On Defining Terrorism: Text And Context – A Qualitative Approach
Muhammad Saleem & Muhammad Azam Tahir

Abstract
The present study reviews the definitions and classification of terrorism; with special reference to historical, ideological, sociological and psychological aspects as well as contexts. The meta–analysis and grounded theory are the analytical approaches of descriptive research which have been applied for reviewing and analyzing the variety of definitions and types of terrorism, used by different scholars, politicians, journalists, foreign policy makers, analysts, religious-scholars, historians, sociologists, psychologists. Different definitions and types of terrorism, having different perspectives and ideologies, have been analyzed and summarized in the light of grounded theory to establish a precise and comprehensive definition for the classificatory distribution of various types and perspectives of terrorism.

Keywords: Terrorism, Meta-Analysis, Grounded Theory, Qualitative approach

Introduction
The 21st century started with a novel epoch of terrorism, presenting the interweaved rudiments of globalization, religious movement, and the U.S.’s superpower eminence. 21st-century terrorism is predicated on an effort to transmute the world, with an inspirational idea, a want for execution and answerability only to a divinity. Annals on terrorism point to the Muslims as particularly persuaded toward violent hostility with other ethnic communities, most remarkably the West.

Even though terrorism as such is not an innovative phenomenon, the acts of 9/11 raised it on the list of topmost priority concerns of security in the West and simultaneously the revived research interest in the area of the area. Likewise, as the Euro barometer 75 public belief surveys done by the European

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Commission disclose, that EU nationals are also worried about terrorism and they recognize it as one of the foremost problems faced by the European Union. The augmented concern over terrorism generally has also enhanced the concern about new means and forms of terrorism.

The U.S. Department of State figures that there were 3000 incidences of terrorism; with 10000 injured; and 4500 fatalities by 2004, across the globe by international terrorists.

**International terrorist incidents**

Source: U.S. RAND/MIPT, RAND Terrorism Chronology Database and RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident Database (updated 6 May 2013).

**International terrorism injuries**

Source: U.S. Department of State data, blue indicates RAND/MIPT data (updated 6 May 2013).
Before the 9/11 attacks on WTC and the Pentagon, peace psychology has been interested in international themes of peace, conflict and violence primarily focusing on conflicts outside the borders of the United States; Paying primary attention to Palestine and Israel, Bosnia, Kosovo and Serbia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Rwanda, Angola, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. However, September 11 attacks drove international terrorism to the fore. Psychologists initiated to focus on the cause and effects of terrorism and establish a comprehensive definition.\footnote{14}

Terrorism is used to be described differently by diverse theorists. As a label for acts of violence, it reflects negatively on those who are labeled as terrorists. In this sense, the term terrorist is comparable to other insulting terms in the political vocabulary like racist, fascist or imperialist.\footnote{15}

As of 1983, the US State Department (2000) has used United Stats Code Title 22, Section 2656f (d), to define terrorism. In the introduction of \textit{Patterns of Global Terrorism}, by US State Department, it is defined “politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually to influence an audience”.\footnote{16}

The very definition embraces three key criteria that differentiate it from other forms of violence. First, terrorism ought to be politically motivated like the intentions of the New York City and Washington DC terrorist are to influence US government policy on Middle East. Secondly, terrorist violence is directed at noncombatants. This form identifies terrorism as violence directed
towards civilians who are not prepared to defend against political violence (for example the recent attack on Marriott Pakistan). The State Departments’ definition’s third criterion is sub-national groups or clandestine agents commit terrorist attacks (like the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya).17

Though the use of a word like terrorism, as a means of political insult is now widespread practice, yet, it is highly unsatisfactory from both a moral and a legal point of view. Language ought to be a tool for careful thinking. Not an instrument of propaganda. 18 It is important to arrive at a clear definition of terrorism. Only then can we be certain of what is meant by the word, and to design laws to punish the terrorist.19

By looking at the uses of the term terrorism and at the acts of violence attributed to individual terrorists, terrorist groups, and terrorist organizations, it should be possible to find a precise definition. It is useful to examine the historical origin of the word terrorism before moving on to a clarification of its modern meaning. And to place acts of terrorism in the broader context of political actions and legal practice. 20

The basic purpose of terrorism is to produce terror in a target audience. A civilian population at large may be targeted, or police officers or government officials may be targeted to deter them from carrying out their duties.21 It is important, therefore, to look at the psychological dimension of terror. However, remarkably little of the literature on terrorism has paid much attention to terror as a state of mind. Only the recent literature has received some attention which deals with hostages’ experience of being terrorized.

Methodology

Meta–Analysis
Meta-analysis is a generic term for all types of formal research literature review. 22 It is an approach for summarizing the results of many studies which have investigated basically the same problem. 23 In fact, terminological confusion is not eased by the fact that Hunter and Schmidt’s methods were originally labeled validity generalization, which is now considered to be a special application of meta-analysis. In Meta-analysis, specific procedures are delineated for finding, describing, classifying, and coding the research studies to be included in a review, and for analyzing study findings. 24
All social researchers systematically collect and analyze empirical evidence to understand and explain social life. Qualitative and quantitative modes of research differ in several ways, but in other ways they are complementary. Qualitative researchers rarely use the tools of quantitative research; such as variables, reliability, statistics, hypotheses, replication, and scales.

**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory is “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon” and it is a widely used approach in qualitative research. The purpose of grounded theory is to build a theory that is faithful to the evidence. It is a method for discovering new theory. In it the researcher compares unlike phenomena with a view towards learning similarities.

**Application of Grounded Theory on Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Open Codes</th>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Selective Codes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “The use of violence against constitutional democracies considered as the only way to expose these regimes’ expressive nature.”</td>
<td>Violence, constitutional, democracies repressive nature</td>
<td>Violence, constitutional democracies</td>
<td>Revolutionary terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “The policy of using acts inspires terror as a method of ruling or of conducting political opposition.”</td>
<td>Policy, inspire, terror, conduct, political opposition</td>
<td>Policy, inspire, political</td>
<td>General phenomenon of terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “The extreme force or the use of force on the behalf of racism and militant nationalism”</td>
<td>Force, extreme, racism, militant nationalism</td>
<td>Racism, extreme, militant nationalism</td>
<td>Far- Right extremism</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. “Terrorism is an intense, overpowering fear”</td>
<td>Intense, overpowering fear</td>
<td>Overpowering fear</td>
<td>Terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Terrorism is a tactic or technique by means of which a violent act or the threat thereof is used for the prime purpose of creating overwhelming fear for coercive purposes.</td>
<td>Tactic, violent act, purpose</td>
<td>Tactic, prime purpose, coercive purpose</td>
<td>Terrorism is 9 technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “A violence of the group to handle publicly aimed, targeted”</td>
<td>Violence, one issue, publicly aims,</td>
<td>Violence, one issue, publicly aims</td>
<td>Single issue group terrorism</td>
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Technocrats and businessmen

7. “Terrorism is a form of political violence, directed at government but often involving ordinary citizens whose chief aim is to create a climate of fear as which the aims of terrorist will be granted by the country in question.”

8. On October 25, 1984, George Shultz, the Secretary of State of USA while speaking at the New York Avenue gave the following points in his definitions.

   • Terrorism is the form of political violence.
   • Terrorism is a threat of modern western civilization.
   • iii) Terrorism is a menace to western moral values.

9. “The use of affective power within state and concerned with sympathy in an other country for destructive purposes”

10. “There is no question about our ability to use force when and where it is needed to counter terrorism”

11. “Systematic violence in the furtherance of political aims, often by small guerilla group”

12. “A violence spread by both government and non-government has intimidated and terrorized civilian populations”

13. “Peacetime Peace time, War crimes Philosophy of

Technocrat, businessmen

Political violence citizens.

Threat, western, civilization manacle, values

Affective power, within state, sympathy

No question, ability, force, counter, terrorism

Systematic, violence, political aims, small guerilla, groups

Violence, political, aims, small, group

Violence both, government non-government, against, population

State vs. non-state terrorism

Domestic vs. international terrorism

Use force to counter terrorism

Systematic violence is terrorism

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equivalent</th>
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<td>equivalents of war crimes&lt;sup&gt;14&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>terrorism</td>
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<td>equivalents, war, crimes</td>
<td>equivalents, war, crimes</td>
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<td>equitant peace time</td>
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14. “Politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually to influence an audience”

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<th>Premeditated political, violence, against, non, combatant</th>
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<td>Premeditated, violence, non, combatant</td>
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<td>Premeditated violence is terrorism</td>
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15. Terrorism is based on clashes on civilizations is the surest safeguard against World War.<sup>15</sup>

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<th>Clashes, civilizations, threat, world peace, world war</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clashes, civilizations threat world peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clash of civilization is terrorism</td>
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16. “A slow war or attrition on insulated security forces unit by small squads, on the other hand urban organizations are more managerial and financial<sup>16</sup>”

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<th>Slow war, attrition, security forces, small squads, urban, organizations</th>
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<tr>
<td>War, attrition small squads, urban organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban vs. rural terrorism</td>
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17. “We have always opposed terrorism. But terrorism is one thing and a national struggle against occupation is another. We are against terrorism. Nevertheless, we support the struggle against occupation waged by national liberation movements<sup>17</sup>”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terrorism not, national struggle, against occupation</th>
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<tr>
<td>National struggle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationalist terrorism</td>
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18. Contributes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted.<sup>18</sup>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contribution illegitimate, use political objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate, use, force, terrorism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illegitimate force terrorism</td>
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</table>

19. A strategy of violence designed to promote desired outcomes by instilling fear in the public at large.<sup>19</sup>

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<th>Strategy, designed, promote, outcomes, fear, public</th>
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<tr>
<td>Designed, strategy, outcomes, fear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violence to achieve outcomes is terrorism</td>
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20. The use or threatened use of force designed to bring about political change.<sup>20</sup>

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<th>Use, threat, political, change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Threat use, political change</td>
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<td>Revolutionary terrorism</td>
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21. The deliberate, systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Deliberate, murder, innocent, fear, Political,</th>
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<tr>
<td>Murder, innocent, fear, political, terrorism evil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systematic murder is called terrorism</td>
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</table>
fear in order to gain political ends. Terrorism is intrinsically evil, necessarily evil, and wholly evil.  

22. “Strong desired of sweeping change and are prepared to inflict a high death toll to achieve it by religious activist”

23. International terrorism is the threat or use of violence for political purposes when:
   • Such action is intended to influence the attitude and behavior of a target group wider than its immediate victim and
   • ii) Its ramifications transcend national boundaries.

Conclusion
The definition proposes here states: “terrorism is the international use of or threat to use violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims”. The definition is established on the following three important elements based upon grounded theory:
   • The essence of the activity is the use of or threat to use, violence. According to this definition, an activity that does not involve violence or a threat of violence will not be defined as terrorism (including non-violent protest strikes, peaceful demonstration, tax revolts, etc.)
   • The aim, of the activity is always political-namely, the goal is to attain political objectives; changing the regime, changing the people in power, changing social or economic policies, etc. In the absence of a political aim, the activity in quest will not be defined as terrorism. A violent activity against civilians that has no political aim is, at most, an act of criminal delinquency, a felony, or simply an act of insanity unrelated to terrorism. Some
scholars tend to add ideological or religious aims to the list of political aims. The advantage of this definition, however, is that it is short and exhaustive as possible. The concept of political aim is sufficiently broad to include these goals as well. The motivation—whether ideological, religious, or something else—behind the political objective is irrelevant for the purpose of defining terrorist.

- The targets of terrorism are civilians. Terrorism is thus distinguished from other types of political violence (guerrilla warfare, civil insurrection, etc.). Terrorism exploits the relative vulnerability of the civilian “underbelly” the tremendous anxiety, and the intense media reaction evoked by attacks against civilian targets. The proposed definition emphasizes that terrorism is not the result of an accidental injury inflicted on a civilian or a group of civilian who stumbled into an area of violent political activity, but stresses that this is an act purposely directed against civilian. Hence, the term “terrorism” should not be ascribed to collateral damage to civilians used as human shields or to cover military activity or installation, if such damage is incurred in an attack originally aimed against a military target. In this case, the responsibility for civilian casualties is incumbent upon whoever used them as shields.
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