POSSIBLE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SECURITY-POLITICAL CAUSES OF TERRORISM: VIEW OF EXPERTS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract: An integral part of the issue of terrorism is not only the consequences of committed terrorist acts which lead to subsequent security measures but also the causes of terrorist activities which determine the reasons why people are motivated for these activities. The paper focuses on the social factors (social inequality in society, citizen's standards of living, level of citizens education, religion), economic factors (economic performance of state, unemployment, inflation) and security-political factors (corruption, criminality, political instability, government ineffectiveness, war conflicts) which potentially generate future terrorist activities. The main target is to analyze opinions of 98 Czech respondents on importance of individual factors. Experts from military, police and academic institutions in the Czech Republic were selected as respondents for the questionnaire. Based on this analysis we made summarized statement about possible causes of terrorism. According the respondents, security-political area is the most important (especially current national and international war conflict), followed by social area (Islam religion) and economic area (youth and adult unemployment).

Keywords: causes, economic factors, multicriteria decision making, social factors, security-political factors, terrorism

1 Introduction

Terrorism is usually defined as a planned use of violence targeting a wide range public. The aim of terrorism is to attract attention and cause fear through which are achieved specific political, religious, or ideological intentions. It is possible to identify many factors in current society, which motivate people to terrorist ideas and then to practical actions. According to Meierrieks and Krieger (Meierrieks & Krieger, 2011) most of these factors come from security-political, economic, and social area.

The research performed by Li & Schaub (2016) and Odehnal and Sedlačík (Odehnal & Sedlačík, 2018) reported significant role of political instability as a factor of potential terrorist activity. Krueger et al. (Krueger, Laitin, Keefer & Loayza, 2008) even suggested political instability as a major cause of world terrorism. National and international conflicts together with political stability influence terrorist activity according to study of Campos and Gassebner (Campos & Gassebner, 2013). Study performed by Plamper and Numayer (Plamper & Neumayer, 2010) confirmed that national and international violence conflict are one of the most important determinants. Government inefficiency is another factor related to terrorist activity in a state as reported by Asongu et al. (Asongu S., Tchamyou V., Asongu N. & Tchamyou N., 2019), Li and Schaub (Li & Schaub, 2016) and Freytag et al. (Freytag, Krueger & Meierrieks, 2010). Study of Mullins and Wither (Mullins & Wither, 2009) suggested the possible positive relationship between criminality rate in state and terrorist activity. This link, however, was not uniform throughout the world but varied from country to country and over time. Stanojoska (Stanojoska, 2011) showed similar ambiguous results. Corruption is another variable where no consensus is. Boussiga and Ghdamsi (Boussiga & Ghdamsi, 2016) revealed a long-term relationship between corruption and terrorist activity. On other hand, Simpson (Simpson, 2014) obtained completely different results reporting no significant relationship.

Regarding the correlation between economic factors and terrorist activity, performed studies have come to different conclusions. Piazza (Piazza, 2013) focused on consumer prices fluctuations in relation to terrorist activities. He reported food price fluctuations and rapid food price increases to be significant predictors of terrorist activities. Shahbaz (Shahbaz, 2013) provided similar findings and showed that inflation affects terrorist activities. Anyway, study of Campos and Gassebner (Campos & Gassebner, 2013) pointed to different results reporting no significant relationship between these two variables. Unemployment in general is a highly statistically significant predictor of terrorist activity. Richardson (Richardson, 2011), who extensively analyzed economic factors related to the risk of terrorist activity, highlighted unemployment as possible important cause of terrorism. This finding is also supported by the study of Goldstein (Goldstein, 2003).

Blomberg and Hess (Blomberg & Hess, 2006) reported the level of economic performance of state to be associated with a higher number of terrorist attacks. These results are supported by analysis of Plamper and Neumayer (Plamper & Neumayer, 2010). On the other hand, Krueger et al. (Krueger, Laitin, Keefer & Loayza, 2008) suggested that there is no systematic link between economic performance of state and terrorism.

Factors from social area are other possibly important predictors of terrorist activities. According to Ola (Ola, 2018), citizen's social inequality is one of crucial causes of terrorism. Social inequality measures a lack of the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, a lack of establishing the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and a lack of creation the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential. Study of Goldstein (Goldstein, 2003) agreed with conclusions of Ola suggesting that high social inequalities produce isolation, poverty and aggression that may occur in terrorism.

Azam and Thelen (Azam & Thelen, 2008) reported positive relationship between level of citizen's education and terrorism. Drakos & Gofas (Drakos & Gofas, 2006), however, came to the opposite conclusion finding no significant link between these two variables. Krueger & Malečková (Krueger & Malečková, 2003) suggested that poor economic conditions of people are related to terrorism activities only weakly. On the other hand, Piazza (Piazza, 2011) in his study reported remarkably close link between citizen's standard of living and the number of terrorist attacks.

One of the worldwide-discussed topics related to terrorism is issue of religion. There are various opinions, findings, results, and conclusions. For example, Richardson (Richardson, 2006) in his book suggested an important role of religion as the cause of terrorism. Kosárová & Ušiak (Kosárová & Ušiak, 2017) pointed out that potential paths of radicalization are significant to understand the roots of Muslim rage and related terrorist threat. On the other hand, Tavares (Tavares, 2004) reported weak evidence between religion and terrorism.

This paper provides summary overview about opinions of 98 czech experts from military, police, and academic institutions on importance of possible predictors of terrorism activities.

2 Methods

In the first step, we selected experts specializing in security and terrorism issues from state authority's institutions, security and armed forces and academic area in the Czech Republic. We contacted them with a request to fill in the questionnaire described below. Respondents come from the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affair, and the University of Defence in Brno, Police Academy in Prague, Tomas Bata University and Technical University of

Ostrava. Data collection was proceeded in the year 2019. We received back 98 responds from 143 requests.

In questionnaire, respondents were asked to make a pairwise comparison, which of two selected factors is more important as predictor of terrorist activities. A five-point scale was used for each comparison with following meaning:

1) both factors are equally important (corresponding with intensity of importance 1 according Saaty 1987),
2) selected factor is of moderate importance over the other one (corresponding with the intensity of importance 3 according Saaty 1987),
3) selected factor is of strong importance over the other one (corresponding with the intensity of importance 5 according Saaty 1987),
4) selected factor is of extraordinarily strong importance over the other one (corresponding with the intensity of importance 7 according Saaty 1987), and
5) selected factor is of extreme importance over the other one (corresponding with the intensity of importance 9 according Saaty 1987).

The following factors from security-political, economic a social area were used for pairwise comparison:

- *social area*: citizens social inequality, level of citizens education (primary, secondary, tertiary), citizens standard of living and religion (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism/Buddhism)
- *economic area*: economic performance of state, unemployment (adult, youth) and inflation
- *security-political area*: criminality, corruption, war, and violent conflict (national, international), government inefficiency and political instability

First, respondents were instructed to decide on the importance of each area in comparison with other areas. Then, similar comparison was made for each factor from selected area with other factors included in the area. Some of the factors, e.g. religion, were also divided into second level factors, e.g. Islam, Christianity etc. Each of these second level factors were compared with other corresponding second level factors.

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (Saaty, 1987) was used for evaluation of results from questionnaires. Weights of compared factors were estimated using Row Geometric Mean Method as described by Saaty.

P*aired t-test* was used for determination of statistically significant differences among weights of individual areas and factors. Results with p-value lower than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. For this statistical calculation software *IBM SPSS Statistics 25* (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, 2017) was used.

3 Results and Discussion

Weights of compared areas and factors based on the preferences of respondents are, shown in Tab. 1. Based on the results from questionnaire, respondents determined security-political area as the most important, followed by social area and economic area. In security-political area, the respondents considered war and violent conflicts to be the most important risk factor of terrorism. In social area, all compared factors had approximately same importance for respondents. Between economic factors, the unemployment and economic performance of the state were considered more important than inflation. Subsequently, the differences in weights of factors were assessed using *paired t-test* (Tab. 2-8). It was proved that security-political area was statistically significantly more important than both social area and economic area based on respondents' opinion (Tab. 2). Simultaneously, social area was more important than economic area.

Tab. 1: Weights of compared factors

1. SECURITY-POLITICAL AREA (0.428)
1. war and violent conflicts (0.397) *1. national conflicts (0.510)* *2. international conflicts (0.490)*
2. political instability (0.175)
3. criminality (0.165)
4. government ineffectiveness (0.151)
5. corruption (0.113)
2. SOCIAL AREA (0.348)
1. religion (0.274) *1. Islam (0.413)* *2. Christianity (0.249)* *3. Judaism (0.187)* *4. Buddhism/Hinduism (0.152)*
2. level of citizens education (0.271) *1. tertiary (0.408)* *2. primary (0.346)* *3. secondary (0.247)*
3. citizens social inequality (0.230)
4. citizens standard of living (0.226)
3. ECONOMIC AREA (0.224)
1. unemployment (0.462) *1. youth unemployment (0.563)* *2. adult unemployment (0.437)*
2. economic performance of state (0.344)
3. inflation (0.194)

Source: own processing

Tab. 2: Statistical comparison of individual areas

	social area	economic area	security-political area
social area *(w=0.348)*	X	0.000	0.042
economic area *(w=0.224)*	0.000	X	0.000
security - political area *(w=0.428)*	0.042	0.000	X
w – weight of the factor			

Source: own processing

In security-political area, war and violent conflict was determined by the respondents as the most important factor (Tab. 3). The second most important factors were criminality, political instability, and government ineffectiveness. Although these three factors have different numerical values of the weights, these differences were statistically insignificant. Corruption was identified as significantly the least important factor. Similar weights were obtained for international and national war/violent conflicts (Tab. 4). Accordingly, no statistically significant differences were found between the importance of these types of war/violent conflict.

Tab. 3: Statistical comparison of individual factors in security-political area

	corr.	pol.	gov.	war	cri.
corruption *(w=0.113)*	X	0.000	0.017	0.000	0.000
political instability *(w=0.175)*	0.000	X	0.146	0.000	0.612
government ineffectiveness *(w=0.151)*	0.017	0.146	X	0.000	0.431
war and violent conflict *(w=0.397)*	0.000	0.000	0.000	X	0.000
criminality *(w=0.165)*	0.000	0.612	0.431	0.000	X
w – weight of the factor					

Source: own processing

Tab. 4: Statistical comparison of individual types of war and violent conflict:

	national conflict	international conflict
national conflict *(w=0.510)*	X	0.746
international conflict *(w=0.490)*	0.746	X
w – weight of the factor		

Source: own processing

In social area, all evaluated factors gained similar weight (Tab. 5). Accordingly, no difference between factors in this area proved to be statistically significant. There was found, however, significantly higher importance of primary and tertiary education as risk factor compared to secondary education (Tab. 6). Statistically highly significant difference in weights of factors were also found for individual religions (Tab. 7). Based on pairwise comparisons of importance of these religions as a risk factor of terrorism, religions can be sorted in following order according their importance: 1. Islam, 2. Christianity, 3. Judaism, 4. Buddhism/Hinduism.

Tab. 5: Statistical comparison of individual factors in social area

	religion	social inequality	level of education	standard of living
religion *(w=0.274)*	X	0.119	0.915	0.096
social inequality *(w=0.230)*	0.119	X	0.173	0.698
level of education *(w=0.271)*	0.915	0.173	X	0.124
standard of living *(w=0.226)*	0.096	0.698	0.124	X
w – weight of the factor				

Source: own processing

Tab. 6: Statistical comparison of individual types of education

	primary	secondary	tertiary
primary *(w=0.346)*	X	0.005	0.277
secondary *(w=0.247)*	0.005	X	0.000
tertiary *(w=0.408)*	0.277	0.000	X
w – weight of the factor			

Source: own processing

Tab. 7: Statistical comparison of individual types of religion

	Islam	Chris.	Jud.	Budd./Hind.
Islam *(w=0.413)*	X	0.000	0.000	0.000
Christianity *(w=0.249)*	0.000	X	0.001	0.000
Judaism *(w=0.187)*	0.000	0.001	X	0.002
Buddhism/ Hinduism *(w=0.152)*	0.000	0.000	0.002	X
w – weight of the factor				

Source: own processing

Between factors from economic area, unemployment was identified as the most important factor, followed by economic performance and inflation (Tab. 8). All these differences were statistically significant. The youth unemployment and adult unemployment obtained similar weight according respondents' opinions and difference between them remained statistically insignificant (Tab. 9).

Tab. 8: Statistical comparison of individual factors in economic area

	unemployment	eco. perf.	inflation
unemployment *(w=0.462)*	X	0.000	0.013
economic performance of state *(w=0.344)*	0.000	X	0.000
inflation *(w=0.194)*	0.013	0.000	X
w – weight of the factor			

Source: own processing

Tab. 9: Statistical comparison of individual types of unemployment

	youth un.	adult un.
youth unemployment *(w=0.563)*	X	0.071
adult unemployment *(w=0.437)*	0.071	X
w – weight of the factor		

Source: own processing

4 Conclusion

Based on our results, security-political area (especially national and international war and violent conflict) proved to be most important predictor of terrorist activity according experts from Czech Republic, followed by social area (especially Islam religion, primary and tertiary level of education, social inequality and standard of living) and economic area (especially overall unemployment). It is necessary to highlight the fact that our results originate only from subjective opinions of selected respondents. Moreover, only measurable economic, social, and security-political variables were used in this study. However, there are many possible causes of terrorism that are hard to measure, such as personal revenge, or mental disorder of potential terrorist. These individual factors were not evaluated in this study. This fact is another significant limitation of the study.

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