COUNTERING TERRORISM THROUGH RELIGION, CULTURE, LEGAL AND ETHICAL VALUES

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism has been widely used as a tool by extremist to achieve their political, religious, and ideological agendas. The most worrying issue about terrorism is that innocent civilians are targeted, and they are considered as soft targets. Terrorists consider themselves above the law and normally do not work within the legal and ethical frame of the common army. The mass destruction committed by terrorists is also monstrous in comparison to normal criminals, usually the cause of a huge number of deaths and devastation of properties. Religion is typically used as a motivation for terrorism act where ignorant people are deceived to commit acts of terrorism in the name of religion. This is done by cunning designed doctrines which are used to instigate the perpetrators. Therefore, a better counter-narrative to overcome such doctrines. The use of legal means has proven worldwide to be one of the most effective ways to overcome terrorism. The inculcation of ethics is also important as ethics were throughout history, observed, even in the worse of wars. It is imperatives that all parties of conflicts to observe ethics despite their differences. A culture might easily be influenced by extremist ideas if left unchecked, thus leading to the flourishing of radical ideas. The best solution is for all these elements to synergize to create a concerted effort to combat terrorism.

Keywords: Religion; Terrorist; Culture, Legal and Ethical Values, Media

INTRODUCTION

Islam does not affiliate or support terrorism in any way as terrors differ from the beliefs and practices of actual Muslims. Unfortunately, in recent years, Islam is often associated with terrorism and violence due to the actions of a few extreme individuals who have taken it upon themselves to do the most heinous crimes in the name of Islam. Additionally, the media has also contributed to the misconception by repeatedly linking Islam to terrorist attacks.

It has been over a decade since Islam is being constantly assumed and criticised for terrorist acts. Various tragic events occurring in different locations worldwide such as the attack on the twin towers in New York, the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London, are accused as perpetuated by Muslims. This misconception has heightened when media channels portray these bombers as 'Islamists' or 'Jihadists'. The Western media specifically believes that the concept of Jihad in Islam plays a major role in perpetuating terrorism. False claims by certain media that Jihad promotes violence further associates terrorism with Islam. The

actions of a small number of fanatic individuals who have Muslim names or ascribe themselves to the Muslim faith should not be a yardstick by which Islam should be judged.

Radicals who claimed that they are on the right path have misinterpreted their religious belief and practices. Any Muslim who kills innocent people has committed a grave sin, and the action cannot be claimed 'in the name of Islam' (Qais Zayed, 2012). Thus, it is essential to understand Islam's stance, especially on terrorism through the holy Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). These sources are explicit in their prohibition of any form of injustice including that of wanton violence which seeks to instill fear, injury, or death to civilians.

Through the Quran, God has instructed all human beings to stay away from any evil action that leads to rebellion, cruelty, murder, and bloodshed. The Quran turns our attention to the high value of human life, whether Muslim or Non-Muslim and makes it forbidden to take any innocent life unjustly. The gravity of such a crime is equated, in the Quran, to the killing of all humanity. The Quran has explained that the act of killing another human being who has done no wrong is one of the greatest sins in Islam:

"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them our apostles with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land." (5:32)

From the above verse, God has prohibited any kind of inhumanity, including terrorism or violence. Individuals who respect the sanction of God would not lead themselves to harm others and kill thousands of innocent people.

Besides human life, the property, wealth, family, and dignity of all individuals in society must also be respected and protected in Islam. Those who transgress these rights and sow *fasad* (corruption) as the Quran describes it, incurs the wrath of Allah. Allah Almighty states unambiguously in the Quran:

"...and seek not corruption in the earth; lo! Allah loveth not corrupters " (28:77)

Likewise in another verse

"The blame is only against those who oppress men and wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a penalty grievous" (42:42)

Islam goes further than just prohibiting oppression and safeguarding rights; it commands it's faithful to deal kindly and compassionately to all those who seek to live in peace and harmony. In Surat al-Mumtahinah verse 8, this command is given:

"Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For Allah loves those who are just" (60:8)

In times of war and conflict, where enmity can obstruct an individual's judgment to act morally, Islam commands that justice is upheld even towards one's enemies. Islam teaches all Muslims to deal with others, even enemies, with justice and fairness. At the beginning of Surat al-Ma'dah Allah Almighty says:

"O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do" (5:8)

Centuries before the Geneva Convention was drawn up, Muslims were bound by a code of conduct which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) set. He restricted the killing of women, children, and elderly in war. In an authentic narration, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) warned that anyone who kills someone who has a covenant of peace with the Muslims will not even smell the scent of Heaven. He taught that justice is not only to humans but must be shown to animals and other living things as well. In a narration, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) also mentioned how a lady was sent to hell because the cat she had locked up died of starvation. If such is the sanctity which Islam places on the soul of an animal, how much graver is the killing of hundreds of innocent people?

Abu Bakar, the first Calipha of the Muslims, reflected these prophetic teachings when he advised his general Yazid, who was confronting the Roman armies;

"I advise you ten things. Do not kill women or children or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter sheep or camels except for food. Do not burn bees and do not scatter them. Do not steal from the booty, and do not be cowardly."

The message of the Quran is clear that the sanctity of any human life is to be respected, and any violation in that regard is paramount to the worst crime that can be committed. Mercy is at the heart of the Islamic call, *"We sent thee (O Muhammad) not save as a mercy for the peoples" (21:107)*; a different message to what the terrorists are sadly imparting to humanity.

MEDIA AND THE MANIFESTATION OF TERRORISM

Terrorism is regularly understood as demonstrations of vicious acts that target regular citizens to force political or ideological points. In lawful terms, even though global society has yet to embrace the definition of terrorism, existing announcements, resolutions and general "sectorial" arrangements identifying with specific parts of it defy certain demonstrations and central components. In 1994, the General Assembly's Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, set out in its determination 49/60, expressed that terrorism incorporates as "criminal acts planned or figured to incite a condition of fear in the overall population, a gathering of persons or specific persons for political purposes" and that such demonstrations are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the contemplations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that might be summoned to legitimize them" (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, July 2008).

Nowadays, media outlets have been urged to cover news stories concerning terrorism (Nacos, 2006). These media outlets significantly develop and allow such news to be reciprocated and accepted by the general public, especially the larger audience of their media channel. The word terror itself comes from a Latin word, terrere, meaning frighten or tremble (Matusitz, 2013).

Since the tragedy of 9/11, the global society has given excessive attention to terrorism acts even though "terrorism" itself is not new, to begin with. The act itself refers to the political viciousness towards the civilians and discrimination associated with it (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014). The term of 'War against Terrorism' resulted from a series of terrorist attacks that spread vigorously. Some might define it as a form of national cause to fight against terrorism, thus for the terrorists themselves, this type of 'publicity' may trigger them to act even more violently since their main interval has been acknowledged by the global society in general. The excessive attention from the media worldwide has aided terrorist groups to promote their ideology internationally.

The societal difference with regards to terrorism has been portrayed differently in the media, depending on the demographic and level of acceptance of their target audience. Each nation has its type of audience; which comprises of religion, political, social, cultural, and historical dimensions, which leads to the varying types of news produced by the media. The news reporting differs depending on the audiences in each country. After the September 2001 incident, the word terrorism or terrorist has always been associated with Islam or Muslim in general. According to the statistics provided by Think Europol, less than two percent (>2%) of terrorist attacks are religiously motivated while the rest are related to non-religious motives specifically from the year 2009 until 2013 (Ahmed, 2015).

If a person resembles a Muslim with regards to their appearance or language, they will be immediately assumed as a potential terrorist without further investigation to stereotype Muslims in general. However, there is evidence that shows that if a person is white and Christian, their terrorist act will not be considered as terrorism, but due to mental disorder and will not be attacked in the media to dissuade the belief that there is no such thing as a Christian terrorist. Since the media continuously develops a connection between terrorist and Islam, thus it mutually establishes a sense of fear and stereotype towards Muslims as a whole. Today, countless media campaigns against Muslims and Islam have been carried out by numerous Western media, making it harder for the Muslim based media to withstand the negative claim and explain the true facts.

There are various types of terrorism that exist within society, and each society has its interpretation of terrorism; either physical or mental state. According to the Crime Museum (2005), six types of terrorism exist in the world at present such as civil disorder, political terrorism, non-political terrorism, quasi-terrorism, limited political terrorism and lastly state terrorism. The media mostly covers all types of terrorism but typically focuses on specific types of terrorism which the public are mostly engaged with and interested to read in general.

As mentioned earlier, terrorist activities portrayed in the media directly assist the terrorist with a free platform to establish the attention or recognition and eventually develop sympathy for their cause. In the past 15 years, the world has experienced numerous terrorist attacks. Based on the Global Terrorism Database, 8441 attacks have been recorded in 2012 (Doward,

2015). From this data, we can conclude that the media indirectly has helped terrorists in spreading their agenda through news worldwide coverage.

Numerous scholars have found that media coverage benefited terrorists to propagate their agendas through their channel watchdog, either through direct or indirect approach. But some of the findings revealed that the media played its role to counter terrorism (Nacos, 2006). However, most importantly, the media must be free from any bias in reporting to cover all sides of the story and inform facts. The symbiotic relationships between terrorist group and media outlets make both parties benefit with regards to media interest towards terrorism cases (Walsh, 2010). According to Doward (2015), the sensationalism of the terrorist acts provide the terrorists with free publicity and creates more damage rather than helping the nation to counter terrorism.

Biased reporting is also one of the major aspects that should be focused on. Today, media outlets are mostly biased, especially when reporting terrorism. They report the story according to the interest of certain parties or groups and aggressively defend their actions as fair reporting. Biased reporting can be either towards religion, race, or nations. Beirut, Lebanon and Baghdad and Iraq indeed did not receive the same intensity of news reporting, for instance, in the example of the consecutive incidents in Paris, France. Based on the survey in the feature article of The Nations, the incidents which happened in Beirut and Baghdad had lesser news coverage in comparison to the attack that occurred in Paris resulting in a lack of awareness of the incident (Darling-Hammond, 2016).

Various dimensions of terrorism have been portrayed in the media internationally. In America, for instance, the portrayal of terrorism and the negative sentiment produced by the Western media has made the situation harder for Muslims to live in that nation. Based on the 2011 survey done by Public Religion Research Institute, Americans have a tendency to discriminate Muslims rather than assuming Christians as terrorists. Unfortunately, until today, there are many Americans who still think that Muslims are associated with terrorism (Cox et al., 2011).

Racism does not only appear in issues related to race. The way media portrays criminals in the news also reflects on how they frame the issue and publish it for their benefit. For example, Yancy and Butler (2015), stated that the media treatment towards criminals will be different based on their skin color. Recently, a white male named Dylan Roof was described as mentally ill rather than a possible terrorist. The question is, will a similar assumption be made if that person was of a different race and skin color? They will immediately be marked as terrorists without any further justification and be dehumanised all the way. Hence, the audience will fail to embrace the differences but will create more problems in society. Qasim Rashid (2016) stated that according to a sociologist, Dr Craig Considine, racism does not only involve skin color alone but also religion and culture.

Furthermore, society and cultural affiliation also affect discussions on the mechanism of terrorism. Fatalism is the ultimate term to explain its role in general. Fatalism refers to life that has been destined to be in such a way since it has been predetermined even before it happens (Gelfand et al. 2013). Acts of terrorism that occur across the globe mostly happened because of this major factor. According to Gelfand et al. (2013), the cultural fatalism closely related to the possible thoughts of individual may attribute to an act of terrorism as a whole,

second punishment for any action that deviates from social norms and involves the collective behavior that leads to extreme thinking patterns and thoughts.

Other than that, language diversity also creates a dimension for terrorism to be presented at a higher level as the media primed the issue to change the perception and conception towards terrorism. The narratives of reporting as well as how the news is being constructed and represented as well as the small amount of space allocated for it to be discussed results in target audience receiving limited and shrewd news within the frame only.

ROLE OF RELIGION, ETHICS, LAW AND CULTURE IN COMBATING TERRORISM

Terrorism is defined as "the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilian, in the pursuit of political aims." Also, Hoffman (1998) broadens the definition by stating that terrorism is not only limited to trying to achieve political ideologies but also to achieve religious and ideological goals.

Today, the world has witnessed a trend where organisations simply use terrorism to achieve their specific goals and objectives. Terrorism, unlike conventional warfare, is more dangerous as it does not include itself in the same framework of laws and ethics. Terrorism is an application of every possible means to inflict death, destruction, damage, injuries, and losses.

There are various factors that lead an individual to decide to commit terrorist acts, but it is hard to identify the cause. To come out with strategic plans to handle this crucial problem, there is a need for concerted efforts from various parties as it involves aspects of religion, ethics, legal and cultural.

Religion is as "a particular system of faith and worship." It is unfortunate that most of the terrorist's acts nowadays are committed in the name of religion, even though their practices and beliefs contradict the actual teachings of their religion. For instance, the most notorious group currently is the Islamic State or IS, and the name itself carries a religious connotation which has been proven to be a very effective branding, especially to appeal to potential jihadists. The Islamic State's propaganda focuses on the grievances and sufferings of the Muslims. This method is assisted by the lazy narrative of those against Islamic State by merely labeling them as terrorist groups without really coming out with a much proper narrative to counter their propaganda.

Definitely, by using the brand "Islam," the Islamic State includes the Islamic motif in its messages to allure their radical followers. Among the commonly used message is the need to return to the glory days of the Caliphate and the prophecies of a Mahdi Caliphate towards the end of the world. Among the hadith that are used often are:

Huzaifa narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Prophethood will remain among you as long as Allah wills. Then Caliphate (Khilafah) on the lines of Prophethood shall commence, and remain as long as Allah wills. Then corrupt/erosive monarchy would take place, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. After

that, despotic kingship would emerge, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. Then, the Caliphate (Khilafah) shall come once again based on the precept of Prophet Hood."

Muslim reported on the authority of Abdel Aziz al-Muqrin, once said:

"I accompanied Abu Hurairah for five years and heard him talking of Muhammad's saying: The Prophets ruled over the children of Israel, whenever a Prophet died another Prophet succeeded him, but there will be no Prophet after me. There will be Khalifah, and they will number many. They asked: What then do you order us? He said: Fulfill the bai'ah to them one after the other and give them their due. Surely God will ask them about what He entrusted them with."

Apart from that, the message of The Doctrine of Salafism, in specific, its branch of Salafi Jihadist is also being used. Rhodes (2012) argued that the followers of this ideology believe that Jihad is the way to advance the cause of Allah in the world. This is also in line with their takfiri concept where they interpret a verse from the Quran with a high degree of radicalness. In this doctrine, it is compulsory to kill the nonbelievers.

"Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed. Those are the disbelievers." (Al – Maaidah Verse 44)

The doctrine of the Black Flag Army (Ashabu Rayati Suud) is among the popular messages conveyed to the followers. Hadith attributed to Abdullah ibn Mas'ud in which the Prophet supposedly said:

The people of my Household will face calamity, expulsion, and exile after I am gone until some people will come from the east carrying black banners. They will ask for something good but will not be given it. Then they will fight and will be victorious, then they will be given what they wanted, but they will not accept it and will give leadership to a man from my family. (Source: Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 4082)

Another Hadith attributed to Abu Huraira in which the Prophet, supposedly said:
Black flags will come from Khorasan; nothing shall turn them back until they are planted in Jerusalem. (Source: Sunan At-Tirmizi, No.2269)

In the knowledge of the above hadiths, it is a clever choice by the Islamic State to use black flags to represent them.

The other message is the Anti-Syiah doctrine where Syiah is considered an eternal enemy, and if we do not kill them, we will be killed. The message of Anti–Democracy doctrine is also imposed on the followers where democracy is considered as secular system invented by the enemy of Islam. This is argued using a passage in the Quran:
"Now if you pay heed unto the majority of those on earth, they will but lead you astray from the path of God" (Al – An'am verse 116)

To prevent people from getting involved and influenced to join the Islamic State, a better religious counter-narrative is needed. To counter the narrative, there are several suggestions; the Islamic State needs to be reported and shown to as behaving in un-Islamic ways. In this case, the media should play their role in explaining the deviant's ways of this terrorist group.

Besides that, the doctrines used by Islamic State mentioned before needs to be clarified properly by influential and leading scholars. Essentially, the grievances of the Muslims in the area need to be addressed sooner rather than later to disallow the Islamic State from using the excuse. The media should also highlight and allocate space to the fighters who have repented and let the public listen to their mistakes and regrets as it would be more effective and influential than having authorities handle this subject in a second voice. Moreover, these solutions not only focus on the Islamic Stat, but it can also be used to tackle other terrorist groups that use religions to further their ideological goals.

Ethics can be defined as moral principles that govern a person's behavior or conducting an activity. As ethics are not legally binding, but merely a set of moral principles hence are often ignored. Even worse, in many cases, ethics depends on the interpretations and definitions; it might differ from one person's view to another.

The best method to discuss ethics with regards to war is by using the Just War Theory, in which there are three elements that need to be adhered to in a war. This includes *Jus Ad Bellum* (Valid and justified reason to enter into a war)*, Jus In Bello* (The conduct during a war) *and Jus Post Bellum* (The conduct after the war). Although terrorism does not necessarily represent war, this is the possible theory that can be used as a guideline as most terrorism in the modern era is committed directly or indirectly through armed conflict. About the discussion of *Jus Ad Bellum* alone, there are four aspects that can be reviewed, which is Just Cause, Proper Authority. Last Resort and Probability of Success.

In the case of Just Cause – whether there is a just cause for terrorism. In most terrorism issues around the world, we can see that it is reactive rather than proactive. A lot of debate was had on the definition of terrorists. One man's terrorist might be another's freedom fighter. Most of the terrorists will claim the moral high ground by justifying their action as a means to defend national, political, or religious interests. These are the difficulties as yet again; one man's meat could be another man's poison.

In Proper Authority – whether there is an authority given by any recognized international body for them to act the way they did. If we are to define who are these "recognized international bodies," are we cannot go further than United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), ASEAN, Arab League, and a few regional ones. There were severe acts of aggression towards certain countries which were considered acceptable; such as the bombings in Afghanistan by The United States during the invasion because apparently, it received international clearance. This is highly debatable.

In Last Resort – whether the act is the last resort. In most cases, terrorism is the last resort when all else has failed. For example, in the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand, after years of trying to secure independence for their region, the people decided to take up arms and commit terrorism. Whether it is justified for them to take up arms and attack the government is something worth pondering.

In Probability of Success – whether they are most likely to be successful in their effort. In most cases, terrorists know that they are actually on the losing side. As mentioned earlier, most of these terrorists' acts are carried out of desperation. It is carried out mostly to inflict only some form of loss to the other side and drive home the same message.

While discussing the principle of *Jus in Bello* (the conduct during war), there are several points of discussions. One is Prohibited Weaponry – whether there is any use of prohibited weapons. Terrorists normally do not possess any advanced weaponry system and act mostly using their homemade explosives and also light weapons. Thus this is not a big issue in regards to most of them.

Next is Fighting Well and Limited War – any attacks should be limited within acceptable boundaries. Terrorists normally do not act within boundaries. They will with whatever means try to inflict injury on the victims.

In the case of Discrimination and Non-Combatant Immunity, – civilians are not targeted. This is the major issue when terrorism is discussed. Terrorist's acts normally are inflicted on soft targets, namely the public who are non-combatants as it is easier to attack unarmed and unsuspected targets rather than the fully armed and ever ready to battle soldiers.

Proportionality – no excessive force was used. Their aim is for maximum damage, regardless of the weapons used or the targets. Therefore, terrorists will aim their best with the highest capability in any attack they committed.

Right of soldiers – Soldiers need to be well taken care of, and any Prisoners of War needs to be humanely treated. In the case of Islamic State, it is well reported and documented that prisoners of war were not only tortured but killed. Worse, they were killed in the most gruesome way, such as being burnt to death, beheaded, or steamrolled (Wyke, 2016).

To review the *Jus Post Bellum* (the conduct after the war), the areas that need to be focused on are compensation for victims. In wars such as the World War II, the Japanese are known to compensate war victims. However, in the era of modern terrorism, there is a higher percentage than most of the terrorists are either dead, captured, or broke.

War Crime Trials for the Aggressor. There were many instances where war criminals are brought to justice, such as Radovan Karadzic, the Yugoslavian President who was convicted for his role during the war (Borger and Bowcott, 2016).

Security from future attacks. Normally, revenge will take place and further breed terrorism. In many cases, terrorist attacks, do not stop even though the perpetrators are caught as there will be new successors who are ever willing to step in and take their place. Therefore, security always needs to be tightened without letting their guards down.

Terms of Settlement. In some countries, the settlement could be that the terrorists can get what they are fighting for. In the case of Timor Leste, the group of people branded a terrorist by the Indonesian government was able to get their way when the United Nations intervened and allowed them the independence that they were fighting for.

Legal can be defined in line with the law, which is a system of rules that a particular country and community recognize as a mean to regulate its members and which may be enforced by imposing penalties for those who break it. The term "legal" concerned with the law where the rule or policies, especially regarding the authorities, should not be broken that can lead to the force of punishment and retribution.

In an effort against terrorism, which is notoriously known to have no respect for the rule of law, is quite challenging. However, behind the exhaustion, there are success stories in certain countries in handling the terrorism issue. In Malaysia, for example, on 30 March 2015, the government introduced several new Acts and proposed amendments to several existing ones. One of the preeminent amendments is the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorist Acts (POTA) and amendments to Security Offences (Special Measures) or in short, known as SOSMA (Bernama, 2015).

Significantly, POTA allows Malaysian authorities to detain terror suspects without trial for up to two years. Although POTA was accused as the reincarnation of the so-called draconian Internal Security Act (ISA) that was abolished in 2011, it has been proven to be effective as at present there is no evidence of terrorism reported in Malaysia. Furthermore, these two acts were also used on potential recruits of Islamic State who were planning to travel to Syria and join the terrorist organizations. It has been successfully proven that this act has indirectly contributed to the decreasing number of people traveling to Syria (Bernama, 2016).

The United States also introduced the US Patriot Act on 26 October 2001, but it had been improved and changed to the US Freedom Act in the year 2005. The act allows the tapping of phones and access towards private data. Although this is an intrusion of private space, it proved to be effective as there are no major terrorist attacks reported in the United States since, apart from only a few shooting cases which killed at most three people in 2016 compared to the scale of devastation of the 9/11 incident (Hay, 2016).

In an attempt to further emphasize the importance of the anti-terrorism acts, several countries like Belgium, Italy, China, and other influential nations have introduced preventive acts as measures to combat terrorism beginning from the new millennium. Thus, this is a clear indication that the most effective way of combating terrorism nowadays is through legislation, especially the implementation of preventive measures. Even though the policy and legislation may not fully combat the spread of terrorism, it has been proven to decrease the expansion of terrorist ideologies within the nation.

Culture is defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (1985) as "refined understanding of the arts and other intellectual achievement, customs and civilisation of a particular time or people" There might be a direct relationship between the declines of interest in culture to the rise of terrorism. In the pursuit of globalization, culture also allows the radical and terrorist groups to spread across borders. The values that culture inculcates in influencing the young generation are replaced by global ideas. Unfortunately, some of these global ideas are radical, including the rise of anti-culture. There are several major aspects of cultures that need to be explored and considered to be used as an effective method to combat terrorism.

In this case, neighborhoods play a vital role in the first simple measure to prevent terrorism. Previously, neighbors in villages know their neighbors. They make it a point to at least know their neighbors' names, their problems, and activities. Essentially, they assist their neighbors who are having problems and advise them in seeking the best solution. But today, that culture is disappearing in the bustle of modern society. Families do not even know the existence of their neighbors, let alone their problems and the things that they are up to. Hence, this situation indirectly breeds terrorism. The role of "busybody" neighbors of the yesteryears needs to be revived as any sign of trouble, and suspicious actions should be reported instantly to the authorities.

Furthermore, the love of local arts can be an effectual weapon to combat terrorism. Art is widely known as calming and therapeutic. It gives its practitioners an avenue to be calm and serene. Each culture has its creative art of various types and dimensions. Fully developed, it could help people to be calmer and occupied, leading people to fill their leisure time with valuable activitie, especially for the radical ones. An idle mind is the most dangerous of all; therefore, leaving a mind idle without any activity may allow terrorist ideas to thrive. Art is also a form of expressing dissatisfaction and anger more peacefully compared to the use of a weapon in addressing the problem.

Next, the need to encourage "local" solutions should be one of the initiatives to combat terrorism. The locals can understand the local context in a better way than others. It probably could be a problematic situation as international solutions interfere with local issues. In some instances, people of a certain region are well known to be good negotiators and delegates in nature; therefore, by importing aggressive ways for solutions might lead to the change of locals' identity in general. Occasionally, local solutions might fit certain situations better, and those proven to be successful over the years.

Education can be an effective way to overcome radical ideas through knowledge. Therefore, the strengthening of education, whether formal or informal is the best defense against the ideology of terrorism. The idea of "anti-terrorism" needs to start at the earliest stage at home and further reinforced at schools for the younger generation.

TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA

The media plays an essential role in addressing the issue of terrorism, which can lead to more problems, but at the same time, can be the best solution to fight terrorism. There are several ways the media can handle this issue, and a series of arguments need to be discussed for this to be realized.

The media should be constantly aware of the actual definition of terrorists. There is a need for a standard definition of terrorist without being influenced by political, ideological, racial, and religious bias. The issue of 'terrorist labeling' has been used to regard people who are opponents to their ideologies. For Instance, HAMAS whom the Palestinians regard as freedom fighters among many Muslims are labeled as terrorists by the Western media.
The issue of consistency alone has also become a big argument, especially when it comes to media interest. The Mujahidin in Afghanistan, for example, was labeled as fighters when they fought against the Russians by the American media. However, as they turned against America, they were labeled as terrorists. Similarly, Jabhat Al–Nusra in Syria were previously labeled as a terrorist, but now since they are allied with the United States, fighting against the Islamic State, they are labeled something milder along the line of "rebel" and "fighters." This clearly shows that some media define terrorists differently based on their understanding and definition. Speaking of the word definition, has Israel ever been labeled as terrorist by any of the Western media? The result of western information flow has systematically distorted international knowledge of the cultural, political and economic progress of the third world and emphasizes its negative aspect (Mohd Rajib, Faridah, Asmah & Taylor, 2011).

For the media, the objectivity of reporting is a significant instrument for news coverage. Due to the ideological, political, and religious bias, sometimes the media lacks objectivity in their reporting. To portray certain groups as terrorists, the media aggressively reinforces the idea with supporting proofs while neglecting facts that will dispel the notion. For example, in the case of HAMAS, the Western media came out with significant proofs to relate HAMAS with terrorist organizations, and neglected facts that showed HAMAS being a law abiding and proper freedom fighter organization. What makes it worse is that certain terrorist acts are justified by the media itself. For example, when Israel attacked the Palestinians, the Western media portrayed the narrative as it was done in the name of "self-defense."

One of the reasons that contributed to the rise of the Islamic State is their impressive usage of propaganda. Its propaganda machinery are slick and effective, thus increasing their recruitment (Kaidanow, 2015). Hence, the media also needs an impressive propaganda to counter the narratives. The failure of the mainstream media apparatus to counter the propaganda of the Islamic State has made it harder to combat terrorism, especially in the psychological war against them. The media should play a more active role in combating terrorism rather than reporting or disseminating the terrorists' propaganda to the public. They should progressively design a proper counter-narrative or at least assist to disseminate the information from those who can. It is essential to understand that terrorist groups are mostly ideological; therefore, the only effective way to overcome it is by countering their ideologies. The failure to deal with this issue has resulted in many questions being left unanswered, thereby contributing to the rise in terrorist groups in the future.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism is a delicate issue affecting everyone. As mentioned earlier, one man's terrorist could be another man's freedom fighter. Therefore, the issue of terrorism does not possess one solution that fits all but each case of terrorism needs to be addressed differently. Stereotyping will lead to further problems in this crucial situation. Even worse is the labeling issue where the media constantly labels them as a terrorist without any form of understanding. There is a need for better comprehension to deal with this affair and the psychological aspects of the perpetrators to combat the plague effectively. The combination of the elements of culture, religious, legal, and ethics are needed to deal with this critical problem to solve and prevent terrorism from happening.

In a continuous effort to curb the terrorist ideology, the attention of the media needs to be diverted as a terrorist might feel that they are receiving the attention that they need. Therefore, due to excessive media coverage of terrorism, it makes it easier for a terrorist to plan following attacks and directly develop fear and insecurity within the society globally.

The devastating impact of the terrorist acts, thus develops the uneasiness and discontentment among civilians in general. It also creates tension for innocent people who happen to speak and wear the same clothes as the terrorists. The world has witnessed how Muslims are portrayed and treated due to Islamophobia. They are being wrongly accused and disgraced inhumanly as a result of the terrorists' behaviors. Islamophobia is part of western propaganda. Propaganda can manipulate people's mind and influence people's actions. Propagandist would go to some extend to interpret any issue up to their understanding and perception regardless whether it is the truth or not (Annuar Amri Abdul Muluf, 2014)

Last but not least, the media outlets should be more fair and truthful, especially in their news reporting. The media is an important instrument where the audience can understand the actual situation without having certain sentiment and racial judgment in evaluating the situation. The media should work harder to provide accurate facts so the audience will not lose confidence in their security and reduce the public stereotype towards certain groups repeatedly labeled as terrorists.

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