

Causes and motivations of terrorism today research paper

[Society](#), [Terrorism](#)



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Introduction

The name Osama bin Laden is more than just a buzzword when it comes to topics revolving around terrorism. Speaking of international terrorism, the terrorist groups that conduct the most heinous acts of terror are affiliated with Islamic extremists. However, the belief that all acts of terrorism are planned and executed by Islamic radicals is more than a distortion of reality. There is more to terrorism than just Islamic motivations. Research shows that the root causes of modern terrorism revolve around economic depressions, power struggles, religious and social strife, ethnic conflicts, a spillover of domestic upheavals and low measures of democracy (Bjørge, 2005). Terrorism is ultimately motivated by the fact that there are groups and leaders who are more than willing to sponsor and offer moral and financial support to the terrorist organizations. Additionally, terrorism is motivated by vengeance and the malicious intent to embarrass some government. This part seeks to explain the primary causes of terrorism and the motivations of today's terrorists as well as the recommendations on how to address the root causes.

The Causes and Motivations of Today's Terrorism

According to Akhmat et al (2013), the greatest cause of terrorism in the modern world is economic depression such as the one experienced in the middle east – the most notorious region when it comes to matters of terrorism. Pick et al (2009) notes that according to Louise Richardson, a guru in matters of terrorism, the economic gap created by poverty drives people – especially young men into a state of seeking to find a better place in society,

because they feel oppressed by the economic situation. In their search for a greater cause, explains Richardson, they find themselves destitute and willing to engage in any acts, however ugly, so as to fend for their families. This way, they fall for the lure of malicious extremist religious leaders that have access to various resources and sources of income, which funds terrorist activities. Ultimately, such young men become the soldiers of the cowardly acts of terrorism.

The second cause of terrorism today is ethnic and religious strife. While jihad is not an uncommon term, religious leaders associated with terrorism usually misinterpret the scriptures and use such misinterpreted information to corrupt the youth. English (2010) notes that such terrorists as Osama bin Laden were misguided by the Muslim brotherhood affiliated scholar Sayyid Qutb – a man that used religion as a bridge to achieving malicious goals. The distortion of the scriptures is explained by rational Muslim leaders who think that, if anything, the Islamic religion should be used to foster peace and not instigate war and terror. The culture of martyrdom is a common feature of such terrorist groups as Hizballah and Hamas, which are synonymous with suicide bombing and shootings. The international spillover of the ideas of such Islamic fundamentalists is the main cause of terror attacks in such vulnerable countries as the African and south American states.

Campos et al (2011) argues that one of the noteworthy root causes of terrorism is class conflict. Using the case studies of Latin American states, Campos et al (2011) believes that the Leninism employed by the South American leaders is responsible for the rise of terrorist groups. The class conflict comes about when other political groups find that they have

absolutely no chance to outweigh the dictators in power. A perfect example of terrorist group that grew out of political class conflicts is Peru's Sendero Luminoso (which is literally translated as 'the shining path'). Campos et al (2011) believes that such terrorist groups will not cease to exist, for as long as Leninism has a place in the leadership of the third world countries. Closely associated with class conflict is social distance, which is enhanced by political polarization. This is a common cause for terror, especially in the third world nations where democracy has not come of age, and polarization along lines of tribe is common.

Apart from the above discussed root causes; there are factors that have been identified as enhancing causes of terrorism. While these may be inevitably part of a normal functional society, technology, especially the social media platforms are the most potent infrastructure for modern day terrorism on the international scene. The current crises in the Arab world, most notably Egypt and Syria, and most recently Iran, were facilitated by the social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. The Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and Armed Islamic Group (GIA) are among the most notable organizations using the social media platform. The accessible nature of the media is quite a big motivation for the terrorists (Björger, 2005).

According to Coolsaet (2011), another big motivation of the terrorist activities is the fact that terrorism is a low cost tool, with potentially high yields. While this is the case, terrorists easily access resources such as explosives, military equipment and machinery through sympathizers and influential rebels within the governments. The mongers of international

political propaganda provide military, financial and moral support so as to intimidate other governments through harassment and embarrassment. The key motive of the terrorists is to attain widespread fear, which in essence, makes them appear superior and gain recognition. Vengeance is a key goal of the militant terrorists. For instance the Al-Shabaab militants launched an attack less than two months ago in a neighboring country, Kenya, citing vengeance as the primary reason for the attack which saw close to 100 people lose their lives in a sporadic chaos where militants forced their way into a popular mall and started shooting indiscriminately after allowing Muslim shoppers to walk out.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is clear that the main causes of terrorism today include social and religious strife, economic depression, political injustices, immature democracies, and class conflicts. From the foregoing, it is evident that the primary motivations of modern day terrorism revolve around vengeance, misinterpretation of religious scripture, international recognition and the desire to embarrass, harass and destabilize some governments, especially the western powers. To put to an end such acts of terror, it makes sense that the governments of the world powers start attacking the vice from the root causes. These are among the potent recommendations:

- The world powers should seek to establish powerful ways of dealing with poverty and economic strife in the third world, and more especially in the volatile Middle East.
- The United States, arguably the only remaining superpower, should act as a

role model by finding ways to put to an end all instances of shootings that take place in various states, such as the recent Connecticut incident.

Fighting local cases may require the government to take a multifaceted approach in such a way that they eliminate all vices associated with terrorism. For instance, the government should be steadfast in breaking the network of drug trade, which is among the sources of finances used by terrorist groups.

- Political powerlessness of certain countries should be addressed on the international scale through such agencies as the UN Security Council.
- The western powers should support the political growth of the democratic nations in the middles east, Africa and Latin America.
- The sponsors of political goodwill on the international scene should use religious leaders to preach the essence of coexistence and the need for peace.

References

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