Meta-Analytic Investigating of the Notion of "Terrorism"

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Abstract

During the second half of the twentieth century up until today, the issue of terrorism and how to fight this phenomenon are among the most important priorities of all members of the international community, particularly the countries which have been victims of terrorism and especially the Islamic Republic of Iran which has been one of the biggest victims of terror, in a way that thinkers consider this phenomena among international threats, not in the field of internal affairs. Due to the importance of this phenomenon, unfortunately, a holistic definition that includes all aspects of this notion has not been provided in the books of scholars and not in international documents, so based on this fact, providing a comprehensive definition that would have included all the notions of terrorism is necessary. The main question of this study is that what are the main components of the notion of terrorism? The presented paper examines these facts by using the "meta-analysis" method and by using the descriptive-analytical approach. This paper concluded that in order to have a comprehensive definition of "terrorism", three basic components of lack of legitimate-defense, security-debugging, and strategy based on violence are required in explaining this idea.

Keywords: Terrorism, meta-analysis, a comprehensive definition.
1. Introduction:
When we deal with the previous study of notions, we find the history full of terrorist acts, in all these centuries, serious ideological struggles have been going on to clarify the concept of this phenomenon but they did not provide a comprehensive definition of this problem. However, from 1970s onwards, the global efforts were made for this issue but has always failed due to the ideological and political reasons (Dona, 1987: 1-9). It should be noted that one of the main causes of global firm in dealing with these problems is the lack of a consensus definition which this same problem has created the lack of modular orientation in dealing with terrorism in international level and among the international community members (Muller, 2003: 211-219). In the second half of the twentieth century, scientists have proposed the science of methodology in order to have a better and broader definition and accordingly, it is better to use the particular way that described it as "meta-analysis ". The present paper by using this method, seeks to identify the main components of this phenomenon.

2. The Theoretical Framework of "Meta-Analysis":
In the 1970s, the modern European science of methodology had been dealt with serious challenge and lived in a deep crisis which was as a result of the weakness and inefficiency of traditional methods of that time, because these methods, had put massive problems for researchers (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004: 18). Efforts of methodologists for solving this challenge brought the birth of the meta-analysis.
Meta-analysis refers to the research methods that can be gained from viewing the previous research on a particular topic, and investigating the results of their research and finally, the discovery of common ground among the results of conducted studies, in other words, creating consistency and arranging the results of researches on a particular topic, and estimation of the fresh hidden relationships between them (Glass, 1976: 3-8). In the meta-analysis the researchers try to study the previous results of scientific research and then they should evaluate and assess each one of them and after this stage, they try to obtain the comprehensive answer through these studies and evaluations so that to bring together the previous research results and to create consistency among the results of previous research (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004 445).
The main advantage of meta-analysis is its ability to increase the power of the study to achieve new and significant findings and to offer conclusions arising from the collective mind of researchers (Siahpoosh, 2008: 102, quoting from Rezaeian: 2006). It should be noted that in terms of the political science perspective, three types of phenomena can be recognized and separated from each other, the first group is the group of phenomena which have merely material existence, the other group are the phenomena that lack any material aspect, but the third category of phenomena are also reckoning that they not only have material aspect but also have immaterial indicators, (Reiters, 1995: 243), from this perspective, we can put terrorism in the third category, because this unfortunate phenomenon has harsh and intimidating material aspects and non-complex immaterial elements that are needed to be recognized.
A variety of studies and research carried out so far in relation to terrorism, each of which has been examined a particular aspect of the issue, this paper is trying to analyze the previous results of studies and by changing and assembling them with each other, could achieve the basic elements of terrorism and create the overall and functional result.
3. The Concept of Terrorism
3-1: Components and Features of Terrorism:
The concept of terrorism is a multilateral issue. In fact, when we examine the concept of terrorism, we find that this phenomenon is composed of several components, that the most important among them are violence, victim, target, motivation, legality, accepting responsibility, the factors of a terrorist act, and audience (Abdullah Khani, 2007: 23-24).
But among these factors and components that we reckon for the concept of terrorism, the three factors have got the greatest importance rather than other ones that these three are the victim, the terrorists and the audience (Mohseni, 2011: 205).

3-2. Different Kinds of Terrorism:
Monitoring the various kinds of terrorism has a decisive role in the general understanding of its meaning. One of the most important divisions of terrorism that has been done till now is the division of this concept in terms of geopolitical mode. In terms of geopolitics, we can study terrorism in four different levels: local terrorism, national terrorism, regional terrorism, and global terrorism (Afzal and others, 2011: 112-114).
The government's strategy against nowadays' terrorism must be dealt with places attacked by terrorism which means that the terrorist insurgency can occur at any point, all states should be united with the insurgency and confronted with terrorist destruction, because such a thing is more easily for the governments than the struggling with terrorists and also it is more safer from confronting with the terrorists inside the country's borders (Tuker, 1997: 14-31).

3-3. Researchers’ Definition of Terrorism:
Researchers have offered various definitions associated with the concept of terrorism. "Reich" in its definition of the concept of terrorism, stated that terrorism is more likely to occur in democratic societies, and terrorism is fundamentally the spread and promote of a philosophy that opposed to democracy, he said, terrorism is a form of fighting based on ideology that its final goal is to seize political power and business and to get governmental rule (Reich, 2001: 123), in the other definition, they defined terrorism as the use of violence and bloodshed and conducting various threats or planned attacks that have many similarities with guerilla warfare which have no special order (Whittaker, 2006: 50).
When we look at history of terrorism we find that in past, states considered terrorism, as an internal threat, but in the modern age, the issue of terrorism is in the form of international concern (Luck, 2003: 1-2), Through these statements, we understand that nowadays’ terrorism is drastically changing in terms of various ways of conducting terrorist acts and also based on the goals of conducting terrorism acts (Tayeb, 2003: 118). As long as there is not a clear definition of terrorism, is possible that a militant terrorist act of people in some countries can be considered as justice and nationalist movement (Braden and Shelley, 2004: 223).
There are definitions of terrorism that focused their gaze at the regional level of terrorism that these people had brought the previously planned use of violence by a state against another country with the aim of creating the fear and panic and violence atmosphere to achieve the political objectives of terror in the definition of terrorism (Rosie, 1987: 7).
"Habermas", believes that terrorism is necessary consequences and unfortunate implications of modernism, he says in all terrorist acts that have been occurred, three factors are visible: the use of violence, political objectives and intention to create fear among the people (Habermas 2001: 79).

3-4. UN Definition of Terrorism:
The issue of terrorism in ancestors of international organizations, was used firstly in 1937 in first article of the convention on the prevention and punishment of terrorism adopted by the "UN", in this convention, terrorism considered as criminal act that takes place against a government and was defined to establish panic and fear among the public, particular individuals or obvious groups of people.

After the founding of the United Nations, terrorism issue took into consideration independently for the first time in September 1972 after the hostage-taking of Israeli athletes during the Munich Summer Olympics (Peterson, 2004: 179). In this statement noted that the United Nations is obliged to take action to prevent from terrorism acts and other forms of violence endangering human life and the rights that have been taken away from them for having life or endangering fundamental freedoms of people with risks and also have the duty to study the main factors of this phenomenon and other acts of violence which are rooted from the phenomena such as poverty, frustration, injustice and despair and leads a group of people or even some of their fellows to sacrifice themselves to witness major changes in the world (Bozorgmehri, 2008: 22). The common thread in all of these reports was that the national liberation movements of the issue of terrorism was isolated and was not brought under the heading of terrorism (Peterson, 2004: 197).

All United Nations conventions considered terrorism as a serious worldwide threat towards international peace and security (Bozorgmehri, 2008: 21). The problem of terrorism is not defined in the European Convention on fighting terrorism and instead that matter, they refer to instances outside the phenomenon of terrorism: hijackings and taking any action that would jeopardize the security of air travelers, threaten or otherwise violate the life or liberty of individuals which is internationally supported, such as diplomats, hostage situation, the assassination attempt, manifest application and parcel bombs, and finally trying to do one of the above matters and participation in the commission of such acts (Piruzan, 2009).

3-5. Analysis of the Proposed Definitions and the Search for Basic Terrorism Components:
By studying the votes of political science thinkers and searching the definition of the notion of terrorism which is provided in international conventions, and finally by gathering these definitions and discourses we can offer new and appropriate answers to the research question which is questioning that what are the basic elements of terrorism. In fact, by reading these definitions we can define three basic components in relation to terrorism (Afžal and others, 2011: 109) which are as a result of definitions provided by political scientists and international relations or international conventions. These three components must be included in the definition of terrorism and without them understanding the notion of terrorism would not be possible which includes the lack of legitimate defense, security debugging, and strategy based on violence. In fact if we want to offer a conceptual model of the notion of terrorism, we have to offer a
combination of these three components in recognition of the concept of terrorism. This following model clearly explains the matters:

The word "violence " is derived from the Latin root "Vis ", in fact having strength and force in the commission of acts of violence is very important and in other words having violence and force would play a vital role in conducting violence, to the point that sometimes some social scientists defined violence in terms of an ultimate force and put an emphasis on it (styrene, 2003: 16). In all definitions of terrorism, the acts of violence are known as one of the most original and the most obvious components of terrorist activity as much as if there is not an act of violence, accordingly it is impossible to refer to that single incident as a terrorism act. In the field of "lack of legitimate defense" it is necessary to note that there is fundamental difference between legitimate and non-legitimate defense. In the Charter of the United Nations, the legitimate defense is recognized as one of the inherent right for each country, in fact, if a foreigner wanted to enter a country's borders with aggression and occupation, for the all members of that country, dealing with this person, arresting and deporting him considered as an undeniable right and conclusive matter, and no one won’t held them for the legitimate defense of their land, because defending them has legal and legitimate aspects and it is applied in a legitimate way and the issue of legitimate-defense is rooted in natural right of "self-defense" (Bowett, 1958: 48). Based on this provision of the charter of the United Nations was noted above that, it is not right to call terrorist group the "Hezbollah" in Lebanon and the resistance groups in occupied Palestinian in accordance with international standards, because they defense their land against the aliens who fight in aggression and occupation against them to get their land. But terrorists have no such rights because basically they are not rejected form somewhere that intend to recapture it and secondly, that the use of violence by these groups completely lacks legitimacy, because without
having any frame, they keep killing accidental victims in the intended community, so the absence of legitimate-defense is one of the terrorism criteria that must be considered.
But security-debugging is a very important in terrorism, because terrorists’ secondary purpose of committing terrorist acts aimed at destroying social security, security-debugging is fundamental factor that in all forms of terrorism can be seen and it is necessary to put it in the broader definition of terrorism. Many definitions have been released for security in some definitions, for example, they called it through the opposite concept of security which means insecurity and sometimes security have been defined as the concept of relative freedom from the absence of physical and mental modes that may cause serious damage (Both, 1991: 319). But if we pay attention to this issue, we learn more in the sense that this idea with the combination of three factors of land, power and politics is understandable, due to this fact, some experts believe that it is better to consider security as a geopolitical concept (Hafeznia, 2005: 327).

4. Conclusion:
In today's world, terrorism and how to fight against it are among the most important concerns of all members of the international community, the terrorism which is not placed in the same national level anymore and it is considered as an international phenomenon. Although many efforts had been done to counter terrorism at the national, regional and international level, but none of these efforts had not been successful. One of the main causes of this failure, is the absence of comprehensive and inclusive definition of terrorism, it should be noted that great efforts have been made in line with the definition of the phenomenon, but these studies have been conducted separately and independently and that is why not it could not put all those factors under this concept to accommodate components. This article by utilizing the theoretical framework of analysis, after reviewing and studying the definitions by scholars and international conventions in relation to the notion of terrorism has come to the conclusion that it is necessary for broader definition of the notion of terrorism to pay attention toward three essential elements in the definition of this concept, first factor is conducted to recognize that the most outstanding characteristic of terrorism is the violent strategy of this phenomenon, secondly that generally terrorism is different from what is called legitimate-defense, in other words, the lack of the legitimate defense is second feature of terrorism since the terrorist events lack of any framework of legitimate actions, and thirdly to know that in the definition of terrorism, we should pay attention to the category of security-debugging since in all terrorist events, destroying the security is considered as the terrorist group aims.
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