

WESTPHALIA TREATY 1648, ISLAM AND EFFECT OF THE MEDIA ON GLOBAL TERRORISM

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Abstract

Streaming back to the history of global terrorism, the 19th century jihad is indeed the power of contemporary trends. Just as civilization started in Africa, the quest for cultural advancement and religions propagation in the form of crusades and scholarship began in Nigeria in the 19th century with Usman Dan Fodio, advocating for education and respect of Islamic norms, which he attained his objectives in a most peaceful manner. Though his crusade was flag under the banner of jihad, treaties have not been respected in the world, amounting to the global menace on human security.

The non-respect of Westphalia Peace Treaty and discriminatory use of the media are strategic aspect which moderates contemporary trends. The impact of what is today considered “new terrorism” is an agenda to limit economic growth in developed countries and of globalization in general. The economic impact of terrorist attacks, especially the repercussions of 9/11, have been very visible due its media coverage. The public encounter a new dawn, economic consequences of security measures and counter-terrorism policies challenged. Yet, the analytical and empirical interplay between security, religion and economic prosperity are still insufficiently understood in academic and policy milieu.

Though posters of media condemn the 9/11 attacks due to the mass casualties, barbaric, inhumane, and violation core teachings of Islam. Others posters wrote that they felt that their religion was being raped by criminals (jihadists or extremist) who use it to carry out their socio-political agenda. This paper appeals that Islam is the religion of peace, and a

minority can be used to generalize the mindset of a huge group of persons, thereby exposing the circle that exist in the Muslim community. The paper equally examines the effect of the media in its social discrimination and bias on other cultures limiting to Islam. It concludes by an appeal for peace and religious interrelation for sustainable development and harmony.

Keywords- Westphalia Treaty, Islam, Jihadist Muslims, Islamist Muslims, Conservative Muslims, Pluralist Muslims, Framing

Introduction

One of the most strategic treaties in international relations and diplomacy as well as international security is the Westphalia peace treaty (1618-1648), which ended the Thirty Years' War in Europe. The treaty was endorsed or drawn from two treaties: the first, signed in the city of Münster, between the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France; the second, endorsed between the Emperor and the King of Sweden in the nearby city of Osnabrück, in order to settle conflicts, especially conflicts over religion, which continue to moderate debates in European union. The treaty is considered to be a Pan-European peace treaty following the pledge of the kings of Sweden and France to guarantee sustainable peace. This paper does not focus on the diplomatic segment, but rather links the failure to respect religious principles to global terrorism.

The globalization period has changed the dynamics of international security, drawing back historical events on religions, particularly on Islam. The peaceful nature exhibited by some Muslims has not been enough to limit scholarly debates of the nature and principles of Islam in relation to terrorism and jihadist tendencies. As such, Islam is perhaps the most controversial of the three monotheistic religions. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States (henceforth, 9/11), have a negative impact on Islam and Muslims, as some Western media consider Muslims as extremist and terrorist, following Osama Bin Laden's religious stance for his criminal attacks. Many media continue to point to Islam and Muslims as follows to the 9/11 events not even isolating scholars. It will be necessary to first redefine the different types of Muslims and review the impact of media in contemporary trends.

Structural classification of Moderate Muslims

One of the significant changes in the field of terrorism over the past 20 year has been the increase in the number of groups claiming religious beliefs as source of legitimacy for their actions. In order to understand modern terrorism, it will be necessary to make a point out the difference between a Muslim and Islam, which is constantly interrelated. Islam is a way of life based on divine sources, the Holy Quran, the word of God and Sunnah. While a Muslim is an individual free to adhere by or deviate from divine guidance, either led by conscience or by radical doctrine of religious clerics.

Cheikh Saleh Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Cheikh in a study titled '*La moderation et le juste-milieu et leur effet sur la vie des musulmans*' gives and redefines Islamic principles as prescribed by Allah in regards to contemporary narratives of Islam. According to Alex P. Schmid (2007), he explores several questions in order to establish what 'moderate' Muslims are and, indirectly, what 'moderate Islam' is, through their characteristics, who should be labeled moderates nor extremists. However, he approaches this issue imagining a series of concentric circles, starting from a very small, violence-prone extremist jihadist core to more peaceful Muslims in the other rings, and especially the outermost ring. Four circles can be distinguished in relation to modern Islam:

Jihadist Muslims: Religious diversity has led to development but nonetheless international insecurity, with some groups or community advocating for antisocial behaviors in relation to another community. The first class of Muslims is Jihadist Muslims which are the forefront of this narrative, made up of revolutionary and terrorist, a community of Sunni Salafist. Their crusades or agenda is the implementation of sharia through misguided religious prescriptions and the use of fatwa (religious command) and radical jihad to impose a new culture. They are usually enjoying the sympathy from certain Muslims depending on the particular conflict and agenda, not ignoring their global aspirations, as well as fighting of the 'near enemy'.

Islamist Muslims: The second, much larger circle, consists of 'Islamists'. These proponents of 'political Islam' may not practice violence themselves but often adhere to religious fundamentalist ideology. They make no distinction between the religious and political sphere in society with agenda to impose Islamic law by opposing non-believers and the myth

supremacy. Through crusades political Islamists like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during the Arab Spring seek to achieve their objectives with the ballot box rather than through revolutionary terrorism like the more militant jihadists, using democracy as a vehicle to go beyond it. In principle, they are opposed to pluralism, but due to democratic principles they opt for coexistence with other political parties as, for instance, in Tunisia (Ennahda) and Morocco (Justice and Development Party – PJD). There are Islamist parties in many Muslim-majority countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran, Sunni and Shia Islamist regimes are in power, vying for regional dominance.

Conservative Muslims: The third category consist of ‘non-Islamist’ Muslims, or traditional Muslims are ‘religiously conservative’. These ‘conservatives’ majority are found in countries like Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Gulf states. Many of them, adhere to Saudi Wahhabism, which interpret the Quran literally, regarding it as the word of Allah that has to be followed to the letter at all times and in all places. It is considered the largest circle of all Muslims. Contrary to Islamists, who view Islam as an political ideology and are not revolutionary.

Pluralist Muslims: Beyond these three circles of jihadists, Islamists and conservative Muslims, there are non-traditional Muslims living in Western diasporas. They adhere to a broader interpretation of what it means to be Islamic and are inclusivists rather than exclusivists with a different narrative of Islam and correlating it to other faiths. They include ‘modern Muslims’, ‘sociological Muslims’, ‘reformist Muslims’, ‘Muslim democrats’ and the ‘Far left Muslim’. It’s worth noting that, the circle starts from extremist to non-extremist, with a different view of Islamic torts.

The media as genesis of global terrorism

This study analyzed the role of the media in relation to the global menace on human security before and after the 9/11 events and how Islam has been tag as a terrorist faith with its followers. Although terrorists claimed of the 9/11 attacks, linking it to Islam, the religion demurs a peaceful religion which is against violence and any human or antisocial behavior. More than 43% condemned the attacks as being a criminal act of terrorism which contradicts Islamic principles, while 30% adhere to the attacks, even if they felt sorry for the

victims and their families (Abdulla, R., 2007), as it was considered a political, rather than a religious issue.

Long before the 9/11 events, Arabs had voiced their concerns about their image in the Western media. In 1980, journalist Djelloul Marbrouk noted that the Arab in American television stands for 'terrorism, hijack, intractability, sullenous, perverseness, cruelty, oil, sand, embargo, boycott, greed, bungling, comedic disunity, primitive torture, family feuds, and white slavery' (Abdulla, R., 2007, Shaheen, 1980, n.p.). Shaheen profiled many programs that portrayed Arabs in a negative light in the late 1970s, from Hollywood pictures and productions such as Vegas, and Charlie's Angels to comic strips such as Brenda Starr and Dennis the Menace. Nonetheless, the Charlie Hebdo and 9/11 events gave a different narrative about Muslims to the international community.

The effects of Media in Global Terrorism

An image, word or song can spark internal wrangling and as well war. This formidable frame is what is known today as mass media, which helps in transmitting dominant ideologies, culture and values (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; Hall, 1981; Kellner, 2005). The theoretical model of transmitting messages which molds debates in ways that eventually serve the interests of corporations (McChesney, 2004; McCombs, 2004; Shuffled & Tewksbury, 2007). Thereby upholding to media dual functions of reflecting and shaping contemporary issues (socio-political, terrorism and global jihad). Mainstreaming media and academic discourse in relation to Islam/Muslim, terrorism and the Western narrative continue to moderate international debates. As muslims are overwhelmingly cast as violent individuals and irrational terrorist (Manning, 2003). The language use for news story or some articles alienate criminal activities of terrorists with the adjective 'Islamic' which is critical for social caution (Alghamdi, 2015).

There are several factor which explains this virulence of human security which are but not limited; 1) seemingly the Anglo-American nature of international news media and its coverage (Manning, 2003) and 2) the conjecture about Islam that violence is inherent to Muslim societies, as the term 'Islamic Terrorism' itself signify a unified nexus between acts of terror and practice of Islam (Holmes, 2016). There exist a social cleavage and communications limitation between the Muslim world and USA (Pintak, 2003). Though

major religions have had violent periods, or periods in which the religion has coexisted with violence (Robert, 2015), the 9/11 events in US left a scar on Islam 'violence' as well as the rise of Islamophobia (Sudan, 2015).

What makes terrorism distinct from war is fear and media coverage (Hawthorne, 2012). The phenomenal menace 'Terrorism' of human security goes back to the late 19th century, with the emergence of mass media and democracy. Just as how the media provide information, it can also ignite fear with images of attacks as well as propaganda of non-conventional actors, and without democracy, hegemonic dominance or the quest for power with heed sentiments can provoke violence (Burke, 2016). Philip Bump's writes in the Washington Post that the term 'terrorism' has become so central with Muslim that associating it to a white person dismantles the entire lexicography of Israelo-American political culture (Dabashi, 2015). Linking terrorism and jihadist tendencies through media coverage to Islam is what Bülent Kenes called 'international injustice' (Kenes, 2015), considering the peaceful nature of the religion.

Moreover, the link between Islam and violence is not only debatable but also terrifyingly reductionist, in relation to contingent collection of heterogeneous followers with action of a political minority. As such the term 'Islamic Terrorism' is a structural notion and emotional depoliticizing term intended to make publics think less and fear more (Holmes, 2016). The controversial history of some Muslims communities is the reason for the misinterpretation and the globalization of all Muslims to contemporary trends. For example, in 2002, journalists report on Taliban in Afghanistan were too quick to predict the rejection of culture, which the country's women would abandon their veils (burqa) (Karim, 2006).

In addition to the above mention, research fellows develop a term 'Framing' to refer to describe an event in a particular news story is portrayed. The cohesive manner of depicting events and news reporting, in words, tone, visuals, similes and presentation constituted different frames. That is the selection of strategic issues related to human security are explored, analysis made in relation to the causes, solution and recommendations provided (Entman, 1993; McQuail, 2012). Common frames used by the media center usually associate Islam/Muslim with terrorism e.g. "Islam caused Violence" and "Muslim are terrorists" (Yusof, 2013). Another example is "France's Charlie Hebdo blames ordinary Muslims for terrorism" (McAuley, 2016), "More than 15 Armed Muslims Opened Fire in California!"

(Kosar, 2016), "Muslim student at Texas school called terrorist by teacher" (Bolt, 2016) and "Muslim migration in France opens door to terror" (Bult, 2016). The cultural deviance and continuous link to antisocial behavior to Muslim is a misguided theory which might plunged the war in future if these frames are not limited.

Conclusion

The 9/11 events begun a new dawn for the Islamic community, that marked with discrimination, noted as element of darkness due to acts committed by criminals in the name of Islam and jihad (holy war), which the Western media was quick to pick, have one ever heard Buddhist terrorists and Jewish terrorist. Or even Hindu terrorists? Big NO! When is the last time we heard about "Christian terrorists"? (Dr. Khalid Sultan, 2016) The "War on Terror" is primarily directed towards the Muslims states like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Iran safeguarding West's dark impulses (Moore, 2003). Though extremist Buddhists killed many civilians in Burma, Sri Lanka and even burnt to ashes Muslims homes and businesses. Jewish terrorists equally conducted attacks on Palestinians causing mass casualties. A report of the State Department's in 2013 on terrorism revealed that there were close to 400 acts of terror committed by Israelis' in what are known as "price tag" attacks (Obeidallah, 2015).

More so, it's worth noting that more than 50 percent of the Americans and close to 50 percent of Canadians say the West does not respect Muslim societies (GALLUP, 2016). A study conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in relations to acts of terrorism committed on US soil from 1980 and 2005 revealed that 94 percent terror attacks were committed by non-Muslims (Obeidallah, 2015). However, this does not exonerate Muslims from the extreme hatred, hostility towards Islam and its followers painted with negative images, and marginalization (Ali, et al., 2011). Anti-Muslim sentiments and heavy media depiction proclaiming Islam and Muslims as elements of terrorism gripped Western societies to Islamophobia, a concept nest before the 9/11 events (GALLUP, 2016).

Limiting contemporary security challenges on "Islamist" instead on "violent extremist" reduces the efforts of tackling the core problem, yet focusing on religious curve 'faith' and over one billion Muslim who abhor violence (Benjamin, 2010). The wave of terrorism and the misinterpretation of Western dominated media is a structural mistake committed in

the past in relation to Communism as a potential threat to their interest, now Islam is the prime threat to their interest. US 'shift' in Iraq and Afghanistan reminds the similar attacks on Vietnam decades ago. Appealing to McNamara, (the architect of US) policies regarding defense in the past, who posed later "we were wrong, terribly wrong".

According to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR, 2001), "many media pundits focused on one theme: retaliation. For some, it did not matter who bears the brunt of an American attack". For example, on September 12, 2001, Steve Dunleavy wrote in the New York Post: "The response to this unimaginable 21st-century Pearl Harbor should be as simple as it is swift—kill the bastards. A gunshot between the eyes, blow them to smithereens, poison them if you have to. As for cities or countries that host these worms, bomb them into basketball courts." (Steve Dunleavy, 2001. New York Post) On September 11, former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger commented on CNN, "There is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this thing" (FAIR, 2001, n.p.). Peace is the only aspect that can lead to sustainable development and the respect of democratic principles.

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