Motivation and risk factors inclining juveniles for terrorism

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Abstract

In this article, we will summarize most of the factors which lead to the involvement of juveniles in terrorist activities via comparative research methodology. In result, there are a certain amount of children who join terrorists' voluntary having a specific motivation for joining terrorist groups. This motivation mostly is a result of a process of radicalization and the influence of some trigger factors. As a conclusion, the vast majority of individuals who live in deprived social conditions do not end up as terrorists despite natural feelings of injustice.

Key words: juveniles, terrorism, motivation, radicalization, crime.

Motivación y factores de riesgo que inclinan a los jóvenes al terrorismo

Resumen

En este artículo, resumiremos la mayoría de los factores que llevan a la participación de menores en actividades terroristas a través de una metodología de investigación comparativa. En consecuencia, hay una cierta cantidad de niños que se unen a los terroristas de manera voluntaria y tienen una motivación específica para unirse a grupos terroristas. Esta motivación es principalmente el resultado de un proceso de radicalización y la influencia de algunos factores

desencadenantes. Como conclusión, la gran mayoría de las personas que viven en condiciones sociales desfavorecidas no terminan como terroristas a pesar de los sentimientos naturales de injusticia.

Palabras clave: juveniles, terrorismo, motivación, radicalización, crimen.

1. INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is a problematic concept to define because of its many forms, objectives, uncertainty, relative fluidity, and the diversity of perpetrators. It can be defined in a general as "the use of intentionally indiscriminate violence as a means to create terror among masses of people; or fear to achieve a religious or political aim" (Fortna, 2015). We all likely cringe when we hear the word 'terrorism'. The phrase, juveniles and terrorism, is even more frightful. Terrorism depends upon the absolute willingness of the committer to act with violence against the innocent, and children are the most innocent of all. The link between youth involvement in crime and terrorism is not confined to one region of the world or to one form of terrorism. Our research shows that there are three main types of process of juvenile's radicalization and future involvement in terrorism. The first is quite similar to the same process in child soldiers recruitment, it appears to happen on the field, where an open struggle and military operations take place (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Gaza, etc.) and/or where a terrorist organization has the strongest influence (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, etc.). The second type is the process of radicalization which is happening in terrorist influenced entities (mainly mosques, national Diasporas, etc.), this type can be observed not only in the countries listed above but also in the Western world. The third type is so-

called home-grown terrorism typical mainly to population residing in Western countries. Bell gives a Canadian example of such kind of terrorist type:

> Home-grown' jihadist youth: people who were born in Canada, are fluent in English, and have no trouble blending in. These individuals present a clear and present danger to Canada and its allies; however, they are almost impossible identify and monitor. What is radicalizing Muslims? Several factors: Family ties, specifically fathers with extremist views; spiritual leaders who preach extremist ideologies; religious conversion; and interpretations of events viewed through an extremist prism (2007: 16).

As difficult as the topic is, it is critically vital to recognize the effects of terrorism on juveniles' development and apply the research to investigate motivation and risk factors inclining juveniles for terrorism and to interventions and policies designed to support children who have been traumatized by terrorism.

2. METHODOLOGY

Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis. It sharpens our powers of description, and plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases. The research design used in this paper is comparative research that is defined to identify, analyze and explain similarities and differences across various researches we collected in here.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are typical features of character and/or circumstances which make certain children the most favorable targets for terrorist recruiters or self-recruitment. These causes of terrorism recruitment are observed in different social levels from personal to social. They also include a system of causes leading the child to recruitment in a terrorist organization and possible commission of terrorist acts in future. Personal features (personal causes and risk factors) are forming the first level of this causal structure. The following elements may be observed here:

1) General psychological factors of age and gender;

2) Social status, including a set of features characterizing a position of juvenile in the system of social connections (family and social ties, social position, etc.) and feelings about his or her position within a micro social group or society as a whole;

3) Social functions, reflecting the personal manifestation in general areas of social activity (educational level, professional, social, cultural activities, etc.).

The second level is set out by non-personal indicators which can be helpful in analyzing the causal complex of risk factors contributing to juvenile's involvement in terrorist activities. These factors are grouped as follows:

1) Poverty and economic situation in the country or region;

2) Social structure of society and the place of the community which juvenile belongs to, which strongly interlinks with #2 of personal motivation structure;

3) Culture and traditions of society or community.

The third level of the pathway to terrorism is a specific trigger factor which directly forms the desire to join aterrorist organization. The trigger factor (or trigger cause) is based on the factors listed above, however, the trigger itself mainly is a specific (quite often dramatic) event leading the child to the final stage of radicalization. Crenshaw (1981) named the trigger cause an action-reaction syndrome, when some kind of event which is addressed to the juvenile or which he or she witnesses or experiences. Summarized research shows there are generally five groups of trigger factors:

1) Events that call for revenge or action (i.e. contested elections, police brutality, murder or violence against friend/relative etc.);

2) Lack of opportunity for political participation;

3) Concrete grievances among a subgroup of a larger population;

4) Importance of belonging to a strong group for the development of identity

5) Peace talks.

As it is seen from the list factors 2 and five barely can be applicable to juveniles on the stage of their recruitment or self-recruitment. That is why further only factors 1, 3 and 4 will be analyzed among the listed personal motivation factors. It is important to remember that so many young people engage in violent, radical and terrorist activities not only because they are forced by circumstances, but also because these offer a sense of independence that resonates with their own experience Radhika Coomaraswamy, former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Special Representative for *Children* and Armed Conflict, while testifying in the ICC in Lubanga case summarized the factors listed above as follows:

> It can be difficult to differentiate between a conscripted and enlisted child:

> The recruitment and enlisting of children … is not always based on abduction and the brute use of force. It also takes place in the context of poverty, ethnic rivalry and ideological motivation. Many children, especially orphans, join armed groups for survival to put food in their stomachs. Others do so to defend their ethnic group or tribe and still others because armed militia leaders are the only seemingly glamorous role models they know. They are sometimes encouraged by parents and elders and are seen as defenders of their family and community. Children who voluntarily join armed groups mostly come from families who were victims of killing and have lost some or all of their family or community protection during the armed conflict (2012: 14).

General psychological factors of age and gender play a significant role in personal development. There are common patterns of personal development typical for all the juveniles. In case of combination with the risk factors these patterns to a greater or lesser extent influence juvenile's inclination for terrorism. Fergusion and Burgess(2008) noted that age and

gender are one of the factors that increase the likelihood of participation in a campaign of violence, terrorist acts are generally committed by young males aged 15 to 25. However, the authors argue that these biological factors are so vague as to be almost useless for anyone engaged in counterinsurgency. This position is quite doubtful. Seemingly counterinsurgency here is understood more like a military-like intervention. On the other hand, fighting insurgency is more likely to be successful if it is done on early stages of juvenile radicalization or attempted recruitment or self-recruitment of children. Due to great level of similarity of child terrorists with child soldiers it is noteworthy to address to some of age risk factors found out by Brett and Specht:

> The stage of puberty, during which many of these young people joined, is characterized by feelings of opposition and resistance to authority and power structures in the family, at school, and at the state level. In addition, it is a time when injustice and its unacceptability are strongly felt. The reasons why young people join the armed forces and armed groups reflect all these aspects of their specific stage of life (2004: 18).

Çetin (2008) argues that violence increases dramatically in the second decade of life, peaking during late adolescence at 12 to 20 percent of all young people and dropping off again by the early twenties. Some of these cases are the childhood-onset, becoming violent before puberty and escalating their rate of offending during adolescence. But in over half of all violent youths, violent behavior begins in mid- to late adolescence. Hence the age of adolescence can be viewed as a general risk factor for the development of violent (criminal) behavior in general and in combination with other factors discussed below to radical/terrorist activities. Traditional beliefs and community perceptions about the entry

of boys into manhood also play a specific part. It is a common perception that terrorists, mostly recruit young males. Male adolescents are often expected to protect and provide for their family and community, including taking up arms, while this is not the expected role of girls. However, there is significant role which is filled mostly with women. International terrorist movements exhibit a much lower level (in comparison to domestic or regional groups) of activity among female members, limited to support services. However the role of girl's recruitment in terrorism cannot be underestimated. The specifics of suicide-terrorism quite often involves female terrorists. There are terrorists well-known for female assassins and suicide bombers:

> The Tigers' greatest notoriety, however, is for its female assassins and suicide bombers. Freedom Birds have assassinated over a dozen political figures, including a prime minister of India and a president of Sri Lanka, and the women have conducted more suicide bombings than any other terrorist group…the Black Widows of Chechnya are known for killing approximately twice as many victims in each operation compared to other female suicide bombers. The spate of female suicide bombers in Iraq is also the outgrowth of an international terrorist movement, such as Al Qaeda (Gonzalez Pérez, 2010: 15).

There are also numbers of evidence of girls' involvement in suicide terrorist acts. For example, the mentioned above Black Widows, a name that plays on their alleged desire to avenge the deaths of their husbands (or other relatives) at the hands of Russian security forces working in the North Caucasus. In recent years, they have taken part in several vicious attacks in Moscow, including the bombings of two passenger planes in 2004 that killed 89 people. This terrorist attack was conducted by two female suicide bombers, one of which was a 17-year-

old. As we view the involvement of children in terrorism and their participation in terrorist activities not only from the point that they are becoming criminals themselves, but also from the angle of their victimization due to the lack of personal control and harmful influence of terrorist propaganda. The analysis of children involved in terrorism, especially terms of researching the age factors is crucial for victim logically based approach to prevention of juvenile terrorism. The whole construction of such preventive system cannot be imagined without considering the individual peculiarities of juveniles in combination with relevant risk factors leading the child to radicalization and terrorism. Avoiding this approach would lead to inefficiency and destructiveness of compulsory preventive interference in juvenile's life.

System of juvenile's social connections (family/friends/community, educational level, social position, etc.)is another set of features which can form juveniles inclination for terrorism. The role of the family and community is often a critical factor in the normative development of youth and their involvement in extremism. Recruitment into violent extremism may involve radicalization and subsequent recruitment. The researchers' opinion on the influence of family as a risk factor mainly coincides. There are several risk factors found in family relations which can harmfully affect juvenile. First of all it is family-related serious conduct disorder in childhood and adolescence (leading to commission of regular crime and particularly can lead to terrorism) such as: parental antisocial behavior; parental substance abuse; poor parental supervision, discipline, communication; poor parent-child relationship; physical or sexual abuse; maternal depression; mother smoking during pregnancy; teenage motherhood; parents disagree on

child discipline; single parenthood; large family, low socioeconomic status. However, these factors are mainly outside of the scope of this research and the family-related risk factors most commonly leading to terrorism will be reviewed below.

McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) argue the ways family affects the child's attitude to terrorism also vary. The individual's family may have a past involvement with, or show support to the movement, thus promoting membership within the family through historical connections. Individuals are recruited to a terrorist group via personal connections with existing terrorists. No terrorist wants to try to recruit someone who might betray the terrorists to the authorities. In practice, this means recruiting from the network of friends, lovers, and family. Devotion to comrades can lead a clique of friends to join a terrorist group together. According to della Porta, 30 block recruitment occurred both for the BR [Brigate Rosse in Italy] and the RAF [Red Army Faction in Germany]. Sometimes a small political group would hold a meeting and if the vote favored joining the underground, all would join together. It is also noted that that strong bonds with family and friends rather than behavioral disorders are the key motivating factor for young Muslims joining the jihad. Brett and Specht argue that after the war itself, the family is the most critical factor, whether in pushing or pulling adolescents into armed forces or armed groups. Sometimes this is deliberate: the military family sees the military as a good option, or simply as the natural step.

In the case of Islamic families, terrorist attacks are could be encouraged by family members as it gets high social status and other benefits. This risk factor is mainly applicable to the first and the second

types of terrorist recruits and generally cannot be applied to so call home-grown terrorists. The sons and daughters feel committed and responsible for their parents, brothers, and sisters. The children usually stay at home until they get married. Strong family ties extend beyond the immediate family to close and even distant relatives. Hence, if one of elder family members (father, uncle, grandfather) is disposed to radical ideology and expresses his views, the pattern of radical behavior or radical thought becomes an approved social norm within the family. Even though such elder member by sharing his thoughts merely expresses his opinion, such expression is a high risk factor which can lead to an active radicalization expression of younger family members as it is the easy way to gain respect from elderly. The influence of friends can be a pull factor or a push factor, the same situation is observed with the family. As with the other environmental factors identified, this does not mean that all the young people in a group will join, butthat's where many of the members of a group are already involved or are considering joining, the pressure to join is greater. If the individual has strong ties with another individual and the first one joins an extremist or terrorist group most likely they both will end up as members of such group.

Quite often local community support terrorist groups. This situation is especially typical to post-conflict or conflict zones, such as Afghanistan or Pakistan, where the insurgence became a social norm. Becoming a member of terrorist group often brings prestige, respect from the community and security not only to the newcomer terrorist but to his or her family in whole. Owen (2008) specifies that the suicide bomber brings many benefits to his family and it is a well-known fact that these families are compensated financially. The families also gain a special

status glorified with respect and honor. From the religious aspect, the Shahid is granted by God the promise to secure a place in heaven for 70 people chosen by him, most of whom are, of course, family members. For the financial, social, and spiritual benefits, the Shahid gains the love, idealization, and admiration of his mother, father, sisters, brothers, and extended family members. Another important aspect in this set of personal features is juvenile's feeling about his or her place in society or about a place of micro-social group within society (Jenkins, *2006*).

According to Mapping the Global Future report by U.S. National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project. There is a strong incidence of youth bulges in Arab states and growing radicalization of this demographic group. Low levels of education, as well as stunted access to socioeconomic improvement, have exacerbated this phenomenon in fragile polities such as Pakistan. The majority of radicalized youth in such countries are motivated to join violent organizations due to feelings of alienation from the larger society, and as a function of socio-economic deprivation. In this case the existence of a grievance or perceived injustice by a sub-group of the population considered to be an important the risk factor. The important aspect here is not the individual's environmental conditions, but their perception of the general level of deprivation of members of their group. It is suggested that psychological factors are playing a fundamental role in determining the movement toward terrorism. The first step here is that juvenile understands how people feel about the general levels of fairness and treatment of their group. The second step is viewed as a search for solutions to this perceived injustice to group members. If ways cannot be found to address this need, the

movement toward potential alignment with terrorist organizations is more likely (Kellner, 2018).

The personal feeling of injustice toward the juvenile as a member of a certain social group or toward the group, in general, can be formed by various factors, such as the actions of other social, political, religious group or even another nation. Yildiz and Göktepe argue that another point that may drive the populace to side with terrorist organizations occurs when the acts of law enforcement contribute to feelings of injustice and the belief that the police are operating outside the law. This happens when law enforcement bodies exceed their power, use unnecessary force (including lethal) or on the contrary do not act when it is necessary. When populace feel harassed by and unprotected from a certain social group and at the same time, law enforcement for some reasons is unable to perform its functions well people resort to another kind of protection and counteract the irritant in different ways. Akan characterizes juveniles as they are ardent; they are daydreamers and idealists. They faithfully defend their emotions and opinions; adopt a relentless stance against injustice; without paying much attention to the existing facts and realities they want that the current social order be instantly changed and the inequalities be eliminated. On this ground the recruitment of new members becomes a great deal easier for terrorist organizations (Alkan,2018).

The population here also can be viewed as a whole nation and another nation can represent a source of evil and injustice. Sütalan underlines that despite the discussion on the poor becoming poorer and rich becoming richer, globalization accelerates inequality, especially in terms of the distribution of benefits. Growing global inequality is laying a

fertile ground for new motivations for people to turn to terrorism, such as micro-nationalism (ethnic nationalism), separatism and religious extremism. Theocratic Islamic fundamentalists engage in such simplistic binary discourse [of good and evil] which they use to legitimate acts of terrorism. For certain Manichean Islamic fundamentalists, the U.S. is evil, the source of all the world's problems and deserves to be destroyed. Jihadists agree with bin Laden that Islam is in mortal danger from the hostile West led by the United States. From radical Islamic recruit's point of view the involvement into terrorist organization can offer the social gains of friendship and companionship, a newfound cultural identity, spirituality, and a consistent ideology that clearly defines the evil forces of world politics. For the individual, the newfound identity resolves the problem of a division between the modern West, and the traditional Islamic culture. The activist suddenly has a new independent platform, allowing him to be in opposition against both Western modernity and Islamic traditionalism. This kind of approach successfully used against juveniles who being affected by other risk factors look for an outlet of their negative feelings (Brandt, 2006).

4. CONCLUSION

The reports show that there are no direct correlation between poverty or economic situation and terrorism in terms of frequency of terrorist acts occurrence. However, these factors are valuable for terrorism when it comes to recruitment of new members, especially from the young part of population. In certain circumstances, poverty-induced marginality may be reinforced by a lure of ideology, especially when recruiters harp

on perceptions and experiences of injustice. Segregated social environments, associated with poor economic conditions, provide a basis for the development of extreme group attitudes amongst young people. It should be emphasized from the outset that the vast majority of individuals who live in deprived social conditions do not end up as terrorists despite natural feelings of injustice. Educational level, professional, social, cultural activities as individual's social functions, reflect his or her personal manifestation in general areas of social activity and also play a significant part in personal development and expression. There is a general misperception about terrorist recruits, cadres and members. There is a common idea that terrorist recruits are illiterate, and/or undereducated. However, researches show that the level of education among terrorist recruits is sometimes even higher than generally in the area. For example, Krueger and Maleckova (2003) compared Hezbollah militants' and Lebanese population of similar age and found that none of Hezbollah militants (even among 2 % in the age 15-17 years) were illiterate, while 6% of Lebanese population was. General level of education is also considered to be comparable higher in a terrorist group. The same results are found in research among Palestinian suicide bombers. This trend keeps up within more mature members of terrorist organizations. Sageman collected data on 400 terrorists who actually targeted the far enemy, the U.S., as opposed to their own governments. And he found that three quarters of [this] sample came from the upper or middle class. The vast majority—90 percent—came from caring, intact families. Sixty-three percent had gone to college, as compared with the 5-6 percent that is usual for the third world. These are the best and brightest of their societies in many ways. Al Qaeda's members are not the Palestinian fourteen-year- olds we see on the news, but join the jihad at

the average age of 26. Three-quarters were professionals or semi-professionals. In is noteworthy to mention that these results are not an evidence of the contemporary development of terrorist organizations, the same results were concluded by (Russell and Miller, 2005).

The only one of the risk factors which are not strongly interlinked with the personal motivation structure we would like to address separately is events that call for revenge or action. This risk factor includes a trigger for motivation by vengeance and feels a need to hit back and right wrongs. The existence of this factor is one of the most consistent findings from research dealing why people engage in political violence. Especially this trigger factor is typical for self-recruited terrorists and quite often this factor is the last stage of the child's radicalization. The personal histories of armed insurgents are frequently filled with stories about incidents in which they, their acquaintances or communities are victimized by them and decide they need to take action, seek revenge and join an armed group. An event which becomes this trigger factor could be violence from a certain social group (government bodies, including law enforcement, community and social groups or even nations as a whole), e.g. mutual violent attacks of Protestants or Catholics in Northern Ireland, the US invasion in Afghanistan etc. This violence could be directed as against juvenile him/herself or against a juvenile's social group.

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