RESEARCH ON TERRORISM: AN OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Since the bombing of New York and Washington in 2001, literature on terrorism has surge as researchers engage in theoretical perspectives in order to account for the increasing trend of terrorism in the contemporary world. However, theories from psychology, economics, sociology and other aspect of social sciences were deployed to understand the phenomenon and to formulate appropriate policy response. A review of the evidence indicates that despite the contributions of these theories, intellectual puzzles as to why do 'terrorist' do what they do; and class dimension of terrorism have either not been adequately addressed or escape scholarly attention. These knowledge gaps show that new possibilities are opening up, and scholars are yet to take on this new dimension of terrorism. The paper concludes that further research on the aforementioned gap is needed as far as the future of terrorism studies is concerned.

KEYWORDS: Terrorism, theory, policy, interest.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Terrorism as a social issue has permeates the fabrics of all the hitherto existing societies since the beginning of the modern era. From classical period to the contemporary times, terrorism discourse has been consigned to the backwaters of political violence to which social scientists have paid a passionate interest. However, the record of research on terrorism has grown immensely since the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, and a plethora of studies have developed and examined the theoretical underpinnings of terrorism in order to understand and contain the threat posed by terrorism in global society. Today terrorism is less understood than ever before and the war against it is less certain of being won on the terms in which it is being fought by the international community given the theories, methods and policies adopted to tackles it, and the dimension and trend which the terrorism has taken. If cities in Kenya, Tanzania, Yemen and Nigeria, which rank among the

poorest countries in the world, could be a point of target for terrorism, it then follows that the issue of global terrorism is not a target towards the west only, but a universal phenomenon. This dynamic of terrorism and the everyday threats that was started in the west, is now spreading to the developing countries. Yet theoretical model that can adequately capture this reality is lacking as the nature and definition of terrorism itself suffered from diverse academic perspectives on terrorism. This paper attempts to review the most important theoretical approaches to the study of terrorism with a view to rethinking how far it stands in the light of contemporary development.

This article is organized into three main sections. In the section below I seek to critically review previous approaches in terrorism studies. On this theoretical basis, the second section extends the argument to critique the theoretical perspectives in order to capture the reality of modern day terrorism. I conclude in the third section.

2. REVIEW OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

Over the past years, terrorism research has progressed much further in the theoretical field than its empirical research. Terrorism like other social problems have been thoroughly analyzed through different theoretical perspectives such psychological, rational choice, mainstream/orthodox and Critical approaches. This paper however takes a look at these approaches in order to review it strength and weakness as far as terrorism debate is concerned.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Psychological approaches to terrorism often take different approaches depending on the theoretical traditions, ideologies, epistemologies and ontologies in researchers' frame of reference. In lieu of the complexity of this social problem and its present state of research, there were diverse approaches and school of thoughts within psychology that scholars employ in order to contribute to the discourse of terrorism. Apart from psychoanalytical theory, other approaches within psychological perspective such as theory of religious fanaticism, relative deprivation theory and others help to offer rich understanding on the nature of terrorism in the society. Generally, psychological perspective to terrorism focuses its attentions on the individual and group levels of analysis. This perspective seeks to understand what motivates individuals to carry out acts of terrorism? And what is the specific 'terrorist personality'? Moreover, early psychological researches on terrorism tend to be divided into two main traditions: The psycho-pathological and the psycho-social traditions (Kegley 1990: 99-101) until other approaches emerged.

A) PSYCHO-PATHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Psycho-Pathological Theories are the Individual level approach to terrorism. Psychologists who conducted earlier studies on terrorism draw its strength from the theory of psycho-pathology. They argued that terrorists are those that suffer from narcissists' personality disorder. This premise is based on the general claim of psychoanalytic theory that narcissist behaviour was the inner impulse that drives individual towards terrorist acts. In other words, this theory assumes that terrorists are 'insane' or 'psychopaths'[i]. To demonstrate this, psychologists identifies two adult behavioural disorders according to a multi-axial classification scheme: Axis I disorder which refers to the major clinical illnesses—those such

as schizophrenia or major depression—while Axis II disorder refers to personality disorders—such as antisocial personality disorder (APD) [American Psychiatric Association 2000] as heuristic criteria for measuring individual propensity to terrorism. To this end, many interviews and studies were carried out to ascertain whether 'terrorists' exhibit these disorders. The prominent study by Rasch (1979) interviewed 11 terrorist suspects who were member of the red army faction called Baader Meinhof group, and observed that none of the suspects exhibited any psychological disorders. Similar study by Post, Sprinzak, and Denny (2003) also interviewed 14 radical Islamic 'terrorists' based in Middle East, and observed no evidence of any of the psychological disorders. The inabilities of psychoanalytic perspective to link terrorism to Axis I disorder compel most psychologists to focus on Axis II disorder (antisocial personality disorder or socio-pathology). Study conducted by Martens (2004) have pointed out that many individuals with Anti Social Personality Disorder (ANSP) share certain characteristics with terrorists, such as a sense of social alienation, early maladjustment, impulsivity and hostility, but the correlation between ASPD and the tendency terrorist acts is quite insignificant.

This approach excludes the political, ideological, economic, and sociological factors that can motivate people to commit terrorist act. However, the decline and fallout of the psycho-pathological theories in the terrorism discourse compelled psychologists to shift its paradigmatic attention towards psycho-social explanations.

B) PSYCHO-SOCIAL THEORIES

Psycho-social theories focus its synergy on the connection between individual characteristics and the influence of the social groups to which individual belongs as the likely factor to produce terrorism. Prominent scholar in this direction is Kinsey Pearce (1977) who argued that terrorists were sociopaths acting antisocially due to 'superego lacunae'—a disorder characterized by chronic disregard of social norms and laws, lack of remorse, impulsivity, and other traits. Pearce (1977) posited that terrorists are sociopaths who use a political cause as an avenue to vent their frustrations over perceived wrongs and to engage in the domination and humiliation of others. However, Pearce claim finds little or no empirical support from the literature as 'terrorists' seems to enjoy considerable popular support.

Further study conducted by Post (2004) observed that organisations such as ETA, Chechen "black widow" who terrorizes a Moscow theatre, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealem (LTTE) suicide bombers, used terrorism to fight on behalf of their group and may enjoy considerable popular support and conscientiously serve his society in a pro-social way. Post (2004) however dismissed Pearce's claim as terrorism is neither anti-social nor pro-social behaviour.

4. THEORY OF RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

With the fall of psychoanalytic theories, psychologists were compelled to shift more attention to religious fanatics as possible explanation for terrorist acts. The theory of Religious fanaticism examines the social psychological factors inherent in terrorist violence by delving into the role of the social group as the motivation for terrorist acts. The theory posits that group membership and identity have a greater influence over terrorist behaviour than individual pathology or beliefs[ii]. It further argues that the membership of a terrorist group is the spring board to fulfill self-esteem needs of an Individual, and provides the necessary

training and outlets for the emotions caused by concrete grievances[iii]. David Rapport, one of the proponents of the theory argued that religious fanaticism causes a greater propensity for large-scale carnage and indiscriminate terrorist attacks, because a bomber who believes he is waging a Holy War (carrying out the will of God or Allah)[iv]. Rapport's thesis focuses its attention on how a terrorist's mindset is obsessed with a particular perspective about the world that is so powerful that it can produce such violent acts. This was further supported by Özdamar (2008) who noted that terrorists are individuals who join a group that wants to change or implement a particular policy with pre-determined set of their ideological dictate[v]. A further review by Robert Pape looks at the direction of religious ideology as possible explanation for suicide bombing and terrorism. Pape (2003) points out that individual attacker may be motivated by religion, but groups have strategic military goals. This implies that religious rhetoric may help persuade attackers that their cause is either necessary or noble, and that glorifies or renames suicide as martyrdom, but it does not explain why suicide attackers choose that particular tactic.

By looking at the direction of religion as possible root of terrorism, religious fanaticism theorists failed to realise that not all suicide terrorists are religious. In fact, the secular Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers (LTTE) has committed more suicide attacks since the 1980s than any other groups. Similar example like the Japanese Kamikaze is crucial to this. Julian Madsen (2004) pointed out that 'in World War II, Japanese Kamikaze pilots participated in suicide attacks against American ships in the Pacific. In the Battle of Okinawa (April 1945), some 2,000 Kamikaze pilots rammed fully fuelled planes into more than 300 ships. 5,000 Americans were killed (alongside the 2000 Kamikaze) in the most costly naval battle in American history. Researchers of the Kamikaze point out that these individuals were not suicidal, but rather viewed self-sacrifice as the ultimate goal against a powerful enemy[vi].

Second, the theory failed to look at the context in which suicide attacks take place. This stems from the fact that there are always particular grievances or perceived grievances in play that explain why the decision to use the terrorist tactic. For example, Hamas, an Islamist Palestinian group, has a clearly Islamic identity. But their goal, which is to establish an Islamist state in the West Bank and Gaza, cannot be divorced from the political conflict between Israel and Palestine from which it springs.

The theory of religious fanatics has come under devastating criticism from Taylor and Horgan (2006) who viewed it as sterile and underdeveloped part of psychological approaches that is largely unsupported by empirical research[vii].

5. RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY

The application of Relative deprivation theory to terrorism debates was first articulated by Ted Robert Gurr (1970)'s book on 'Why Men rebel' to explain how a gap between the expected and achieve welfare gave rise to collective discontent. Gurr argued that political violence and terrorism occur mainly because of collective discontent caused by a sense of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation according to Gurr implies a tension that emanates out of the discrepancy between individual's expected and achieved welfare[viii]. Gurr's theory of Relative deprivation has been alleged to have drawn its strength from Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis—that assumed that aggressive behavior always originated in frustration.

However, the key component in Relative deprivation theory is the comparison between expectation and aspiration. As Craig Webber (2007) argued that 'if we expect something to happen then we are likely to feel discontented if it does not materialise. If we aspire to something then we may feel less discontent if it does not materialise. It could be argued that an aspiration is a subjective perception of future potential, whereas an expectation is more fully based on an assessment of objective probabilities, e.g. social status, qualifications, either actual or potential, and ethnicity'[ix]. In this regard, people feel aggrieved when they compare their position to others and they realise that they are inferior to others on what they believe they are entitled to. Moreover, the potency of Relative deprivation approach is useful in understanding how economic disparities and differences between the material welfare of the haves and have-nots serve as the catalyst that will provoke a new wave of political violence and terrorism in the global system[x].

The relative deprivation theory of terrorism finds little or no support in the literature. A study conducted by Blomberg et al (2004) showed that economic contraction in high-income countries has a significant effect on transnational terrorism. In a related case study of political violence in Northern Ireland by Thompson (1989), it was observed that socio-economic changes are not irrelevant in explaining propensity to terrorist acts.

The obvious shortfall implicit in the application of Relative deprivation approach is the lack of clear parameter use in the measurement of terrorism. This reveals that the methodology used by the Relative Deprivation theorists seems unclear.

Generally, psychological approaches to terrorism were criticized for its inability to draw its data from primary sources such as interviews and life histories of individuals engaged in terrorism. The recruitment of small number of cases inevitably render its hypotheses as speculative, and findings as unreliable (Crenshaw 2000:409). Moreover, Psychological approaches like all other theoretical traditions can be regarded as a single theory that cannot explain all events. The greatest undoing of psychological school of terrorism is its attribution of terrorist activities to the characteristics of the individual motivation rather than that of the social group as findings from recent researches have shown.

6. RATIONAL CHOICE PERSPECTIVE

Rational Choice theory of terrorism was put forward as a response to psycho-pathological perspective in psychological school. It was derived from Economics (especially Games theory) to describe the choice of rational decision made by individuals and groups (terrorists included) before embarking on a course of action.

The theory proposed that terrorist acts derive from a conscious, rational, calculated decision to embark on optimum and strategic course of action with a view to achieving sociopolitical goals (Sandler, Tschirhart, and Cauley 1983; Sandler and Lapan 1988; Crenshaw 1992; Wilson 2000). In other words, individuals take rational decision based on the assessment of expected benefits and cost of each action, and seek to maximise the best course of action that will benefit its interest (Gupta 2008:8). This approach posits that if a person is willing to risk his life and/or freedom to commit an act of terrorism, he must have few preferable alternatives. From this perspective, terrorist behaviour is exhibited on the basis of benefits, costs and expectations that perpetrators may adopt (Sandler and Lapan 1988). Further

explanation by William Shughart (2009) asserts that terrorists are rational on the basis of two important ways:

First, very terrorist faces a budget constraint and, whether acting alone or in concert with others, consequently must deploy money, munitions and manpower cost-effectively, allocating the available resources over time and space so as to maximize terrorism's net returns, in whatever form those returns are expected to materialize. Second, terrorists respond rationally to measures taken to counter them. When some targets are hardened, they shift attention to softer ones. If a country elevates its counterterrorist efforts, terrorists move their operations to less vigilant states. Terrorists, in short, behave as if they are guided by the same rational-choice calculus that animates human action in more ordinary settings. They evaluate the alternatives available to them and choose the option that promises the largest expected benefit relative to cost; they respond in relation to changing risk[xi]

Rationality in this approach is understood as a strategy adhered to by the terrorists toward achieving certain aims. According to Pape (2003), this aim or benefits of terrorist attacks is to achieve specific political purposes: to coerce a target government to change policy, to mobilize additional recruits and financial support, while its cost often comes in forms of risk associated with 'the use of explosive device, aircraft hijackings, assassinations, kidnappings and hostage-takings are among the other available options – as well as their responses to the security measures adopted to thwart them' (Shughart 2009:15)

However, rational choice theory has been critiqued for its inability to provide appropriate parameter for measuring how a perceive action could serve as benefit or cost to the terrorists. Wieviorka's (1993) observation is particularly salient as it helps to figure out how the prediction of rational choice theory is misleading given the inability of its parameter to adequately measure variables with precisions. The obvious implication is that changes in strategies and tactics of the actors or changes in the assumption of perceive benefits or cost of some act, can significantly affect the likelihood that terrorists act will be committed[xii].

7. ORTHODOX APPROACHES

Orthodox approaches focus its analysis on the legitimacy of the state system in international society and view any challenges to the authority of the state as illegitimate threat that should to be contained. Orthodox approaches offer a clear distinction between the state and non state actors and posit that state is legitimate and non-state actors are illegitimate forces. Orthodox approaches to understanding terrorism tend to focus on the type of violence employed and how to counter it not why it occurs. Orthodox approaches as a state-centric paradigms, are usually regarded as mainstream approaches because it is rooted western model of freedoms, the rule of law and the liberal democratic state[xiii]. Prominent theories in orthodox traditions are Realism/Neo-realism and Liberalism/Neo-liberalism theories.

A) REALISM

Realism as a western mainstream theory has dominated intellectual discourse on terrorism for more than four decades. The theory argues that the state is the key actor or primary agents in international politics and there is no actor above the state. Second, governments are engaged in a constant effort to ensure the survival of their respective states[xiv]. Third, states selfishly pursue their national interests, the most vital being national security[xv]. Generally, the realist

school believes that state have the omnipotent legitimacy and brand any challenge to state authority as illegitimate. In a nutshell, terrorist groups are regarded as illegitimate non state actors who challenge the authority. Within the context of international politics, it is assume that states would always feel insecure about other countries, thus, they always use military forces to deter other states and keep their interests which constitute their core aim in their foreign policy[xvi]. From a realist perspective, state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force and that terrorism is carried out by non-state actors only[xvii]. This realist orthodoxy view rejects state terrorism in international relations, and therefore opted for military force as a privileged means to an end, and necessary expedient for preserving power[xviii].

Since the orthodox realist approach state terrorism and focuses its attention solely on the illegal non-state actors terrorizing legitimate state, this reflects its view on what is terrorism. Prominent Realist scholar like Bruce Hoffman has defined terrorism as an 'acts perpetuated by a sub-national or non-state entity' (Hoffman 1998). Other realist scholar like Caleb Carr defines terrorism as 'warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence find objectionable' (Carr, 2002). Walter Laqueur is described terrorism as deadly violence perpetrated by unidentified amorphous non-state groups, who often bear no relation to their country of origin and who claim no responsibility for their actions. They intend to kill as many people as possible, predominantly non-combatants and their blind lethal violence is typified by hate, aggression and anger[xix]. On the basis of these definitions, the occurrence of September 11th bombing gives Oliver Richmond (2003) the needed impetus to argue that terrorism is carried out by violent non-state actors, sometimes funded by transnational criminal networks and renegade states, applying guerrilla warfare and acts of terror for secessionist or irredentist aims, motivated by ideological, political, economic, linguistic, and cultural reasons, or purely for profit. This involves complex transnational networks, and a particularistic ideology, perhaps free-riding on the international norms of self-determination and sovereignty[xx].

These realist conceptions of terrorism in the wake and aftermath of the September 11th encourage the western politicians, mainstream media and policy makers especially the United States Government to define terrorism in a narrow and biased way as a 'premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience' (Pillar, 2001). Thus, provide policy tools to categorise certain group as terrorists and incorporate them into their terrorist database, and justifications for the so-called American and British war on terror in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen, which uses dangerous counter terrorist tactics, military intervention, and regime change against groups and governments that oppose its interest in the developing countries; and to provide tactic support and assistance to authoritarian regimes (allies) of Bahrain, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

A case of Nelson Mandela and other African National Congress (ANC) leaders during apartheid struggle was a reference point. ANC and other groups during the struggle against apartheid were accused of using guerrilla tactics to fight white separatist government, and were therefore labeled by the United States as terrorists. Despite being the President of the Republic of South Africa in post apartheid, Mandela and other ANC chieftains' name was still in US terrorist register. The implication of this is that Mandela was only allowed in US to attend United Nation meetings and was restricted to New York only, while other labeled ANC chieftains were refused visa to enter the United States[xxi]. The use of realist label by the

Western states to any group or organisation as 'terrorist' was ostensibly crafted to serve particular interests in today's global power relations—to sustain and maintain the existing institutional and power-relational status quo by confronting any destabilizing pressures within the international system.

B) LIBERALISM

Trailing behind realism is the liberal perspective. Liberalism examines how nations can co-exist within a stable and ordered international system, and reject war as an inevitable product of international relations. Liberalism believes that non-state actors are important players in international relations and must be considered along with the state actors. While states may be considered sovereign, in reality other actors such as multi-national corporations, terrorist groups, non-governmental organizations, and other transnational actors are all important and relevant (Walt, 1998). Liberalism believes that shared and increased economic interest and cooperation between states will foster economic interdependence and reduce the likelihood of conflict.

The liberal approach therefore treats terrorists as criminals that threaten the limits in which international politics can become stable and peaceful (Fiala, 2002). In other words, terrorists do not want to foster economic and security cooperation and do not wish to create of world of economic interdependence. For liberals, terrorists would be criminals committing criminal acts, not central actors in the arena of international relations (Parker, 2003).

Despite the seeming difference between Liberalism and Realism, both approaches focus more on the dominance of states' interest within the international system and how to achieve advantages without minding whose ox is gored in the global order. Both theories share the view that terrorism are carried out by non-state actors only[xxii]. Both theories are part of the traditional orthodox approach that have been influenced by mainstream social sciences, which posits that there is independent existence to social phenomenon and the meaning they elicit[xxiii]. The argument of orthodox theorists is that 'a contextual consideration is not related to socio-political actors and contexts'[xxiv]. This ontological position which was termed objectivism[xxv] followed the Emile Durkheim's positivistic idea of social fact that believe that terrorists will exist 'out there' no matter what the historical context may be.

The philosophy of mainstream social sciences where social phenomenon are treated as 'objective' science (objectivism) stems from the positivist ontology that emphasizes the existence of an existing project or social reality and such reality should be understood in terms of data and fact using method of natural science (such as data collection, theoretical deduction and statistical analysis which stresses value free approach) drives orthodox ontological position in terrorism studies, and further influence its epistemological and methodological outlook. This philosophical underpinnings of orthodox theories culminated in their definitions and understanding of terrorism. The crux of orthodox approach is to ensure that western state terrorism is off the agenda and subtly defines terrorism in a way that delegitimizes opposition to the interest and power of the West while legitimizing the Western power's own political violence[xxvi]. For ignoring state terrorism perpetuating by western states against its own citizens and other weak states in the world, and focusing on and focus on non-state actors as illegitimate terrorist formation, orthodox approach have made great strides in disseminating the false perceptions that permeate the international debate on terrorism, and

has further gives the western states undue advantage in labelling and classifying terrorist at will as far as global power relations is concerned.

Therefore, the ontological, epistemological and methodological foundation of orthodox approach do not question the existing social and power relations but help to sustain and maintain the existing institutional and power-relational status quo by confronting any destabilizing pressures within the international system.

8. CRITICAL TERRORISM STUDIES

Critical Theory was developed as a response to the claims of Orthodox approaches to uncover the ideological, conceptual and institutional underpinnings of terrorism. Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) critiques dominant orthodox approach that tend to liaise with technical capitalism, and argue that violent activities used by the state (state terrorism) against its own citizens or other states have been ignored by the orthodox terrorism scholars (Gunning 2007; Silke 2009; Jackson, Smyth and Gunning 2009, Herring 2008). By rejecting the orthodox definitions that link terrorism to non-state actors only, critical approach rejected orthodox conceptualization that fit properly into legal interpretation that was drafted on the basis of the need of the state/government, but not suitable for academic discourse[xxvii].

CTS thus argued that by ascribing terrorism as dissent violence from below, the exclusion of state violence against its own citizens makes the analysis of contemporary terrorism one-sided. CTS no doubt challenges the conventionally held belief on terrorism that specialized in 'reducing persons or groups to what is usually a subset of their overall behaviour'[xxviii] and posit that 'terrorism occurs in the context of wider political struggles in which the use of terror is one strategy among other more routine forms of contentious action'[xxix]. This implies that CTS rejects politics of naming and labeling of person or group as terrorists, and made radical departure from state centrist form of analysis to focus on the security, freedom, and well-being of human individuals[xxx]

However, the truth is that if the repression by the government of Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Iran and Syria against her citizens and protesters during the Arab spring could be characterized by the orthodox theorists as state terrorism, then the use of lethal counter-terrorism strategies in Afghanistan and Iraq under the so-called 'war on terror' against the non-combatants by the Western led NATO forces, could also be described as state terrorism. Therefore, CTS assert that only dissent violence directed against western interests are labelled as 'terrorism' by the orthodox theorists.

While challenging the arguments of orthodox approach, critical theorists questioned former's positivistic epistemology, reject its scientific methods, challenge its rational ontology, and normatively condemn its value neutral theorizing (Price and Reus-Smit 1998:261). Critical theorists argued that 'object' in orthodox ontology does not exist independently of the 'subject' but rather shape each other in a dialectical, never-ceasing dynamics (Toros and Gunning 2009: 92). In challenging orthodox empirical verifiable social fact, CTS opines that terrorism and its nature is not limited to violent acts itself but depends on the context, circumstance and intention on one hand, and the social, cultural, legal and political processes of interpretation, categorization and labelling on the other hand (Jackson 2009:4). This ontological underpinning of critical theorists can be regarded as social constructivism—as it

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help to shape our understanding that actors/objects relate to each other within the confines of collectively-constructed social configurations (Price and Reus-Smit 1998).

Since ontology deals with what really exist out there to know, then the question is how it can be known (epistemology). The epistemology of CTS tends to thoroughly scrutinize the origin and uses of terrorism as a discourse, and the meaning 'terrorist' attach to their actions. This epistemology can be regarded as Post-Structural Interpretivism (merging of post-structuralism and Interpretivism)—which connotes that terrorist acts can be perpetrated by anyone within a structural configuration, given the existence of a particular context. In this regards, the ontological and epistemological position of Critical theorists seems to suggest that social reality of terrorism can be understood by appealing to the interdisciplinary methodological essence of its existence. CTS therefore reject statistical analysis because it can be manipulated to support neo-liberal and neo-imperialist political agenda, and protect certain hegemonic interest.

However, CTS can be credited for espousing history, ideology, context and intentions behind terrorism beyond the narrow lens of orthodox approach. It is not clear following the review of literature at what point in its history did state and non-state actors engage or continue to engage in terrorism, what class[xxxi] in society did non-state actors belong to, which class in society did non-state actors recruit to carry out individual terrorism? How social contradictions in the society usher terrorism within different classes?

Generally, CTS like all other approaches mentioned in this chapter, failed to explain class dimension of terrorism: how social relations of production among different social class produce terrorism within and across states. The inability of CTS to address this brings us back to Historical Materialism as a theory that is needed to delve into class analysis of terrorism. Although, Herring (2008), Herring and Stokes (2011), Jonathan (2011) and Ogunrotifa (2012b) have suggested that CTS should incorporate class analysis into its theoretical vocabulary, these appeals seems to raise fundamental concern that may pitch it against certain interests who have somewhat severed their link with Marxist and neo-Marxist scholarship, particularly in Frankfurt Critical School or Welsh school of Critical Security Studies.

It is my contention here that Historical Materialism (HM) should stand alone as new theoretical tradition in terrorism studies or in the alternative be a new variant that is taking paradigmatic shift in CTS. This stems from the fact that if the focus of orthodox approach is to provide problem-solving tools, as Robert Cox[xxxii] argued, to combat military threats using counter-terrorism strategies against perceived enemies under the pretext of 'War-on Terror', CTS as far as its current literature stands is less likely to shape policy direction. That explains why Duvall and Varadarajan (2003:81) opines that critical theories is grossly overdrawn for imposing dubious categorization and simplifying all research into either being policy relevant or having no bearing on policymaking.

Therefore, HM must rise to the task of unpractical gap left by CTS in order to advance scholarship that bears implications for Policy and Practical socio-political action that will help to stem the tide of state terrorism and individual terrorism of non-state actors that are more likely to occur in the Third world countries than anywhere else in the future.

9. A BRIEF CRITIQUE OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

A thorough review of theoretical literature shows that much progress has been made on terrorism studies, yet several issues remain unsolved. These issues as set out below are best examples in the literature that suffers from serious shortcoming as far as empirical and policy considerations are concerned.

In most of the literature on terrorism, all theories focus on the personality of the 'terrorist' rather than explaining why 'terrorist' do what they do? Since theories reflect the policy direction, these theories fail to shape policy measure to stem people from engaging in terrorist act, and not necessarily engage in counter-terrorist tactics as advocated by most theorists. Researchers focus exclusively on terrorism by state or non-state actors without taken into consideration the material conditions that necessitate terrorism in the first place.

Consequently, theoretical literature can also be critiqued for engaging in politics of naming. The most frequent type of study in the literature tends to concentrate on naming, labelling and classifying people or group as 'terrorist'. Instead of taking side or swimming with the current global tide of who is a 'terrorist' and who is not, scholars must be emotionally detached and study the pattern of terrorism in an objective way. Otherwise, researchers stand the risk of being accused of disseminating false perceptions that permeate the international debate on terrorism. As far as this paper is concerned, such politics of naming or labelling people or group as 'terrorists' or 'terrorist organisations' often undermine ongoing effort at achieving peaceful resolution of conflicts in the world as the labelled or stigmatised groups continue to harden their stance and tone, build up arms and become more combative at the slightest provocation.

For instance, United States and other western countries regarded Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt as 'dangerous terrorist' during the 30 years CIA-backed of Hosni Mubarak regime. Having been caught off the guard by the fall of Mubarak vis-à-vis Egyptian Revolution, the politics of naming MB as 'terrorists' and 'terrorist organisation' has been tactically abandoned as the United States now realise the political cost of looking at the direction of the MB as potential partners in the business of re-establishing order and stability in Egypt.

Therefore, scholars should refrain from regarding any individual or group as 'terrorist' or 'terrorist organisation', but should focus attention on people or group who use terrorism as a method to achieve and protect certain interest or to settle political scores couple along with why such individual or group do what they do, and what can be done to ensure that such groups are discouraged or prevented from using terrorism as a tool to express grievances.

The third critique is that theoretical literature ignore class dimension of terrorism. What class did the terrorist belong to in the society, what are the roles of social classes in the use of terror in the society or state, how does class struggle transform into terrorist act, how social relations among classes and actors in the society produces terrorism, and what link does class and state have with terrorism, have not been adequately addressed in the literature. The reorientation of scholars' attention to this issue will help to understand the fundamentals of terrorism or unravel the foundation on which the current trend of terrorism is rooted, and how to fashion out appropriate policy formulation to tackle the menace headlong.

Despite the shortcomings outlined above, theoretical perspectives into terrorism has helped to demonstrate how theory is relevant in providing appropriate research and policy guidelines, and how theoretical constructs can help researchers to raise empirical and philosophical questions about what is to be known and how it can be known as far as terrorism debate is concerned.

10. CONCLUSION

Terrorism is a social issue that appears everywhere and is used by individuals, groups, and states. A discussion about the nature and causes of terrorism seems controversial as people have widely held idea about what constitutes the phenomenon. However, a review of theories and researches on terrorism indicate that it is easy to theorize but hard to gather data to substantiate theories. Apart from focusing on terrorist activities perpetrated by clandestine groups of often very small numbers, most theoretical perspectives takes a passionate appeal towards devise effective long-term counter measures, and ignored why 'terrorist' do what they do. This trend of discourse depicts that researchers are entrapped by the language and assumptions of the mainstream synthesis that gives much emphasis on predominantly state-centered co-operation to provide enormous security and instability in the anarchical international system.

It is quite obvious that all theoretical explanations revolve around micro-macro level of analysis that attempt to construct a theory of terrorism within the ambit of a particular paradigm. Challenges posed at the level of existing theories indicate that certain issues such as policy consideration, biased politics of naming terrorist, and class content of terrorism have either not been adequately addressed or escape scholarly attention. It can thus be concluded that the surge in terrorist acts in the recent shows that there exist a gap in the nexus of theory and practice, and that the contemporary theories did little to stem this tide. It is therefore important that mapping out new or alternative routes is needed. A problem-solving approach that would take cognizance of class dimension would be required in developing more rigorous theoretical analysis and classification that fit into appropriate policy direction and practical actions as far as the future of terrorism studies is concerned.

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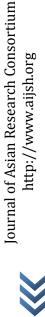
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END NOTES

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ii (Rogers et al 2007).

iii (Post 1998)

iv Rapport, 1984

v ibid

vi Julian Madsen .2004.pp 1

vii Taylor and Horgan (2006)

viii See Gurr, 1970. Pp.12

ix Webber, Craig (2007) Revaluating relative deprivation theory. Theoretical Criminology, 11, (1), 97-120.)

x See Victoroff (2005). Pp. 17

xi

xii See more on Rational choice approach to terrorism available at http://www.psych-it.com.au/Psychlopedia/article.asp?id=370

xiii See, O'Sullivan G, Herman E, 'Terrorism as Ideology and Cultural Industry,' in George A, Western State Terrorism,Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991, p.44.

xiv See Ashley (1981), Mearsheimer (1990), Morgenthau (1951), Niebuhr (2001), Keohane (1984) for more on Realist perspective in International Relations and politics.

xv Klarevas, 2004: 19).

xvi James Dougherty, and Robert Pfaltzqraff. Contending Theories of International Relations. (Adison Welsley Publishing Company, 1996)

xvii Blakeley, 2009)

xviii Fiala, 2002)

xix Laqueur W, The New Terrorism, Oxford: Phoenix Press, 3rd ed, 2001.

xx Richmond O, Realising Hegemony? Symbolic Terrorism and the Roots of Conflict, Conflict and Terrorism. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 26:289–309, 2003. Pp 299

xxi Ogunrotifa, 2012.pp.5

xxii (Blakeley, 2009).

xxiii Bunyavejchewin, 2010:4)

xxiv ibid

xxv (Grix 2002:177)

xxvi (Herring 2008: 22).

xxvii See Jeroen Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies," Government and Opposition, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2007), p. 367.

See also James M. Lutz and Brenda J. Lutz, Global Terrorism, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 13-14.

xxviii Richard, 2009, pp.4

xxix Richard, 2009, op cit in 31

xxx See (Toros and Gunning, 2009; Sluka, 2009)

xxxi Class here in this paper connotes a group of people in society with the same relationship to the means of production. The class which owns and controls the means of production rules society. The society is divided into three distinct classes: The Ruling class, Middle class, Working class and the Lumpen class.

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