

DIVERGENT NATURE OF TERRORISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON PKK AND ISIS/ISIL

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Abstract

Terrorism is affecting all human beings regardless of time, place, and nationality such as the case of brutal ISIS/ISIL attacks that took place in the center of Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2016. Mostly foreigners, twenty-two people have killed in the Holey Artisan Café during this attack. The terrorist organization of ISIS/ISIL claimed responsibility for this criminal act. This violent assault made one thing certain that the struggle against terrorism is increasingly getting more problematic and solutions are becoming more complicated. On the other side terrorist organization of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK/KCK/KONGRA-GEL) has been trying to terrorize provinces in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In Turkey, PKK made strategic changes many times since its first action in 1984. However, there are some basic differences between these two terrorist organizations. For instance, while secular terrorist organization PKK restricts its violence, ISIS/ISIL as a religiously motivated terrorist organization has no limit in its violence. This article offers one of the first systematic comparative analyses based on PKK vs. ISIS/ISIL in terms of their major components. By doing so, the study is aiming to make a significant contribution to the existing terrorism literature by using the cases of PKK and ISIS/ISIL. Besides, although there are abundant definitions of terrorism in the literature, this article will also try to find out a common and concise expression for terrorism.

Keywords: *Terrorism, PKK, KCK, ISIS/ISIL, DAESH*

TERÖRİZMİN DOĞASINDAKİ FARKLILIK: PKK VE İŞİD ÜZERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZ

Öz

Terörizm, Bangladeş'in Dakka şehir merkezinde 2016 yılında İŞİD tarafından gerçekleştirilen acımasız saldırıda olduğu gibi tüm insanları zaman, mekân ve milliyet farkı gözetmeksizin etkilemektedir. Holey Artisan Kafe'de gerçekleştirilen saldırıda çoğu yabancı yirmi iki kişi hayatını kaybetmiştir. Bu saldırının sorumluluğunu İŞİD üstlenmiştir. Bahse konu şiddet içeren saldırı terörizmle mücadelenin giderek daha zorlaştığını ve çözümün ise daha karmaşık bir

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hale geldiğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bununla birlikte Türkiye’de kendisini seküler olarak tanıtan, Kürdistan İşçi Partisi olarak bilinen ve PKK/KCK/KONGRA-GEL kısaltmalarıyla anılan terör örgütü Türkiye, İran, Irak ve Suriye’de eylemler gerçekleştirmektedir. Bu bağlamda PKK terör örgütü ilk eylemini gerçekleştirdiği 1984 yılından beri çeşitli stratejik değişikliklere gitmiştir. Gerçekte PKK ve IŞİD gibi seküler ve dini motivasyonlu olan iki değişik ideolojiye sahip terörist örgüt arasında önemli farklılıklar bulunmaktadır. Örneğin PKK gibi seküler terör örgütlerinin eylemlerindeki şiddet kısıtlı iken, IŞİD/DAEŞ gibi dini motifli terör örgütlerinde limitsizdir. Bu makale seküler terör örgütü olan PKK ile dini motifli terör örgütü IŞİD/DAEŞ arasındaki yapısal farklılıkları karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz etmektedir. Böylece PKK ve IŞİD/DAEŞ örneklerinden hareketle mevcut terörizm literatürüne katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca geniş bir tanımı olan terörizm kavramını söz konusu literatür içerisinde kapsamlı ve net olarak ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Terörizm, PKK, KCK, IŞİD, DAEŞ

Introduction

During the second period of the 20th century, most of the states have started to suffer from terrorist activities. 9/11 attacks in the U.S., Paris attacks in France, and other terrorist incidents show us that criminal acts of terrorist organizations can hit any target from the distance of thousands of miles. Turkey is one of the states affected directly by one of these long-standing terrorist activities by the terrorist organization named PKK/KCK/KONGRA-GEL since 1984 which we named in this study under the category of “old terrorism” (BBC, 2016). The phenomenon of terrorism has been increasing its importance since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Especially after the outbreak of the Arab Spring movements, many terrorist organizations popped up in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and these organizations trying to fill the power vacuum in that part of the world. So, as a “new terrorism” this study focuses on religiously motivated terrorism in the form of a new systemic structure, such as ISIS/ISIL/DAESH.

Some common characteristics distinguish old terrorism from new terrorism. Terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s had similar features, whether it was left-wing or nationalist-separatist terrorism. There were core characteristics that guided all groups until the end of the Cold War era. The characteristics of old terrorism help to analyze the era simply and systematically. Additionally, it helps to analyze groups that have the same motivations.

The majority of the groups are either ideologically or politically motivated left-wing, Marxist-Leninist, communist, or motivated by nationalistic ideas. Some nationalist-separatist groups are the successors of the anti-colonialist era. These groups reflect certain common characteristics even though their motivations are different. Nationalist groups and left-wing groups oppose each other, ideologically or tactically, and sometimes even engage in conflict with each other. Whatever their goals and motivations are,

their organizational structures, target selections, method of operations, finance methods, and publicity understandings are surprisingly similar.

The 20th century witnessed the advent of religious-based terrorism in the early 1990s (Juergensmeyer, 2000: 158). Contrary to conventional wisdom on terrorists and terrorism, this type of terrorism emerged with new motivations and justifications (Hoffman, 2002: 8). Terrorism has evolved parallel to the radical changes in the world; therefore, significant changes have accompanied the end of the Cold War era (Clutterbuck, 1994: 12). The religious revolution in Iran in 1979, the war between the Soviets and the Afghans lasting almost three decades, and finally the fall of the Berlin wall and collapse of the Soviet Republic were the hallmarks of the last decades that had a considerable impact on the emergence of this new type of terrorism (Chalk, 1999: 15).

The characteristics of religion-based terrorism have been explained in the literature. However, the most significant features of this terrorism are the change in terrorist groups' motivations and the significant increase in the number of religiously motivated terrorist groups. Despite the decrease in the terrorism incidents, the lethality of the incidents increased. Terrorist groups have become loosely linked, globally operating organizations that increasing the use of technological improvements, primarily in communication technology.

This study discusses the differences between secular and religiously motivated terrorist groups with the cases of PKK and ISIS/ISIL. The first part will shed light on the terrorism literature to find out a clear definition of the term. In the second part, two diverse terrorist organizations will be scrutinized based on their structural differences such as motivations, target selections, modus operandi, and organizational structures. This study discusses terrorism literature, especially the difficulty of making a comprehensive definition of the term. Then focusing on the remarkable differences between secular and religion-based terrorist organizations and expose their fundamental characteristics for the first time with the cases of PKK and ISIS/ISIL in a comparative way of analysis.

1. TERRORISM

Neither defining terrorism nor reviewing its literature is an easy task. It is comprised of different fields of study, ranging from psychology, history, sociology, and political science to communications. Furthermore, various acts of violence have been defined as terrorism by different authorities, and in particular by the mass media to attract the attention of the general public. Therefore, to draw a line between traditional criminality and terrorism is essential to distinguish traditional forms of criminal behavior and terrorism.

Terrorism had been an important tool for the actors who want to obtain their goals in the political arena. From a single person to organized groups, there is a wide variety of players in this armed political process. Diversity of interests and vagueness of actors make it difficult to make a

single, clear-cut definition of terrorism. Although it is hard to find a commonly accepted definition for terrorism, there are various definitions with significant variations. Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman, two Dutch academics from the University of Leiden have found 109 separate definitions of terrorism basing on their comprehensive research. According to their findings, violence has been used in 83 percent, political goals 65 percent, and fear 51 percent of the definitions (Halibozeck et al., 2008: 7; Kruglanski and Fisman, 2006: 46). Table-1 indicates 22 common elements frequently used in 109 definitions of terrorism (Schmid, 1984: 176-177).

Table 1. Frequencies of definitional elements in 109 definitions of terrorism

	ELEMENTS	FREQUENC
	Violence, force	83,5
	Political	65
	Fear, terror emphasized	51
	Threat	47
	(Psychological) effects and (anticipated) reactions	41,5
	Victim-target differentiation	37,5
	Purposive, planned, systematic, organized action	32
	Method of combat, strategy, tactic	30,5
	Extraneity in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constraints	30
	Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	28
	Publicity aspect	21,5
	Arbitrariness, impersonal, random character, indiscriminateness	21
	Civilians, noncombatants, nonresisting, neutrals, outsiders as victims	17,5
	Intimidation	17
	The innocence of victims emphasized	15,5
	Group, movement, the organization as the perpetrator	14
	Symbolic aspect, demonstration to others	13,5
	Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence	9
	Clandestine, covert nature	9

	Repetitiveness, serial or campaign character of violence	7
	Criminal	6
	Demands made on third parties	4

The terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" were coined during the French Revolution in the last decade of the 18th century. This two-year period (1793-1794) is also known as *régime de la terreur*. (Combs and Martin, 2007: 95). But today, these two terms have been accepted and used commonly in every single part of the world. While Cambridge English dictionary defines terrorism as "violent action for political purposes" (Cambridge, 2021), Britannica defines it calculated violence act to create fear among the public for any political objective (Britannica, 2021). However, Fortna defines terrorism as a device for rebel groups to achieve their political goals (Fortna, 2015: 519). In Laqueur's definition, it is "a covert violence by a group for political ends, is usually directed against a government, less frequently against another group, class or party" (Laqueur, 2002: 79). Khatchadourian focuses on the morality of terrorism and distinguishes it from other definitions with four types; predatory, retaliatory, political, and moralistic so, emphasizes its value-neutral sense of the meaning of the word (Khatchadourian, 1988: 131). United Nations describes terrorism in resolution 49/60 as; "Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them." (UN General Assembly, Res. No. 49/60). United Nations Security Council made another definition for terrorism in 2004 in the resolution numbered 1566 as follows; "Criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act." (UN Security Council, Res. No. 1566).

The U.S. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political." (Joint Publication, 2010). From the perspective of other military documents "definition of terrorism may depend on whose point of view is being represented and terrorism has often been an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. As an asymmetric form of conflict, terrorism projects coercive power with many of the advantages of military force at a fraction of the cost to the terrorist. Terrorism is a means - a method

- to an objective.” (U.S. Army TRADOC, 2007: 1-2). So, there are many kinds of similar definitions of terrorism.

On the other hand, it is necessary to define to explore and analyze religious terrorism and its increasing destructiveness and lethality. The United States State Department defines terrorism as "premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence audience" (Patterns of global terrorism, 1999: 7). However, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in the furtherance of political or social objectives" (FBI, 1996: 3). So, in the final stage terrorism can be defined concisely as "the use of violence to create fear (i.e., terror, psychic fear) for political, religious, or ideological reasons" (Matusitz, 2012: 4).

During the second period of the 20th century, most of the states have started to suffer from terrorist activities. 9/11 attacks in the U.S., Paris attacks in France, and other terrorist incidents show us that criminal acts of terrorist organizations can hit any target from the distance of thousands of miles. Turkey is one of the states affected directly by one of these long-standing terrorist activities by the terrorist organization named PKK/KCK/KONGRA-GEL since 1984. It is not only recognized as a terrorist organization by Turkey, but also by many of the European countries (European Union, 2020) and the U.S. (The United States, 2021).

1.1. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED AND SECULAR TERRORIST GROUPS

Commonalities of terrorist organizations in the Middle East are their tactics. They use similar guerrilla tactics of separatist terrorism in general. But in practice, PKK and other terrorist organizations such as ISIS/ISIL/DAESH are different in terms of motivations, target selections, modus operandi, and formations. One of the differences is their "motivations". PKK, as an ethnic-based entity, is basing on the Kurdish ethnic community in the eastern and southeastern part of Turkey, has been terrorizing the region for more than 30 years. It is not only active in Turkey but also in Iran (under the name of PJAK), Syria, and Iraq. But other terrorist organizations are religion-based entities, predominantly from the Sunni part of the Muslim world. Interestingly here, some Christian minorities have joined ISIS/ISIL to fight for their ideology (Morrison, 2015). The psychological situation also makes another difference between these organizations. Terrorists of PKK are less willing to die comparing to the ones in ISIS/ISIL and Al-Qaida. The main reason is the common belief in martyrdom and terrorists' expectation of going to heaven after death (Smith and Carson, 2015; BBC Cardiff, 2014; Milliyet, 2011). The second difference is the "target selections". PKK is trying to homogenize the region by using ethnic cleansing techniques via mass killings among residents.

Members of ISIS/ISIL are using similar tactics with a different motivation of extremism in religious politics. So, it can be stated as while PKK is aiming to establish an ethnic "Kurdish" based state in the region, others are trying to create an Islamic Caliphate in the regions of Syria and Iraq, then extending it throughout the regions in Turkey, Middle East, and North Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Balkans, and the Caucasus. The third difference is their “modus operandi” strategies. PKK is using ‘violence’ for its vital interests, but ISIS/ISIL uses ‘apocalyptic violence’ including suicide bombings in their actions. The last profound difference is the “organizational structures” of these organizations. The populace of PKK is mostly consisting of ethnic Kurds, but the ones in ISIS/ISIL are more heterogeneous. Table-2 provides a comparative outlook to these four dimensions between PKK and ISIS/ISIL/DAESH.

Table 2. Remarkable Differences Between Religiously Motivated and Secular Terrorist Organizations

	TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS	
	PKK/KCK/KONGRA-GEL	ISIS/ISIL/DAESH
MOTIVATIONS	Secular; Marxist, Leninist, Kurdish origin separatist organization. Motivated by ethnic politics. Ideologically motivated. Less willing to die. Partly sponsored by specific states. Has a specific, clear goal.	Sunni (Salafist-jihadi) Islamist extremist organizations. Motivated by extremism in jihadist religion. Willing to die to be a martyr.
TARGET SELECTION	Establishing an ethnic-based state in the region dominantly populated by Kurdish people. Selective in choosing its targets.	Establishing Islamic Caliphate System in the regions of Syria, Iraq, then extending it throughout the regions in Turkey, Middle East, and North Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Balkans, and

		Caucasus. Less selective in choosing its targets.
MODUS OPERANDI	Use violence	Use apocalyptic violence including suicide bombings
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	Its structure is homogenous which is consisting of mostly ethnic Kurds. Hierarchically vertical organizational structure.	Their structure is heterogeneous (consisting of different parts of the world) predominantly Sunni Muslims. Horizontal, hydra-type organization.

2. MOTIVATIONS

The first crucial element of terrorism is motivation. Violent acts without political motivation cannot be identified as terrorist acts. This is one of the most important points that draw the line between traditional crime and terrorism. This core point excludes criminal violence motivated by monetary gain or personal expectation (Pillar, 2003: 13). Laqueur says that terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to achieve political objectives by targeting innocent people (Laqueur, 1987: 72). All terrorists are criminals but all criminals are not terrorists. Criminal activity is not the primary motive of terrorists; it is the outcome of their actions (Kellen, 1982: 9).

Motivation is the basic characteristic that distinguishes secular organizations from religion-based terrorist organizations. The characteristics of a secular type of terrorism help to analyze the era simply and systematically and also analyze groups that have the same motivations. The majority of the groups were either ideologically or politically motivated Marxist-Leninist or communist ideas. These groups reflected certain common characteristics even though their motivations were different. Whatever their goals and motivations were, their organizational structures, target selections, modus operandi, and organizational structures were quite similar.

So, in the case of PKK, the common features of its motivations can be summarized in a few points: It is a secular; Marxist, Leninist, mostly Kurdish-origin separatist organization. Ideologically or politically motivated by ethnic policies. PKK has clear political or territorial goals. It has a specific, clear goal which is the crucial point of the support they gain;

therefore, such characteristics are the key to their longevity (Cronin, 2003: 35). It is partly sponsored by specific states and given weaponry, explosives, and training, sometimes it has to build their explosives and train their militants and educate them in ideology as well. However, the group acquired money particularly from robberies, forgery, extortion, illegal taxing, and drug trafficking. Due to their non-religious belief system and difficulty of recruitment, members are not taking vital risks during attacks and terrorists are not willingly kill themselves.

However, many religious groups including ISIS/ISIL consider themselves to be armies, fighters, warriors, or parties of the divine. They identify their organizations as armies and fight a holy war to implement the order of God and willing to die to be a martyr. They see themselves in a struggle on behalf of God against His enemies; thus, they constantly fight on the side of good against evil. Religious terrorist organizations and radical groups that extensively employ violence are the results of a mindset that forces them to conduct a holy war.

There are some specific emotional perspectives to understand their increased lethality and destruction in ISIS/ISIL. First, these groups consider themselves under attack (Juergensmeyer, 2003; Lifton, 2003; Mason, 2003; Selengut, 2003; Stern, 2004; White, 2001). Their belief, values, society, and concepts of morality are under attack by enemies. Second, they consider their acts of violence to be self-defense (Juergensmeyer, 2003; Lifton, 2003; Mason, 2003; Selengut, 2003). Since they are constantly attacked by enemies, they claim they have to defend themselves, their beliefs, values, morality, and society. This provides legitimization and justification for their violence. Third, their struggle or fight is a holy war waged against enemies of God or evil on behalf of good to establish or restore the order of God (Juergensmeyer, 2001; Lifton, 2003; Selengut, 2003; Stern, 2004). Finally, these groups feel a need to produce more lethal and destructive incidents to demonstrate the power of their organization and the divine and to demonstrate the weakness and powerlessness of the evil secular powers (Juergensmeyer, 2003; Stern, 2004). Ultimately, they aim for the victory of good over evil.

It is common for radical religious groups and terrorist groups to feel as though they are under attack. They feel the spiritual or material richness of the religious group is threatened by other forces, (e.g., governments and societies, other religious groups, political orders, and social organizations) that are oppressive and discriminate (Selengut, 2003: 22). Religious groups reject compromise with secular institutions, which are considered corrupt, deviant, and evil agents of the system that attacks their religious values (Juergensmeyer, 2003: 358). Religion inherently inspires total loyalty or commitment; thus, a religious community does not imagine anything higher than its religious values (Rapoport, 1991: 120).

It is necessary to understand the concept of “self” to comprehend the psychological roots behind the feeling of being under attack. How do people

create such a feeling and how do they perceive a persistent enemy who wants to destroy or even annihilate them? The self is the central point for understanding human behavior because it allows individuals to construct a concept of who they are. The self-concept organizes experience, guides behaviors, and provides the individual with meaning (Taylor & Louis, 2004: 171). While individuals associate themselves with groups and internalize the groups' values and moral concepts, they may also disassociate themselves from the community. Moreover, the group specifies the routes that individuals might take to internalize values and achieve goals (Taylor & Louis, 2004: 172).

2.1. Target Selection

Terrorists mostly target unarmed, undefended noncombatants (Schmid, 1993: 12). Noncombatants are, by definition, defenseless victims who cannot defend themselves with violence in response to terrorism (Pillar, 2003: 14). Terrorism is very different from war or combat operations, both of which have legitimate roots in international laws, rules, and regulations. Such acts are waged between national armies within certain legitimate restrictions, and primarily require the discrimination of noncombatants from the combatants. However, terrorism makes no such distinction. Schmid (1993: 12) asserts that terrorist attacks on the undefended and unarmed are not an unintended side effect but a deliberate strategy of terrorists. They do not engage in combat as soldiers and do not distinguish between their armed adversaries, who are the government's agents, and noncombatants.

Secular terrorist groups in the 1970s and 1980s were selective in their choice of targets (Crenshaw, 2003: 50; Laqueur, 2003: 14; Medd & Goldstein, 1997: 283; Simon & Benjamin, 2001: 5). So, PKK is one of them selective in choosing its targets. Its attacks are, of course, deliberately carried out, but were carefully designed at specific targets that were considered the symbols of the political system the terrorists opposed (Hoffman, 1999: 8; Howard, 2004: 75). PKK attacks specific figures and symbolic targets because they wanted to mobilize the public and gain converts and supporters. The terrorists want to demonstrate the vulnerability of the state system (Hewitt, 1990: 145; Jenkins, 1978: 115), therefore, they attacked the representatives of the ruling power so-called the servants of the oppressive regime and collaborators of the imperialistic and capitalist system they were attempting to change (Crenshaw, 2003: 50; Hoffman, 1999: 8; Howard, 2004: 75). PKK as a terrorist organization meticulously selects its targets among security forces such as military bases, personnel, police forces, governmental buildings, and personnel, government-supported rural guards, in some cases public school teachers, and other government-related targets.

As mentioned earlier, secular terrorist groups seek to have converts or supporters in their cause by employing violence against specific targets; however, they also intend to educate their potential sympathizers through

violent means. Hence, they refrain from more violent, high-casualty attacks for fear of negative publicity. However, their violence has no educational purpose or intention to gain support; they intend to eliminate the enemies of their belief system. The absence of constituency further explains the common rhetoric of religious groups when describing persons outside their religious community in denigrating and dehumanizing expressions (e.g., “infidels,” “apostates,” “dogs,” “children of Satan,” and “mud people”). Thus, the enemy’s humanity disappears, and the dehumanization mechanism allows limitless violence on subhumans who do not deserve to live (Bandura, 1998:164).

There is no need to refrain from high-casualty incidents because the terrorist groups’ concept of humanity is very different; according to their worldview, not only are Western countries their enemies but also Muslim countries where the rule of Sharia is not established. Thus, the Muslims living in Muslim countries are not part of their constituency unless they participate in their struggle and stand with them. The terrorists’ aim is not simply to gain converts for their cause, though all Muslim countries are likely recruitment grounds for the struggle.

ISIS/ISIL’s ultimate goal is to establish the Islamic Caliphate System in the regions of Syria, Iraq, then extending it throughout the regions which they call ‘dar-ul harb’ in Turkey, Middle East, and North Africa, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Balkans, and the Caucasus. So, there is no specific stable region for this terrorist organization.

2.2. Modus Operandi

Violence is the fundamental component of a terrorist phenomenon. All terrorist acts are crimes that involve violence (Jenkins, 1985: 4). Combs asserts, “Violence—the threat of violence and the capacity and willingness to commit violence—is endemic to terrorism.” (Combs 1997: 9). Violence in terrorism is a deliberate act, and premeditated (Pillar, 2003:13). Public intimidation is the critical element of terrorism that distinguishes it from other forms of violence (Bandura, 1998:162). In other words, publicity is the sine qua non of terrorist acts. Fear is as important as the act itself. Terrorism produces extreme emotions as a consequence of the indiscriminate nature of its violence (Poland, 1998: 3). There are basic differences between religious terrorist groups and secular terrorist groups that stem from their drastically different value systems, legitimization and justification of the violence they employ, worldviews, and concepts of morality (Hoffman, 1998: 94). These factors help us understand why terrorist incidents perpetrated for religious motives result in higher fatalities.

Secular terrorist organizations are not excessively violent. They avoided causing high casualty attacks for fear of negative publicity (Howard, 2004: 74; Juergensmeyer, 2000: 160; Morgan, 2004: 30; Quillen, 2002: 284). They are also particularly wary of the repercussions of these brutal actions in the international environment.

Members of PKK prefer to act clandestinely, hiding themselves and their identities, they need money to survive; other materials are necessary to obtain false identities to evade government arrests. Also, they are not professionally educated in ideology and were not well trained in terrorist tactics and operations. Even some leader cadres were not well trained. Such militant cadres rely mainly on recruiting idealistic youth or students by using some kind of ideological indoctrination.

Hunger strikes in prisons were a common characteristic of PKK resistance in the 1990s. Outside of attacks and kidnappings, PKK gained the most publicity through prison hunger strikes. Terrorists rejected ordinary criminal treatment; opposed their imprisonment among ordinary criminals, and claimed they were political prisoners and had to be treated according to their criminal status.

On the other hand, religious groups employed more violent acts and caused significantly higher levels of fatalities when compared with relatively more discriminating and less-lethal incidents of violence perpetrated by secular terrorist organizations (Hoffman, 1998: 95). Taheri explains the distinction between religion-based terrorism and other forms of terrorism. Although he argues that three points distinguish these type of terrorism from the secular one: It does not accept all of the contemporary ideologies in their different forms; it considers itself a total outsider which has no option other than violence. It is a holy war that can only end when total victory is achieved. And its basic theory is to kill the enemies of God and to put the infidels to death; it is the duty of every faithful believer (Taheri, 1987: 6-9).

Apocalyptic imagery is mostly used by ISIS/ISIL militants in the territories of Syria and Iraq. This empowers them among other religious-based terrorist organizations and ranks them in a higher status. So, this type of imagery has also been used for deterrence, and for gaining public support. Brutal use of this power intimidates people and it helps to keep the public under control.

ISIS/ISIL is using the argument of self-defense to attack the enemy for military glory. An explanation of self-defense can begin with the suicide bombings of Islamic terrorist groups in the Middle East. There are two main reasons for choosing this method: first, although suicide is strictly and explicitly forbidden in Islam, Muslim terrorists and radicals turn that reality into martyrdom. Second, the suicide bombings were popularized and frequently used by Hezbollah, and became the trademark of Hezbollah. Later, these attacks spread to other groups and became the choice of Islamic terrorist groups.

One of the greatest sins one can commit in Islam is to undertake martyrdom operations in the name of self-defense. The word for suicide is 'intiḥar', which never corresponds to shaheed (martyr) or istishhad (martyrdom). This is not an interpretation of the text; it is explicitly instructed in the Quran. According to the Quran, anyone who commits suicide commits one of the greatest sins of Islam and is punished to serve his

afterlife in hell (Stern, 2004: 52). Innovative moral sanctions and justifications for suicide attacks have been provided by the radical clerics, who alter reality by brilliantly interpreting the Quran.

2.3. Organizational Structure

Terrorist groups were hierarchically structured organizations, and their organizational structures were identifiable to government agencies, although they sometimes were organized into autonomous cells or units. (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, & Zanini, 1999: 41; Gearson, 2002: 17; Hoffman, 2001: 417; Whine, 2002). In secular terrorist organizations, such as PKK, leaders have the highest decision-making status in the organization and are full-time members; they are also committed to the use of violence. However, all of the organization's leaders are well known to government agencies. Its structure is mostly homogenous which is consisting of primarily ethnic Kurds. PKK's organizational structure is hierarchical. Commands come through vertically from the top leader of the organization. Some mid-level leaders convey these messages directly to the sublevels. Comparing to the religious-based terrorist organizations militants of secular organizations are not well trained in terrorist operations and are not well educated ideologically, either (Merkl, 1995: 199) through our enemies' eyes (2003: 18; Whine, 2002). This is their weakness comparing to the religious-based ones.

On the other hand, the structure of ISIS/ISIL is heterogeneous, consisting of different parts of the world, predominantly Sunni Muslims. ISIS/ISIL used the argument of ' Jihad ' to get members from all over the world and became surprisingly successful. So, with this type of heterogeneous organizational structure, it created a so-called success story in its territory. It is a horizontally organized structure, just a top leader was known, and other leaders are mostly clandestine. ISIS/ISIL benefited from its hydra-type organizational architecture and survived a long while despite its heterogeneous structure.

Conclusions

Though there is no commonly accepted definition of terrorism in the international realm, it is possible to identify acts as terrorism by analyzing some common distinguishing indicators. The fundamental distinguishing feature is of course violence. It is true that in European lexicons the term terrorism cannot be found until the French Revolution. But what makes the French Revolution a milestone in terrorism history is not only "reign of terror" or "terror from below". The fundamental differentiating factor is in general the term itself "state" but "the nation-state" in which we can define the commonly known Weberian approach as an entity that has a monopoly of the use of violence. The only organized entity which has a unique monopoly on violence for it is the only authority to rule. Hence, any act which seeks to use violence despite the authority of the ruling power which is the state is a great disruptive threat to order where the state is seeking to

implement on its constituencies. This very a fundamental point, to some degree, can still be discussed as *raison d'etra* of national penal laws which all states have enacted. On the other hand, since the states have the power to rule in the name of common consent produced by both society and state, and the commonly established order begs for a political will and power to survive *raison d'eta* appears as any action tends to disrupt order shall be banned even by using brute force.

The study sheds light on the significant differences between the secular and religiously-motivated terrorist organizations with a comparative analysis of respectively PKK and ISIS/ISIL. Those differences stem from their drastically different value systems, legitimization, and justification of the violence they employ, worldviews, and concepts of morality. This article clarifies the argument that there are remarkable differences between religiously motivated and secular terrorist organizations from the perspectives of their motivations, target selections, *modus operandi*, and organizational structures. Other than these separations there are some other characteristics of religiously motivated terrorist organizations differentiated from secular ones. First, their acts of violence are in direct response to theological demands or imperatives. Second, according to their logic, members of other belief systems are considered as infidels, even worse than that. Last, they see themselves as outsiders who want to change the entire system.

The secular terrorist groups' goals are limited to their country or the region in which they operated. They did not aim to change the entire world and spread their ideology throughout the globe. These groups aimed to change local politics and either establish an independent government or acquire autonomy within their region. However, religiously motivated organizations would like to change the whole world based on their belief system and faith. According to the members of other belief systems are dehumanized and considered to be infidels, or are described with degrading expressions. Thus, they consider themselves in a total war with others. Finally, unlike their secular counterparts, they see themselves as outsiders who want to change the entire system.

Secular groups do not have historical precedents that define the means and ends, they define the means and ends according to current political or historical context. However, religious groups have binding precedents that give them ideas and inspiration for means and ends. They usually refer to sacred texts and ancient religious sources.

Secular terrorist groups consider themselves components of an existing order. Therefore, they used violence as a means to create a new system that was good and just and to eliminate an existing one. In contrast with secular terrorist organizations, religious groups do not consider themselves to be a component of a system. They want fundamental changes in the existing order; their aim is not to eliminate the flows of the current

system to create a good and just new one but to change the entire order according to religious law.

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