RECRUITING, MOTIVATING, AND RETAINING YOUTHFUL PARTICIPANTS IN

TERRORISM: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

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Sarah Cates Tunnell

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TERRORISM: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Thesis Supervisor:

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Arnold Leder, PhD
Department of Political Science

Approved:

_____

Heather C. Galloway, Ph.D.

Dean, Honors College

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Abstract

      The purpose of this study is to isolate a potential trend in organized terror recruitment practices; specifically whether youthful populations comprise a significant percentage of participants. Membership patterns may illustrate common factors in individual motivations for terrorist activity, the strategic logic employed by movement leaders, and be a deciding factor in the means used to achieve their goals. Given the centrality of counterterrorism in the United States' post-9/11 foreign policy, understanding the perpetrators of political violence is essential for prevention. Through the analysis of primary and secondary sources, news reports, and quantitative data, this work will allow for a deeper understanding of this complex issue.

Introduction

In the years following the September eleventh terrorist attacks on New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, counterterrorism came to dominate U.S. foreign policy. However the United States' primary strategy for the prevention of terrorist attacks tends to follow the model of demand side economics; drone strikes, raids, renditions, and intelligence sharing garnered via international partnerships, targeting already formed terrorist cells and preventing plots already in development.[1] These measures do not eliminate the supply of terrorist recruits or address their reasons for joining an organization; on the contrary they can often counterproductively motivate more people to take up the cause. Additional approaches to this issue include the elimination of state sponsored attacks, which do not cut off the significant funding provided by illegal trades such as drug and arms trafficking.[2] Apart from a marginal percentage of the policy allocated to development aid, the United States' strategy addresses the consequences, not the causes of political violence.

If the United States were a house with a leaky roof, its inhabitants – world policy makers - have two options for dealing with it. They can put a bucket under the stream of water slipping into the living room and hope that the rain ends soon, or they can get up on the roof and patch the leak. For advocates of the latter solution, it becomes necessary to understand the source of the problem. In the case of terrorism, this metaphor translates to

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[1] Robinson, Linda. "The Future of Counterterrorism: Fewer drones, More Partnerships." The Washington Post, October 18, 2013.

[2] Cilluffo, Frank. "The threat posed from the convergence of organized crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism." *House, Committee on the Judiciary. Congressional Testimony. 106th Cong., 2d sess* 13 (2000).

curtailing the recruits to an extremist organization. The prerequisite for such action is understanding which persons or populations comprise the pool of potential recruits, why they choose to join an organization, and why the organization accepts them.

Within this realm of understanding terrorist recruits; this work seeks to examine a potential trend in the age of individual recruits; in particular, whether youthful populations comprise a significant portion of recruits. To truly do this topic justice would require original, on the ground, research. Nonetheless primary and secondary sources, news reports, and quantitative data are available enough to allow a preliminary analysis. While individuals under the age of eighteen participate in terrorism at a notable level, youth in general constitute a much greater proportion of recruits. The greatest implication presented by these trends is that individual motivators for political violence are instilled at an early age.

Defining Terrorism

Terrorism is often misunderstood, conflated by the media with terms such as insurgency or guerrillas, and manipulated to fit all manner of acts. Agreement on a definition is so elusive that even the varied departments within the United States government require different qualifications for motives, victims, and the type of act. Some of the conflict arises out of whether attacks on combatants qualify and if not, whether a distinction should be made between on and off duty combatants.[3] For a majority of scholars only non-state actors can be terrorists, thereby preserving the ability for a state to exercise legitimate force. States are still restricted by the laws of just war and can be held accountable for war crimes akin to terror tactics. However, some also believe that this characterization unduly privileges states by delegitimizing political

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[3] Hoffman, Bruce. Inside terrorism. Columbia University Press, 2013. P. 31

violence by non-state actors for potentially justifiable causes, such as national liberation.[4]

Other controversies involve whether assassinations should be included, whether social change (rather than political) can be a motive, and even whether the threat of force is just as terrifying as actual force. Yet the most frequent conflict is with the all too familiar refrain, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."

As clichéd an observation as this may be; its relevance to the discussion of identifying terrorism cannot be diminished. When is political violence moral and acceptable? Many organizations that states consider to be terrorists deem themselves freedom fighters, liberation armies, or even self-defense movements. Are these wordings intentional obfuscations intended to engender support or the genuine sentiments of the organization's leaders? Should the actions of the Sons of Liberty in the American Revolutionary War or Nelson Mandela and the Marxist African National Congress in the fight against apartheid in South Africa, be delegitimized as terrorism or accepted as part of the path to self-determination?

A major distinction between legitimate revolutionary action and extremism may come down to the targeted victims. Attacks against the state itself and its representatives, with some attempt to avoid harming innocents, may be permissible, whereas the random murder of uninvolved civilians is another case entirely.[5] According to scholars like Michael Waltzer; it is the randomness of the attack that becomes a defining characteristic of terrorism. To further elucidate this statement, one might look to the aforementioned examples. Dumping tea into the Boston harbor, or even more violent cases such as the Algerian *Front de Liberation Nationale* bombing government buildings (many times after

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[4] Evangelista, Matthew. *Law, Ethics, and the War on Terror*. Vol. 5. Polity, 2008 p. 38.
[5] Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument With Historical Illustrations*. Basic Books, 2006. P. 200-205.

they had been evacuated), would be direct attacks against a repressive government that were not random in the least.[6] On the other hand, the radical wing of the African National Congress known as the MK, were not as discriminating in their targeting. They famously bombed primary school buses and public rail stations, killing hundreds of innocents.[7]

Other differentiation methodologies have involved analyzing the means employed by these groups. However these measures can be problematic. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency argues that unlike insurgencies, terrorists do not form traditional armed units, attempt to commandeer territory, seek mass mobilization, participate in open combat with other forces, or obtain sovereign power.[8] This is counterintuitive first when considering ethno-nationalist terrorist groups such as the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers) whose primary goals are to gain sovereignty. Secondly it muddies the classifications of groups like the Taliban, Hamas, and even Al-Qaeda. Each is classified as a terrorist organization by the United States government and if applied to the randomness principle above, qualify.[9] Yet the former two have been sovereign powers in the past and occupy territories. Additionally, all three face other armed groups in direct combat, and use widespread propaganda that encourage mass recruitment or mobilization.[10]

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[6] Horne, Alistair. "A Savage War of Peace: Algeria *1954-1962.*" *Pac Macmillan,* (1977). P 187.
[7] Higson-Smith, Craig. "A community psychology perspective on terrorism: Lessons from South Africa." *The Psychology of Terrorism* (2002): 3-22.
[8] Central Intelligence Agency, Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, No Date,) p. 2
[9] U.S. Department of State. Foreign Terrorist Organizations. Bureau of Counterterrorism. September 28, 2012.
[10] *Al-Qaeda in Yemen*, Public Broadcasting Service, Frontline. May 29, 2012. Documentary. Obaid-Chinoy, Sharmeen. *Inside A School For Suicide Bombers.* February, 2012. Documentary. Sayigh, Yezid. "Hamas Rule in Gaza: Three Years On." *Middle East Brief, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, March* 41 (2010).

For the purposes of this work, the Walzer method will take precedence because of the problems with the C.I.A.'s method. Furthermore to disregard the threat of violence as a terrorist act would be to disregard the profound psychological impact of such threats, which have the potential to be more "terrifying" than an actual attack. Thus, let the following definition stand: Terrorism is an act of premeditated intimidation or coercion against noncombatants and is intended to provoke political, social, or religious change through fear stimulated by the threat or use of physical force.

Deciphering why one political movement chooses to adopt violence and another does not remains a murky study. Despite suggestions that terrorism is the only form of leverage available to weak actors, not all weak actors employ terrorism.[11] Many have argued that violence is a last resort prompted by an initial failure; perhaps the outright failure of nonviolent tactics or an organization's inability to invoke mass appeal to their cause "either because their view is too incompatible with the rest of the population or because of organizational failings".[12] However, three challenges to this idea expose its fault. First, even initially unsuccessful nonviolent movements can still refrain from violence; see Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights protests. Second, originally violent movements or individuals may turn to nonviolence; see Gandhi's war efforts in South Africa.[13] Finally, a majority of terrorist organizations never attempt other tactics.[14]

Terrorist acts may be a means to raise awareness and garner support for a given cause. The media has become particularly integral to modern terrorism, providing a stage

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[11] Arreguin-Toft, Ivan. "How the weak win wars: A theory of asymmetric conflict." International Security 26, no. 1 (2001): 93-128.
[12] Crenshaw, Martha. "The logic of terrorism." Terrorism in perspective 24 (2007).
[13] Indian Opinion, 6-1-1906, Collected Works of Mahatama Gandhi, 1905
[14] Abrahms, Max. "What terrorists really want: Terrorist motives and counterterrorism strategy." International Security 32, no. 4 (2008): 78-105.

upon which terrorists can gain attention.[15] Tactics can include hostage taking, airline

hijacking, assassinations, and surprise or forewarned violence such as bombings.

Traditional nonsuicide terrorism is responsible for ninety seven percent of all terrorist

attacks, yet suicide attacks account for the majority of terrorism related deaths.[16]

Furthermore, nonsuicide attacks are less controversial and therefore are more likely to

stimulate support and less likely to prompt significant domestic resistance. Suicide

attacks are the most risky in terms of angering potential supporters, neutral parties, and

opponents. However, along with being the most damaging, it is the most frightening

because it eliminates the opportunity for deterrence. When one's opponent is willing to

die for the cause, (or if the organization leaders possess the ability to recruit a limitless

source of foot-soldiers willing to die for the cause) the threatened population's feeling of

vulnerability is compounded.[17]

Suicide terrorism is not specific to any exact motive in terms of religion, ideology

or ethno-nationalism. The mystery however, is why one group chooses to use suicide

tactics and another does not. While technological innovations in explosives have made

suicide attacks less necessary for inflicting harm on a target, suicide attacks have been on

the rise since the 1980s.[18] Scholars like Robert Pape have controversially argued that

suicide attacks see higher success rates (nearing fifty percent) in terms of mission

completion, but this has been challenged.[19] However, there is merit in the assertion that

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[15] Weimann, Gabriel, and Conrad Winn. *The theater of terror: Mass media and international terrorism*. New York: Longman, 1994.
[16] Piazza, James A. "A supply-side view of suicide terrorism: A cross-national study." *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 01 (2008): 28-39.
[17] Bloom, Mia. Dying to kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror. Columbia University Press, 2005.
[18] Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *Terrorists and suicide attacks*. Congressional Research Service, 2009.
[19] Piazza, James A. "A supply-side view of suicide terrorism: A cross-national study." The Journal of Politics 70, no. 01 (2008): 28-39.

suicide attacks draw more attention, have the aforementioned greater psychological effect and are financially cheaper.[20] Nine and a half times out of ten, suicide attacks are practiced by organized groups, not "lone wolf" terrorists, and can be traced to a specific social or political issue. The operatives involved tend to be mentally stable and aware of the full ramifications of their act. Individuals may prefer this method in hopes of achieving religious purity, as in classical jihad, but martyrdom is not purely religious.[21] Individual motivators for suicide terrorism typically do not differ from their motivations for nonsuicide terror.

Terrorism is often not a last resort for campaigners and can be confused by issues such as anonymous attacks, ineffectiveness, and even fluctuating platforms.[22] Research in terrorism, though growing, is also hampered by problems of semantics, lacking attention to nuances or details, the limitations of analyzing a clandestine activity, and faulty methodology.[23] Nonetheless, continued effort is necessary for prevention and international cooperation.

<u>Historical Perspective</u>

Though it has only moved to the forefront of world politics in the twenty-first century, terrorism is by no means a new phenomenon. From ancient Assyrian psychological warfare, to Spartan bioterrorism in the Peloponnesian Wars, to Mithradates' attacks on Rome (88 BCE); terrorism has been intertwined with human

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[20] Cronin, Audrey Kurth. Terrorists and suicide attacks. Congressional Research Service, 2009.
[21] Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2009.
[22] Abrahms, Max. "What terrorists really want: Terrorist motives and counterterrorism strategy." *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 78-105.
[23] Young, Joseph K., and Michael G. Findley. "Promise and pitfalls of terrorism research." *International Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2011): 411-431.

societies for thousands of years.[24] Timeworn as it may be, terrorism has matured and

transformed alongside the rest of the world. The first terrorist organizations formed in

the early Common Era with Jewish Sicarii Zealots, then came the Muslim Assassins of

the Middle Ages, and Hindu Thugs during India's colonial period.[25]   Yet none of these

groups, or their practices, are interchangeable with the terrorist organizations of today.

Some scholars have divided terrorism chronologically into "waves," beginning

with the ideological (often anarchy) movements at the turn of the century. By this logic,

certain trends arise that are specific to each period, such as generational rebellion as an

individual motivator during the first wave.[26] The modern, or fourth, wave of terrorism has

been marked by some of the themes already referenced; a marked increase in suicide

tactics and the rise of religious causes over the ethno-nationalist or anti-colonial struggles

present in the second and third waves.[27] Though many fear this violent fourth wave is

still on the rise, bucking the tradition of former waves maintaining a lifespan of twenty or

thirty years, others argue that it is already on the decline.[28]

Modern international terrorism was born out of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the

1960s.[29] Almost twenty years after Israel attained statehood, three members of the

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) hijacked a plane en route to Tel Aviv in order

to negotiate with the Israeli government. The men used their hostages as leverage to free

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[24] Saggs, Henry William Frederick. The might that was Assyria. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984. Mayor, Adrienne, "How an Ancient Act of Terror Brought Down a Republic." George Mason University, History News Network. 2014. Papagrigorakis, MJ, Et al. "The Plague of Athens; An Ancient Act of Bioterrorism." National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine. 2013. (3):228-9. Doi: 10.1089/bsp.2013.0057.
[25] Bloom, Mia. Dying to kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror. Columbia University Press, 2005.
[26] Weinberg, Leonard, and William Eubank. "An End to the Fourth Wave of Terrorism?." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 33, no. 7 (2010): 594-602.
[27] Weinberg, Leonard, and William Eubank. 2010.
[28] Weinberg, Leonard, and William Eubank. 2010.
[29] Hoffman, Bruce. P. 71.

a number of PLO members imprisoned in Israel.[30] The features of this attack were entirely novel in 1968 but have become the defining characteristics of terrorism since. International travel, facilitated by technological innovations, created a global, rather than domestic, threat. Abundant media attention and coverage of the hostage crisis alerted terrorists to the fact that the media could be employed for their cause, both to strengthen awareness and spread fear. Finally targeting innocent or uninvolved civilians generated an unprecedented shock value. Doing so further attracted the media and motivated the threatened government to cooperate.

<p style="text-align:center;">Modern Organizations</p>

Terrorist organizations can be most easily classified by their orientation: religious, ethno-nationalist, or ideological. Ethno-nationalist groups generally seek autonomy or secession from a larger state based on their ethnicity or nationalism. Political ideologue groups hope to transform a given territory's political practices, such as a transfer from capitalism to socialism. Finally, religious groups are motivated by faith or religious doctrine. These classifications are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, a number of religiously motivated groups like Hamas also seek a sovereign state. No society, religion, or culture is exempt from the possibility of terrorist activity; even Buddhist terrorist organizations exist.[31] The following organizations are not by any means the only terrorist organizations operating today, but they are the key players.

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[30] Hoffman, 2004. P. 71
[31] "Terrorist Organization Profile:Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA)". The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, the University of Maryland. 2013. Retrieved 1 April 2013.

Ideological terrorism has declined in recent history, with many organizations such as the Red Brigade or the Shining Path of Peru going defunct. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine while still potentially relevant, has not staged an attack since 2004. However, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) continue to be a threat to stability in the region. This Marxist-Leninist organization is heavily intertwined with the flourishing Colombian drug trade, controls a number of rural areas, and employs demonstrative and destructive terrorist tactics. They hope to overthrow the current government and establish a socialist regime and have been active since the 1960s. [32] Another Marxist-Leninist organization seeking socialist rule is the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) of Turkey. It has been active since the late seventies, violently opposes Western imperialism, and recruits most of its foot soldiers from underprivileged areas.[33]

A number of ethno-nationalist organizations are at the forefront of contemporary terrorism discussions. The now-defunct Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka were a Marxist-Leninist organization fighting for Sri Lankan autonomy. Their twenty-six year conflict with the Indian government was marked by the group's record-breaking use of suicide attacks.[34] This group is notable for a number of reasons, including their relative tactical success in assassinating a slew of state officials and successfully inventing and deploying the suicide belt.[35] Their actions provoked such brutality from the Indian government that security forces allegedly tortured and raped those suspected of even supporting the

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[32] BBC News Profiles, "Colombia's Armed Groups." August 29, 2013.
[33] BBC News Profiles, "Turkey's Marxist DHKP-C." February 2, 2013.
[34] Bhattacharji, Preeti. "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam" Council on Foreign Relations, May 20, 2009
[35] Bhattacharji, Preeti. 2009

organization.[36] Finally the tigers hosted a truly diverse membership pool, including child

wings, and numerous women.[37] The Tigers were funded by illegal activities such as drug

smuggling and robberies.[38]

After the fall of the Soviet Union, a Muslim minority group in the northern

Caucasus region known as Chechnya, began its struggle against the nascent Russian

Government. These Chechen separatists (Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade

(IIPB), Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR), the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance

and the Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs) have led massive bombing campaigns,

undergone two wars against their rulers, and have become increasingly violent since

2008.[39] Like the Tamil Tigers they employ multiple strategies of terrorism, however it is

believed some of their funding comes from Saudi financiers linked with Al-Qaeda. These

groups are particularly notable for the number of women in their ranks, colloquially

known as "black widows."[40]

Al-Qaeda is a radical Sunni Islamic terrorist organization whose purpose is to

remove American infidels from the sacred Arabian Peninsula.[41] The peninsula is the

holiest of all Islamic lands; it is not only home to Mecca and Medina, but also the

Messenger Muhammad is purported to have declared that two religions could not exist

together in Arabia.[42] The presence of American army bases in the peninsula is therefore

[36] Prabhakaran, Velupillai, "Tamil Tigers Chronology" The New York Times, Last updated, March 28, 2014.
[37] Prabhakaran, Velupillai, 2014.
[38] Bhattacharji, Preeti. 2009
[39] Bhattacharji, Preeti. "Chechen Terrorism" Council on Foreign Relations, April 8, 2010.
[40] Speckhard, Anne, and Khapta Akhmedova. "Black widows: The Chechen female suicide terrorists." Female suicide terrorists (2006): 63-80.
[41] Lewis, Bernard. What went wrong?: the clash between Islam and modernity in the Middle East. HarperCollins, 2003.
[42] Lewis, Bernard. Islam and the West. Oxford University Press, 1993.

sacrilegious and is furthermore seen as an arm of Western imperialism.[43] The

organization hopes to overthrow these powers and establish just Islamic states through

the Middle East. Further tension arises out of the United States' support for Israel and

involvement in similar issues.

Al-Qaeda's recruit base is international, with a large portion of members hailing

from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and even Morocco.[44] Most of the organization's funding is

derived from Saudi Arabian investments and voluntary remittances.[45] Scholars like

Bernard Lewis attribute the availability of funds to the West's addiction to petrol,

"Without oil money [Al-Qaeda] would have remained a fringe group in a marginal

country."[46] Al-Qaeda is most famous for the attacks of September eleventh, but has

evolved considerably since that time. Rather than the inflexible, monolithic establishment

it once was, it is now a vastly networked ideological movement that claims to be stronger

than ever.[47] While the Iraqi rebels responsible for half of the world's suicide bombings in

the last decade are of mostly unknown affiliation, at least twenty-five of the known

attacks have originated with the Iraqi branch of Al-Qaeda, also known as the Islamic

State of Iraq (AQI). These attacks have led to nearly five hundred deaths and fifteen

hundred injuries.[48] Al-Qaeda is also able to spread its influence by supporting or

endorsing groups like Al-Shebab (Somalia) and Boko Haram (Nigeria), two Islamist

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[43] The Heritage Foundation. "Al-Qaeda: Declarations & Acts of War." Fatwas, 2014.
[44] Riedel, Bruce. "Al Qaeda strikes back." Foreign Affairs (2007): 24-40.
[45] Gunaratna, Rohan. Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror. Columbia University Press, 2002.
[46] Lewis, Bernard. "Book Notes, What Went Wrong" C-SPAN, Interview. December 18, 2001.
[47] Hoffman, Bruce. "The changing face of Al Qaeda and the global war on terrorism." Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 27, no. 6 (2004): 549-560.
[48] Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism. Chicago University, 1981-2011

groups that are of growing concern to counterterrorism efforts. The latter is responsible for fifteen hundred deaths last month alone.[49]

Hezbollah identifies itself as the "defender of Lebanon." It formed after the 1982 Israeli invasion of its home state and supports Palestinian extremist groups in their aspirations for an Arab state. This uniquely Shi'ite organization galvanizes global Shia empowerment in all sectors, not just militarily.[50] The political branch of Hezbollah is involved in the state's governance, while the militant branch stages terrorist attacks. While the organization has employed suicide terrorism in the past, the last attack of this sort was in 1999.[51] The belief is that it is funded by remittances from the Iranian government and voluntary contributions.[52] Hezbollah has trained Shia militants in Iraq to fight U.S. forces and has most recently offered its support to Bashar-Al-Assad's regime in Syria. Some of Syria's geopolitical relevance is due to its service as a conduit for Iranian arms shipments to Hezbollah.

While Islamic literalism was not a significant motivator in the Palestinians' violent uprising against Israel in 1987, Hamas has combined religious literalism with its desire for Palestinian autonomy.[53] The resulting objective is to replace Israel with an Islamic Palestinian state. The organization is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, rejects all past agreements between the PLO and the Israeli government, and is concentrated in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.[54] It has been designated as a significant barrier to peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict by the U.S. government. Hamas' legacy has

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[49] Ross, Will, "Death Toll in Boko Haram Attacks Reach 1500" BBC News, March 31, 2014.
[50] Cammett, Melani. "Habitat for Hezbollah." Foreign Policy (2006).
[51] Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism. Chicago University, 1981-2011.
[52] Cammett, Melani. "Habitat for Hezbollah." Foreign Policy (2006).
[53] Hoffman, Bruce. Inside terrorism. Columbia University Press, 2013.
[54] National Counterterrorism Center. "HAMAS" 2014.

fluctuated between involvement in the Palestinian government and an increasingly violent string of bombings and suicide attacks. The most recent cease-fire between Israel and Hamas took place in 2009, but was counteracted by violence from both sides. It is believed that the group is funded by charitable donations from Muslim NGOs and individuals.[55]

Like FARC, the Taliban vacillates somewhere between insurgency and terrorism. It has branches in Afghanistan and Pakistan and is being included in this study for its frequent use of suicide attacks against innocent civilians. Between 2001 and 2011, the Afghan Taliban successfully killed thirty-seven hundred people and injured twice as many, with over four hundred successful suicide attacks.[56] In the same period its counterpart in Pakistan totaled only seventy-five attacks but killed twelve hundred people, averaging seventeen deaths an attack versus the Afghan Taliban's nine deaths per attack. [57] Both groups are Sunni radicals that seek sovereignty in their respective states and most members possess ethnic, as well as religious, ties. The Afghan branch fights against NATO forces in the region and the Pakistani branch's main opponent is the Pakistani government, which is targeted for their alliance with Western powers. Both advocate for Sharia law, strict interpretation of the Qur'an, and are famed for their "oppressive" treatment of women and girls. A primary source of funding for these groups is illegal drug trades, specifically opium.[58]

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[55] Pina, Aaron D. "Fatah and Hamas: the New Palestinian Factional Reality." Library of Congress, Washington D.C., Congressional Research Center. 2006.
[56] Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism. Chicago University, 1981-2011.
[57] Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism. 1981-2011.
[58] National Counterterrorism Center. "Afghan Taliban" 2014. National Counterterrorism Center. "Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan" 2014.

As of yet there is no single explanation for individual motivators for terrorism that applies to all cases, however the following section will attempt to discuss the strongest arguments. Mainstream explanations for joining a terrorist organization range from a lack of education, to mental illness, and even psychological conditioning As to the first two, numerous scholars have questioned a relationship between socio-economic status and terrorism or even violent crime. Most find instead that the average terrorist has a relatively affluent background and adequate level of education.[59] Such an assertion would be akin to the understanding that educated people are more likely to become involved in politics. Indeed, Krueger and Maleckova find that terrorism most often originates in countries with ongoing civil rights issues. In this light, it can be seen as a political and social issue.[60] However it should be noted that education and familial status do not negate economic factors altogether. While educated, recruits are also most often unemployed and unmarried.[61] A different relationship exists with poverty at the national or societal level, rather than individual. Scholars like James Piazza emphasize economic hardship among subnational groups in particular, sighting the economic ramifications of political discrimination as a relevant determinant.[62]

The latter two assertions can be similarly precluded; mental illness is only a factor in two percent of all violent crimes and is further unrelated to terrorism. Recruiters are

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[59] Krueger, Alan B., and Jitka Maleckova. "Education, poverty and terrorism: Is there a causal connection?." The Journal of Economic Perspectives 17, no. 4 (2003): 119-144.

[60] Krueger, Alan B., and Jitka Maleckova. (2003): 119-144.

[61] Pedahzur, Suicide Terrorism, Cambridge University Press, 2005 pp. 137–138, 168.

[62] Piazza, James A. "Poverty, minority economic discrimination, and domestic terrorism." *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 3 (2011): 339-353.

unlikely to rely on a mentally ill person because of their instability or unpredictability.[63]

While psychological conditioning seems like an easy explanation with which one can

write off political violence, many studies have deemed terrorism a rational choice.[64] The

question is to what degree an individual's socialization defines a decision or action as

rational.

An individual may join an extremist group in the same way that other people join

social groups, clubs, or movements. "Most recruitment today relies on small group

pressure and authoritative leaders."[65] Media solicitations, such as propaganda, and

personal connections can begin the relationship and dogma may be adopted ex post

facto.[66] Interviews with over one thousand Turkish terrorists are likely to say they joined

an organization for the sake of affective ties.[67]Most ethno-nationalist and religious

terrorists do not pursue causes fundamentally opposed to their family's values.[68] They

may be extreme versions or offshoots of those ideas, but not necessarily. As Abrahms

argues, many individuals join an organization because they have a friend or family

member already involved. Additionally, many terrorists do not have criminal records and

come from intact or stable families.

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[63] Hoffman, Bruce. Inside terrorism. Columbia University Press, 2013.

[64] Crenshaw, Martha. "The logic of terrorism." Terrorism in perspective 24 (2007). Abrahms, Max. "What terrorists really want: Terrorist motives and counterterrorism strategy." International Security 32, no. 4 (2008): 78-105. Richardson, What Terrorists Want, p. 14. See also Marc Sageman, Understanding Terror Networks (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 81.

[65] Wilson, James Q. "What makes a terrorist." City Journal 9 (2004).

[66] Aho, James Alfred. The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism. University of Washington Press, 1995.

[67] Abrahms, Max. "What terrorists really want: Terrorist motives and counterterrorism strategy." International Security 32, no. 4 (2008): 78-105.

[68] Wilson, James Q. "What makes a terrorist." City Journal (2004).

That being said, the motivation for personal relationships is often caused by social alienation. Individuals who feel excluded, marginalized, rejected, or lonely encompass a significant portion of recruits.[69] If social alienation is agreed upon as a factor for potential recruitment, risk groups may include immigrants who fail to assimilate or be accepted in states whose societies do not reflect the individual's personal beliefs or views.[70] Organizations have been known to seek out such populations because of their vulnerability, even over those who may actually be dedicated to their cause.[71]

Terrorism can also be linked with humiliation, trauma, or injustice.[72] Traumatic events may include having a family member killed, arrested, or tortured. The Chechen black widows frequently undertake suicide attacks because of the death of their husbands, brothers, or sons. Sometimes an entire movement can be sparked by trauma, such as the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide. Feelings of injustice, such as living beneath a corrupt government or as the Palestinians believe, having one's homeland stolen from them, can lead to the belief that terrorism will bring attention to the cause or right the situation.[73]

Of all of the individual motivators discussed, humiliation and shame can generate a profound sense of grief and desperation. Evelin Lindner explains humiliation as follows: "the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that

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[69] Melvin Seeman, "Alienation and Engagement," in Angus Campbell and Philip E. Converse, eds., The Human Meaning of Social Change (New York: Russell Sage, 1972), pp. 472–473.
[70] Roy, Olivier, "Terrorism and Deculturation." The Roots of Terrorism (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 159–160
[71] Pedahzur, Suicide Terrorism, Cambridge University Press, 2005 pp. 137–138, 168.
[72] Newman, Edward. "Exploring the "root causes" of terrorism." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 29, no. 8 (2006): 749-772.
[73] Hoffman, Bruce. "The changing face of Al Qaeda and the global war on terrorism." Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 27, no. 6 (2004): 549-560.

damages or strips away their pride, honor or dignity."[74] Humiliation may relate to the loss

of societal status, such as the debasement of the formerly glorious Ottoman Empire.[75] It

can also be attributed to the dehumanization of colonialism and oppression, once again,

particularly if a group was targeted based on their ascribed traits.[76] Terrorists often self-

describe their motives through expressing feelings of shame, despair, and the desire for

revenge.[77] One of the great dilemmas in combatting humiliation at an individual or

collective level is overcoming the temptation for revenge. So often, wronged populations

seek to restore their dignity by oppressing others or seek retribution by humiliating their

opponents. This begins an incredibly destructive cycle.[78]

Case Study: Adolescents

If the aforementioned sources are correct in arguing that joining a terrorist

organization occurs in much the same way that individuals join any other organization,

one might presume that the interest in recruitment is first identified prior to "adulthood."

Naturally adulthood is not a universal measure culturally. Children around the world are

awarded different experiences, responsibilities, and educations with which they mature.

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[74] Lindner, Evelin G. Humiliation or Dignity: Regional Conflicts in the Global Village. Journal of Mental Health, Psychosocial work and Counseling in areas of Armed conflict, forthcoming (2002), p.2.

[75] Lewis, Bernard. "Book Notes, What Went Wrong" C-SPAN, Interview. December 18, 2001.

[76] Newman, Edward. "Exploring the "root causes" of terrorism." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 29, no. 8 (2006): 749-772.

[77] Newman, Edward. "Exploring the "root causes" of terrorism." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 29, no. 8 (2006): 749-772. Levy-Barzilai, Vered. 2002. "Interview with a suicide bomber,". In Virtual Jerusalem, Levy-Barzilai, Vered. 2003. "Ticking bomb.". In Haaretz, Hassan, Nasra. 2001. "An arsenal of believers.". In The New Yorker 19 November 2001, Stern, Jessica. "Beneath Bombast and Bombs, A Cauldron of humiliation. The Los Angeles Times, June 6, 2004.

[78] Lindner, EVELIN G. "Genocide, humiliation, and inferiority." *Genocides by the oppressed: Subaltern genocide in theory and practice* (2009): 138.

However an individual's level of maturity is always relative to and restricted by their biological limitations. Even the most worldly and precocious thirteen year-old will interpret and process data with the still developing brain of a young teenager. Additionally, the United Nations (UN) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* which has been signed and ratified by every U.N. member-state save for the United States and Somalia, designates all persons below the age of eighteen to be "children".[79] For these reasons, it is not improper to discuss the adolescent members of terrorist organizations using a universal measure of age.

There is no question that terrorist organizations recruit children and youths, even as suicide bombers. The main purpose of this case study is not to examine this issue, but to establish whether adolescent membership in extremist organizations can be considered a major trend. This focus on age should not be considered discrimination. This is not an attempt to profile terrorists as a whole. To argue that a majority of terrorists are young is not to say that all members are young or fit one type; the age, class, sex, religion, and ethnicity of terrorists are, of course, as varied as the organizations and movements themselves.

This study is limited by the availability of data. However, it seems clear that youth is intimately connected to terrorism. There are very few scholars who address terrorism who do not reference youth being the most likely recruits.[80] Furthermore, while

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[79] Unicef. "Convention on the Rights of the Child." (1989).

[80] Bloom, Mia. Dying to kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror. Columbia University Press, 2005.; Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *Terrorists and suicide attacks*. Congressional Research Service, 2009.

Hoffman, Bruce. Inside terrorism. Columbia University Press, 2013. Laqueur, Walter. "The age of terrorism." (2012).

Hudson, Rex A., and Marilyn Majeska. "The sociology and psychology of terrorism: Who becomes a terrorist and why?." Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1999.

the number of studies providing quantitative data are few, their results replicate this

pattern. Jonathon Rae confirms that the majority of terrorists are in their early twenties,

though the median age of recruits may be lowered considerably for specific organizations

or movements.[81] The overall median age for recruits in a 2008 study by Russell and

Miller, conducted throughout Latin America, Western Europe, the Middle East and Asia,

was twenty-two to twenty-four.[82] When the Tamil Tigers were active the median age

within their organization was sixteen to seventeen, and Arab and Iranian organizations

averaged around fourteen to fifteen years old in the 1980s.[83]

The average age of terrorist leaders is much higher, with men like Osama Bin

Laden being in their late fifties. Furthermore, in certain cases, second generation

terrorists have a median age around thirty years old.[84] This is presumably because second

generation participants were recruited into "the family business" and this is therefore

likely to be a long-term job. The median age is lowest among foot soldiers, who are less

likely to play a role in major attacks.[85]

These numbers are worth very little without establishing a causal relationship.

However, the correlation between youth and political violence is not spurious. Causality

Moghaddam, Fathali M. "The Staircase to Terrorism:< em> A Psychological Exploration." *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 161. Newman, Edward. "Exploring the "root causes" of terrorism." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 29, no. 8 (2006): 749-772. Stern, Jessica. "Beneath Bombast and Bombs, A Cauldron of humiliation. The Los Angeles Times, June 6, 2004.

Urdal, Henrik. "A clash of generations? Youth bulges and political violence." *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 607-629.

[81] Rae, Jonathan A. "Will it Ever be Possible to Profile the Terrorist?." *Journal of Terrorism Research* 3, no. 2 (2012).

[82] Russell, Charles A., and Bowman H. Miller. "Profile of a Terrorist." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 1, no. 1 (1977): 17-34.

[83] Laqueur, Walter. "The age of terrorism." (2012).

[84] Hudson, Rex A., and Marilyn Majeska. "The sociology and psychology of terrorism: Who becomes a terrorist and why?." Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1999.

[85] Urdal, Henrik. "A clash of generations? Youth bulges and political violence." *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 607-629.

can be established through three perspectives: psychological, demographic, and environmental. From a psychological perspective youth tend to be highly idealistic, and very relevantly, they feel things much more intensely than their older counterparts.[86] "The parts of the brain responsible for more "top-down" control, controlling impulses, and planning ahead—the hallmarks of adult behavior—are among the last to mature."[87]

Demographically in the same states that have major economic problems and civil rights abuses, you also tend to have youth bulges. Jean Pierre Filiu discusses this in depth with regard to the Middle East. The median age in the Arab world is twenty-two, in Sub-Saharan Africa it may be as low as 17, and these modern youth are connected to the world in unprecedented levels.[88] They are involved in social media, are exposed to outside thought by globalization, are educated, and are more urban. Because of this they have higher expectations for the world than past generations. In contrast however, they experience hardship at higher levels than other populations. Unemployment rates among the educated Arab youth are twice the world average.[89] Youth are more often victims of corruption and violence in many states because they tend to be out on the streets and come into contact with security forces more often. These educated and global youths have a legitimate desire to contribute to society and can become truly estranged when this is blocked. "There is a word in Algerian culture that specifically describes the absence of respect for youth, *hogra*, which is a mixture of vilification and humiliation."[90]

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[86] Filiu, Jean-Pierre. *The Arab revolution: ten lessons from the democratic uprising.* Oxford University Press, 2011.
[87] National Institute of Mental Health, "The Teen Brain, Still under Construction." United States National Institute of Mental Heatlh, 2014
[88] Urdal, Henrik. "A clash of generations? Youth bulges and political violence." *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 607-629.
[89] Filiu, Jean-Pierre. 2011.
[90] Filiu, Jean-Pierre. 2011.

News reports covering successful and failed attacks have illustrated a number of cases in which children have been involved in suicide and other attacks.[91] While not scholarly in nature, the sheer mass of reports from often reputable sources such as the BBC suggests that even if the prevalence of these cases is overstated for the mainstream media, a trend is present. Combined with references from academic sources, precise numbers are elusive in most cases, but recruiting children does appear to be on the rise.[92]

In 1998 "Sri Lanka's Directorate of Military Intelligence estimated that 60 per cent of LTTE fighters were below the age of 18. Even if this figure was exaggerated, an assessment of the LTTE fighters killed in combat reveals that 40 per cent of its fighting

[91] Amnesty International, "Occupied Territories, Stop Using Child Suicide Bombers, Amnesty International, February 11, 2004. Boone Jon, "Groomed for Suicide; Taliban Recruits Children for Mass Murder." The Guardian, May 17, 2011. CBN News, "Kiddie Jihad: Child Bombers Terror's Newest Weapon," CBN News, April, 23, 2010. Chinoy, Sharmeen. *Inside A School For Suicide Bombers.* February, 2012. Documentary. Crossette, Barbara, "Tamil Rebels Said to Recruit Child Soldiers." New York Times, July, 17, 2000. Dugger, Celia, "Rebels Without Childhood in Sri Lanka War." New York Times, September 11, 2000. Gunaratna, Rohan. "Tiger cubs and childhood fall as casualties in Sri Lanka." *Jane's Intelligence Review* (1998): 32-37.Human Rights Watch, U.N. Security Council to Discuss Columbia's Child Soldiers." Human Rights Watch, February 22, 2005. Hussain, Murtaza, Pakistani Taliban's Indocrinated Child Bombers". Al Jazeera, October 27, 2012. Hyat, Kamila, "Pakistan, Child Suicide Bombers, victims of The Most Brutal Exploitation" UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs." Mohamud, Osman, Somalis Decry Al-Shebaab's use of Child Suicide Bombers." Sabahi, March 5, 2010. Odede, Kennedy, "Terrorism's Fertile Ground," New York Times, January 8, 2014. O'Hagan, Andrew. "From Classroom to Suicide Bombs; Children's Lives in Afghanistan." The Guardian. August 2, 2013. Quraishi, Najibullah, "Taliban Child Fighters Afghanistan," January 2014. Documentary. Subramanian, Nirupama, "The LTTE's Baby Brigade." India's National Magazine, Volume 18 - Issue 24, Nov. 24 - Dec. 07, 2001. The Washington Times, "Taliban Buying Children for Suicide Bombers," The Washington Times, July 2, 2009. Webb, Sam. "Youngsters Trained to Kill With Pistols, Assault Rifles in Shocking Pictures from Al-Qaeda's heartland." The Daily Mail, UK. November, 2012. Weiner-Bronner Danielle, "How Two Children Were Tragically Pulled into World of Suicide Bombing." The Wire. January 9, 2014. Whisenhunt, John. Countering Child Suicide Bombers," Child Rights Institute. Fall 2007.

[92] Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2009.

force were both males and females between nine and 18 years of age."[93] According to the Daily Mail, in 2012 the Al-Qaeda affiliated East Turkestan Islamic Movement released videos of very young children being trained with assault rifles.[94] While most children who become involved in terrorism are teenagers or pre-teens, this is not the first alleged case involving children as young as five.[95] The Bush Administration confirmed that between 2001 and 2004, 22 boys between the ages of 10 and 17 were held and interrogated as enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay and two thousand five hundred juveniles world wide in the War on Terror.[96] According to CNN in 2013 Afghan police intercepted 41 children whom insurgents were planning to use as suicide bombers. They were between 6 and 11 years old.[97]

Some organizations like Boko Haram, FARC, and Al-Shebab have been known to use outright force to recruit children, some favor propaganda or schools and training camps.[98] While some children become involved in terrorism through madrassas, they comprise a large minority of overall terrorists.[99] Although, it should be considered that the importance of madrassas differs between organizations. While madrassas in Turkey may have little to do with terrorism, those in Pakistan or Afghanistan may exhibit greater involvement.

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[93] Gunaratna, Rohan. "Tiger cubs and childhood fall as casualties in Sri Lanka." *Jane's Intelligence Review* (1998): 32-37

[94] Webb, Sam. "Youngsters Trained to Kill With Pistols, Assault Rifles in Shocking Pictures from Al-Qaeda's heartland." The Daily Mail, UK. November, 2012.

[95] Chinoy, Sharmeen. *Inside A School For Suicide Bombers*. February, 2012. Documentary.

[96] Pincus, Walter, "U.S. has detained 2500 juveniles as enemy combatants." The Washington Post, May 15, 2008.

[97] Castillo, Mariano and Popaizai, January 7, 2014.

[98] Chinoy, Sharmeen. *Inside A School For Suicide Bombers*. February, 2012. Documentary.

[99] Bergen, Peter, and Swati Pandey. "The madrassa scapegoat." *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2006): 115-125. Bergen, Peter, and Swati Pandey. "The madrassa myth." *New York Times* 14, no. June (2005).

It does appear that most children join a movement of their own free will. This may indicate "subcultures glorifying the cause, as in Palestine, or social, cultural, and political incentives for involvement."[100] Regardless of a child's mental capacity to run a sufficient cost-benefit analysis for making this type of decision, their willingness also indicates that individual motivators are present from an early age and may even be a part of the individual's socialization. Interviews conducted with adolescent terrorists and group leaders reveal that children often want to be actively involved in a struggle and can be easily encouraged when shown that other children their age are successfully serving the cause.[101] There is debate about whether children are entirely aware of what awaits them in a suicide mission. Some individuals claim they were told they would survive and others are well aware when interviewed that the greatest service they can offer the cause is martyrdom.[102]

Even when children do not become actively involved in an organization, they are targeted by propaganda and sought as recruits in many modern movements.[103] This may be true for no other reason than that organization leaders want to guarantee that the cause lives on, but children do have their benefits. Scholars suggest children are preferable because they are less likely to question instructions, financially inexpensive, and less likely to draw attention.[104] But there is also something to be said for the shock value of

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[100] Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2009.

[101] Chinoy, Sharmeen. *Inside A School For Suicide Bombers*. February, 2012. Documentary.

[102] Farmer, Ben. "Afghan Boy Suicide Bombers Tell How They Are Brainwashed into Believing they will Survive." The Telegrah. January 12, 2013. Chinoy, Sharmeen. *Inside A School For Suicide Bombers*. February, 2012. Documentary.

[103] Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan, and Eric S. Dickson. "The propaganda of the deed: Terrorism, counterterrorism, and mobilization." *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 2 (2007): 364-381.

[104] Hudson, Rex A., and Marilyn Majeska. "The sociology and psychology of terrorism: Who becomes a terrorist and why?." Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1999.

using a child. The idea that even a child could be a terrorist has the potential to induce true panic among populations who view themselves as targets.

Disengagement

On retention, an individual's voluntary disengagement from a terrorist organization may be due to disillusionment with organizational aims or tactics, changing personal priorities, or suffering from a negative experience.[105] Yet none of these things address the original motivators born by the recruit. Rather than being symptoms of conflict resolution, these issues represent a mental disconnect with the means originally employed for goal fulfillment. This implies that leaving a terrorist organization is not synonymous with deradicalization or reform.[106]

Retention's relevance to this study can be assessed with the following question: What can an individual's age tell us about the disengagement process? A brief answer to this question is not possible; it requires extensive additional research. One might hypothesize that the same psychological elements that make youth more likely to join extremist organizations, diminish with age or maturity (for lack of a better term). With age, an individual's opportunity costs are no longer quite so low, intense feelings mellow, and even demographic variables shift.[107] This hypothesis has not been tested, but it would no doubt be a fascinating foray into terrorism studies.

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[105] John Horgan, J. R. Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements. Routledge, 2009.
[106] John Horgan, 2009.
[107] Weinberg, Leonard, and William Eubank. "An End to the Fourth Wave of Terrorism?." Studies in Conflict & Terrorism 33, no. 7 (2010): 594-602.

Terrorist reform programs have gained notoriety and popularity in recent years, but they are problematic for the aforementioned reasons. It is true that socialization is easier to reverse when people are younger and less set in their ways, but it is important to remember that when motivations are cultivated from an early age, they become a part of the individual's identity. This differs from the social dynamic within forcibly conscripted child soldiers and even those individuals indoctrinated into a given ideology as North Korean spies are.[108] In other words, reversing psychological conditioning is one issue, but because group ideology is often less important than individual motivators in terrorism, reformers find themselves battling against deeply embedded psychological manifestations of complex social, political, and economic problems. If the root causes of terrorism are not dealt with, motivations are unlikely to change.

Conclusion

The implications of this study are not merely that children are increasingly joining terrorist organizations or that youths comprise a significant number of recruits. These patterns reflect the early age of an individual's initial motivation for political violence and the way in which those motivations are manifested based on the possessor's age. Such observations have value for curtailing recruits to terrorism and even enhancing the understanding of disengagement. With this in mind, counterterrorism bodies might consider addressing those issues specific to youth populations, or attempt to generate change in conjunction with the youthful members of vulnerable populations. Without this kind of change, purely demand-side counterterrorism efforts may not prevent or reduce

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[108] Kim, Hyŏn-hŭi, and Yung Cho Sun. The tears of my soul. William Morrow and Company, 1993.

the motivations for youth to participate in terrorism. The inability of states to understand and empathize with their enemies can be debilitating; so even if the addition of supply-side efforts to counterterrorism do not succeed, at least they will not be counterproductive.

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        (2005).

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        no. 2 (2006): 115-125.

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