TERRORISM LONGEVITY LITERATURE AND TERRORISM PERSISTENCE IN PAKISTAN: EXPLORING THE THEORY AND REALITY DISCONNECT

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Abstract

Extant terrorism studies can be characterized, among other discrepancies, by the absence of systematic study of terrorism persistence more specifically the conceptual validity of prevailing longevity arguments in explaining empirical reality. This article helps to fill the gap. It does so by subjecting existing theories coalesced from a diverse set of relevant literature to a structured critique, and then pitches the salient inferences to a plausibility probe through a case study of terrorism landscape in Pakistan. Several gaps transpire in current research warranting revisit of major assumptions to harmonize theory with real time dynamics of clandestine non-state violence. More importantly, the study engenders unique insights which can benefit future study of terrorism prolongation in identical settings.

Key Words: Terrorism persistence, Pakistan, longevity arguments, variables, competition, political economy

Introduction

Indeed, terrorism has declined globally. It however persists and has actually intensified in certain new regions i.e., the US and Western Europe (Global Terrorism Index, 2016, pp.2-3). Accordingly, among other areas, the interest can be witnessed in the emerging literature to study causes underlying decline of the phenomenon. Ironically, the more compelling problem accompanying this recession i.e., metastasis of terrorism, has not received compatible scholarly attention despite its serious implications for countering terrorism. The observation does not presuppose that the longevity of atrocious violence has not been investigated, but it primarily confines to a few variable specific

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endeavours, for instance group longevity or how terrorism works or ends. The contributions by this corpus of knowledge notwithstanding, two major problems nonetheless mar empirical value of this scholarship; a) methodological skewness i.e., either the analytical canvas of these studies is too broad or they are entirely variable specific, and b) in terms of substance, the writings are exceedingly theoretical (see e.g., Biberman & Zahid, 2016 ; Rapoport, 2016 ; Popovic, 2015 ; Phillips, 2013 ; Porta, 2013, pp. 235-62 ; Alonso, 2011 ; Jones & Libicki, 2008 ; Cronin, 2006; Bloom, 2005, pp. 95-96). In practice therefore, the field of terrorism studies continues to suffer from the absence of focused study of terrorism persistence as a key variable more specifically the authenticity of conceptual validity of prevailing longevity arguments in explaining the empirical reality. This article helps to fill the gap.

Primarily, it tests knowledge claims of available theories coalesced from a diverse set of relevant literature through a structured (eclectic) critique and their objective appraisal in a practical setting - Pakistan. The selection of this country as a frame of reference seems fitting because of the unceasing spate of political violence, which it is argued owes to the primacy of different set of variables than those underpinning existing explanations of terrorism longevity, thereby warranting their revisit. The discussion thus identifies new variables, hypotheses and casual mechanisms to improve understanding about why terrorism persists in one context and not in others, which can be selectively generalized.

The main discussion proceeds in three sections. First section undertakes systematic critique of the existing explanations of terrorism longevity especially their constitutive variables. Next section highlights the security landscape of Pakistan with 9/11 as the entry point to locate which specific variables shaped and have sustained terrorism in this country. Prior to conclusion, the last section synthesizes the insights and attempts to scrutinize comparative merit of theoretical assumptions and variables evolved from empirical context. This analysis implicitly indicates future trajectory of terrorism in Pakistan.

Methodologically, the article employs a grounded theory approach by drawing upon multi source qualitative data to discern factors persevering oppositional violence, wherein the case study method provides a plausibility probe to demonstrate viability of

main argument of this paper i.e., the debility of longevity research in illuminating real time dynamics of non-state violence and thus the need to bridge the gap.

Terrorism in this paper is defined as violent political communication by clandestine non-state actors to instill fear or shape social and political behaviour and power relations of / concerned targeted audience including governments aimed at political change (Porta, 2013, p.7; English, 2016, p.10). The longevity literature simply implies scholarly renditions engaging explicitly or otherwise in studying structures or factors encouraging protraction of terrorist violence.

Terrorism Longevity Literature

This literature can be mainly gleaned from two subfields - historical theories of longevity and perpetrator groups' life cycles (or survivability) which is the main site of longevity variables encompassed in groups' studies.

Historical Theories

The historical theories - a shared terrain of continuity of terrorism – comprise three interrelated theoretical innovations – wave theory, inspiration hypothesis and strains (viruses) framework.

David Rapoport's wave construct identifies four broadly consecutive waves of terrorism – anarchist, anti-colonial, new left and religious (Rapoport, 2004, pp.46-73). Another unique explanation of terrorism constancy - *Inspiration* (italicized) - has been propounded by Mark Sedgwick (2007), that emanates from 'globally visible and apparently successful uses of terrorism and similar violent strategies,' epitomized by the independence of Italy.An extension of identical work, the strains theory, developed by Tom Parker and Nick Sitter (2016) rivets around the virulent effect of "contagion." It argues the consistent co-existence of four Strains - Nationalism, Socialism, Religious Extremism and Social Exclusion - since 1850. These strains, according to the authors, not only accommodate the continuity of terrorist activity over the *longue dureʾe*, but also the cross-contagion (or infection) between terrorist groups.

While revealing, these iterations are vexed by some major inconsistences. For instance, they apply blanket characterization of

terrorism to all historical violence. The known authorities in the field, Paul Wilkinson (1974, pp.39, 75), Walter Laqueur (2002) and Alex Schmid (2011, pp.5, 20-21), quite to the opposite, construe wars of national liberation inherently non-terroristic joined by other experts who show restraint in such generalizations (Chaliand & Blin, 2007, 27; Mockaitis, 2007, p.23; Hoffman, 2006, p.16). Besides, the protraction of terrorism averred in historical theories is challenged by the absence of terrorist activity between 1920 and 1945 since the 'anticolonial' organizations were predominantly active after 1945 and not after 1920,' (Mockaitis, 2007, p.38). Certainly, political violence prevailed in Germany (Nazi SA- Brown shirts), Russia (Red terrorism) and China (Maoist insurgency) between 1920-1945. This however cannot be conflated with terrorism by underground organizations.
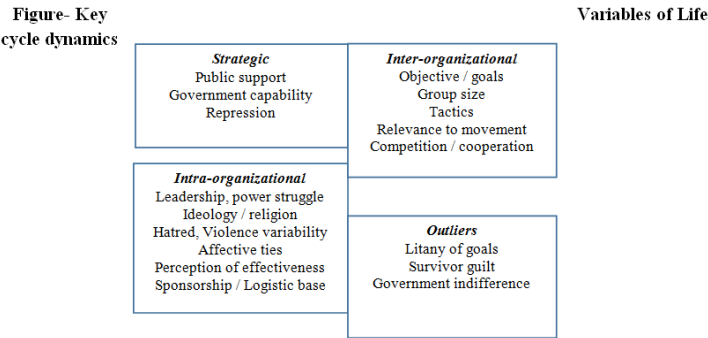
Another important albeit more philosophical objection is that historicity is not possible for an ontologically unstable concept like terrorism (Erlenbusch, 2014). Moreover, the contagion or inspiration hypothesis (and also the wave concept) ignores the fact of existence of terrorism only in a cultural and historical context (Chaliand & Blin, 2007, p.6). In fact more often diffusion (physical movement of terrorists across borders) or spillover effect of conflicted neighborhood likely contribute to the spread of political violence than the contagion (Chaliand & Blin, 2007, p.6).

Life Cycle Dynamics of Terrorist Organizations

Groups' life cycle dynamics revolve around certain key variables of varied significance, which can be obtained from a range of group studies through a careful delimitation of their multilevel intersections and functional utility (Figure) (Phillips, 2016, 2015, 2013, 2011 ; Fortna, 2015; Becker, 2015; Young & Dugan, 2014; Steinsson, 2014; Porta, 2013, pp.235-262; Krause, 2013; Abrahms, 2012 ; Carter, 2012; Alonso, 2011; Blomberg, Engel & Sawyer, 2010; Kydd & Walter, 2006; Bloom, pp.95-96 ; Post, 2005). A few outliers further augment this listing, for instance, since a group will never achieve litany of the stated political [strategic] goals, it will inescapably continue [terrorism] indefinitely (Steinsson, 2014; Abrahms, 2008). "Survivor guilt" (emphasis added) also pushes the members of group to continue with terrorism even after political settlement as mark of loyalty with those who died for the cause

(Franks, 2016, pp.37-38, 42). The government's indifference toward conflict resolution is also recognized possible cause to prolong terrorism (Fortna, 2015).

Figure
Key Variables of Life cycle dynamics

Figure- Key cycle dynamics   Variables of Life

Strategic Public support Government capability Repression	**Inter-organizational** Objective / goals Group size Tactics Relevance to movement Competition / cooperation
Intra-organizational Leadership, power struggle Ideology / religion Hatred, Violence variability Affective ties Perception of effectiveness Sponsorship / Logistic base	**Outliers** Litany of goals Survivor guilt Government indifference

Strategic and inter-organizational milieu

Public support bears strategic implications for survival of terrorist organizations. There is however discernable incompatibility between the essence of literature on this aspect and the ground reality. In fact, some scholars contest the need for public support since terror organizations are essentially clandestine (Sambanis, 2008).

In the first place, notion of public support is generally applied loosely as if it were monolithic in constitution. This is counter intuitive because the discourse of terrorism is not standardized even within societies most impacted by terrorism (i.e., Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and Iraq) (Feyyaz, 2016b), where sympathetic fringes coexist within several 'distinct publics' of different persuasions. The groups' strategies to compete i.e., outbidding, reflect similar representational affinities to achieve multiple purpose e.g., intrafield (competitors within same movement directed against opposing sectarian or ethnic communities) and the interfield outbidding (rivals targeting members of a different race, ethnicity, religion, or nation) (Phillips, 2015; Bloom, 2005, p.79).

Second, though terrorists pretend to act on behalf of a wider popular constituency, their aims or methods do not always have the

approval of that constituency (Crenshaw, 1981). This necessarily implies need for regulation of violence by conspiratorial groups to respond to the public sensitivities (Sharvit et al, 2015; Becker, 2015). It also compels insurgents to constantly reassess and redraw goals and tactics in response to changes within the group and the larger political and social environment (Jones & Libicki, 2008). For instance, there was such outrage by Irish community over the Omagh bombing, that the group - Real Irish Republican Army - declared a cease-fire along with claiming that its killing of civilians was in-advertent (Becker, 2015). Same behaviour can be noticed in interfaith conflicts e.g., Israel versus Palestinian vigilantes and Hezbollah and even among some otherwise more outrageous ethno-national insurgents - LTTE. These examples make infinite objectives hypothesis least persuasive. Yet, there are perpetrations that do not neatly fit into these stereotypes - brash terrorism by Daesh, Boko Haram, GIA (Islamic Jihad Group), Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Sendero Luminoso, and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)or millennial (mostly sectarian) groupings. Some of these cases also challenge arguments that large sized groups are less likely to target civilians which may be valid for population induced rebellions (Wood, 2010), but not entirely for terrorist organizations. Additionally, the group size becomes immaterial due to other factors - availability of safe havens away from target country and protection by new sponsors.

The scope of grassroots content also varies according to the degree of immunity of the affected population from government repression e.g., for transnational jihadi and violent sectarian organizations. The case of former is distinct from others; they espouse interfield (or interfaith)interests (Bloom, 2005, p.79); are perceived just in cause by fellow citizens (Schmid, 2014, p.29), have no violent rival, are larger and are more or less supported by the host state e.g., Hezbollah, Hamas,LeT (Lashkar-e-Taiba), Hizbul Mujahedeen, or even LTTE (before assassinating Rajiv Ghandi). Their source of provisions (recruitment, economy, motivation) mainly resides in popular roots (hence is perineal), compared to politically motivated groups who rely on criminal activity (or "gangsterization") for sustenance (CCISS, 2007). Since typical terrorist organizations use indiscriminate violence against own people, they are generally fluid to avoid government clamp down

and at times may be imposed major displacement specifically in unregulated border regions. Insurgencies in Northeast India and African conflicts are replete with such precedence. One important conceptual implication of territorial inflection is that conception of effectiveness of terrorist acts will presumably change. The long term goals of political change may be relegated for short time survival stakes, by mere continuation of operations in target country on behest of or to appease gained sources of support-mostly hostile neighbouring states. Sectarian groups who share doctrinal denomination with parts of population however have enabling environment in host country (Fair, 2015). Accordingly, the impact of (excesses in) counter terrorism in terms of backlash as well as recruitment mobilization and erosion of public support owing to sanguinary by terrorists does not occur uniformly which some researchers propose to be the case (Becker, 2015; Faria & Arce, 2012; Arce & Sandler, 2009). Arguably, cooperation (or alliances) between groups can materialize within more capable and in more autocratic states (Porta, 2013, pp.235-62; Phillips, 2013). But to say that alliances between groups universally take place under repressive conditions or can always produce favourable outcomes for groups' survival is suspect. India's heightened counter insurgency in Kashmir during the 2000s illustrates failure of alliances (Kasturi, 2012).

Comparatively, role of public support in spoiler situations which is a radical category of competition among rival groups, is negligent. The scale of terrorism increases during these situations, since spoiling results in outcomes quite controversial to those advanced by group scholarship (e.g., see Phillips, 2015) which asserts that moderate groups may give up violence if not subjected to spoiling by extreme opponents. Rationally speaking, groups involved in a peace process should not commit violence for some time (months or even year) to maintain good will. Practically, this does not suggest aversion to violence. Instead the respite could be used for extended planning cycles, reconsolidation efforts, avoiding taxing counterterrorism campaigns by the state, and the patience, as a group bides its time until a more advantageous opportunity presents itself (Price, 2012). Altogether, the group may never refrain from terror acts while being part of peace process such as the Tamil Tigers etc, if it is to demonstrate its viability to the

competitors or to influence peace discussions (Shinoda, 2011; Pape, 2005, p.139). The moot is, in most cases peace overtures by terrorists are disingenuous because they constantly face countervailing incentives in terms of how much and when to use, vary or cease violence (Becker, 2015).

Alternatively, groups might splinter due to dissension over participation in peace processes or leadership feuds. It – splintering - does not signal end of terrorism as argued by Khusrav Gaibulloev and Todd Sandler (2014). The members remain committed to terrorism but choose to continue fighting for other groups, might start a new group (e.g., GIA morphed into AQIM, more examples will follow) or go where the capital lies (Zaidi, 2014; Jones and Libicki, 2008, p.13). This iteration refutes overemphasis by some writers on affective ties, solidarity and identity with a particular group (Porta, 2013, p.261). Instead, the same attribute can be particularly helpful for the renegades as well as new groups to attract recruits.

Groups' Internal Dynamics

A dominant leader lies at the psychological root of terrorism. It is debatable whether his departure will lead to death of organization, make it further atrocious due to problem of succession or cause dilution in hatred among followers. The fact is as Jenna Jordan (2014) concludes that larger, older, and religious organizations are highly resilient to leadership targeting due to bureaucratized structure and social context. Vibrancy of major militant and resistance movements further proves this point - Hamas, Al-Qaida, Hezbollah, Boko Haram, PKK etc. Besides the idea of correlation of inspirational leadership with "hatred bred in bones,' which vitalizes endurance of terrorism is contentious. Among most non-state armed groups, hatred for 'outgroup' is a function of civilizational, ethnic or cultural expression, and for this reason does not subside with the liquidation of leadership (Gunning & Jackson, 2011; Feyyaz, 2014). The archaic institution of revenge animated by groups hailing from tribal or traditional background is one case in point (Feyyaz, 2016a). A regime thus encourages succession of terrorism [in normative societies] when it creates martyrs to be avenged (Crenshaw, 1981).

The role of religion in nurturing value based terrorist organizations abound several studies. A closer inspection into the

leaders' profile, and those of the groups many of whom principally seek political control as well as socioeconomic demands, betrays this somewhat universal banality (Tellidis, 2016, pp.139-40; Goodwin, 2016, pp.129-30; Sageman, 2008, p.51). Moreover, the religion or even ideology alone comprise insufficient reasons to explain propensity for, or temporal span of terror (Yayla & Speckhard, 2016).

One of the more important questions relating to internal dynamics is the arguable linkage of longevity issue with survivor guilt, and presumptive belief among some researchers about the efficacy of perception of success among terrorists drawn from false analogies of past successful guerrilla campaigns (Abrahms & Lula, 2012). Civil war and veterans' literature cites examples of survivor guilt; the incidence of embracing retributive violence are however hard to locate (Ross, 2010; Bourgois, 2001). Similarly, analogy hypothesis overlooks other real time variations e.g., interpretation of terrorism effectiveness from the groups' perspective, the factual successes accruing from overreaction and yielding by the governments to terrorists' coercion (e.g., US presidential hostage policy directive),a never-ending supply of recruits due to rendition, torture, abuses by vast majority of countries, drone war, terrorism tolerant social groups and states' dualism in dealing with militant groups (Fair, 2015; Krause, 2013; Horowitz & Cammarano, 2013).The latter assumes importance due to possible fracture of shared preferences (e.g., policy, ideology, motive, interest) between sponsor (state) and the agent. Terror organization experience defection (turning against sponsor) if the principal backtracks from stated policy more so when alternative sources of support to hitherto prostate militants also become available or the agent embraces financial incentives divergent from the principals' goals (Popovic, 2015 ; Byman and Kreps, 2010). These constructions are simplistic which neither detail on impact of defection on length of terrorism in particular involving multiple defectors, and whether fracture will certainly cause mutual confrontation over policy changes.

The Anatomy of Reality

September 11 attacks changed the whole world, Pakistan perhaps more profoundly than others. The immediate outcomes of

Musharraf's decision to align with Washington had a tumultuous fallout, far disparate than conventionally understood.

First was the breaking out of Frankenstein terrorism. Angered by General Pervez Musharraf's U turn policy, JeM - Jaish-e-Mohammad (and also HuM (Harkat ul-Mujahedeen)) who had close ties with Al Qaeda and Taliban, fragmented and by October 2001, its hawk elements were set on a collision course with the military regime (Popovic, 2015). The commotion exacerbated when he later moved to curtail militants' cross-border activities in Kashmir causing a number of factions to initiate a series of bombings across Pakistan targeting minorities and security forces including attempts on life of Musharraf (Popovic, 2015). A new group Jamaat-al-Furqan came into being within ranks of JeM; the prostate 313 brigade became antagonist and a few renegades from JeM laid the groundwork for founding militancy in Swat.[2] JeM's links to Al Qaeda also significantly motivated its rank-and-file to turn guns against Pakistan. Besides, the breakaway faction from HuM, HUJI (Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami), LeT (some individuals) and LeJ (Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, 1996) spawned a new anti-state breed of Punjabi Taliban (Tankel, 2016a). A unique feature of the whole scenario was that LeT did not defect (Popovic, 2015).

Concomitantly, talibanization of tribal population and adjoining settled districts spread by coercion than the appeal of religion, precipitated by pre-existing Jihad-violence discourse shaped by Afghan Jihad of 1980s (Fiaz, 2012). Soon after American invasion of Afghanistan, the ultra-right JUI (Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam) declared Jihad against the US forces, and the anti-American sentiments and hatred against the military regime intensified (Cloughley, 2008, pp.164-66, 182-84). Subsequently (October 2002), a new political front formed by pro-Taliban Mullah led political coalition - Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) – took control of the two provinces bordering Afghanistan – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan - which gave new lease on life to dormant sectarian groups such as SSP (Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, 1986) and LeJ as well as the transnational jihadis (Harkat groups - (HUJI)/ HuM/Al-Ansar)) (ICG, 2016, 2008; Tankel, 2016a &b).

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[2] Interview with Mr. Akhtar Ali Shah, Additional Inspector General Police, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 26 May 2016, Mardan.

These developments expose multiple conflicts in theoretical dictates – first, passionate bonds could not prevent intra-group fragmentation or splintering which devolved around political considerations; secondly, despite policy shifts by the Pakistani government principal-agent equation produced only marginal fracture, and lastly alliances among various terrorist organizations and sympathetic political actors accrued less due to religion than political ideology – anti American populism. Admittedly, more terror groups came into being later, terrorism increased and germinated sources of its furtherance.

During mid-2000s three hapless events plunged the country into further chaos - the assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti (a famous Baloch tribal elder), a drone attack on madrassa belonging to TNSM in Bajuar agency of FATA both occurring during 2006, and the botched operation by Army against the administration of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad during July 2007.

The death of Bugti in military action as part of wider counter terrorism efforts reignited 5th Baloch insurgency by drawing their historical discontent into a new organized wave of ethnic terror. Close to a dozen armed groups representing a wide range of aspirations and loyalties emerged within a short time. The exceptional thread that weaved them together was feeling of hatred and revenge reflected in the systematic ethnic cleansing of non-Baloch settlers and targeting of the state symbols (Zurutuza, 2010, 2015; Murphy and Tamana, 2010, pp.52, 60-61); Khan, 2009). The common cause also led secular Baloch groups to align with Al-Qaeda supported millennial (sectarian) groups - LeJ and Iranian Jundullah (Iqbal, 2015, pp.84-85; Gunuratna & Iqbal, p.222).

The most petrifying consequence of the mayhem was the swift unification of Pashtun groups of all hues in December 2007 under the umbrella of TTP (Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan) (Abbas, 2008). Not least that Lal Masjid operation also effected the shift of large numbers of jihadists with overlapping ideological and ethnic identities against the Pakistani state and into the hands of al-Qaeda-style militant groups including TTP (Tankel, 2016b; "Pakistan must," 2013). The triggering determinant of this terrorist campaign, as in the Baloch case, was revenge (or badal in Pashtu), supplemented by a call for Jihad by Lal Masjid's clerics and the escalating military operation in Swat ("Pakistan must," 2013). The

planned massacre of 145 school children and their teachers in Peshawar on 16 December 2014, was apparently a highpoint of this motivation. Latent in this transformation was also the increasingly interconnected loci of revolutionary and sectarian groups (Tankel, 2016b). The Inspiration assertion does not fully explain these localized phenomena.

The post 9/11 phase manifested in significant other ways to endure terrorism.

The government drew nine peace deals during the 2000s with the TTP, conceding ground almost on all demands (Khattak, 2012; Tajik, 2013). It sounds surreal that neither the inclusion of shari'a was ever demanded by militants, nor the mediated settlement could prevent Pakistan's relapse into terrorism within weeks of the agreed truces despite intervention by highly influential mediators (Khattak, 2012; Tajik, 2013). The terrorism therefore remained unrelenting and dramatically surged by increasingly emboldened pro-Taliban militants after Pakistan's failed military operations and the aborted peace agreements (Tankel, 2016b). The general public remained skeptical about the government's ability to deal with the growth of violence (Masood, 2012).

Interestingly, the contagion ensued as a result of successful terrorist activity but was incongruent compared to that professed in historical literature. For instance, one was the religious vigilantism, i.e., imposition of self-styled shari'a in neighborhood by clergy and students of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa Madrassa in Islamabad (White, 2007). Similarly, FATA registered exponential growth of terror cells, franchises and small scale organizations since 2004. At one point, there were over 100 local and foreign terrorist groups reported present or operating from FATA (Rana, 2009, 2010). This development was brewing since January 2006 when several independent (mainly sectarian) terror groups emerged in different parts of tribal areas, splintering flared up among Kashmir-based Jihadi groups and new alliances came into being evoked by military operations in Swat (Tankel, 2016 a&b; Feyyaz, 2016a). The explosive deluge in FATA by Al-Qaeda, other foreign militants, Haqqanis and Afghan refugees through diffusion and not contagion, was an important contributor to transform the local conditions.

There were other changes from the longevity perspective in the terrorist landscape during this period in the face of intensifying

military campaign. In the first place, TTP was subsumed into violent leadership disputes among its Mehsud siblings (Khan & Walsh, 2014 ; "Taliban infighting," 2014 ; Shah & Masood, 2009). It experienced significant fragmentation into four major (Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JA), Tehrik-i-Taliban South Waziristan, Abdullah Mehsud group, Punjabi Taliban) and some minor factions (Hangu chapter, Jamait Ahle Hadith Orakzai, Ahrar-ul-Hind, Ansar ul Mujahideen), in addition to defections of key commanders to form Khorsan chapter of Daesh (Zahab, 2016, pp.124-125; "Pakistan Taliban," 2014; Hasan, 2009). Curiously, none of the major and minors groups were weakened from infighting and splintering, they instead remained cohesive. The prodigy lay in the archipelagic nature of TTP, gravitated around tribal lineage from the outset, which had prevented it from fully becoming a coherent and disciplined group (Zahab, 2016, pp.124-125; Yusufzai, 2008). The retention of tribal identity among hardcore (Pashtun led) terrorist organization or even those forming formative core of Daesh fundamentally differed from Punjabi dominated Jihadi and sectarian groups which broke on the basis of political underpinnings. The Punjabis nonetheless symbolically maintained ethnic distinction while operating as part of TTP or Al-Qaeda (Tankel, 2016a).

Likewise, scores of deadly (spoiling) terror acts were committed across Pakistan during the negotiation period between TTP and the government in 2014 (Zahab, 2016, p. 129; Roggio, 2014; "Six soldiers," 2014). TTP itself killed 13 police commandos in Karachi while engaging in talks without burden of good will being created (Sherazi, 2014). There were a few characteristic instances of outbidding in this milieu. Two attacks by Umar Mansoor (then budding rebel within TTP) on Peshawar School and Bacha Khan University in Charsadda on 20 January, 2016 are categorized cases of desperate outbidding by experts. The irony is former was ostensibly owned and the latter condemned by TTP (Ahmed, 2016; "BKU attack," 2016). This quandary is not explicated by literature. Conceivably, however, the latter appeared a probable case of political outbidding to preserve affiliation base and to also publically isolate Mansoor for consolidation of leadership by Fazalullah to address power struggle within TTP. Yet again, political outbidding may not always manifest in non-violent means. The attack by JA on session court in district Charsadda on 7 March

2016 claimed as retribution for hanging of Mumtaz Qadri (who murdered Governor Taseer during 2011 on pretext of blasphemy), was a novelty in intrafield outbidding to win over ideologically hostile Barelvis (the largest Sunni sect in Pakistan) into its camp ("Taliban bomb," 2016). Contrary to conventional assumption that outbidding inter alia, aims at 'fence sitters,' (Fortna, 2015) Barelvis being ardent adherents of Sufism, could be hardly if ever, persuaded by Deobandi violent groups.

Identically, out of 442 fidayeen attacks undertaken by various Taliban groups in collusion with Al- Qaida and LeJ between 2004 and 2016, those targeting of Shias, Qadianis, Pashtuns and Punjabis or other religious monitories were motivated by millennialism than simple outbidding. Indeed, it is true that many of these were carried out to avenge assassination of TTP leadership besides encouraged by successes and outbidding (Biberman & Zahid, 2016 ; Feyyaz, 2016a).

One of the destabilizing dimension of Pakistan's joining war on terror during the initial eight years (2001-2008), was the emergence of a pattern of categorization by security agencies of non-state entities based on a blanket criteria of the utility offered and threats posed to the state (Tankel, 2016b). The Kashmiri groups ((LeT, JeM, HzM (Hizbul Mujahideen)) who were regarded as freedom fighters due to historical centrality of Kashmir issue and some of the good (Pakistani) Talibanwere treated in the former category, whereas Al-Qaeda, TTP and its affiliates, now JA and sectarian organizations were declared as the enemy of the state (Ahmed, 2012; Siddiqa, 2011; Haqqani, pp.304-05).Afghan Taliban are not considered among any of this division, but Pakistani establishment has hesitated to abandon them (Paul, 2014, p.67; Markey, 2014, p.4). All of this distinction has been at the expense of or indifference to domestic stability (Yusuf, 2016). It is difficult to find a reasonable clarification of this contradictory securitizing agenda; a possible rationalization lies in conflicting definition of national security by Pakistani civil and military leadership in addition to typical geopolitical realities of South Asia (Fayyaz, 2010, p.302). The terrorism longevity arguments are wholly quiet on these contextual peculiarities.

Importantly, in tandem with violence, the terrorism – crime nexus thrived with the influx of Taliban and Al –Qaida (Fair,

Howenstein & Thier, 2006). The economy of violence, which had existed in Pak-Afghan border belt since the 1980s, evolved into an institutionalized political economy in all areas under influence of the Taliban (Acharya, Bukhari & Sulaiman, 2009; Schetter, 2004). The criminals were in fact the first to bandwagon the talibanization drive in Pakistan (Yusuf, 2011). The TTP criminal associations and operations were later extended to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Punjab provinces, with Karachi turning into most lucrative hub of extortions and black money (Acharya, Bukhari & Sulaiman, 2009; Ayub, 2015). All this while, recruitment by militant networks relied less on ideology than on the promise of money (ICG, 2013; Bari, 2009). In fact, peace deals also became a lucrative source for revenue collection by the Taliban (Feyyaz, 2016a). Punjabi Taliban were no less in practicing criminal tendencies and could be bought by highest bidders, the like of Asmatullah Muwaiya who fell under the state's patronage after breaking away from TTP during 2012 (Zahab, 2016, 130; Rehman, 2014a&b; Zaidi, 2014). Comparatively LeT and JeM have lived comfortably by drawing enormous donations from diverse private, government and foreign sources to include Saudi and Gulf states, Wahabi clerics and Pakistani diaspora (Bhattacharya, 2014). The religious festivals and natural disasters act additional source of funding spike for them.

Consequent to military operation - Operations Zarb-e-Azab - in Waziristana in 2014, which considerably reduced capability of TTP and some of its affiliates, these groups have found sanctuaries in eastern border provinces of Afghanistan along with willing sponsors – India and Afghan intelligence networks – to commit terrorism inside Pakistan (Karnad, 2017). Regardless of their current size, it is the patronage which is now sustaining TTP's recently up scaled terrorist activity in various parts of Pakistan.

Theory and Reality: Comparative Merit

The above discussion underwrites notable disparity between the longevity literature and undercurrents of contextual reality. In fact, the indigenous variables emerging from the analysis and the reasons as well as mechanisms materializing them can hardly be found in the prevailing literature – convoluted threat, repression / revenge, terrorism success, groups' idiosyncrasies, and political economy of terrorism. The role of religion does not come out

strongly in developing terrorism in Pakistan, rather it has aggravated than singly triggering antagonistic violence.

Given the multiplicity of threat prevailing in Pakistan – sectarian, jihadi, non-sectarian religious and secular – it is needless to underscore that terrorism cannot be explained in a unitary framework. It is instead marked by multiple competing settings and dynamics. Both the historical theories as well as group studies tend to construct terrorism rather more linearly. Another crucial aspect belied by above analysis is that historicity of terrorism is possible within a specific time and space scope, rather as a consistent phenomenon spread over centuries.

The role of repression in provoking backlash has been endorsed in the literature. The primacy of element of badal (and not survivor guilt) characterized by prevailing norms has found far less attention in prolonging terrorism. It is instructive to note that despite successive decapitation of TTP's earlier leaders which slowed pitch of violence, but did not abate it. In fact, the Bugti's assassination spawned a fresh genre of militant organizations. The retribution cycle has been further infused with more alarming layers to existing repressive regime – militarized justice system, capital punishments, extra judicial police encounters - which 'feeds and fuels the very violence it is meant to curtail,' (ICG, 2016; "Lashkar-i-Jhangvi,"2015 ; HRCP, 2017). Consequently, if all other dynamics are discounted, Establishment's exclusive reliance on military instruments to counter violent extremists is sufficient to keep the retributive cycle going. Badal in meaningful ways also drives groups to ally. Besides, the alliances in Pakistani context as the discussion suggests have not occurred due to repression, but owing to other more political contemplations which have benefited terrorists to synchronize their operations.

The study also clearly brings out the contributory role of success of terrorism in its prolongation in Pakistan. The longevity discourse does not account for this variable which essentially results from local conditions - the realpolitik (impulsive peace deals, insurgent friendly political actors, presence and support to proxies and Afghan groups), the intersected character of violence and lately, the altered perception of effectiveness of violence among transborder groups. The latter in particular has been produced by availability of safe havens and sponsorship of Pakistani terrorists by

unfriendly Afghanistan which has not only measurably enhanced space for terrorism, but more detrimentally, in furnishing an evolved meaning of terrorism effectiveness among TTP and its cadres – accomplishment of assigned tasks – to placate the Principals. The syndrome sufficiently explains why Pakistan repeatedly relapses into terrorism and why terrorists succeed in eliciting concessions from the state. Besides, whereas the role of LeT to stay loyal to Pakistani state repudiates straightjacketed principal-agent theories, it is not guaranteed these agents will remain abidingly subservient to the state especially so when organizational cooperation by means of collaboration exists between all militant groups (Moghadam, 2017, p. 4). The implication is persistence of terrorism in Pakistan. Together, these factors evoke an ominous specter for peace in Pakistan.

More significantly, the study engenders terrorist organizations' idiosyncratic profile and behaviour. The groups' age is one such critical issue that can be inferred from the discussion. Over a dozen major and numerous smaller groups and their leadership are still fully unhurt. Besides, many deadly attacks during 2015-17 have been carried out by splinters / defectors. These organizations more specifically JA, Punjabi militants, various siblings of TTP in FATA and Karachi, are at their early age, which makes them most dangerous as they compete for grassroots and criminal niches as well as new clients (Phillips, 2011). It is possibly here that Inspiration encourages them for furthering their agendas, and hence prolonging terrorism in the country. Their idiosyncratic behaviour e.g., uncharacteristic outbidding, rampant violence against civilians and frequent splintering based on tribal or ethnic affiliation, injects further uncertainty into the whole security calculus. Southern Punjab (and now also Balochistan) which boasts variety of militant organizations along with enabling recruitment environment, adds to the fluid and explosive mosaic (ICG, 2016). Concomitantly, urban Pakistan has become increasingly more crucial for Daeshespecially the middle class and recruits from other groups (Zahid & Khan, 2016; Barr, 2016).

Finally, the emergent spate of terrorist activity explicitly heralds renewed level and reach of insurgents' resourcefulness which suggests booming swath of political economy of terrorists. More can

be gleaned from the existence of prolific funding opportunities afforded by a plethora of donor networks in Pakistan (ICG, 2016).

Conclusion

In sum, the article engenders few important findings. First, while the existing literature is indeed helpful in many measures, its explanatory prowess is notably limited because most extant research stays short of studying the phenomenon holistically. Further, contextualization of violent phenomenon is ineluctable (historicity) to understand characteristics generating its persistence to bridge the gap between theory and empirical reality. More probe is thus warranted entailing settings identical to Pakistan. Importantly, the prevailing academic gaps can be addressed by realigning research agenda with longitudinal methodologies in context specific framework. By recourse to identified variables, this case study provides some input for theorizing terrorism persistence and comparative probe in that direction.

Finally, the article unambiguously establishes ominous ubiquity of fertile reservoir of violence in Pakistan. The decline in violence during 2015-2016 was at best a lull imposed by military operations on a single group - TTP, while others likely exercised elective restraint to preserve and realign. Resurgence of violence witnessed since early February 2017 was hence predictable. If the country seriously intends to effectively arrest trajectory of terrorism perpetuation, that is possible by (i) recasting its reliance from a maximalist national security matrix to a blend of hard and soft power counter terrorism model (to wean away amenable mindsets) along with an inclusive stand against terrorism, (ii) institutionalized research investment to improve understanding about the inside-out of terror organizations, (iii) leaving the Kashmir freedom struggle to indigenous people, and (iv) resolution of Afghan imbroglio and repatriation of Afghans as an immediate foreign policy priority. Otherwise, the claims vying for end of terrorism will remain meaningless and will keep surprising Pakistanis as those experienced during 2017.

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