The root causes of terrorism

Bekir Çınar
71 Bridge End, E17 4ER, London, UK
e-mail: bekir.cinar@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper aims to discuss the root causes of terrorism, which might be political systems and political administration and policies. It debates that without knowing the root cause of terrorism, there will be no plausible solution to the problem. Further, the paper tries to prove that the root causes of terrorism might not be economic, social, ideological or beliefs and religions. The core theme of terrorism can be injustice that is product of the political system and its activities. Therefore, the political system and decision-making are the root cause of terrorism. In short, this means that any suggestions to solve the problem of terrorism will not be successful unless they address the political system.

Keywords: Terrorism, prevention of terrorism, the root causes, democracy, wealth, justice, injustice.

1. Introduction

People are not born terrorists and do not wake up one morning and suddenly decide to start planting bombs in public streets. Therefore, an important realisation here is that terrorism is a process and 'terrorism is a choice; it is a political strategy selected from among a range of options' (Silke, 1998). The process of terrorism has an historical background, which involves people who rightly or wrongly perceive that the political system is treating them harshly. This harsh treatment may even stretch back to their ancestors.

Terrorists may come from any country and any culture. Terrorism is a complex problem and its origins are diverse and, as Franks says, 'the study of terrorism has become preoccupied with the constant debate that revolves around explaining *what* actually constitutes terrorism and *how* to counter it. Instead of perhaps concentrating on *why* it actually occurs' (Franks, 2006).

Political actions can take any number of forms. However, one of the most radical forms of political violence is terrorism, and it is differentiated from the other forms of political violence. The differentiation is not

completely understood by academics and practitioners, because there are different explanations about the origins of violence.

What justifies, supports violence, and causes grievances? Is it background conditions, such as political, social, cultural, economic and psychological issues, that cause those people to carry out terrorist atrocities? Alternatively, will focusing on these give relatively little explanation of the subject? What is the best way to explain terrorism?

Whatever the answer is an examination of the root causes of terrorism will make an important contribution to the studies of terrorism in terms of understanding terrorism, and thereby help that students to design a model for countering it. As Richardson writes, 'understanding is the first step towards formulating an effective counter-terrorist strategy' (Richardson, 2006). Moreover, terrorism can never be efficiently combated unless its causes are more systematically studied and addressed' (Mazrui, 2007). Therefore, this paper aims to enhance that understanding of terrorism.

Initially, the political roots of terrorism will be studied. In this paper, political violence and civil disobedience will be investigated in order to establish whether there is a link between these and terrorism.

The exploration of the political roots of 20th-century political violence might be an important factor in terrorism, because there should be some similarities between political violence in general and terrorism more specifically. The study will include the causes of, and justifications for, political violence. In addition, civil disobedience will also be investigated in this part in order to establish if there is a link with terrorism.

This paper will try to reach a conclusion which will demonstrate that terrorism is the product of political systems[1], resulting when a political system cannot meet the demand of terrorists or some other political actors within the establishment. Then, terrorists will be shown as political actors in the political system and the country.

Secondly, economic and social roots will be inspected for possible causes of terrorism. Radio, television and newspapers inform us that there are very close links between economic and social conditions and terrorism. It would be a mistake not to overlook what these three forms of media are saying.

Thirdly, philosophical, ideological and religious roots will be considered. It is important to discover the ideologies, culture, and religious beliefs that might have any impact on the causes of terrorism. Psychological roots which may attempt to understand the motivations and actions of terrorist individuals and groups will also be studied, taking into account the enormous diversity of theories and the fact that no single

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[1] Any political system is part of culture of that society. Then 'cultures differ in how they react to a sense of injustice. Some may lean towards correction and compensation; others may be provoked into an urge for retaliation. Some cultural rage may demand reparations; other forms of indignation may dream of revenge' (Mazrui, 2007).

psychological theory, and no single field of scholarly study, is able fully to comprehend these roots and whether they have any impact on terrorists' actions (Leeman, 1987, 45-53).

Finally, a conclusion will be drawn in order to stress the important points once more. This will state once again that the main root cause of terrorism is not poverty, ideology, or psychological problems, but the failure of political systems.

2. The root causes approach

It was noted that some authors believe that an approach to counter-terrorism based on addressing the root causes of terrorism may be counter-productive. The fear is that tackling the grievances which causes terrorism will be seen as weakness, and so encourage more terrorism. Dershowitz, in particular, comments that 'the real root cause of terrorism is that it is successful – terrorists have consistently benefited from their terrorist acts. … terrorism will persist … as long as the international community rewards it' (Dershowitz, 2002: 2). It would be wrong, however, to reject the root causes approach because of this fear. Understanding *why* people resort to terrorism is an essential prerequisite for determining *how* to respond. As Pape notes, for instance, 'understanding that suicide terrorism is mainly a response to foreign occupation rather than the product of Islamic fundamentalism has important implications for how the United States and its allies should conduct the war on terrorism'(Pape, 2005: 237).

Responding to the root causes of terrorism does not, in any event, necessarily mean that surrendering to terrorist demands. In a recent report published by Demos, Briggs *et al.* comment about the attraction of British Muslims to Al Qaeda that, 'while factors such as foreign policy and the Middle East are important, they will have no traction unless they can be linked to sources of grievance and anger closer to home, such as the poverty and discrimination suffered by the Muslim community in the UK' (Briggs *et al.,* 2006: 40). If this is true, then much can be done to eliminate these grievances, and so reduce support for terrorism, without making concessions to the demands of the terrorists. Refusal to accept that 'the grievances of the Muslim community … in many instances … are well founded and deserve to be recognised' (Briggs *et al.,* 2006: 16) alienates members of the community from government and from the police and makes them less likely to cooperate with security and intelligence forces. Although, the intelligence services, which is an important part of security forces in combating terrorism, in turn rely on information provided by local communities. Alienation of this sort therefore makes it much more difficult to combat terrorism in the manner proposed. While 'there are dangers linked to policy change in response to terrorist demands', the British government, says the Demos report, 'must get over its hang-ups about responding to the grievances' (Briggs *et al.,* 2006: 48, 59).

In short, terrorism will continue until the root causes are addressed. As Homer-Dixon (2007) argues, 'until we understand the sources of terrorism and do something about them, we can arm ourselves to the teeth, rampage across the planet with our militaries, suspend many of our civil liberties, and still not protect ourselves from this menace'(Homer-Dixon, 2007; Zimbardo, 2001).

3. The root causes of terrorism

In this study, I perceive and consider terrorism 'as a response' to the existing political system. In other words, terrorism is seen as political and as politically motivated actions. 'It is a strategy rooted in political discontent, used in the service of many different beliefs and doctrines that help legitimise and sustain violence. Ideologies associated with nationalism, revolution, religion, and defence of the status quo have all inspired terrorism' (Leeman, 1987: 45-53). In sum, 'terrorists fight for very different reasons' (Richardson, 2006). These are mainly political and interconnected.

The causes of terrorism can be investigated under these sub-headings:
1) Historical and political roots;
2) Economic and social roots;
3) Ideological and religious roots;

4. Psychological roots

4.1. Historical roots

It has been accepted that political violence, conflict, and terrorism are old phenomena. Hence, 'the history of terror is unfortunately part of the humankind's history of executing political power, as force by the use of fear and violence has always been part of our history' (Leeman, 1987). The term 'terrorism' dates back to the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution in 1793-4 (Wilkinson, 1974: 129). However, the phenomenon developed its current meaning in the 20th century. By the 1980s, organizations such as the Irish Republican Army, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Red Brigades of Italy were classified as 'terrorist', and since then this term has developed much more. Until the 1980s, the term 'terrorism' was not always used; the terms 'political violence' (Davis, 2007) and 'anarchism'[2] were also used in order to explain terrorism.

A recent study investigates the historical pattern of terrorism in the world political system, and the study provides some interesting finding about the relationship between terrorism and the world system of politics and political systems. This is briefly explained in Table 1 (see Bergesen and Lizardo, 2007).

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[2] 'The anarchists who performed acts of violence at that time were motivated by the belief that the state was an instrument of oppression directed against the poor and the downtrodden' (Wilkins, 1992: 1).
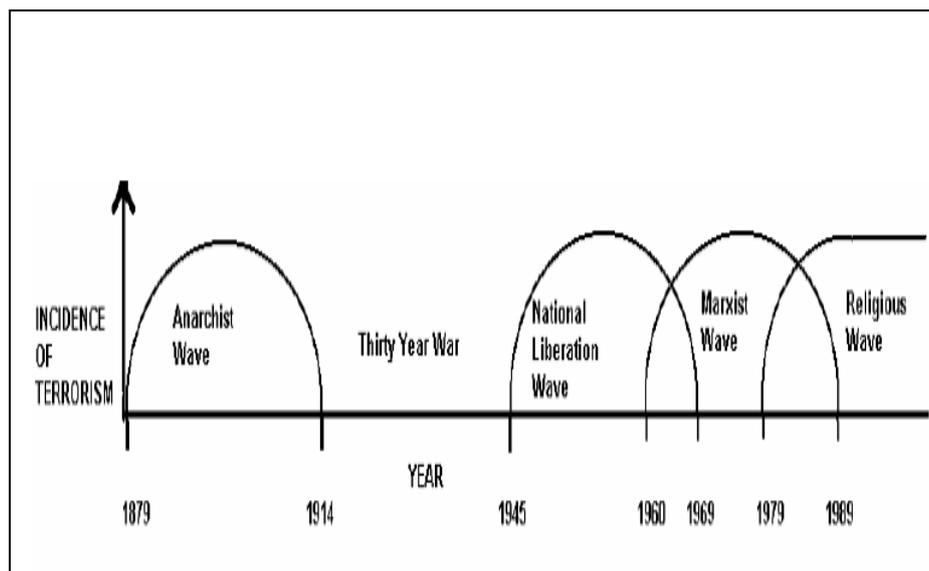
There is a clear link between political systems and terrorism. This suggests that terrorism is a product of political systems and will not go away before those systems are corrected. At present, '(t)errorism can be interpreted as a desperate response of the growing number of weak or powerless groups challenging the rigidities of frontiers, power and resource distribution underpinned by the current international system'(Wilkinson, 1977: 30). The current international system is seen as unfair and unjust by many whom 'see themselves as defending the weak against strong and punishing the strong for their violation of all moral codes'(Richardson, 2006: 59). This has produced the so-called 'new terrorism'.

4.2. Political roots

Terrorism is like a cancer cell of the existing political system. If the political system works perfectly, this cancer cell will not be visible within the political system; if the system does not work perfectly, it will be visible, grow, and spread into the whole political system (Çınar, 1997: 247). Wilkinson agrees with the present writer, although in a slightly different approach. He states that 'revolutionary violence stems directly from conflicts within and between a country's political institutions.

Revolutionary violence is seen as the product of conflict about legitimacy, political rights, and access to power. It often results from the refusal or incapacity of a government to meet certain claims made upon it by a powerful group or a coalition of group (Wilkinson, 1974).

Table 1
Political Systems and Waves of Terrorism

Examination of an existing political system and its governance will provide the required information about the root causes of terrorism. When one is investigating the existing political system, one should start to investigate and analyse it at least from 40 years before the present day. For example, ethnic terrorism may be a product of a 'nation-state'[3] because nationalism means that the dominant ethnic groups in the country have been prized above others, who have been subordinated in the country's political, economic and social life for a prolonged period. 'Without question, in the most successful revolutionary wars of the last 25 years, the strongest appeal has been to nationalism and patriotism based either on resistance to a conqueror or the gaining of independence from a colonial power'(Wilkinson,1974). Today, it is difficult to see any colonial power in any country, but many ethnic groups within the nation-state see the dominant ethnic group or government as a colonial power or occupying power. For example, 'the PKK claims it is only acting in self-defense and for the protection of the Kurds'.[4]

In addition to seeing terrorism as the product of the nation-state, one may see it, in the Middle East for instance, as a product of the political systems of repressive regimes[5], economic systems which are corrupted and produce poverty and no job opportunities, educational systems which are lacking in decent education and training, and the never-ending conflict in Muslim world in general and in particular the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Sharansky argues that 9/11 'has dispelled the free world of its illusions and democratic policymakers recognise that the price for "stability" inside a nondemocratic regimes is terror outside of it' (Sharansky, 2006: 14).

Another type of political system, which is relevant, is the international system, in particular the current balance of power. One Middle Eastern academic states that 'Now, there are some injustices in the Middle East. There is at the same time an imbalance of power in the Middle East. There is the occupation of Palestine, the invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, of Chechnya, Kashmir. What you call suicide bombs is something related to the imbalance of power. When a partner has all the weapons and the other partner has nothing, except his life to offer, then he will sacrifice his life'(Mollov,

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[3] 'Nation-states exist to deliver political goods-security, education, health services, economic opportunity, environmental surveillance, a legal frame-work of order and a judicial system to administer it, and fundamental infrastructural requirements such as roads and communications facilities-to their citizens' (Rotberg, 2002). Further, '(a) form of state in which those who exercise power claim legitimacy for their rule partly or solely on the grounds that their power is exercised for the promotion of the distinctive interests, values and cultural heritage of a particular nation whose members ideally would constitute all, or most of, its subject population and all of whom would dwell within the borders' (Johnson, 2007).

[4]   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan_Workers_Party, accessed on 15 Mar. 07.

[5]   'The region has been dominated by a range of authoritarian political systems, including military regimes, monarchies, theocracies, and one-party statist regimes. … Civil society is weak as a result of the severe legal restrictions and coercive methods that the region's regimes use to stifle political expression. Independent media are largely nonexistent; most newspapers and articles are censored, and those that exist are seen as serving the interests of the regime or particular political parties. In such societies, severe repression drives all politics underground, placing the moderate opposition at a disadvantage and encouraging political extremism' (Windsor, 2003).

2005). The power of America and its foreign policy may be seen causes of terrorism. Since the collapse of super power rivalry, the United States acts when and where it sees such action as fitting its interests. President Bush states 'these terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way'.[6] However, it is not right to claim that those terrorists aimed to disrupt the way of life of the USA. They aimed to give their message to the administration of America by showing that they were not happy with American political, economic and military presence in the Middle East. For example, Ayman al-Zawahiri states that 'the masters in Washington and Tel Aviv are using the regimes (such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan) to protect their interests and to fight the battle against the Muslim on their behalf'(Richardson, 2006). Laqueur seems to be affirming this statement as 'the resentments felt by Muslims against the dominant position of the West politically, culturally, and economically, and the stagnant state of Muslim societies'(Laqueur, 1996).

It is assumed that a very small number of individuals are present in every country that is ready to take a form of political action against those government decisions, which cause unhappiness to them. These people may or may not represent collective interests, but they encourage other people to listen and understand their starting point. When others begin to listen to them, a formation of political actions will start. One of these political actions is terrorism. It is clear that terrorism requires the active participation of these kinds of unhappy people. Thus, the action of terrorism is an end product of the process. This process moves through several stages until the overt terrorist action takes place. Only, at the action stage of terrorism does it become noticeable and be named by people. From the initial genesis of terrorism to the action itself, each individual stage requires careful determination and planning. Accordingly, terrorism has many dimensions and each dimension needs to be dealt with carefully in order to understand and prevent it.

Sometimes terrorism is associated with a social movement or political party that enjoys significant popular support, largely because of its non-violent activities such as providing much-needed social services (Hamas and Hezbollah are examples of such implanted organisations). Such actors employ terrorism because it is a temporarily expedient means of pressuring a government. They can survive; even flourish, without using terrorism. Other groups are more socially isolated. They may be splinter factions of larger organizations, or small groups that have formed in order to use terrorism. Such groups have few options other than terrorism and over time, it may become an identity for them as much as a strategy. Groups of both types are

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[6] President Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C. For Immediate Release, Office of the Press Secretary, September 20, 2001.

subject to internal strains and divisions, and factionalism is common. Their leaders struggle to maintain cohesion and loyalty.

Introducing this distinction raises another point: in some circumstances, terrorism may be seen as legitimate by popular audiences, especially when they are it is discriminated against and access to power is blocked. It cannot be denied that in some circumstances the public may not only support the goals behind terrorism but the method itself (Crenshaw,2005).

Without support of the public for the goals behind terrorism and the method, terrorists cannot successfully engage in any terrorist activities. When I look at the action of terrorists, I see two important elements. One is the terrorists who carry out the atrocity and the other is those giving support. This second set of people may not be actual members of a terrorist group, but their provision of support is still a part of terrorism. This support can be in the form of money, goods, media and other categories.

4.3. Civil disobedience

It is a known fact that any political decision will leave certain people unsatisfied. These unsatisfied people will show their none-satisfaction in different forms because they feel that they are conflict with the decision makers. As sated that 'conflict between the desires of different individuals is a necessary condition of politics' (Warner and Crisp, 1990). Hence, there are several types of political resistance and one of them is terrorism which 'is one of the forms which sometimes quite tiny groups may use to attack even the most stable liberal states, those enjoying a high degree of popular support and legitimacy'(Wilkinson, 1977).   Another form of resistance is civil disobedience.

Civil disobedience is often an effective means of changing laws and protecting liberties. It also embodies an important moral concept that there are times when law and justice do not coincide and that to obey the law at such times can be an abdication of ethical responsibility. The choice of civil disobedience and non-cooperation is not for everyone. We all choose to do what feels right to us personally (Starr, 1998).

Wilkinson says that 'civil disobedience on a large scale becomes revolutionary when it is used to overthrow an existing system and establish a revolutionary regime, and when it is employed to coerce opposing and uncommitted elements into submitting to the revolutionary will' (Wilkinson, 1977). This statement indicates that there can be a link between civil disobedience and terrorism that targets the existing system and seeks to replace it with another regime.

One writer states that 'when a person's conscience and the laws clash, that person must follow his or her conscience. The stress on personal conscience and on the need to act now rather than to wait for legal change is a recurring element in civil disobedience movements'(Thoreau, 1849; Starr,

1998). The disobedience can appear in the form of terrorism, sub-revolution, and revolution, which is definitely the most extreme form of disobedience. In this situation, parties dispute the legitimacy of their action. Neither terrorists nor statesmen believe that the other party's action is legitimate.

According to the theory of frustration-aggression, 'humans only become violent if they are frustrated in their efforts to attain a particular goal: severe frustration leads to anger and anger to acts of aggressive violence' (Wilkinson, 1977). This theory 'maintains that aggression is always a consequence of frustration' (Tay *et al.,* 2007). Frustration is 'resulting from unfulfilled needs or unresolved problems'.[7] These are 'since ancient times, worsening deprivation, injustice or oppression' which can be seen 'major precondition of political violence'(Wilkinson, 1977).

4.4. Political violence

One of these forms is political violence whic is an extreme way of showing the conflict. Historically, 'the use of violence to effect political change is a generalized phenomenon around the world' (Boix, 2004).

What is violence? The word 'violence[8]' obviously concerns a great variety of social phenomena. One assumes, however, is that the meaning of the word 'violence' is vague (Chwe, 2001). In general, terms violence is a product of an individual or group who acts unilaterally in order to impose its opinion, and there is no space for negotiation because the power of each side is not equal. The action may harm the body, life, future, or plans of the others. The violence can be linked to specific places and times. It can be sustained and reproduced in social structures. Violence is unwanted physical interference with the bodies of others, such that they experience pain and mental anguish and, in the extreme case, death – violence, in a word – is the greatest enemy of democracy as we know it. Violence is anathema to its spirit and substance. This follows, almost by definition, because democracy, considered as a set of institutions and as a way of life, is a non-violent means of equally apportioning and publicly monitoring power within and among overlapping communities of people who live according to a wide variety of morals (Keane, 2004: 1).

Davis says that 'violence is shown to be negatively related to the availability of alternative means of acquiring political goods and to the availability of alternative economic opportunities' (Davis, 2007).

Political violence can involve violations of human rights in the society. It occurs whenever the expected net gains from employing it exceed

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[7] Random House Webster's Dictionary.

[8] 'Violence is a common means used by people and governments around the world to achieve political goals. Many groups and individuals believe that their political systems will never respond to their political demands. As a result they believe that violence is not only justified but also necessary in order to achieve their political objectives. By the same token, many governments around the world believe they need to use violence in order to intimidate their populace into acquiescence. At other times, governments use force in order to defend their country from outside invasion or other threats of force' (in http://polisci.nelson.com/violence.html, accessed on 28 May 2007).

the net gains derived from accepting the status quo among some political
actors (such as unions, peasant organizations, a clique of army officers and
so on). The status quo is here defined as a situation in which either a section
of society holds the (public) monopoly of violence and policymaking
uncontested by those that are excluded from the decision-making process or
political differences are settled peacefully (through either voting procedures
or bargaining) among all parties in contention. The decision to engage in
violent activities is a function of two factors. First, violence becomes more
likely as the difference between the benefits accrued under a new regime
obtained through the use of violence and the gains obtained under the status
quo increases. Second, the occurrence of political violence declines as its
costs go up (Boix, 2004).

Table 2
Some Explanations of the Origins of Violence

Variables	Structural	Conjuctural explanation
Economic	Economic inequalities	Intermediate steps in the economic growth
Social	Social cleavages	Rapid modernisation
Political	Authoritarian regimes	Crisis of repressive apparatuses
Cultural	Tradition of violent conflict	Rapid changes in the value system

Political violence becomes unavoidable in an unequal society in which
assets are not distributed fairly among people. Then, the potential rebels can
apply violence to overturn the existing political and economic system (Boix,
2004). Porta draws a table (Table 2) in order to show some explanations
about the origins of violence. These are the structural conditions, such as
'the level of societal development, the strength of ethnic or class cleavages,
the repressiveness of a regime, and cultural traditions'; and what Porta calls
the 'conjunctural' explanation, which relates to 'the intermediate stages of
economic development, the crises of modernization, period of ineffective
state coercion, and rapid cultural changes' (Porta, 1995: 5).

Whether the structural or the conjunctural explanation has more to say
about political violence and terrorism, the essential characteristic of politics
itself requires 'conflict between the desires of different individuals' (Warner
and Crisp, 1990) that helps to find a right balance in the society. This
explanation leads us to look at 'socio-economic factors that can potentially
contribute to the manifestation of violence, such as social dislocation,
urbanisation, modernisation, immigration, unemployment and poverty'
(Franks, 2006).

When such a dispute involves disagreement about the appropriate
source of legitimation the conflict may be more than usually intractable, for
the standard democratic procedure of majority vote by the legitimating
'people' (*vox populi, vox Dei*) is fatally flawed when the question at issue is

who 'the people' are. The more intractable the dispute the more likely, other things being equal, that dissent will take illegal or terroristic forms (Warner and Crisp, 1990). Further, one of the aims of the use of political violence (Davis, 2007; Wilkinson 1977) is to alter the political and economic status quo, because this is seen as maintaining injustice and unfairness. The injustice and unfairness are subjective not objective and these are reflections of the perceptions of people who claim to be suffering from them. They are also relative not absolute. However, this idea will be examined within the 'the deprivation theory of civil violence'[9] which suggests that 'political violence results from the social frustration that occurs in the wake of relative deprivation'[10]. Individuals or group may feel that the deprivation causes the problem, and the use of violence 'becomes more attractive to those that are excluded from the state apparatus– the prize of victory raises with inequality' (Boix, 2004).

Identifying and analysing forms of violence and responses to forms of violence requires one to focus on the role of representation, sovereignty, and identity in conflict, as well as the role of the state system in reconstructing some of the essential conditions of asymmetric warfare. Without analysing the implications of the root causes and nature of the peace and order important elements of the violence, one cannot reach a proper result on identifying the violence.
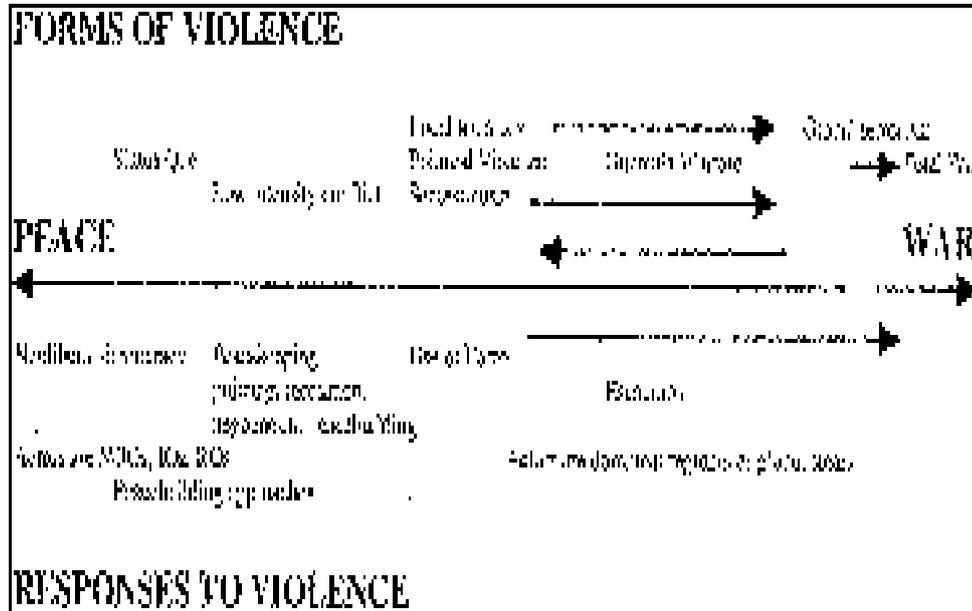
In Table 3 forms of violence and responses are shown. There is a very thin line between peace and war. This line consists of political systems and politicians. If the politicians do not react properly in response to political problems, they will make it more difficult to keep the peace. This is also the case in the international system, in which states and international politicians become the main actors who represent that thin line. If they have tended to draw on similar simple definitional categories to define and legitimate their responses, they will inflame the political activities of the others, thereby creating more problems. These others may often gain a degree of support and legitimacy when people see their grievances in the media and in public debate (Richmond, 2003).

In the following Table 4, different levels of political conflict are shown and distinguished. The table lists state actors and non-state actors in opposition and gives their politics as mirror images. If the political system is not a liberal democratic system, then the opposition may not be in a position to express its ideas and alternative as much as those holding state power.

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[9] Wilkinson (1974: 126). He states that 'there are at least four models of relative deprivation: rising expectations may overtake rising capability; capabilities may remain static while expectation rise; general socio-economic malaise may actually bring about a drop in capabilities while expectations remain constant; and finally there is the classic J-curve phenomenon in which, for a period, capabilities keep pace with rising expectations and then suddenly drop behind'.

[10] Davis (2007). He states that '(r)elative deprivation is said to occur when the outcomes experienced by individuals are inferior to those that: a) they expected to receive or b) felt that they were entitled to receive. It is the inconsistency between outcomes and expectations and/or the prevalence of outcomes that are regarded as unjust that constitutes relative deprivation'.

Table 3
The Conflict and Response Spectrum*

*See Richmond (2003).

This could lead it to respond on a different level. If the state actors respond in turn with the use of force, this might be countered with force of a similar nature. Sharansky argues that 'the lack of freedom in many parts of the world that was the greatest threat to peace and stability'(Dermer, 2006: xii). This idea led President Bush to adopt a doctrine known as the Bush Doctrine,[11] but some academics have criticised it. In the context of the Middle East, for instance, Gause states that 'there is no reason to believe that a move toward more democracy in Arab states would deflect them from their course. And there is no reason to believe that they could not recruit followers in more democratic Arab states -- especially if those states continued to have good relations with the United States, made peace with Israel, and generally behaved in ways acceptable to Washington'(Gause III, 2007). However, keeping the political structure of the Middle East as it is will not obviously solve the problem. As Sharansky says, 'I am convinced that all peoples desire to be free. I am convinced that freedom anywhere will make the world safer everywhere' (Sharansky, 2006). Without freedom of choice, expression and belief, security is not possible. Throughout history,

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[11] The Bush Doctrine is name given to a set of <u>foreign policy</u> guidelines first unveiled by President <u>George W. Bush</u> in his <u>commencement speech</u> to the graduating class of <u>West Point</u> given on <u>June 1</u>, <u>2002</u>. The policies, taken together, outlined a broad new phase in US policy that would place greater emphasis on <u>military pre-emption</u>, military superiority ("strength beyond challenge"), unilateral action, and a commitment to "extending democracy, liberty, and security to all regions". The policy was formalized in a document titled The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, published on September 20, 2002.

Table 4
Political Actions v. Political Opposition*

State of Peace	
State Actor	*Non-state Actor*
Conventional Politics	
I. Rule of Law (Routinised rule, legitimated by tradition, customs, constitutional procedures)	I. Opposition politics (Lobbying among power holders, formation of opposition press and parties, rallies, electoral contest, litigation [use of courts for political struggle])
Unconventional Politics	
II. Oppression (Manipulation of competitive electoral process, censorship, surveillance, harassment, discrimination, infiltration of opposition, misuse of emergency legislation)	II. Non-violent Action (Social protest for political persuasion of rulers and masses; demonstrations to show strength of public support; non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and other forms of non-violent action)
Violent Politics	
III. Violent Repression for control of state power III.1. (Political Justice. Political Imprisonment) III. 2. Assassination III. 3. State-terrorism (torture, death squads, disappearances, concentration camps) III. 4. Massacres III. 5. Internal War III. 6. Ethnocide/Politicise/Genocide	III. Use of Violence for contestation challenging state power III. 1. Material destruction III. 2. Assassination. (Individuated political murder) III. 3. Terrorism (De-individuated political murder) III. 4. Massacres III. 5. Guerrilla Warfare III. 6. Insurgency, Revolution (if successful).
State of War	

* See Schmid *et al.* (1998: 58-9) .

'what a legitimate authority plants, gives its citizen and neighbours, it would cultivate it from their plantation'.[12] Peace will bring peace (Shain, 1995); war brings war (Hamdorf, 2000). Peace is the end product of freedom, achieved through political communication defined as 'the ability of people to express their views, thoughts, and beliefs freely, without the fear that they will be imprisoned as a result'[13] in that political system. This political

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[12] A Turkish saying.
[13] Sharansky (2002), He states that '(w)e must understand that it is not only individuals who are equal, but also the nationalities of this world that are equal. They all deserve to live in democracy, to live under a government that depends on them.' Windsor agrees with Sharansky and states that 'promoting democratization in the closed societies of the Middle East can provide a set of values and ideas that offer a powerful alternative to the appeal of the kind of extremism that today has found expression in terrorist activity, often against U.S. interests (Windsor, 2003).

communication is possible in liberal democratic systems and not in non-democratic political systems.

As Windsor notes, 'democratic institutions and procedures, by enabling the peaceful reconciliation of grievances and providing channels for participation in policymaking, can help to address those underlying conditions that have fueled' (Windsor, 2003) radicalisation and terrorism.

5. Economic and social roots

5.1. Economic roots

Do economic conditions fuel terrorism? The answer varies: on the one hand, 'plenty of commentary and some academic scholarship suggest that economic conditions like poverty and income inequality very much matter for terrorism by affecting levels of deprivation, feelings of injustice, and hence political tension'(Burgoon, 2004). On the other hand, some other scholars agree that it is difficult to establish a direct link between terrorism and economic conditions (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003a).

Terrorism is a political problem and it is not an economic problem. However, politics affects the economy through the design of economic policies. If these policies create more injustice, income inequality and poverty, then those people who are suffering because of those polices will raise their voices against the politicians. Therefore, there is a link between economic conditions and terrorism, although it is not a direct one.

Some economists, notably William Landes, Todd Sandler, and Walter Enders, have applied the economic model of crime to transnational terrorism. …the economic model yields few concrete predictions insofar as the relationship between market opportunities and participation in terrorism is concerned, because participation in terrorist acts by individuals with different characteristics depends on the probability that participation will bring about the desired political change, as well as the differential payoff for the various groups associated with achieving the terrorists' desired aims versus the penalties associated with failure. It is possible, for example, that well-educated individuals will disproportionately participate in terrorist groups if they think that they will assume leadership positions if they succeed, or if they identify more strongly with the goals of the terrorist organization than less-educated individuals (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003a; Enders and Sandler, 2004).

This kind of assumption relies on 'the problem of terrorism that treats the individual decision to engage in terrorist activities as a rational choice calculus, which is largely in line with empirical evidence'(Schnellenbach, 2005). Therefore, economic conditions do have an impact on the roots causes of terrorism, but this does not necessarily mean that poor people will be involved in terrorism more than the rich, or that poor countries will have more terrorism than rich ones.

Instead of viewing terrorism as a response -- either direct or indirect -- to poverty or ignorance, I suggest that it is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions and longstanding feelings of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economic circumstances. I suspect that is why international terrorist acts are more likely to be committed by people who grew up under repressive political regimes (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003b).

Consequently, the political conditions, not the economic ones, are the determining factor in the root causes of terrorism. When economic conditions deteriorate and the public's standard of living declines, unhappy political groups will begin organising political protests. The response to these protests plays a vital role. Traditionally, government prefers one of two choices: an oppressive way or a democratic way, which 'gradually adheres to their demands'(Testas, 2002). The oppressive way may be counter-productive and create more problems than it solves.

5.2. *Issues of poverty*

Can poverty and inequalities be causes of terrorism? Indirectly, as noted above, the answer is yes, because poverty and inequalities are representatives of injustice. If there is no justice, people are ready to fight for it.

Some studies on this topic say that '(p)overty *per se* is not a direct cause of terrorism' (Gurr, 2005). One does not entirely agree with them, because as they in fact admit: 'terrorism can occur anywhere, but it is more common in developing societies, rather than in poor or rich countries, and is most likely to emerge in societies characterized by rapid modernization (Bjorgo *et al.*, 2007; Gurr, 2005). The investigation cited was on terrorist action and individual terrorists rather than roots of terrorism. It is obvious that a terrorist is unlikely to be a truly poor person, because such a poor person needs to concentrate on getting food and shelter rather than on challenging the existing political system in order to bring a better one. Terrorists, especially terrorist leaders, are more likely to be at least from a middle class background and sufficiently well educated to be able to understand a group's aims and objectives. To act, the terrorist needs to be mature enough to take responsibility. In other words, he should be a psychologically fit and normal person. Leaders of almost all political organizations including militant movements are better educated and of higher status than most of the population from which they come. The reason might be that 'more educated people from privileged backgrounds are more likely to participate in politics, probably in part because political involvement requires some minimum level of interest, expertise, commitment to issues and effort, all of which are more likely if people have enough education and income to concern themselves with more than minimum economic subsistence' (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003a).

Having said that, violence increases when important assets in societies are not equally distributed. If there is relative fairness in the distribution of wealth and justice, the use of violence is unlikely to be considered as an option. However, if there is not fairness and justice or the distribution of important assets is not equal, then the individual may consider the use of violence. One of the aims of violence is to alter the political and economic status quo, because these are seen to be maintaining the injustice and unfairness. Hence, the use of violence 'becomes more attractive to those that are excluded from the state apparatus – the prize of victory raises with inequality (Boix, 2004).

Leaders of terrorist groups such as the PKK, IRA and Palestinian groups exploit poverty in their respective communities. Poverty therefore does play a vital, if indirect, role in the process of terrorism. For example, Northern Ireland, the Basque region, and the Eastern part of Turkey are relatively poor parts of their respective countries. They are also, where terrorists have come from, and many of the people of those regions have supported and recruited terrorists. Any investigation of the terrorist activities in these regions which does not include these regions' economic and social conditions will be incomplete.

Groups which are relatively disadvantaged because of class, ethnic, or religious cleavages within countries, often support terrorist movements. Terrorist leaders will, as previously mentioned, most likely be educated and middle-class, but '(r)ecruits are also drawn from among poorer and less-educated youth – those with a lack of opportunities to complete secondary or higher education, or unable to find good jobs' (Gurr, 2005). In short, inequalities and injustice within a country may become a breeding ground for violent political movements in general and terrorism specifically (Gurr, 2005).

Economic change creates conditions that are conducive for instability in every part of the world. If the economic change is perceived by the community to be good for everybody, this obviously will not help any militant movements and extremist ideologies. If the economic change harms a specific region of the country and people are not sharing the burden, the sense of injustice will create new political opponents.

However, economic changes are not exactly the obvious and immediate causes of any conflicts. There needs to be a compelling process of interpretation or reinterpretation, which makes people perceive economic change as a manifestation of greedy or power-hungry conspiracies.

Often the socio-economic causes are combined with very real but isolated instances of humiliation and exploitation to form the "evidence" for larger interpretations. To be effective, moreover, interpretations require potent interpreters, leaders and organizations capable of galvanizing people into action. This role of parties, demagogues, and dynamic revolutionary organizations can even seize power, for example, when a state has been

overwhelmed by external enemies in war, or by an overload of major problems and enemies within (Merkl, 2000).

The economic changes may be used by groups in order to justify their aims and objectives. All economic changes will have an impact on the future. But as nobody knows for certain what the future holds, everything depends on the interpretation of those changes.

5.3. The welfare state

'If your enemies are hungry - feed them (Romans 12:20).' Social justice is an important factor in the society. If there is social justice, the society is solid and united. People can trust each other and try to keep peace rather resort than to violence. If the distribution of wealth is not equal and politicians favour some group or class, this will eventually offend the others.

This is true not only within countries, but also of the world economy. For that reason, early in 2003, Britain's Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Patricia Hewitt, said, 'If we in the West don't create a system of world trade that is fair as well as free … we will pay a price in increased terrorism and increased insecurity.' In reality, it is an irony that while its supposed benefits are increasing, the fruits of the global economy are far from equitably distributed. Western consumerism in all its elusive bloated glory is benefiting from this, while the streets of third world cities are lined with hoardings merely holding out the promise of the same. Consequently, for the vast majority, the gulf between their daily reality and the riches so displayed is unimaginably huge, (Porritt and Wright, 2003) which leads people into opposition to the wealthiest political systems.
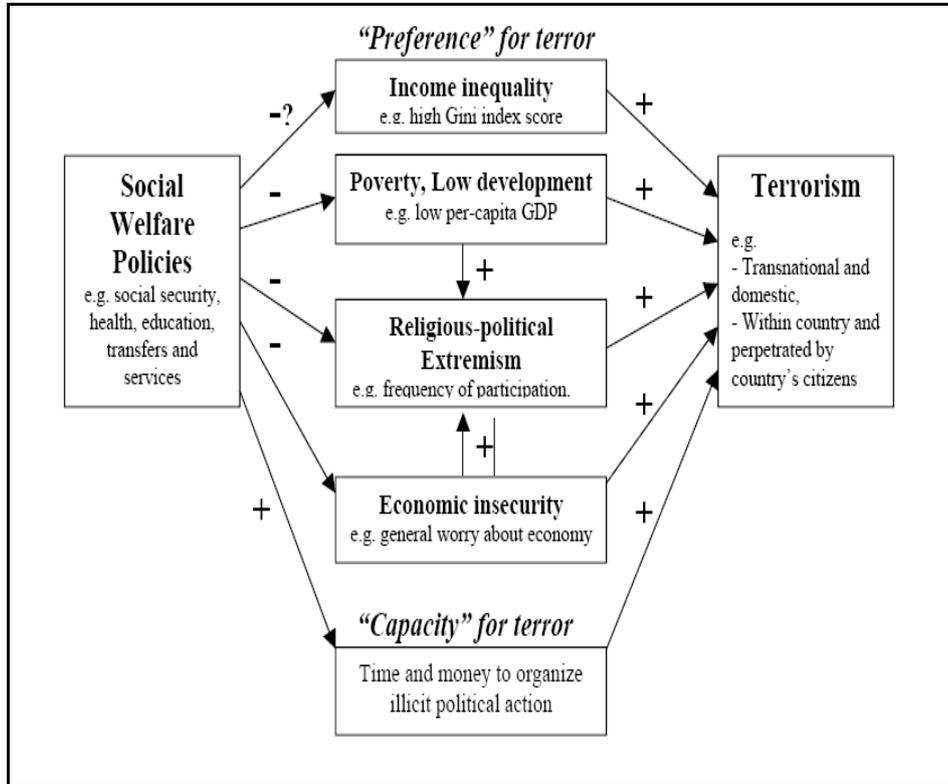
The gap between rich and poor has grown, and this unwelcome growth is apparently accelerating. According to the World Bank, of the six billion people on Earth, three billion live on less than $2 a day, and 1.2 billion live on less than $1 a day, which defines the absolute poverty standard. Access to clean water is denied to 1.5 billion people. Meanwhile, the world's richest 200 people are worth an average of $5 billion each. This naturally increases envy and anger.

The instability of economies and politics erodes a sense of national identity, and therefore decreases stability and makes conditions ripe for fundamentalism. When nations cannot take care of their people, people lose confidence in them and often tend not to vote, because they are not pleased with any of the candidates. The growing influence of extreme right-wing parties in Western European countries certainly indicates that the problem of extremism and fundamentalism is not just limited to poor countries (Lovin, 2003).

It is worth mentioning here the findings of research about the relationship between the social welfare system and terrorism.

According to Table 4, there is a link between income inequality, poverty, economic insecurity and terrorism. The starting point of these links

Table 4
'Social Welfare Policies, and the Preferences and Capacities for Terrorism*

*See Burgoon, 2004.

is the social welfare policies, which depend on the decisions of the government. According to the researcher, 'both narrow and broader conceptions of social welfare policy can be expected to reduce poverty, inequality, political-religious extremism, and general economic insecurity that, in turn, shape preferences for terrorism; but at the same time, social policy can be expected to increase capacities to organize and carry-out terrorism' (Burgoon,2004). One can draw the conclusion from this table that welfare policies, if adequately funded, might reduce terrorism. If they exist, but are not adequately funded, they could increase terrorism.

6. Ideological and religious roots

6.1. Ideological roots

According to Kullberg and Jokinen, 'terrorism is not an ideology as such. It has no united political agenda. In principle, almost any ideology could be claimed by a terrorist'(Kullberg and Jokinen, 2004). Terrorism uses ideology as a tool for participating in relations with an audience who believes in that ideology and for influencing the wider public. In other

words, 'terrorism needs an all-encompassing philosophy, a religion or secular ideology, to legitimize violence, to win recruits to the cause and to mobilize them for action'(Richardson, 2006).

Human beings seek to justify whatever they do. The justification can be done with ideological and religious teaching. People who belong to different groups in society feel forced to position themselves in relation to two opposing poles. The opposing concepts of the others have such powerful meanings that they tend to supersede other conflicts and determine how these conflicts are interpreted, mobilised around, and fought over (Bjørgo *et al.*, 2004).

6.2. Religious roots

Religion *per se* is not a direct cause of terrorism, but people can find justification for terrorism in religion. 'Religiosity itself is not a cause of political radicalism. Appeals to religion are likely to be a way of framing or representing a struggle in terms that a potential constituency will understand rather than the determinants of a strategic choice'. Juergensmeyer says that

> while religion has been a major factor in recent acts of terrorism, it is seldom the only one. Religious ideologies, goals, and motivations are often interwoven with those that are economic, social, and political. A group's decision to turn to violence is usually situational and is seldom endemic to the religious tradition to which the group is related. Islam does not cause terrorism, nor does any other religion with which terrorist acts have been associated. As John Esposito explained, usually 'political and economic grievances are primary causes or catalysts, and religion becomes a means to legitimate and mobilize'. Ian Reader stated that even in the case of Aum Shinrikyo, the Buddhist movement implicated in the Tokyo nerve gas incident in 1995, the religious factor 'would not have been enough to take the group in the direction that it did'(Juergensmeyer, 2006).

Because there are terrorists who claim that they belong to a certain religion, many may call them 'religious terrorists' (e.g. 'Islamic terrorists'). Nevertheless, at the same time millions who also belong to that same religion are not terrorists, and even denounce terrorism. Therefore, the tiny proportion of violent people should not be seen as representing their religion. Therefore, 'any political ideology, or opinion, cannot be terrorism'(Kullberg and Jokinen, 2004). Terrorism can be the *means* used in the name of some ideology by terrorist groups, but that ideology is not terrorism (Kullberg and Jokinen, 2004). 'Interviews with terrorist often reveal their sense of frustration bred of failure. Religion provides them with a means of dealing with these personal issues in a way that address their particular inadequacies by making them part of a more powerful movement and promising ultimate victory (Richardson, 2006). In short, religion may enable people to deal with their frustrations, but it is not the root cause of those frustrations.

6.3. Psychological roots

None of the research undertaken on the issue of the psychological roots of terrorism has proved that there is a link between personal psychology and terrorism. 'Terrorism is an extremely complex and diverse phenomenon' (Post, 2006) which might have different and diverse causes. Hence, there is no unified general theory, which leads people to explain terrorists' psychology: their motivations, behaviours, leaderships, organisational dynamics and followers.

Research that was carried out in the Unites State in the nineteen seventies and eighties about 'terrorist personalities' states that 'the militants of underground organizations were described as infantile, mentally distressed, and terrorized by the external world; as defeated people or seeking to compensate for their failure by excluding themselves from society or seeking for revenge' (Porta, 1995). In contrast, Crenshaw says that 'the most relevant characteristics of terrorists are their normality' (Crenshaw, 1981).

Understanding terrorist psychology requires starting from the point where a person began his/her journey towards a world of terrorism. I have already said that terrorism is a process and its roots may go back some forty years. I think the environment of any particular individual has a key role in the decision of men and women when they turn to the world of terrorism. That environment is combining with political, social, economic and cultural factors. Each of them may have an effect on him or her differently and gradually. Their effects are psychological and inspirational.

The psychological explanation of an individual terrorist indicates that terrorists are not clinically psychotic and depressed. While terrorism and membership of terrorist cells might have given some psychological help to those involved, 'explanations at the level of individual psychology are insufficient' (Post, 2006). Individual motivations are important, such as gaining of power, taking revenge and being an important figure in the organisation. However, 'a clear consensus exists that it is not individual psychology, but group, organizational and social psychology that provides the greatest analytical power in understanding this complex phenomenon. Terrorists have subordinated their individual identity to the collective identity, so that what serves the group, organization or network is of primary importance' (Post, 2006).

It is easier to find recruits when there is an organisation of terrorists, which already exists, than it is when creating a new organisation. These new recruits can be anyone who might have been emotionally disturbed, alienated, and/or a frustrated individual. But it is the initial stage of the formation of the terrorist cell which holds the key for making a proper explanation of the causes of terrorism. It is clear that at the initial stage of the formation of terrorism, the individual should be psychologically fit, educated and economically sound. Without these qualities, he cannot

organise any activities or cell in the first place. The question is here, what psychological factors may drive him to do this? The answer may be frustration, loss of belief in the authorities, anger, and seeing himself as a saviour. This person can be a leader of a terrorist cell, which has the potential to develop.

After the initial stage, it is important to differentiate followers from leaders. The leader has a very important role in organising the cell and encouraging people to join the organisation. He should be a good speaker in order to unify the group, and a good conveyer of messages that are drawn from politics, ideology or culture, in order to educate the followers. 'The leader also plays a crucial role in identifying the external enemy as the cause, and drawing together into a collective identity otherwise disparate individuals, who may be discontented and aggrieved' (Post, 2006). The leader persuades believers to die for their cause, while also restraining them from competing with each other to die prematurely.

Followers of the leader do not need to play any crucial role; they just need to have capability to complete their given role properly. These people can be estranged students, youth or unhappy people. They are forced by the political system into the kinds of psychological conditions which make them ready to receive the leaders of the terrorists' products. Take, for example, the statement: 'Our message to you is crystal clear: Your salvation will only come in your withdrawal from our land, in stopping the robbing of our oil and resources, and in stopping your support for the corrupt and corrupting leaders' (BBC, 4 August 2005). When an Arab youth or student listens to this statement, he might believe that the statement is true, and that consequently he is compelled to respond positively. Therefore, 'understanding each terrorism in a nuanced manner within its own particular cultural, historical and political context' is important (Post, 2006). In short, the political, social, economic and cultural environments have a paramount role in determining whether people participate in terrorism.

All humans seem to need recognition of their worth. This is a basic psychological need. Philosopher John Rawls noted that 'the most important primary good is self-respect' (Rawls, 1995: 125). Self-respect depends on external recognition. The search for recognition is therefore important in the development of the terrorist.

> The desire for recognition may at first appear be an unfamiliar concept, but it is as old as the tradition of Western political philosophy, and constitutes a thoroughly familiar part of the human personality. It was first described by Plato in the *Republic*, when he noted that there were three parts to the soul, a desiring part, a reasoning part, and a part that he called *thymos*, or "spiritedness." Much of human behaviour can be explained as a combination of the first two parts, desire and reason: desire induces men to seek things outside themselves, while reason or calculation shows them the best way to get them. But in addition, human beings seek recognition of their own worth, or of the people, things, or

principles that they invest with worth. The propensity to invest the self with a certain value, and to demand recognition for that value, is what in today's popular language we would call "self-esteem." The propensity to feel self-esteem arises out of the part of the soul called *emos*. It is like an innate human sense of justice. People believe that they have a certain worth, and when other people treat them as though they are worth less than that, they experience the emotion of *anger*. Conversely, when people fail to live up to their own sense of worth, they feel *shame*, and when they are evaluated correctly in proportion to their worth, they feel *pride*. The desire for recognition, and the accompanying emotions of anger, shame, and pride, are parts of the human personality critical to political life (Blunden, 1992).

Once people have decided to participate in terrorist cells, 'the process of becoming a terrorist involves a cumulative, incrementally sustained and focused commitment to the group' (Post, 2006). In addition, there is a continuing enhancement by leaders or other recruiters, educating, brain washing, and justifying fighting against a created enemy. When a person joins the cell, his psychology will be continually drawn towards extremes, because the cell is a form of closed group and his previous knowledge about what is right and wrong and belief will gradually be replaced with the group's knowledge, beliefs and collective identity. When this process has been completed, the person has become ready for use.

Leaving the terrorist organisation is a self-realisation process. When someone joined a terror cell, he might have had sets of beliefs and hopes about changing the environment. As time passes, his beliefs and hopes may gradually fade, and then that person would like to leave, but doing so is not easy. He needs to be brave enough to take risks with his life, which comes under threat because his group will not let him go, as their lives in turn come under threat when he has gone.

7. Conclusion

Understanding the root causes of terrorism helps us to understand the phenomenon of terrorism and may give us the right idea of how to prevent and combat it. Truly, 'terrorism researchers and analysts and counter terrorism policy makers need to be able to understand the much broader trends in terrorism and their possible strategic implications and impact both for their own societies and for the international community, and the relative significance of specific trends or types of terrorism in global terms' (Wilkinson, 2000).

This paper evaluated various aspects of possible causes of terrorism. After careful analyses, this paper shows that the root causes of terrorism is political. In other words, the decision makers of any political system whom leave certain numbers of people unsatisfied about their decisions which may

lead them into frustration which trigger political disobedience and political violence. One of forms of political violence is terrorism.

In order to establish a link between terrorism and other roots such as historical and political systems, economic and social roots, ideological and religious roots and psychological roots. However, intended link has not been established between terrorism and economics, ideological, religious and psychological roots. Thus, we have seen, the psychological roots are unproven; terrorism does not appear to be the product of psychological illness. Similarly, ideology has a role to play in keeping people moving together towards the same aims and objectives, but it is a tool to be used to communicate with the community in order to recruit more support, rather than being itself the root cause of terrorism. Poverty may have a link to terrorism, but it is not direct. Economic and other grievances only lead to terrorism if people feel that those grievances are a product of the political system, and they are excluded from that system. As Richardson says, 'Broad social, economic and cultural factors may be the underlying causes or rather the risk factors that make a society more or less susceptible to the appeal of terrorist groups. But they are not the cause' (Richardson, 2006).

However, the paper has proved that there is a direct link between terrorism political system and political regimes. Demands of politically dissident groups are political neither economic or ideological or religious. The Table 4 clearly indicates that welfare of people and terrorism may have a link, but this is not a cause of terrorism, it is fuelling of terrorism. It is obvious that welfare policies are the decision of governments, that is, political decision.

For example, before Spanish nation building process began, Basque country and other provinces enjoyed political autonomy from Madrid for many years. Since the establishment of new Spanish state, the demands of the Basque Country have not been fully met by the decision makers of Madrid which caused terrorism of the Basques, because 'the fact that intensely felt ethnic sentiments and political interests could not be expressed through legitimate channels led growing frustration among younger Basques' (Shabad and Ramo, 1995). That lead those youths to join ETA which engaged terrorism for many years. This example provides a clear evidence what causes terrorism which is political decision and system.

In short, the root causes of terrorism are political systems and political administration and policies. This means that any suggestions to solve the problem of terrorism will not be successful unless they address the political system.

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Özet

Terörizmin temel nedenleri

Yazının amacı, terörizmin temel nedenlerini tartışmaktır. Bu nedenler, siyasal sistemler ile siyasal yönetim ve politikalar olabilir. İleri sürülen görüş, terörizmin temel nedenleri bilinmeden, soruna makul bir çözüm bulunamayacağıdır. Buna ek olarak yazıda terörizmin temel nedenlerinin ekonomik, tuplumsal, ideolojik veya dinsel/inançsal olmayabileceği de kanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Terörizmin ana teması, siyasal sistem ve eylemlerin ürünü olan adaletsizlik olabilir. Dolayısiyle terörizmin temel nedenleri araştırılırken önce siyasal sistem ve siyasal karar alma süreçleri incelenmelidir. Kısaca, terörizm sorununu çözmeyi amaçlayan öneriler, siyasal sistemin kendisine yönelmedikçe başarılı olamayacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Terörizm, terörizmin önlenmesi, ana nedenler, demokrasi, zenginlik, adalet, adaletsizlik.