The Dynamics of Terrorism and Extremism: Precision and Perspectives

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Abstract

The concepts of terrorism and extremism are difficult to define because the politics involved in doing so are difficult to manage. The study will attempt to traverse the difficult terrain that is the concept of a definition of terrorism, involving and exploring some of the apparent political motives of key stakeholders invested in the so-called 'War on Terror' in defining what the parameters of terrorism are and consequently who the perpetrators of terrorism are and are not. The possible conclusion in this study will be; that where political influence trumps facts-based evidence, the definition of terrorism and who constitutes a terrorist threat becomes even more complex and controversial with little possibility of that controversy being resolved because of a disagreement on the basic facts. Ultimately this **irregular application of definitions harms work that can and should be done in terms of anti- and counter-terrorism initiatives and only leaves governments and populations more exposed than protected from harm in the long-run.** The study will attempt to explore the deep rooted causes of existing problems arising in relation to highlighting the significance of issues and concerns related to compartmentalizing definition of Terrorism to inculcate more progressive attitude within the globalized society to tackle this menace.

Key words:

Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalization, War on Terror.

Preface

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in human experience. Violence has been used throughout human history by those who chose to oppose states, kings, and princes. This sort of violence can be differentiated from what is termed as terrorism. Violence in opposition to a government is often targeted against soldiers and those who govern. Terrorism, however, is characterized by the use of violence against civilians, with the expressed desire of causing terror or panic in the population.

When considering the future of Terrorism with Extremism, therefore, it can be helpful, first to look backwards - albeit briefly - to the modern origins of the criminal phenomenon referred to today as - International or Transboundary Terrorism; where matters of Extremism leading to Terrorist acts and their motivations can be politically sensitive. A century ago, terrorist codes on targeting victims closely resembled professional military codes - in that they respected the distinction between soldiers and officials in the one hand, and innocent civilians on the other.

While considering radicalization in approaching extremism and terrorism caused by extremism, it is fundamental need to understand the difference between them is - Extremism is linked to Thought; whereas Terrorism is linked to Action. Extremism is linked to Political, Social or Religious Beliefs and Ideas; whereas Terrorism is linked to Violent Material Behaviors in the face of Society - Here Radicalization is the process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly radical views in opposition to a political, social or religious status quo - while - Extremism is when a person or group uses fear, terror or violence to try and achieve change; Here Radicalization refers to a Process; whereas Extremism refers to a Person's Beliefs.

Differentiating between Terrorism and Extremism is a thorny issue; because the general impression among the people is that - Extremism and Terrorism are two sides of the same coin, and many researchers consider; Extremism as the "Ideological" umbrella on which Terrorists Organizations depend. Radicalization and Terrorism have no linked with any specific religion or ethnicity - rather Terrorism and Extremism are human behavior spreads in different societies; practiced by Muslims and Non-Muslims. Radicalization and Terrorism are the phenomenon, which cross borders and ideologies; but the western media linked Terrorism with Islam to distort the image of specific religion like Islam; and at the same time ignore other practices committed by Non-Muslims to make it precise under Terrorism or Extremism.

Historically, acts of Terrorism have been associated with Extremism; because they involve the direct targeting of non-combatants. There is broad agreement on the core meaning of the term Terrorism, but considerable disagreement about its delimitation through base of Radicalization process and Extremism statecraft. Terrorism can be seen as Strategic actions, in which violence or threat of violence is used to create fear, gain attention for a cause, or coerce another party to give in to certain demands. The aim of Extremism and Terrorism is to achieve effects on others, beside the direct victims or targets of the violence. Some analysts reserve the term Terrorism for Non-State actors, while others include State Terrorism. Some analysts define acts of Terrorism caused by Extremist virtues only if the actions are directed at civilian targets, while others include all non-combatants (including military targets not involved in the combat).

In the process of precision making of Terrorism and Extremism, some questions we seek to answer - **(1)** What are the linkages between Terrorism, Organized Crime, Weak States and New

Forms of Organized Violence?, **(2)** How to distinguish between Terrorists and Freedom Fighters?, **(3)** What are the political implications of how the various extremists and insurgence groups are defined?

With terrorist attacks in every other parts of the world, Marco Pinfari, Assistant Professor of Political Science, examines the relationship between Terrorism and Extremism.

What is Extremism?

Extremism is holding an extreme persuasion or ideals. To be precise, some beliefs and religious traditions are formulated in such a way that you can hold an extreme or an intermediate version of that doctrine. Extremism is when you stand by to the extreme structure. It is recurrently associated with religious beliefs, but it really encompasses any presumption system.

What is Terrorism?

Terrorism is a type of (political) violence that includes the intentional targeting of non-combatants and distinguishes between the direct victims and audience that you want to affect. In this way, terrorism, as defines itself, has three key aspects: Political Violence or a violent action done to share a particular political message; the Intentional targeting of non-combatants; and a Bifocal nature, where you attack one group to terrorize another group.

How are these two terms related?

In view of Marco Pinfari, there isn't a lot of overlap between Extremism and Terrorism. Where there is some overlap is when you examine the ideology and psychology of terrorists. Unquestionably, when we analyse about the term Terrorism, we generally talk about the Terrorist; and why a person would commit this kind of act. Historically, acts of terrorism have been proportionate with Extremism, because it includes the direct targeting of non-combatants. Individuals may see terrorism as the only way forward and so accept the killing of civilians. This may be because they hold an extreme view, be it their views on self-determination, religion or otherwise, but this doesn't have to be the case.

Do you have to be an Extremist to be a Terrorist?

Not All Terrorists Are Extremists. If we hypothesize that all terrorists are extremists, then we end up labelling people backward. For example, in the case of the National Liberation Front in Algeria or the secessionist movement in Ireland, you may hold a relatively reasonable view on the entitlements of your people to self-determination but still commit an act of terrorism because you feel you don't have any other means. Then, your belief may be considered "extreme" not because it actually is, but because it led you to commit acts that are seen as extreme.

Are all Extremists Terrorists?

No. In fact, some types of extremism don't have anything to do with terrorism. For instance, pacifism has two versions: contingent pacifism, where using violence is allowed in some circumstances, like physical self-defence; and absolute pacifism, where using violence is never allowed. Absolute pacifism is actually a form of extremism and is even sometimes referred to as "extreme" or "extremist" pacifism. The people who hold this view - a view that many would consider extremely good in a way - are treated as extremists in this particular ideology. However, they are not terrorists and, in fact, stand strongly opposed to violence.

General Precision over Terrorism and Extremism

Terrorism and Extremism are sometimes used interchangeably. Both depict crucial threat, but they have very distinct precisions and perspectives.

Terrorism is an action or threat designed to influence the government or intimidate the public. Its purpose is to advance a political, religious or ideological cause.

Definition of Terrorism as a violent action that:

- Endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action

- Involves serious violence against a person

- Causes serious damage to property

- Creates a serious risk to the public's health and safety

- Interferes with or seriously disrupts an electronic system

And here the question stands that; how does Terrorism differ from Extremism? "Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist."

It's essential to mark that; not all Extremist groups, whether Islamist, Extreme Right-Wing, Left-Wing, mixed and unclear ideologies, or other, will commit acts alike terrorists movements. However, some groups represent the posture of some kind of particular threats, both online and offline.

Terrorism and Extremism, both, include the tactics of threatening or coercion of mass or governments through imposing fear or domination of violence. This may implicate in death, serious injury or the taking of hostages. These acts must be prevented with articulation of its precise style, modus operandi; and the financing, movement and activity of terrorist networks blocked, in order to obstruct future violations of human rights.

The victims of extremism and terrorism must also have access to effective pragmatic solutions with reparations. Victims of terrorism and extremism can play a crucial role in building stronger, more resilient societal virtue.

Terrorism alongside violent extremism violates the human rights and fundamental freedoms of groups and individuals. However, States define terrorism in different, sometimes ambiguous ways; so domestic legislation does not always protect the human rights of citizens.

Terrorism and Extremism are the term that frequently appears in the news. These are broad terms, which refer to a myriad range of events and ideas. Terrorism has a profound impact on the world, and India, in particular, has been a victim of various terrorist actions done by various parties.

Background of Terrorism

The word 'terrorism' comes from the French 'terrorisme,' which is derived from the Latin word 'terreo,' which means 'I terrify.' The term was initially coined during the French Revolution, specifically in relation to the 'Reign of Terror.' The Irish Republican Brotherhood (1858–1924) is often regarded as the first organisation to employ contemporary terrorist tactics. Indeed, virtually any particularly heinous act of violence perceived as directed against society is frequently labelled 'terrorism,' whether it involves anti-government dissidents or governments themselves, organized crime groups or common criminals, rioting mobs of militant protesters, individual psychopaths or lone fraudsters.

The term "terrorism" is quite broad, and no single definition exists. Different individuals and organisations have developed their own definitions of terrorism.

• It is an illegal and violent behaviour carried out by an individual, a group of individuals, or an organisation with the intent of instilling fear in the general public and sending messages to the public and governments in order to achieve a certain purpose.

• Although the terror attack may only affect a few individuals (depending on the circumstances), the intended target is usually much larger than the number of victims.

•The goal of the terrorists is to send a powerful message to the general population and the government. They usually claim blame after committing a violent crime in order to demonstrate their power and ability, and therefore terrorise the public.

UN Definition: Any criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of people or a single person for a specific purpose are in any circumstance unjustifiable, regardless of the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious, or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them. **US Department of State Definition Terrorism** is defined by the US Department of State as premeditated, politically motivated violence done by sub-national groups or clandestine operatives against non-combatant targets.

European Union Definition Terrorism, according to the European Union, has the goal of "destabilising or destroying a country's core political, constitutional, economic, or social institutions." **FBI Definition**, According to the FBI: "Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives**." India Definition Terrorism** is an anxiety-inducing form of repeated violent action used by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors for psychological, criminal, or political purposes, in which the major targets of violence are not the direct targets of violence.

- Extremism is the context of security **implies adoption of illegal and violent ways to propagate one's ideology.** Extremists are motivated by different goals and objectives.

- It is somewhat surprising that despite terrorism being recognised as a global phenomenon, **attempts in the past for arriving at an internationally accepted definition of terrorism have proved futile.**

- According to some observers, this ambivalence is **primarily due to two reasons:**

- **Firstly**, a **'Terrorist'** in one country may be viewed as a **'Freedom Fighter'** in another;

- **Secondly**, it is known that **some States resort to or encourage various kinds of criminal acts**, clandestinely, through their own agencies or hired agents to subvert or to otherwise destabilize another lawfully established government or in extreme cases get important political or governmental personalities of another State assassinated.

- History is replete with instances of acts of this nature. Hence, there is an obvious **lack of political will**, if not resistance to any universally acceptable definition of terrorism.

- While **Member-States of the United Nations have not arrived at a consensus** regarding the definition of terrorism.

The Definition of Terrorism proposed by the Secretary General of the UN in September 2005 was accepted by France. According to him, **Terrorism is** "any act meant to injure or kill the civilians and the non-combatants, in order to intimidate a population, a government, or an organization and incite them to commit an act against the perpetrators or on the contrary stop them from doing so".

- The threat from Terrorism and Extremism will remain high and could worsen over the decade. There are now more (Islamist) Extremists from more countries active in more places than ever before. Extremists and Terrorists will continue to deter and target fragile and violence-prone states, including in Southeast Asia, for safe havens and to build power projection. Globally, Extremism and its outcome as Terrorist (activities) will add to turmoil and yield international security interventions, especially in the Middle East and Africa.
- Communications technology allows Extremists and Terrorists, to motivate or penetrate attacks remotely; often through encrypted means, underlining the complexity and unpredictability of the risks, the world is facing currently too. New technologies could make it easier for Extremists and Terrorists to make advanced ideological along with biological or chemical warfare agents.
- Recent attacks and disruptions in Australia underlined the dynamic nature of the Extremists and Terrorists.
- With the conflicts in Syria and Iraq having energised (Islamist) Extremists at a level never thought before; these threats will have a generational influence.
- Extremist narratives will continue to inspire violence comprehensively, even as the so-called Islamic State (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria, Al Qaida retains the intent to conduct attacks against western interests. Other groups are likely to emerge. The security and stability of globe will continue to be vital in containing the threat from international terrorism.
- The threat of Extremism and Terrorism in Southeast Asia is increasing because of links between local Extremists and Terrorist groups such as ISIL, with the situation in the southern Philippines of pressing concern. We must plan on the basis that a mass casualty attack against western targets in Southeast Asia will take place.

Terrorist Activities

Terrorists indulge in a variety of activities for primarily three things:

1. Generate fear among people.

2. Create publicity for their goals/causes.

3. Try to convince people that the government is powerless against them.

Terrorists and/or terror groups engage in random killings/assassinations, bomb blasts in public places, suicide attacks, kidnappings, extortion, destroy public property/infrastructure, hijacking, cyber-attacks, etc. They also indulge in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear warfare. Many terror groups also engage in an armed insurgency against governments.

The aim of political terror groups varies from toppling the established government of a country to having better representation for a group of people, to seceding from a country and forming another country, to acquiring a share in the government, etc. Many other groups of terror exist solely for making illicit money and expanding their own illegal criminal empires. Many groups of organised crime are also labelled terrorist groups.

Controversy in Defining Terrorism: The difficulty in defining "terrorism" is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence (directed at whom, by whom, for what ends) is legitimate; therefore, the modern definition of terrorism is inherently controversial. The use of violence for the achievement of political ends is common to state and non-state groups. The majority of definitions in use has been written by agencies directly associated with government, and is systematically biased to exclude governments from the definition. The contemporary label of "terrorist" is highly pejorative; it denotes a lack of legitimacy and morality. As a practical matter, so-called acts of "terrorism" or terrorism are often a tactic committed by the actors as part of a larger military or geo-political agenda.

Many States define terrorism in national law in ways that draw to differing degrees on these elements. Therefore various aspects of; Specific challenges related to the definition of terrorism and the principle of security need to be addressed in detail.

Significance of the Study

The definition of terrorism is a difficult concept to map and has been the source of contention in academia and policy for a several years now. Where some scholars and experts have chosen to work with open-ended definitions, others have delineated several different types of definitions, all exploring and attempting to encompass the many elements that typify what terrorism is.

In the same way that a singular definition of the concept of terrorism is very difficult to articulate, it is clear that any definition is also problematical when considering *who* decides what it is or is not. Previously, Western governments were reluctant to weigh in on the difficult debates around attempts to define terrorism. Instead, many states deferred to the United Nations conventions that list terrorist threats and prohibit activities associated with terrorism, which

include but are not limited to hijacking, hostage-taking and assassination (Carver, 2016: 124-125).

All of this is evidence underlines just how important it is for scholars and the public to be circumspect of what the definitions of extremism and terrorism are, as much as who is doing the defining and for what purpose. Furthermore, all of these considerations compound the controversy surrounding any attempts to define terrorism as they prove that there are ideological, political and ultimately ulterior motives behind the way different parties conceptualize terrorism and which actions they include and exclude. This logic is the basis for theories surrounding state terrorism and its purposeful exclusion from the public discourse around terrorism; however, the significance of the study is to fill the gaps as far as possible as no work is done in the past.

Review of Literature

To this end, a good point of departure may be the origins of the word itself. The word 'terror' emerged in the English language as a descriptor for the actions of French revolutionaries against their domestic enemies in 1793 and 1794, most notably referring to repression in the form of executions. Beginning with citations from the 1790s, terrorism was quite literally defined as (1) government by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the Revolution of 1989-94 and (2) policy intended to strike terror in those against whom it is adopted (Tilly, 2004: 8). The latter half of this early definition of terror has persisted through global history and politics, with many scholars agreeing that the point of terrorism is to terrorise, with the act of doing so historically assumed by an organised force (Chailand & Blin, 2007: 2).

Scholars like Noam Chomsky (2007) and Timothy Shanahan (2016) rightfully point out that governmental agencies often characterise the concept of terrorism as unlawful activity committed by non-state actors, thus precluding the possibility of a concept such as state or state-sponsored terrorism and that this is intentionally meant to legitimate the prevailing power relationships and institutions of various governments (Shanahan, 2016: 108-109). Chomsky (2007: 44-45) is even more pointed in his views on how and why the American government purposefully defines and constructs the definition of terrorism the way that it does. He states that

"It's hard to craft a definition of terror that applies solely to the terror that they carry out against us [the United States] and our clients but excludes the terror (often far worse) that we and our clients carry out against them… Underlying conventional discussion of terrorism and aggression is the consistent rejection of the most elementary of moral principles: that we apply to ourselves the same standards we do to others, if not more stringent ones".

Since extremism and terrorism policy of various terrorists groups is not a new concern for the world. The relative issues, future concerns and conditions are yet to be studied. The policies have to be harnessed for the benefits of not only to State Governments and its forces but also the country to which they belongs, because ultimately society may have to place its destiny in their hands for good or bad.

Dynamics of Terrorism and Extremism

The implications of the absence of a universal definition of terrorism for legal purposes are wide-ranging. One is that the lack of a definition may facilitate the politicization and misuse of the term "terrorism" to curb non-terrorist (or sometimes even non-criminal) activities. In turn, this can result in States, e.g., violating the rights of their own or other States' citizens, such as those of international human rights law, in the course of their counter-terrorism efforts.

"Terrorism" may well be the most important word in the political vocabulary these days. Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent worldwide to bring this particular form of violent political crime or illicit mode of waging conflict under control while people die every day from acts of terrorism. Nevertheless, some people do not seem to bother to define terrorism nor do they consider it worthwhile defining the concept.

The absence of a common definition also encourages the continuation of double standards. It is important to have a common understanding of what constitutes terrorism.

In assessing the differences between definitions, it appears that the most disparity lies within the description of terrorist motivations. This disparity, alone, warrants study and yet the importance of focusing on the difficulty of defining the motivations of terrorists is more significant in its implications. It is vital to be comprehensive in the categorization of motivations because the methods and targets selected by terrorists are often reflected by their purpose.

Conclusions of the Study

- There is a clear risk that the international community's use of the term 'terrorism', without defining it, can result in the unintentional international legitimisation of conduct undertaken by oppressive regimes through delivering the message that the international community wants strong action against 'terrorism,' however defined. Besides situations where some States resort to the deliberate misuse of the term, there is reason for concern about the more frequent adoption in domestic anti-terrorism legislation of terminology that is not properly confined to countering terrorism.

- What transforms political or ideological aspirations into terrorism is the decision by one or more morally responsible individuals to employ the morally inexcusable tactics of deadly or otherwise serious violence against 'civilians', i.e. innocent bystanders or members of the general population or a segment of it. With the qualification that hostage-taking entails a threat of serious violence and should therefore be included in the definition, terrorism and terrorist crimes should always be defined so that such violence is an element of the definition.

- Only acts constituting offences within existing terrorism-related conventions may fall under the terrorism definition, includes an important rule-of-law based delimitation of the notion of terrorism. However, not all of the international conventions that are today

listed as conventions against terrorism were originally intended to cover instances of terrorism alone.

- In the absence of an internationally agreed definition of terrorism, the provision of human rights law has come to serve, together with the prohibition against discrimination, as the basis for a 'checklist' for the conformity of definitions of terrorism or terrorist crimes with human rights.

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