RADICALIZATION AND STRAIN:
A PATH TO TERRORISM

Radikalleşme ve Gerilim:
Teröre Giden Yol

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Abstract

This study tries to find answers to two questions: Why do individuals join terror organizations and why do they use violence against people? The first problem was analyzed from differing theoretical perspectives while the second was analyzed by utilizing statistical data. This research also explores the strains that terror organization members experience prior to joining the terror organization in order to understand the relationship between strain and radicalization. In the study, the Turkish Hezbollah terror organization sample was utilized in the frame of General Strain Theory. This study reveals that different theoretical perspectives help us understand the radicalization process and like other individuals, terrorist candidates experience strain and become members of terror organizations. Finally, it can be said that, individuals who experience higher levels of strain are more likely to become radical when compared to individuals who experience lower levels of strain.

Keywords: Radicalization, strain, terror, Turkish Hezbollah, violence, crime, justice, inequality

Özet

Bir süreç olarak ele alınan radikalleşme kimi araştırmacılara göre şiddetle noktalanmak zorunda olduğu gibi bazıları da her radikalleşme sürecinin şiddetle neticelenmeyeceğini belirtmektedir. Gerilim kavramı Genel Gerilim Teorisi perspektifinde ele alınan mikro düzeyde bir yaklaşım içermektedir. Objektif bir gerilim anlayışı yerine subjektif yani problemle yüzyüze olan bireyin yaşamış ve duygularıyla hissetmiş olduğu gerilimdir. Bu makale temel iki soruya cevap aramaktadır. Bi-

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reyler neden terör örgütlerine katılırlar ve neden terör örgütü üyeleri şiddete yönelirler. Birinci sorun teorik bir perspektiften ele alınırken, ikinci sorun istatistiksel yöntem kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Gerilim ve radikalleşme arasındaki ilişkiyi anlayabilmek amacıyla bu çalışma bireyin terör örgütüne katılımından önce yaşamış olduğu gerilimlerin ve negatif duyguların şiddet içerikli terör eylemlerine katılımına etkisini araştırmaktır. Farklı teorik perspektifler radikalleşme sürecini anlamamıza faydalı olduğu gibi diğer bireyler gibi terör örgütü mensupları da terör örgütüne girmeden önce çeşitli gerilimler yaşamakta ve örgüte dahil olmaktadır. Yüksek seviyede gerilim yaşayan bireylerin düşük seviyede gerilim yaşayanlara oranla daha fazla radikalleştiği gözlemlenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Radikalleşme, gerilim, terör, Hizbullah Terör Örgütü, şiddet, suç, adalet, eşitsizlik.

Introduction

1. Injustice and Terrorism: Does Perceived Injustice Result in Violent Behaviour?

Although there are some theoretical answers in terrorism literature to the question "what leads terrorists to act violently while other terrorists do not engage in violent terrorist activities", none of them have been empirically tested (Juergensmeyer, 2001). Adopting Agnew's (1992) general strain theory, this study expands the theory and tries to find answer to the aforementioned question.

Terrorism has been a trouble for many societies. Various studies have been conducted in order to understand the phenomenon from different aspects. It is clear that terrorism threatens the social order in society. The destabilization of social order by terrorist organizations may result in malfunctioning or over-functioning of these subsystems in society, which will in turn disturb every individual within that society. Terrorism that threatens the survival of the system weakens the existing social order.

Moreover, due to any possible reason, dysfunctioning of the system and lack of social order in the society may create frustration and aggression between the members of that society. When the social order is threatened, it paves the way for frustration and the illusion of an unjust system. In other words, terror activities build up new grounds for the recruitment of new members.

It is assumed that individuals tend to react against unfair behaviors and conditions exerted over them, whether by using legal or illegal coping mechanisms. Although various studies have used economic opportunities as the only indicator of inequality, this study be-

lieved that other types of inequalities, such as unequal distribution of goods, resources, and power, as well as health may have effects on terrorism (Martin, 2004; ODI, 2006).

Thus, initially this study will focus on the effect of inequalities on radicalization. Later, we will try to explain why individuals decide to join terror organizations. Finally, the relation between individual strains and violent behaviors of terrorists will be explored.

The concepts of economic and social inequalities have been commonly abused by terrorist organizations. Specifically, economic strains that an individual faces are interpreted as unjust and are an indicator of inequality to the terrorists (Koseli, 2006). With the introduction of a political agenda as a solution to the perceived existing inequalities, terrorist candidates are convinced to participate in terrorist organizations' activities. Thus, it is crucial to understand not only the concept of inequality by itself, but also similar concepts, such as injustice and inequity, and why inequality is a necessary condition in any social organization, and how it is perceived as unjust. Individuals tend to react against unfair behaviors and unfair conditions exerted over them, whether by using legal coping mechanisms against the perceived strains or by choosing a deviant method of behavior (Agnew, 2006).

Although the concepts of equality and justice have been commonly defined and studied from a macro-level perspective, the researcher believes that unequal and unjust behaviors are also sources of perceived strain. The terms equality and justice have been used to define similar situations in our daily lives; however, each concept has a specific meaning.

Furthermore, some scholars such as Miller (1997) suggest that there is no relationship between equality and justice and believe that for individuals "justice has value but equality does not" (Miller, 1997: 222). While justice is "achieved in any situation where the greatest happiness was achieved by the greatest number of people (Zajda, Majhanovich & Rust, 2006: 3)," in its pure meaning, absolute equality can be achieved when every individual has exactly the same resources. However, this is an impossible condition to reach. All modern societies, groups, and organizations have some kind of hierarchical system and status divisions.

Understanding this reality, some scholars, such as Miller (1997) and Dworkin (1987), used equality "to indicate the respect or respects in which the speaker thinks people should be the same, or treated the same way, as a matter of justice" (Dworkin, 1987: 223). Thus, inequality can be defined as "disparity or variability between different groups" (Martin, 2004: 2) or individuals. To say it differently, "inequality is about relative differences" (Martin, 2004: 3).

Inequality has been recognized as a class phenomenon and has been associated with property and wealth, or to be more specific, income (Philips, 1999). Earlier researchers have focused on social class and claimed that people who are located in the lower parts

of the social pyramid experience higher subjective feelings of powerlessness, which, then, leads to criminal behavior (Messner & Golden, 1992; Braithwaite, 1979).

Perception of inequality forms when an individual makes comparisons between him and others. For Agnew (2006) economic inequality contributes to crime rates. Specifically economic inequalities are common in developing countries (Agnew, 2006). As it was implied earlier, chronic poverty, economic deprivation may foster strong negative emotions which may lead individuals to join terrorist groups and carry out violent actions against the system which they assume as the responsible for their deprivation.

Researchers have found that there is a positive relationship between crime and economic inequality (Ehrlich, 1973; Naumayer, 2004; Kennedy, Kawachi, Stith, Lochner & Gupta, 1998). However, inequalities cannot be limited to economic inequality. Many other conditions, such as variation in the status of different groups and variations in access to particular goods, such as education, work, and health, may result in inequality (Martin, 2004).

Socio-economic and political inequalities may also result in violence and crime. Rioting in Malaysia in the 1960's, civil war in Sri Lanka, uprisings in South Africa between 1976 and 1993, and insurgency in Nepal in 1996 are some examples of political violence believed to be triggered by existing inequalities (UNDP, 2004).

According to Bourdieu (1977), violence is justified under two conditions: First, if there is an actual attack against individuals, violence as a defense is used by those who are under attack. Second, as a response to other types of violence, such as symbolic violence, it is justified by the disadvantaged groups when the oppressed group believes that they are worthless in the eyes of the dominant group (Hochschild, 1981).

For Agnew (2006) strains in high magnitude are likely to produce strong negative emotions such as anger, frustration or depression. Agnew (2006: 59) presents three factors as the characteristics of perception of magnitude. The first characteristic is "the degree or the size of the strain." Although it is not always possible to measure the degree and the size of the strain, it can be said that terrorists who experience strains in higher degree may try to cope with their strains by violent actions. For example, terrorists who lost their loved ones during a police or military operation may have intense negative emotions against security forces. This anger may lead them to join military wing in a terrorist group and to carry out violent acts.

Criminals may justify their violent acts by claiming that there is already an existing injustice in the world, whether this perceived injustice is due to economic problems or other reasons. Thus, people at the bottom of the pyramid may feel less loyalty to the system and may justify even terrorism, which is often driven by a sense of injustice and hopelessness (O'Neill, 2002). Moreover, the "terrorist believes that he or she is serving a greater cause that is just" (Nassar, 2005).

Historically, political movements were mostly believed to be a response to poverty, low pay, or unemployment, which are different aspects of inequalities (Philips, 1999). Terrorism, as a crime with a political agenda, may also be influenced by persisting inequalities (Borum, 2004). As a response to injustice, inequalities in political and economic arenas increase the opportunities for terrorist actions (Laqueur, 1999). New terrorist candidates are chosen from volunteers who are more likely to be the poorest members of that society (Berman, 2002; Stern, 2000). Besides, for the volunteers, terrorist cadres are more attractive than their current situation (Addison, Le Billon, & Murshed, 2002).

Furthermore, as it is clearly explains that the new international global system with its growing institutions, trade and technological capacities, can exacerbate real and perceived inequities, creating greater inequalities between and within states. Terrorists can "exploit these gaps, using modern communications and jet travel to preach their ideologies, raise funds, recruit and hide" (O'Neill, 2002: 22).

The relationship between globalization and inequality should also be considered for a better understanding of how terrorists exploit global and local problems. Terrorists claim that all other individuals who think alike do have similar problems all around the world. They tend to globalize their problem or they tend to individualize it and claim the global problem as their own.

The feeling of powerlessness and helplessness because of the increasing inequality is not a new phenomenon. However, today the issue is that while all societies emphasize these inequalities, inherent inequality seems to be increasing all around the globe. Since the 1980s, "inequality has risen in most countries and in many cases sharply" (Cornia & Court, 2001: 1).

Globalization does not just affect economics, but it also threatens every aspect of life. Dominated by Western media, beliefs, values, preferences, globalization has a powerful impact on non-Western cultures and often by the Western culture. This impact has been seen as a part of a global penetration. Western culture spreads through the world by developing communication systems. "With the internet and email, it is easy for citizens of all nations of the world to acquire information and to communicate with each other instantaneously" (Hassman & Rhonda, 2004: 27). However, this diffusion of information is not a penetration, but a one way process. Societies that have the power of the media and technology have a greater chance to influence others.

These transnational corporations also are the engines of development that "promote economic rights through investment and job creation, and civil and political rights through the creation of a stable and tolerant environment" (Rodriguez, 2004: 7). However, today the economic gap between the rich and the poor, which promotes inequality and the sense of

unfairness in the hearts of the poor, is greater than ever. Although societies may develop rapidly, poverty and economic inequality also continue to rise (United Nations, 2003).

About one fifth of the world's population is living on less than one dollar per day (United Nations, 2003). Furthermore, in the urban areas of the world's poorest countries poverty is increasing dramatically, along with severe health problems such as low levels of life expectancy with high levels of infant mortality (Rodriguez, 2004).

Because of globalization, people all around the world are now aware of all this information. The news on human rights abuses, protests, crimes and social conflicts, along with wars, are not domestic anymore. The extension of communication networks all over the world helped people become more aware of their poverty and misery, while it alienating others.

When radicals experience a specific unjust behavior, they affirm their perception of injustice by providing similar examples from different parts of the world. "I" as a victim becomes "we," and perhaps this perception increases the magnitude of the anger toward others.

2. The Theoretical Background: A Discussion on Why Individuals Join Terror Organizations

Terrorism, as a form of crime, shows similarities with organized crime. Although it would be an understatement to state that, terrorist organizations are criminal organizations with opposing ideologies that adopt armed struggle against legitimate social structures. Thus, one's tendency to join a terrorist organization is similar to one's tendency to join an illegitimate organization.

The question is chosen carefully for a better understanding of the issue. The researcher does not try to understand why one becomes a terrorist, but why one chooses to join a terrorist organization. By asking this question it is assumed that an individual does not become an active terrorist in the blink of an eye, but a socialization process occurs inside the terrorist organization. Therefore, one's decision to join a terrorist organization is the crucial first step in deviation from the normal. Socialization process or learning how to act as a terrorist comes next after an individual decides to join a terrorist organization. This study only focuses on the first step. Socialization process of a terrorist candidate can be studied in a saperate research. The main concern of the researcher is to understand the underlying strains of an individual which may lead him/her to join a terrorist organization.

Like many other individuals experience, terrorists also face strains before joining a terrorist organization; however, like any other individual, the reactions of a terrorist candidate may vary; in Merton's terms (1968), their "adaptation method", or in Agnew's terms (2006) their "coping strategies," may vary. The question is what leads these individuals to rebel

and take a stand against society, and what kind of strains influence their choice of joining a terrorist organization and taking violent actions against individuals who are not the actual sources of these strains.

Merton (1968) argues that anomie is a result of the unjust social structure in which social institutions function for some groups while the very same institutions discriminate some other certain groups. Thus, it is possible to claim that individuals who choose to join terrorist organizations were faced with subjectively dysfunctional elements of the social structure and got frustrated. However, this is not enough to claim that such violent actions are just due to individuals' frustration.

Mead's approach (1934) on self is beneficial for a better interpretation of one's reaction to experienced strains. Individuals constantly structure their social and physical environments' by their actions, while both the social and physical environments structure the individuals and their self-concepts. Mead claims that the "me" is the internalization of social roles which develop from symbolic processes such as face to face interactions, plays, and games, while the "I" is a "creative response" to the symbolized structures of the "me" (Mead, 1934).

However, James has a more liberal approach to "me," and states that "a man's 'me' is the sum total of all that he can call his" (James, 1985: 291). Thus, self does not only consist of the body, but also social and physical environments such as material objects that individuals own or statuses that they possess, in other words, identity markers that symbolize their individuality, their belonging to a group or a society. It is important to state that belief systems, which give meaning to one's life, are also part of these identity markers, and become part of the "self." By selecting these identity markers individuals also differentiate themselves from others and gain a self-identity (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000).

From this perspective, individuals extend the self of sense and "me versus not me" becomes "me and mine versus not me and not mine" (Burris & Rempel, 2004). When these boundaries are violated or threatened by strains, individuals can show powerful and irrational reactions (Rozin, Nemeroff, Horowitz & Voet, 1995 and Burris & Rempel, 2004).

Introduction or reintroduction of ideologies that bear different values and norms can promise alternative solutions for the problems of these frustrated and aggressive individuals. Thus, accepting terrorist ideology is the turning point for the individual. Whether the individuals' political backgrounds are similar to or totally different from the ideologies of the terrorist organizations, with those new distorted interpretations of religious or secular political ideologies terrorist organizations present a new solution for terrorist candidates.

Although terrorist ideologies vary (Hoffman, 1998), it is hard to claim that one is more dangerous than another. Terrorists' motivation may be derived from different sources,

such as religion or secular ideologies. They all might legitimize violence and declare a war against their enemies. It is clear that all these ideologies, which conflict with the norms and the values of the current systems, promise a peaceful world that is hard to achieve for their believers.

The most important similarity between these ideologies is their difficulty to achieving success against the dominant ideology. In this sense, fundamentalism, as a resistance to modernism, is not different than the ideology of "returning to nature" by ending the social contract within the society - which is a legitimate reason for leftist ideologies. Thus, the pattern behind violent actions and one's will to join a terrorist organization is similar.

In other words, by reintroduction of distorted ideology the individual's personal problems are transferred to broader problems, which become the concern of the whole group. Instead of finding different coping mechanisms, the very same phenomenon gains priority in their view; initially, terrorist candidates accept the values of the terrorist organization and choose to deviate from societal norms as a coping strategy against experienced strains. Being able to find people with similar strains, and sharing the negative emotions with a specific group, help them to identify themselves as part of that group.

Moreover, as Agnew (2006: 100) proposes "association with criminal others and beliefs favorable to crime increase the likelihood of criminal coping." As individuals deviate from the values and norms of that society, they associate with criminals and their beliefs. It can be said that individuals associate with terrorists (criminal others). In turn, they also engage in terrorist groups' belief systems, or in other words, their political motivation. Finally, involvement in their belief systems may foster criminal coping.

Terrorist candidates, who share similar ideologies with terrorist groups, face some extra strains, such as behavioral or ideological conflicts with others, or negative experiences due to conflicting values and norm systems. An example can be provided by the Turkish legal system. Eventhough some opposing views exist among some scholars, The Presidency of Religious Affairs (DIB) in Turkey states that wearing a headscarf covering certain parts of the body for muslim women is an Islamic rule (DIB, 2010), while the Turkish legal system does not allow students to wear it in public areas, including universities. The negative experiences that individuals fallowing DIB's position create strain over them. While pious individuals try to shape their own lives according to the values of their religion, they face conflicting regulations or values of the society. Public demonstrations in Turkey show the intensity of such a strain. These strains may even lead individuals to anger and extremism.

For some terrorist candidates who share leftist ideology the strains are more likely to be related to their economic goals. Perceived unjust experiences are also sources of strain

for individuals (Agnew, 2006).   Bandura and Walters (1959) claim that the aggressive behaviors of youth may be due to developed aggressive dispositions through the modeling of their aggressive parents. Similarly, some common factors among terrorists, such as socio economic status of their families, may cause violent actions not so much because of their poverty, but because the person is so affected from the inequalities that they faced once. The individual may be largely deprived of his or her earlier non-aggressive ways of conduct and choose violence as the only effective means left to influence the behavior of others as s/he desires.

According to Agnew (2006: 112) "adolescents are more likely to associate with delinquent peers." Negative behaviors which lead adolescents to crime are more common between peers. On average terrorists are between 20 and 25 years old (Russell & Miller, 1977; Taylor & Quayle, 1994; Taylor, 1988; Hudson, 1999; Juergensmeyer, 2001). Their recruitment to terrorist organization occurs in younger ages. They are more likely to join terror organizations in high school ages (Teymur, 2003). It seems that strains experienced in younger ages lead adolescents to associate with these terrorists groups.

Different types of strains were selected in this study: Economic, religious, political and educational strains were choosen as examples of failure to achieve positively valued stimuli. Death of a valued one and migration to bigger cities were selected as examples of removal of positively valued stimuli. Finally, child abuse, adverse relations, victimization and negative school experiences were selected as presentation of negative stimuli.

Terrorist organizations may be looking for individuals who are more likely to accept their views and find their recruiters in accordance to the need of the candidate. For example, it is well known that terrorist organizations economically support individuals with financial problems. Thus, it is expected that a terrorist candidate with a financial problem is more likely to unconsciously find a friend who is a member of a terrorist organization to help him/her rather than expecting help from a family member who suffers from a similar problem.

Even though this discussion may be expanded, the main concern of the researcher was the leading factor for violence carried out by terrorists. It is clear that joining a terrorist group may elevate the strains experienced by those individuals; however, joining a terrorist group leads individuals to associate with their ideology. This ideological association may also promote and justify violence.

Different types of strains were selected in this study. Agnew's (1992) classification of strains was the framework during the selection of strains. The cumulative effect of strains on violence is analyzed.

3. Methodology

Specifically, a micro-level cross-sectional data set taken from the archives of the Turkish National Police was utilized. This data set includes detailed demographic information as well as life histories of 144 known Turkish Hezbollah terrorists operating within Turkey between 1992 and 1996.

The sample for this study includes 144 members of the Turkish Hezbollah. The data was derived from original hand-written reports which were obtained as an outcome of anti-terrorist operations by the Turkish National Police in and around Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakir and Malatya. The original hand-written reports were completed by members of the Turkish Hezbollah at the request of their leaders.

The data set is neither a result of police interrogation, nor is it considered testimony. Rather, these documents are internal reports of the terrorist organization. The rationale behind collecting information from their members was to aid the internal communication of the Turkish Hezbollah and to learn more about their members in order to use them in the most efficient manner.

3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The average age of terrorists in the sample was 23.59 ($M = 22$; $SD = 5.492$). Male terrorists constituted the majority of the sample (99.3%), with only 1 member being female. Almost one-third (30%) of the terrorists were married.

Almost half (44.7%) of the terrorists reported having only an eighth grade education or less, while a similar proportion (42.6%) reported having graduated from a high school. Only 4.3% of the Hezbollah members had a college degree. None of the members had an advanced graduate degree. For purposes of the quantitative analysis, education was treated as an ordinal variable (range 1 – 6) with higher numbers indicative of more education ($M = 2.33$; $SD = 1.282$).

Finally, an almost even split was found when employment status was examined, with 52.6% of the terrorists indicating they were unemployed and 47.4% signifying they were employed. When asked about their economic status, the majority of the respondents (60.1%) declared their economic situation as "average" to "good." Very few terrorists claimed their economic situation was "very good" (3.0%) or "very bad" (15.0%), while some of the respondents (21.9%) claimed that their economic stuation is "bad". It should be noted that economic status is their perceived status, or in other words, their sense of relative deprivation. Economic status is not an absolute measure of their wealth or poverty.

3.2. Variables

Agnew (1992) claims that crime is largely the result of feelings of aggression and frustration that emerges from experiencing strain. Regardless of the motivation of terrorist organizations, violent behaviors as a form of crime is one of the common means used to accomplish their goals. Schmid and Jongman's (1988) study shows that 108 out of 120 definitions employ the words "violence" and "use of force" as their most common elements. However, even though terrorist organizations use violence to create public fear, not all terrorists engage in violent activities such as, illegal demonstrations resulting with vandalism, hijacking, beatings, assaults with meat cleaver, stabbing, shooting and bombing.

As is well known, terror organizations generally have a political wing and a military wing. While the political wing engages in setting the goals, public relations, and recruitment, the military wing carries out the violent activities of the terror organization (Ozeren &Van de Voorde, 2004). As the political wing tries to gain support from the public, they stay away from engaging in violent activities which may estrange the public from them. Thus, political wing members do not engage in violent acts even though they play a vital role in the terrorist organization.

For purposes of the current study, a dichotomous dependent variable was created to capture whether or not the terrorists had engaged in violence after having joined the terrorist organization (0 = did not engage in violence as a terrorist; 1 = engaged in violence as a terrorist). Nearly two-thirds (63.6%) of all terrorists had partaken in some form of violent behavior after having become a member of the Turkish Hezbollah.

The current study includes an index variable indicative of individual levels of strain experienced prior to joining the terrorist organization. Several steps were taken in order to obtain the composite strain variable used. First, a comprehensive list of negative life experiences representative of general strain was developed. This list was guided by Agnew's (1992) general strain theory and includes: (1) Failure to achieve economic goals, (2) Failure to achieve political goals, (3) Failure to achieve educational goals, (4) Failure to achieve religious goals, (5), Loss of a valued one, (6) Migration to bigger cities, (7) Victimization, (8) Adverse relationships, (9) Negative school experiences.

Second, the life histories were qualitatively examined to identify strains experienced by each terrorist prior to joining the terrorist organization. These strains were then organized into nine categories listed above. For instance, phrases such as, "I could not earn enough, so I moved to another city to look for a better job," "I used to steal in order to support my family," or "We have an overcrowded family; if my father had not worked we would have suffered more" were coded as "failure to achieve economic goals." Phrases such as, "I also worked for a political party for some time, but their political agenda was not satisfying and I

decided to leave them," "I attended some political demonstrations," or "I used to enter political discussions with others, but there was no end" were coded as "failure to achieve political goals." Expressions such as, "Unfortunately I was not a successful student in the school," "I failed to pass the university exam, although I wanted to continue my education," or "I asked for help from others in order to pass the classes, but I couldn't" were coded as "failure to achieve educational goals." Phrases such as, "I felt I cannot perform my religion's regulations as I wanted to under those circumstances," "I actively served in a sect for sometime, but that sect was not satisfying," or "I wanted to read and understand the Holy Book, but my father did not allow me to read it" were coded as "failure to achieve religious goals." The death of a family member, relative, or a close friend mentioned by the respondent was coded as "the death of a valued one." Respondents' previous migrations to bigger cities from their hometowns were coded as "migration to bigger cities." Unlawful police treatments, unjust sentencing, false accusations and being a victim of a crime were coded as "victimization." Problems with instructors, school administration, punishments and dismissals were coded as "negative school experiences."

Third, a cumulative index variable indicative of individual levels of strain was composed by summing together the previously mentioned variables. Higher values indicate a higher amount of strain experienced prior to joining the terrorist organization (with a range of 0 to 9, $M = 2.106$, $SD = 0.09$). It seems that overall strain ($M = 2.106$) seems to be low. The researcher only included the expressed strains in their statements by the terrorists. It is possible to say that some terrorists might have solely mentioned strains which are high in magnitude or central to their goals.

In addition to examining the impact of strain on violence, several control variables were included in the current study. A control variable is a variable that effects the dependent variable. In other words, to see the relationship between strains and violent acts it is necessary to identify the other factors which may effect the relationship between strains and violent acts. They include subject demographics such as age (in years), marital status (0 = Unmarried, 1 = Married), and education (1 = 8 grade or less, 2 = Some high school, 3 = High school graduate, 4 = Some college, 5 = College graduate, 6 = Graduate studies).

3.3. Analytical Strategy Used in the Analysis

Like many other individuals, terrorists also experience various strains, such as death of a family member, which may lead them to frustration and aggression and eventually to carry out violent acts. In order to measure strain according to general strain theory (Agnew, 1992), a cumulative index composed of ten different variables was developed as the independent variable. This measure is considered to represent a count of strainful events. Thus, higher

values represent the presence of more strainful events. The highest value is 10, while the lowest value is 0.

The items included in the index are failure to achieve economic goals, failure to achieve political goals, failure to achieve educational goals, failure to achieve religious goals, loss of a valued one, migration to another city, victimization, child abuse, adverse relationships, and negative school experiences.

Primarily, the researcher identified the relation between strains and violent behavior, thus bivariate statistical techniques was utilized. However, the conditioning effect of certain control variables on the independent and dependent variables was also an issue of concern.

Multivariate statistical techniques allow the researcher to utilize more than two variables in the analysis. Some control variables can be included into the equation in multivariate analysis. The introduction of control variables helps the researcher to identify whether the relationship between two variables continue to exist when another variable is introduced to the equation. Also, the joint effect of independent variables on the dependent variable can be measured by multivariate analysis. Thus, such concerns led the researcher to utilize multivariate statistical technique along with the bivariate analysis.

Also, some control variables were included in the analysis. Respondents' age, marital status and education level might have an effect on their decisions. More specifically, the researcher assumed that as individuals get older their coping strategies with strains may show variation. Married individuals may experience less strain compared to unmarried respondents due to their stable life, or it is also possible to say that their coping strategies and decisions might be affected from their responsibilities to their families. Also, it is assumed that educated individuals may be more likely to cope with their strains.

4. Analysis

4.1. Bivariate Relationships

Independent sample t-tests and chi-square tests were utilized to determine which variables were statistically related to whether a respondent engaged in violence after joining the terrorist organization. Three variables were found to be significantly related to an individual engaging in violent acts after joining the terror organization, including strain, education and prior violent behavior (See Table 1).

Specifically, it was found that terrorists who had engaged in violent acts after joining the terrorist organization had experienced strain to a greater degree ($M = 2.43, SD = 1.13$) than terrorists who had not performed violent acts after joining the terrorist organization ($M = 1.53, SD = .76; t = -5.09, df = 140, p < .01$). In other words, individuals who faced with several strains are more likely to perform violence as Agnew (1992) proposes.

Terrorists who had performed violent acts were also less educated ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.16$) than terrorists who had not performed violent acts ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.07$; $t = 4.14$, $df = 138$, $p < .001$). It seems that education is a crucial factor in preventing violence. Even in a terror organization educated terrorists rarely perform violence.

Having engaged in violence prior to joining the terrorist organization was also significantly related to violent actions as a terrorist member. Terrorists who had committed violent acts prior to joining the terrorist organization were more likely to perform violent acts after joining the terror organization" (23.1%) compared to terrorists who did not perform earlier violent acts (7.7%, $\chi^2 = 10.9$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). In other words, if a person engages in violence in his past, he is more likely to engage in violence. People assume that terrorists use violence just because they are terrorists. However, joining to a terror organization is not the only factor for terrorists to act violently. Their earlier tendencies continue when they join in a terror organization.

While terrorists who performed violent acts after joining the terrorist organization were more likely to be unmarried (78.4%) compared to terrorists who did not perform violent acts (65.9%); however, these differences were not statistically significant.

Finally, while terrorists who performed violent acts after joining the terrorist organization were more likely to be older (64.08%) compared to terrorists who did not perform violent acts (35.92%); also, these differences were not statistically significant.

In conclusion, three variables are statistically significant. These variables are strain, education and prior violent acts. As Agnew (2006) proposes strains create negative emotions which may result in crime. Terroristic acts performed in a terror organizations are also criminal acts. Thus, results confirm Agnew's approach. Also as Agnew (2006) proposes education help individual cope with strains faced in daily life. This analysis also reveals that educated terrorists are less likely to perform violent acts. Moreover, people use legal or illegal coping mechanisms to handle their strains. People who perform violent acts as an illegal way to cope with their negative emotions and strains, continue to perform violent acts when they join a terror organization. The motive of their behavior may change, but still their reaction to strains continue to be in an illegal manner.

Table 1. Differences in performing violent acts by individual characteristics

Variable	Performed violent acts (n= 91)	Did Not Perform violent acts (n= 51)	Test Statistic
Strain (mean)	2.43	1.53	$t(140) = -5.09**$
Age (mean)	24.17	22.70	$t(126) = -1.47$
Education level (mean)	1.87	2.67	$t(138) = 4.14***$
Unmarried (percentage)	78.4	65.9	$\chi^2(1) = 2.44$
Prior violent behavior (percentage)	23.1	7.7	$\chi^2(1) = 10.9***$

$N = 142$ respondents.
$***p < .001$, $**p < .01$, and $*p < .05$, one-tailed.

4.2. Logistic Regression Modeling

The researcher estimated a logistic regression model to examine the effect of individual-level predictors on a terrorist's log odds of having engaged in violent behavior after joining a terrorist organization (See Table 2).

Logistic regression is typically used when the dependent variable is dichotomous, as is the case with the current study. Variables included in the binary logistic model were strain, age (in years), education, and marital status (0 = unmarried, 1 = married). Results of the model reveal at least one of the variables in the model has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of engaging in violent actions after joining the terror organization (χ^2 (6) = 41.43, p < .001).

Strain was significantly related to violence. Individuals who had experienced more strain were more likely to have engaged in violent actions after becoming members of a terrorist organization ($B = .988$, Odds ratio = 2.686). As it is explained above individuals who faced with several strains, who had hard times in their daily life are more likely to perform violence. For terrorists this is not different. Joining to a terror organization may only change their *modus operandi.*

Additionally, education was also significantly related to violence as similar to the earlier analysis. Terrorists who were more educated were less likely to engage in violent activities ($B = -.549$, Odds ratio = .578).

Finally, having engaged in violence prior to joining the terrorist organization was also found to be significantly related to partaking in violence as a terrorist ($B = 1.647$, Odds ratio = 5.197). Bivariate analysis also revealed the same relationship. It is clear that recidivism

studies should go further to understand the relationship. It is well known that a percentage of criminals repeat crime. This analysis shows that criminals continue to perform violent acts when they join a terror organization.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Estimates Predicting the Probability of Violent Acts

	Model 1	
Predictor	***B***	**Odds Ratio**
Strain	.988*** (.276)	2.686
Prior violence	1.647** (.831)	5.197
Age	.029 (.053)	1.030
Marital status	-.266 (.642)	.765
Education	-.549*** (.218)	.578
Constant	-.942 (1.319)	
-2 log likelihood	116.046	
Model X^2	41.425	
Pseudo-R^2 (Cox-Snell)	.290	

* $p \leq .05$ **$p \leq .01$ ***$p \leq .001$

Results from the binary logistic regression model revealed that individuals who experienced higher levels of strain were more likely to engage in violent actions once a member of a terrorist organization compared to individuals who experienced lower levels of strain. Furthermore, for each additional strain reported, the odds of engaging in a violent act increase by 2.70 (*B= .988,* $p < .001$).

Conclusion

This study was conducted to understand the causes of terrorism and reasons behind one's decision to join terror organizations. It is assumed that individuals tend to react against unfair behaviors and conditions exerted over them, whether by using legal or illegal coping mechanisms. Although various studies have used economic inequalities as the only indicator of inequality, this study believed that other types of inequalities, such as unequal distribution

of goods, resources, and power, as well as health may have effects on terrorism (Martin, 2004; ODI, 2006).

According to Bourdieu (1977) violence is justified under two conditions. First, if there is an actual attack against individuals, violence is justified as a defense used by those who are under attack. Second, as a response to other types of violence, such as symbolic violence, it is justified by the disadvantaged groups when the oppressed group believes that they are worthless for the dominant group (Hochschild, 1981). Thus, terrorists may justify their violent acts by claiming that there is an already existing injustice in the world, whether this perceived injustice is due to economic problems or others (Juergensmeyer, 2001). Also, negative emotions "create pressure on individuals to engage in corrective action, they reduce the ability to cope in a legal manner, they reduce the perceived cost of the crime and/ or they create a disposition for crime" (Agnew, 2006: 35).

Strains that an individual faces are interpreted as unjust and an indicator of inequality for the terrorists. With the introduction of a political agenda as a solution to existing inequalities perceived, terrorist candidates are convinced to participate in a terrorist organization's legal or illegal activities.

Studies of general strain theory are limited. Utilizing Agnew's general strain theory, this study shows the relationship between strains and violent behaviors. Instead of looking for relationships between specific types of strains and crimes, Agnew suggests measuring the cumulative effect of strains. Thus this study analyzed the cumulative effect of strains on violent acts and proposed that as the number of experienced strains increase, terrorists are more likely to perform violent acts.

The ultimate goal of this study was to prevent terrorism by understanding its causes. Experienced strains may influence individuals' behaviors. Thus, the best way to prevent crime and terrorism is to find new policies to reduce the sources of strains.

New policies can be cited under three topics according to the findings of this study:

a) Policies that should be developed to reduce the predictable strain sources: This study reveals if people face with less strain, they are less likely to become involved in violence. Thus, the initial step should be to create new policies which will reduce the predictable strain sources. For example, economic strains lead individuals to migrate to bigger cities where they can find new job opportunities. Migration brings new problems and becomes a new strain source for individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to form new policies to solve monetary problems.

b) Policies that should be developed to increase the ability to cope with strains in legal manners: According to Agnew (2006) it is possible to cope with strains in a legal manner when they experience strains. Thus, new policies should be created to increase the abilities of individuals to cope with strains in socially accepted ways. Education system can play a

vital role in coping with negative emotions and strains. Students should be viewed with their social environments and teachers should identify and help the students to deal with their strains. Consultants in the schools may help more effectively to these efforts. After school programs can be another measure. Informing families about the possible threats by school authorities may be more effective than informing them through law enforcements. School authorities can empathetically share the strains of families, and try to reduce the negative emotions of both the students and their parents by telling them the alternative ways or opportunities that they have.

c) Policies that should be developed to reduce the effect of crime on society: Crime also has both moral and economic impacts on society. If the existing system is perceived as unjust with its practices, displeasure among people will spread in the whole society. Thus, criminal justice system should perform well to satisfy the society. In this perspective, criminal justice system should adapt new approaches such as restorative justice which is more likely to be seen as just.

In addition, when earlier violent behaviors are included to the equation, this study reveals that individuals who had prior violent acts are more likely to involve in violence, when compared to individuals who have not involved in prior violence. Recidivism studies may shed more light on the issue.

Future policies should show an effort to understand the sources of strains and try to find solutions for the good of society. General strain theory is only one of the ways to approach the problem of terrorism; however, different approaches should also be utilized in order to prevent radicalization and terrorism.

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