled areas\(^\text{10}\), however, it seems complicated that they will honor the commitment. Another factor responsible for their failure to implement the Doha Agreement is the limited capacity of the Taliban administration. They have less resources than the US-backed civil government, similarly, they have limited intelligence support regarding counterterrorism.\(^\text{11}\)

There is a strong perception of change in the Taliban behaviour as they want to implement Shari’a in Afghanistan and maintain friendly relations with its neighbours. Such objectives demand non-compliance of commitments to Al-Qaeda or any other organization. However, there are huge differences between the Taliban dealing with political matters and those fighting on the ground.

**The Threat of ISIS to the Region**

ISIS, through its regional offshoot Islamic State- Khorasan Province (ISKP), is the biggest challenge for the Taliban and the region. ISKP has been challenging the state even before the departure of the US forces from Afghanistan. ISKP admitted attacks at the Kabul airport while the US forces were present there, accompanied by the Taliban for the airport’s security. It was an incident in which 13 US soldiers were killed who were the primary


target. ISKP accepted its responsibility which was a vigil of the starting of a new era.\textsuperscript{12} The Taliban captured power through direct dealing with the US, and soldiers of both parties were quite frank performing airport security duties after the takeover. So, ISKP is targeting the Taliban as the US forces have been entirely withdrawn.

Another reason for the prominent threat to the Taliban government by the ISKP is the difference of ideology between them. ISKP emir Shahab al-Muhajir confirmed the terrorist campaign against the Taliban and their 'American Masters'.\textsuperscript{13} The ISKP wants supremacy of the Salafist sect in Afghanistan and wants to base its legitimacy on ISIS leadership. On the other hand, the Taliban want Hanafists ideology and legitimacy of their rule on the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{14} Another difference between the two is political; the Taliban restrict their rule to Afghanistan only by stabilizing good relations with neighbors, but Islamic Caliphate is borderless. Kabul airport bombing and many attacks in Jalalabad including killing of 35 Taliban fighters claimed by ISKP makes it the most significant terrorist threats for the region, particularly for China and Pakistan. It is close enough to TTP and ETIM simultaneously. And most importantly, it is a common perception amongst the Taliban and analysts that ISKP has the support of the US as it would be impossible to plan a successful coup without their aid.

Support of the US is problematic for all the regional states and Afghanistan itself. American rivalry with China, issues with Iran, deteriorating relations with Pakistan are enough prerequisites to collaborate with a potential non-state actor to use them as a proxy for the destabilization of the region. The US hasty withdrawal is likely to create political chaos in Afghanistan, leading to a resurgence in terrorism in the region.

A deadly attack on the Kabul Mosque on October 3, 2021, though not claimed by any terrorist outfit, is associated with the ISKP due to non-existing of any other strong and organized group. The Wall Street Journal quoted an injured Talib saying, "We have two enemies. Without American help, Daesh cannot operate in Afghanistan".  

**Resurgence of TTP**

The Taliban's victory in Afghanistan has galvanized the TTP and gave them hope to expand their sphere of influence in Pakistan. The latter has been a close ally of the former, and the Taliban have assured Pakistan of limited support as far as TTP is concerned. But reports show that the Taliban might not be separating from other fundamentalists. History proves they always had soft corner for other terrorist outfits. Moreover, Pakhtuns are culturally hospitable, not denying any support to those seeking help or refuge. Muhammad Amir Rana, Director at the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies in Islamabad, said, "With the Taliban taking over, anti-Pakistan terrorist groups will be emboldened, but it doesn't end there." He further explained that "There could be an emergence of a new war of narratives in the country,

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15 Ibid.
which will transform ongoing debates about state and society and the role that religion plays."\textsuperscript{16}

The Pakistani government is in talks with TTP, however, facing huge opposition from rival political parties and civil society activists. Noor Wali Mehsud, chief of TTP, has been trying to unite the disgruntled factions under his leadership to increase terrorist activities across the border and build pressure on the Pakistan government. TTP is a terrorist organization that will be further encouraged with the Taliban takeover. A Pakistani cleric, affiliated to Red Mosque and Jamia Hafsa in the heart of Islamabad, hoisted the Taliban flag on the roof of the Jamia at least thrice since their takeover on August 15, 2021.\textsuperscript{17} The cleric had been a sympathizer of Al-Qaeda and a proponent of Shari'a law in the country.\textsuperscript{18} Such a scenario indicates that TTP has great chances of resurgence.

**Imminent Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis**

Fall of Kabul in the hands of the Taliban feared the neighbouring states with a significant influx of refugees as they have experienced in the past too. Their concerns are genuine as they are unable to bear more refugees due to weak economic conditions. Accommodating refugees directly impacts the welfare of locals as states’ resources and economic opportunities are limited.


A call for open borders by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on August 27, 2021, said that about half a million Afghans could migrate to neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Iran, or Central Asian Republics by the end of this year.\(^{19}\)

Europe and the US are concerned about the Afghan refugee influx, specifically Turkey, as it is a close neighbouring state attractive for the refugees; moreover, it provides a chance to enter into Europe with better economic opportunities. Many European leaders have issued statements regarding the unwelcoming approach except those who helped the western states in the global war on terror.\(^{20}\) Turkey has accepted the Syrian war refugees in 2015 more than its capacity and is not willing to take any more whatsoever nationality they have. Pakistan has repeatedly called the world, particularly the US, not to abandon the war-torn country to avoid humanitarian crises.\(^{21}\) Aid cut-off, freezing Afghan assets, and abandoning the country will be deteriorating the situation. A humanitarian crisis may further accelerate the refugee influx to the neighbouring states who are not in a position to accommodate them.

The frequency of the crisis has been avoided because of the bloodless takeover and lack of willingness of Afghan forces to fight against the Taliban. Moreover, very little local resistance against the Taliban takeover,


which saved the public from any war-like situation. Despite the bloodless Kabul takeover and successfully curbing the resistance in Panjshir, the Taliban could not win the hearts and minds of the Afghans. People’s lack of trust in the Taliban pushed them desperate to flee the country.

Drugs Trafficking

The Taliban have a weak grip on the governance. Without the help of regular forces and foreign troops, their grip will remain weak. After assuming power, the Taliban fighters deputed on police duty took the drug addicts to the rehabilitation centres forcefully, where doctors were compelled to use force as most of the addicts were mentally ill. 80 percent of the world’s poppy production takes place in Afghanistan, and drugs made are transported to the world, especially to the West. Such cultivation is the source of bread and butter for many Afghans, and the situation has increased the number of their users in the country as well. The Taliban's anti-drug measures are temporary and for the Afghans only. Afghanistan's revenues were dependent on foreign aid, about 75% of their total revenue until the most recent. The Taliban used to tax drug dealers in areas under their control. After the aid cut-off and assets freezing by the US and western states, poppy cultivation and opium trafficking will be the only option. Drug trafficking impacts their local population and the neighboring countries as it is not directly smuggled from within the country.

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23 Ibid.
Concerns of Pakistan in the Wake of Kabul Takeover

After the fall of Kabul, regional and global players are busy in securing their stakes in Afghanistan. Pakistan being a next door neighbour of Afghanistan is also looking forward to securing its geo-strategic and geo-economic interests. Arguably, the prevailing conundrum in Afghanistan poses some serious challenges for Islamabad. Unstable Afghanistan would affect Pakistan more than other countries in the region. First and foremost the institutions and economy of Afghanistan’s is weak and fragile. The country in the current arena of international politics is the only state that does not have an organized government structure. Neither there is democracy, dictatorship, authoritarianism nor kingdom in the country. Afghanistan has been perpetuating wars for last 4 decades having frozen nearly USD9.5 billion assets, nearly14 million Afghans living below the poverty line, the country is heading for a humanitarian catastrophe. A weak and fragile Afghanistan, resultantly, escalates Pakistan’s concerns.  

Afghanistan in the last two centuries remained a battlefield between the great powers’ competition, worrisomely, the country once again will remain a battlefield in great power competition between the US and China. Pakistan being a close ally of China will bear the brunt of not cooperating with US in Afghanistan vis-à-vis China. As mentioned earlier that the hasty and abrupt withdrawal of the US was a part of its great power competition in which the former is looking forward to creating instability for China in the

24 Dost Muhammad Barrech “The Post-American Middle East: From instability to a new regional cooperation”, October 11, 2021, ICDT.https://icdt.ir/en/the-post-american-middle-east-from-instability-to-a-new-regional-cooperation/?fbclid=IwAR2HL4jMi1QI9Hxj0u5RmEAduw4yP5dTJzufHTx7oM8CYR1jqtUWgnidOwE
region. Pakistan, thus, cannot afford the instability of the region. Afghanistan certainly is the new battlefield between the US and China, Pakistan will be affected greatly. Afghanistan appears to be an epicentre of the terrorists supported by the different countries to gain their political objectives. Islamabad, thus, is exceedingly wary of the releasing of the hardcore TTP members. The takeover of Kabul by the Taliban has been encouraging IS, Al-Qaeda, IS, TTP, and ETIM. A weak and fragile Afghanistan will be unable to defeat IS; the terrorist group might head towards Pakistan. Emboldening of the mentioned terrorists groups in the next door will put Pakistan in hot water.\textsuperscript{25} The non-inclusive government of Taliban ushers the path to further political polarization causing a great deal of division in the war-torn country generating imminent ramification for Pakistan.

It is worth to mention here imposition of sharia of Islam by force will cause further destruction in Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot remain immune to devastation of former. Admittedly, Taliban are rigid, majority of them do not understand the requirements of the 21st century nor do they believe in democracy and women’s’ rights hence a polarized Afghanistan could cause trouble for Pakistan. Meanwhile, lawlessness in Afghanistan will bolster drug trafficking in Pakistan and the culture of drugs will have irreparable consequences. Pakistan needs to ponder over Indian foothold in Afghanistan. Indian cannot live in isolation and will try to mend ties with the Taliban. India has also started negotiations with Taliban; better ties of Taliban with India will put Pakistan in a quandary. Taliban should not be

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
blindly supported as compared to past they improved their diplomatic skills. Their cordial ties with India would likely to increase Pakistan’s concerns.

Current Developments in Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan

The Kabul takeover by the Taliban, creates new security challenges for Pakistan. The recent wave of terrorist attacks unleashed by TTP in Pakistan coincides with the Kabul takeover intensifying worries of Islamabad. There is a growing fear that TTP might further escalate terrorist attacks. Unstable Afghanistan in the current arena poses innumerable challenges for Pakistan in terms of militancy, insecurity, economic instability and refugees’ influx. A violence-prone and unstable Afghanistan will galvanize extremists in Pakistan that will become an uphill task for the state to deal with.\(^26\) It is pertinent to mention here that in the 1990s how mujahideen were inspiring religious groups in Pakistan. In order to follow the trajectory of mujahideen a banned sectarian outfit Sipah-i-Sahaba carried out a campaign to enforce Sharia rule in district Jhang. Meanwhile, the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam also adopted aggressive political postures.

Jihadi groups were leaving no stone unturned to glorify militancy on campuses and in the streets. Jamaatud Dawaa, a banned outfit, had to run a campaign on media. Under current juncture in Pakistan, one can see the clerics still dominate the network of religious schools generating financial resources by themselves in a bid to augment the madressah network in the country. During the last 20 years, madressahas made a great deal of progress. The takeover of Taliban will embolden the clerics and

maddrassahas institution that might open the path to the intensification of militancy and extremism in Pakistan.  

The Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies in its latest monitoring report unveiled that the Pakistani Taliban after the fall of Kabul unleashed 55 deadly attacks and targeted killings across the country. TTP under the leadership of Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, is believed to have extended its militant network to Baloch separatists in Balochistan. A recent security reports also claim that TTP has established relationships with militant groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS-K to bolster foothold in Pakistan’s tribal and southwestern areas.

Role of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)

Terrorism has been a significant concern in the region for many years. RATS has been fighting the three threats in the region; terrorism, extremism and separatism. Among all, terrorism is given a priority. After the hasty withdrawal of the US, Afghanistan will be an epicentre of terrorism due to the increased activities of terrorist organizations and the lack of capacity of the Taliban to counter them. The Taliban does not have a regular force or intelligence system which can support their counterterrorism efforts.

In such situation, the role of SCO under RATS has been augmented. It has to come forward and deal with the situation carefully and foresightful. The US left Afghanistan without finishing its job is a concern for the regional players, and the former deliberately did it to make the situation worse for

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27 Ibid.
neighbours, especially China. Iran's membership in SCO has also increased the responsibility. All the neighbouring states of Afghanistan are SCO members except Turkmenistan, and it is an observer and prospective member of the organization.

SCO can be taken as a test case for the post-withdrawal scenario of Afghanistan. It is expected that the collaboration of the member states will decide the future of the alliance. SCO's purpose of origin was security issues and power vacuum in Central Asia after the disintegration of the USSR. It dealt with it efficiently. So, its next step of expanding the organization towards South Asia, where prolonging issues had been pending. Pakistan-India tussle and Afghanistan's more than four decades-long crisis is waiting for the SCO's role. Though China has no history of involvement in any other country's internal affairs and Russia seems convinced to follow its suit this time; however, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan demands more than non-interference or economic diplomacy. And for that purpose, SCO could be the best platform.

A former Russian Ambassador once wrote that “One should not forget that the SCO emerged as a response to immediate threats of terrorism and drug trafficking, which came from Afghanistan in the late 1990s. The SCO idea was born from a collective demand for a regional coalition to combat them”. Afghanistan has signed a protocol with the RATS on counterterrorism in 2015 and for full membership in the same year. SCO

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and Afghanistan are correlative and must be engaging in all matters underscored by the organization.  

**Way Forward**

- The Taliban ought to be cajoled for an inclusive government. Non-inclusive government would be destructive for both Afghanistan and the region.
- Pakistan under the current administration of Taliban can easily expand China-Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC to Afghanistan. Islamabad should capitalize on the opportunity of extending CPEC to Afghanistan that will give easy access to Central Asian states.
- Pakistan under the influence of China should help Taliban to extract the natural resources of Afghanistan benefiting them enormously.
- Afghanistan in the great power competition will remain a battlefield between the US and China. Pakistan, in this regard, has to remain neutral nor can Islamabad afford the alienation.
- Indians will not remain isolated in Afghanistan. New Delhi will try to mend ties with the Taliban. The Taliban internationally are more inclusive and might mend strained ties with New Delhi. Pakistan ought to be cautious of the Taliban and Indian nexus.
- Al-Qaeda, IS, TTP and ETIM are ideologically affiliated with the Taliban. Pakistan ought to convince the Taliban that their soil should not be used against Pakistan.
- Pakistan has to be careful while pleading the cause of the Taliban on international forums.

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In international politics foreign policy of a state may change overnight. The intentions of Taliban may also change overnight. Further, the friendship with the Taliban should not be taken for granted.

Inking Doha deal with the Taliban and bringing them into power remain to be seen as the long-term US strategy of converting Afghanistan into safe haven for terrorism with the aim of creating instability in the region. Under such circumstances, it is a prerequisite for Pakistan to tackle both the US and Taliban heedfully.

Drug trafficking and refugees crisis are two other dilemmas that require an introspection by Pakistan policymakers to overcome these challenges.

Conclusion

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan hopes to start a new era towards the end of four decades-long war and long-lasting peace; however, it is also a cause of concern for the regional states. Their lack of capacity and experience to govern the state, close partnership with the hardcore terrorist organizations in the past, and ambiguous commitments with the US are the cautious matters making regional states worried. The Taliban have been vowing for inclusive government, and non-discriminatory actions against all the terrorist outfits seem subtle. Al-Qaeda and TTP are the past allies of the Taliban which might be spared while taking counterterrorism steps. ISKP is a rival outfit but re-emerging in Afghanistan and might be collaborating with the ETIM in the future, which is a cause of the problem for China. Such conditions are creating serious issues for the region, particularly the neighbouring states. SCO is the only ray of hope for strengthening peace and taming the Taliban to govern the country responsibly. Afghanistan can be taken as a test case for the SCO as it is
fighting against terrorism, extremism, and separatism, and the RATS is a dedicated functional body of the organization to eliminate the menace of terrorism from member states. All the member and observer states of the organization can unify their capabilities and work for the permanent solution of the Afghan problem, the primary hurdle for peace of the region and currently posing threats to the region.

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