

# ORDEAL FACTORS TO INTERPRET TERRORISTS: A CONCRETE UNDERSTANDING ON PTSD AND CORRELATED TRIGGERS

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## Abstract

The psychology behind terrorism is very vast and has not yet been studied thoroughly by research scholars for obvious reasons. Like any other criminal, most terrorists also have some psychological impact or trauma that made them become who they are. It is always curious to learn about why potential terrorists become actual terrorists, and what motivates them to commit the most violent crimes in nature like bomb blasting, suicide bombing, assassinations, hijackings etc. Most individuals focus on where, when and how crimes are happening, including terrorist activities, but there isn't much focus on why they commit the crimes they do, which this paper has focused on. Some individuals also join terrorist groups with a suicidal ideation, which means wanting to commit suicide, and joining a terrorist group as a reason to commit suicide for personal gain.

The aim of this review paper was to understand the psychology behind terrorists, the "why" factor of committing terrorist acts, and the motives behind engaging in terrorist activities. One major aspect of this review paper was to analyse and understand how psychological factors like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other correlated triggers like narcissism, anxiety, aggression, and religion play a role in terrorism. After a thorough review on previous research articles relating to psychological trauma and terrorism, it is concluded in this paper that, most terrorist heads and their subordinates too, have been through childhood trauma, abuse, family conflicts, and personal deaths leading to revengeful behaviours. It is also found that a lot of terrorists were a part of terrorist organizations by the use of force, and got into it, unwillingly. Using coercion also triggers the mind of individuals and can lead to traumatic experiences in the future, even possibly PTSD.

**Keywords:** Terrorism, PTSD, Psychological Trauma, Hijacking, Suicidal Ideation, Childhood Trauma.

## INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is the unlawful use of violence against individuals or certain properties to intimidate a government or its citizens with mostly a social or political objective. The two main types of terrorists are domestic and international terrorists. Domestic terrorists, as the word suggests, are those individuals who target victims from the same hometown as them. International terrorists on the other hand are those individuals who go beyond national boundaries in terms of the methods that they use, the people that they target, and the places from which terrorists operate. The need for psychology in terrorism is very essential to understand, but it has less importance as compared to other crimes such as serial killing, rape, arson etc.

A terrorist profile is a list of characteristics that permit identification of actual or potential terrorists. It's closely related to the issues of personality theories of terrorism and particularly to the idea that there is a specific psychopathology of terrorism (Martha Crenshaw, 2000). A lot of terrorists are generally brainwashed, or influenced by other terrorists or terrorist organizations. Generally, individuals who has no home, or lost their home in an accident, are taken up by terrorist organizations, and are given proper food and shelter, a feeling of being acknowledged and respected in the society, and later on, are commanded to engage in terrorist acts. This method is one kind of brainwashing which is very common in such organizations. One major motive of terrorism is exposure to an earlier attack perpetrated by another lone wolf or terrorist group, and the desire to follow that individual's footsteps (Boaz Ganor, 2021).

An individual shifts from being a potential terrorist to an actual terrorist through a process which is psychological, physiological and political in nature. Generally, individuals who become terrorists are unemployed, socially alienated, dropped out of the society etc. (Rex A Hudson, 1999). Being socially out of the society, not having peers, experiencing a feeling of loneliness, not having a proper employment status are all some factors that can lead to major psychological issues in the future, even PTSD. Individuals who have a constant feeling of being alienated from society have a high chance of developing PTSD, which can lead to aggressive behaviour and committing violent crimes.

Emotional aggression is associated with anger too. Emotional aggression is the result of the extreme negative emotions that individuals experience, and is not intended to create any positive emotions. As individuals grow,

it's natural to act aggressively in negative experiences. Mostly, when individuals are frustrated, they tend to become aggressive and angry. This aggressive behaviour or anger can be linked to depression, PTSD, anxiety and other mental health conditions too. The aggression that individuals have, can also be divided into negative and positive aggression. If taken in a negative way, individuals tend to do unlawful activities like killing, theft, terrorism etc. Therefore, it can be said that the psychology of terrorists, the reason and the motives as to why they get into terrorist activities is very vast, and has various reasons.

Rehabilitation programs help offenders to return to normal lives through education and treatment. It helps perpetrators to develop confidence in themselves and helps them get the ability to integrate into society as well as reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Fostering positive family relationships from childhood, taking care of mental and physical health, reduces the risk of becoming terrorists in the future, or doing any sort of violent acts (Zohreh Vakilpour and Behnam Rastegari, 2018).

## THE LINK BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND TERRORISM

It's not an easy task to determine what drives individuals to get into the path of terrorism and to engage in terrorist activities. The psychology of terrorism is very vast which involves a lot of opinions and assumptions more than facts, of research scholars. On the whole, there are various reasons and motivations that make individuals become terrorists in the future. It's a common perception that all terrorists are psychopaths and crazy in nature. Every terrorist like any other person is motivated by their own psychosocial experiences and traits. Most terrorists have had a difficult childhood, and have some traits of narcissism, anger, and frustration in them. But that doesn't qualify for being psychopaths. Psychopathy raises the likelihood of an individual to be violent in nature, but according to research, not all terrorists portray traits of psychopathy or have antisocial personality disorder (Karl Roberts & John Horgan, 2008).

The psychology of terrorists relies on the fact that how individuals can act in some point of their lives to choose terrorism as a method to express their ideology, their opinion and the struggle that they have faced or are facing. The psychology of terrorism discusses the social psychological variables that underlie the terrorism phenomenon and the consequences of the acts done by terrorists for political and people opinion (Thomas Arciszewski, Jean-François Verliac, Isabelle Goncalves, Arie Kruglanski, 2009). According to most terrorists, the purpose of terrorism and terrorist acts is to intimidate the audience by harming only a few, and it is meant to hurt and not destroy. Terrorists are generally abnormal in more subtle ways and not on an extreme level like individuals with psychiatric disorders. Individuals who experienced personal incidents that are emotionally compelling are a major factor in committing violent acts in the future (Martha Crenshaw, 2000). There are a lot of personality theories that are linked to terrorism, and most terrorists are found with at least one personality trait that is different from others, for them to commit violent acts and not get affected by them. Some of the common psychological attributes among terrorists are lack of empathy with victims, dogmatic or ideological mentality and a simplistic world view (Luis de la Corte, 2007). Terrorists can also be motivated by personality disorders like Narcissism and Paranoia. Individuals who have experienced incidents that are emotionally compelling to them tend to commit violent acts in the future, and terrorism is one such act.

There are so many terrorists who joined terrorist organizations due to brainwashing. These terrorists are generally ones who work below the founders of terrorist organizations, and who wait for orders from them. Disengagement on a psychological level can be compared to de-radicalization which is nothing but changing one's internal beliefs, which is a major factor of brainwashing (Sylvene See, 2018). It is believed that paranoia/paranoid persons push people to participate in terrorist activities. This can mean that main terrorists/leaders of terrorist organizations generally have a paranoid personality which makes them brainwash other individuals to join terrorist organizations. Terrorism can also have a neurobiological basis. Recent data indicate that early alterations in brain development, following environmental stressors or genetic liability may impair brain circuits, pathways and differentiation, and contribute a basic vulnerability towards a greater risk of developing psychopathology or deviant behaviour (Donatella Marazziti & Stephen M Stahl, 2017).

Psychologist B.J. Berkowitz (1972) mentioned 6 psychological types who would most likely use weapons of mass destruction namely, paranoids, paranoid schizophrenic, sociopaths, passive aggressive personality, borderline mental defectives and schizophrenic types (Rex A Hudson, 1999). After having read a couple of case studies about terrorists, it is a fact that there are some potentially dangerous terrorists who were diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and had symptoms of it. Most terrorists have a 'Psychic Split' in either their personal or social identities. This means that they have the inability to hold opposing thoughts, beliefs or feelings.

Being aggressive in nature is a feature that many individuals have. But not all aggressive people engage in criminal activities, and it depends on the way each perceives and showcases the aggressiveness that they face. Violent and illegal acts tend to take place when individuals are not able to control their aggressive behaviour, which makes aggression a factor of terrorism too. Narcissistic rage is what prompts an aggressive response to perceived injustice, and is also a psychological precipitant of terrorist aggression. Intrinsic motivation also plays a major role in individuals becoming terrorists, or even carrying a terrorist act forward (Lorne L Dawson, 2019). Suicide bombing is a major factor of terrorism, and a lot of terrorists commit suicide, while killing whom they consider their enemies. Suicide by itself is a motive or a desire for many terrorists, which may be caused by

mental instability, harsh experiences, family honour, or even because of a belief in afterlife. Some psychologists who tried to elaborate on the reasons behind engaging in terrorist attacks believed that these terrorists have a suicidal urge to destroy themselves, which suggests a correlation between the feeling of guilt and engaging in terrorist attacks (*Heba Mohamed Zahra, 2019*).

### TERRORISM BREEDS IN ADOLESCENTS

Childhood plays an important role in every individual's life. The trajectory by which people become capable of doing terrible things is usually gradual. Our childhood and upbringing are what shapes us when we become adults. Experiencing childhood trauma in any form leads to major psychological issues in the future, which can lead to being part of unlawful activities. How an individual was brought up by his/her parents, impact of some dreadful experiences that they went through as a child are all causal factors of becoming terrorists or getting into violent crimes in the future, and on the whole, impacts their behaviour. Every stage in our life is linked to one another, and the traumas that we face stay with us for a long period of time.

Developmental problems lead to unlawful activities too. Some of the root causes for terrorism are poverty, authoritarian and repressive regimes, cultural and religious practices, and being abandoned by family. Growing up in an environment that is marked by radical ideas and values makes individuals join terrorist groups (*Luis de la Corte, 2007*). All of these factors can be experienced by individuals in their childhood itself, which can lead to them having PTSD in the future. Some risk factors do not change over time. They are generally historical and categorical factors like family discord, childhood abuse, periods spent in local authority care, etc. (*Karl Roberts & John Horgan, 2008*). Most violent activities are intentional which can be due to some kind of social or emotional event that happened in the perpetrator's life that affected them badly (*Randy Borum, 2004*). A lot of terrorists have faced childhood abuse, family issues, and other emotional and physical trauma which can be causal factors for them to engage in terrorist activities. Having experienced traumas like these are also causal factors in developing PTSD.

Having a formal religious education in childhood can be both a negative and positive aspect, depending upon how the individual perceives it (*Lorne L Dawson, 2019*). If taken in a negative way, it can lead to a revengeful act. A common developmental pathway by which terrorists enter their profession is early socialization processes, narcissistic injuries (a life event that negatively affects self-image or self-esteem), and personal connections to terrorist group members (*Randy Borum, 2004*).

Having experienced traumatic events early in life increases anxiety issues in the future. Early traumatic experiences can contribute to abandonment anxiety and terrors later in life (*Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin, 2016*). A lot of different factors like interpersonal rejections, personal failure, and individual or collective grievances, can induce a loss of personal significance. There are 2 main terrorist personality types namely, Anarchic - Ideologue, who are terrorists who experience a lot of family dysfunction and maladjustment which leads to them rebel against parents; and Nationalist - Secessionist, which indicate a sense of loyalty to authority and rebellion against external enemies. During childhood, a terrorist in the second type of personality, experiences a sense of compassion towards their parents and rebels against the society for the harm they've done to their parents. Seeing their parents get hurt, can be a traumatizing event in an individual's life, which can make them become potential terrorists. Both these types find comfort in joining a terrorist group of rebels with similar experiences (*Charles L Ruby, 2002*).

Parent criminality where parents are engaged in criminal activities is an influential factor on children which makes them commit criminal acts too (*Victoria Shahly, Corina Benjet, Graça Cardoso, Louisa Degenhardt & Elie G. Karam, 2018*). Witnessing criminality since childhood is a motivating factor for individuals, and can be traumatizing too. Criminality not only comes by watching another person commit crimes, but also by genes or biological factors. This makes it a high possibility for children with criminal parents to become criminals in the future. Experiencing continuous violence can lead to changes in cognitive processes that later affect mental wellbeing (*Emily Corner & Paul Gill, 2020*). Due to all of these traumatic experiences, individuals tend to be isolated from society, and eventually develop some emotional issues that make them commit crimes.

### REVENGE BEING THE BASE OF ALL FACTORS

Almost every criminal activity that we can think of has a vindictive approach. Revenge is one of the main sources of any criminal activity. In the case of terrorists, almost every factor that drives them to commit such violent acts is because of revenge being the main motive. Individuals generally take revenge because of certain personal experiences that they have faced in their past. Having experienced negative events, increases a feeling of hatred towards that person, which makes them take revenge for the acts they have done. Individuals get motivated to join various terrorist organizations as a result of being oppressed for being weak. This triggers their anger, increases aggression and makes them take revenge (*Martha Crenshaw, 2000*).

Most of the terrorists' stem from countries that restrict civil liberties. Religious motivation is a huge factor when it comes to terrorism. Due to the religious rivals and stereotypes that happen around the world, individuals tend to take revenge upon people who speak ill of their religion. Injustice resonates personally, and due to injustice in

caste, religion or any other factor, individuals tend to get frustrated and aggressive which results in the engagement of heinous acts (*Scott Atran, 2008*). Exposure to traumatic events that generates extremely subjective feelings of anger and humiliation can lead to people having a desire for revenge, and eventually, has a possibility of becoming terrorists.

Hurting someone who has hurt you or your close ones is a form of revenge, which occurs not only for one particular reason, but plenty. Most individuals get traumatized and depressed after having lost a loved one by someone else, which makes them develop an anger and an urge to hurt the person who caused that (*Clark R McCauley*). Traumatic childhood experiences form a crippling effect, that is, a feeling that they are continually under attack as they grow into adulthood, which brings them a revenge motive, thus, making them grow up with feelings of vengeance. There are a lot of terrorists who harm the society for personal events that they have been through when they were young. Some terrorists harm others due to family clashes that they had, abusive parents, etc. and they generally get a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure doing so, which makes revenge the base of all factors, as every motive has a small or large part of revenge in it.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES AFFILIATED WITH TERRORISM AND TERRORIST ACTS

Psychological theories play a very important role in crime. The Psychodynamic Theory is centred on the notion that an individual's early childhood experiences influence his/her likelihood for committing future crimes. It suggests that an individual's personality is controlled by unconscious mental processes that are grounded in early childhood. This theory is one of the main focuses when it comes to the study of criminal behaviour because it involves the childhood experiences and traumas that they face. The Psychodynamic Theory suggests that criminal offenders are frustrated and aggravated.

Social Learning Theory is when a behaviour is followed by desired results (reward), that behaviour is reinforced. When behaviour is followed by undesirable or aversive consequences, that behaviour is punished. The Social Learning Theory is the persuasion that people learn to be aggressive by observing other individuals who act in an aggressive manner which in turn influences them. Aggression is a learned behaviour. This can make terrorism (a specific type of aggressive behaviour) also a learned behaviour. Early writings on psychological dimensions of terrorist behaviour were dominated by psychoanalytic formulations. It was and is still believed in some researches that terrorism is the product of early abuse and maltreatment. The psychoanalytic concept of narcissism is the most complete and thus the most intellectual satisfying theory regarding the personal logic of political terrorism (*Randy Borum, 2004*).

The Rational Choice Theory argues that people wilfully choose to commit criminal acts just like they wilfully choose to do other things. In this theory, criminal acts are the product of choice, which means that people make decisions about whether or not to commit crimes. Criminal activities come with both costs and benefits and the theory presumes that when people are thinking about committing a crime, they consider these factors. Terrorists are intelligent and smart in nature, and they generally think and plan a lot before executing their mission. They make strong choices, think about all the possibilities, and then move forward. This makes the Rational Choice Theory really effective to perceive a terrorist's point of view.

### COMPONENTS ASSOCIATED WITH PTSD AND TERRORISM

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is one of the most common disorders that individuals have, even if most goes undiagnosed. A lot of terrorists must be suffering from PTSD, except due to obvious reasons, a proper diagnosis is not given to them. Traumatic events that happen to individuals will lower their self-esteem which has a possibility of them developing PTSD in the future, which can be a start of violent acts. Experiencing social injustices, offences and threats that affect a person has a high possibility of creating emotional and physical trauma, which later on might get linked with PTSD if the trauma doesn't subside. Specifically, there are economic motives like poverty, low SES, acute economic crisis; interpersonal motives like a relationship crisis with a partner; family motives like hardship within the family, complex relationships within the family members, level of disrespect or appreciation they get from family; and personal motives like desire for adventure, self-image and status improvement (*Boaz Ganor, 2021*).

Experiencing trauma back-to-back creates a major emotional issue among people, that leads to PTSD, increase in aggression and frustration etc., in the future. A lot of terrorists are also joined in terrorist groups by coercion, i.e., by force. Forcefully making individuals join terrorist groups can also make them develop PTSD, as they are unwillingly into it, and eventually breaking the law. Individuals who experienced personal deaths related to terrorism, bomb blasting accidents etc. make them join these organizations in the future. Experiencing those in their childhood is also a developmental factor in PTSD. Other factors include feeling isolated, having no home, depression, emotional problems etc. which are all correlated with PTSD.

Individuals generally hold the society accountable for their inability to adapt, which will make them stop perceiving themselves as weak in the society. This can cause PTSD in the individuals who are brainwashed, and also means that the leaders have traumatic experiences to develop a paranoid personality (*Heba Mohamed Zahra, 2019*). A lot of individuals have been arrested in jail before becoming terrorists. Jail experiences can be a

traumatic life event for many individuals, which can lead to PTSD. Some of these terrorists also developed Bipolar Disorder, Paranoid Schizophrenia and a long-term suffering of stress upon their arrest (*Paul Gill, John Horgan and Paige Deckert, 2013*). Individuals who are exposed to terrorist attacks as a child have a high risk of developing PTSD in the future, and eventually make them take revenge on the society. It is a very common fact that people suffering from PTSD increase their odds of engaging in violent behaviour. There is a high prevalence rate of PTSD among juvenile offenders, leading them to engage in such activities. Juvenile offenders also include terrorism, as there are many terrorists who are juveniles (*Thomas W Wojciechowski, 2017*).

## CASE STUDIES

In a few studies, research scholars have interviewed terrorists and found that the criminal records and known biographies of numerous terrorists include significant histories of violence against women. Another research revealed the common motives that lead to individuals becoming terrorists like national, religious or personal humiliation, desire to die or get to paradise, national struggle, to prove themselves, and to gain social esteem (*Boaz Ganor, 2021*). Many studies also claim the presence of the psychological mechanism of externalizations and splitting in terrorists, which are also found in individuals with borderline and narcissistic disturbances (*Amira SN Tawadros, 2020*). In another research, scholars interviewed a couple of terrorists to analyse their behaviour and to identify their motives to enter terrorist groups. In their research, they found that 40% of the terrorists they interviewed were unemployed and exposed to child pornography. A lot of terrorists committed criminal offenses before joining terrorist groups like first degree robbery, assault, blackmailing etc. and because of this, they spent some time in jail (*Paul Gill, John Horgan and Paige Deckert, 2013*).

This paper has analysed the history and background of 4 major terrorists in the world, which connects and explains the understanding between PTSD and correlated factors with terrorism.

### 1) Osama Bin Laden

Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden, born in Saudi Arabia, was the founder of the pan Islamic militant organization Al Qaeda. He's the only child of Mohammed Bin Laden and the least favourite of his wives, Hamida. Hamida was called Al Abeda meaning 'The Slave' and Osama was called Ibn Alabeda meaning 'The Son of Slave'. Both of them had no natural allies in the family unlike others, and there may have been a defensive alliance between both against the larger family which treated them with contempt. His parents divorced when he was 10 years old, and his mother remarried and started a second family. His mentor, who meant a lot to him, died in a mysterious car bomb explosion. (*Killing in the Name of God: Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda; Jerrold M Post, 2002*). The treatment he got from his family members, his mentor dying in a bomb blast, his parents' divorce are all some traumatic experiences that Osama faced as a child and teenager, which motivates him to take revenge, and express his aggression and anger in an unlawful manner. His primary personality patterns were exploitative, dauntless, distrusting orientation, dominant, controlling and ambitious. His blend of ambitious and dauntless personality suggests the presence of unprincipled narcissistic syndrome (narcissistic psychopaths). Generally, narcissistic psychopaths operate as if they have no principles other than exploiting others for their personal gain, and they lack a genuine sense of guilt, which was the case of Osama Bin Laden. (*The Personality Profile of Al-Qaeda Leader Osama Bin Laden; Aubrey Immelman, 2002*).

### 2) Timothy McVeigh

Timothy James McVeigh was an American Domestic Terrorist responsible for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people, and injured more than 680 people. He was executed by Lethal Injection in 2001. He was diagnosed with PTSD, and as a child, he was exposed to psychological trauma and had a dual personality. He showed a lot of interest in military activities, and after joining the US Army, he was betrayed by them. He suffered from paranoia, drug use, and arrogance. He had a hatred towards the government and the US Army due to his betrayal. He had issues with his parents, which caused him his psychological trauma as a child. Due to his betrayal, it was believed that he was motivated with a revenge factor to give back to the government by planting the bomb. His childhood trauma also played a role here. (*Criminal Behaviour and Motivations Behind McVeigh's Decision to Bomb the Murrah Federal Building; Mark Lawson Fetter, 2002*). McVeigh was a clear case of PTSD, which lead him to commit crimes and get into terrorist acts.

### 3) Abu Musab al-Zarqawi

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was a Jordanian Jihadist who ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. During his teenage years, he used to work as a clerk in a video store, and got fired from that job. His background included street gangs and prison for sexual assault. As a teenager, it was said that he was a bully, a thug and a heavy drinker. Both his parents died by the time he was 18, and it was also believed that his time in prison gave him religious motivation. (*The Short Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Mary Anne Weaver, 2006; Profile: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, 2006*). Religious motivation is also a correlated factor of PTSD, and most terrorists are also motivated by religion to engage in terrorist activities. There are a lot of research studies that confirm that there is a link between PTSD symptoms and religious or spiritual struggle.

#### 4) George Peter Metesky aka Mad Bomber

He was an American Electrician and Mechanic who terrorized New York City for 16 years in the 1940s and 50s with explosives that he planted in theatres, terminals, libraries and offices. George Metesky was disabled for 26 weeks in an industrial accident where boilers backfired. That accident led to him having Pneumonia and Tuberculosis. When he filed a worker compensation claim, the claim was denied for a few reasons, which made him unemployed later on. This made him develop intense and paranoid hatred for Consolidated Edison, where he planted his first bomb when he became a terrorist. He was later on diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia and was legally mentally insane (*Laura Lambert*). There is a high possibility that during his accident, he would have been diagnosed with PTSD. The disability, physical health issues are all factors that can create trauma in individuals, and later on become PTSD or other disorders too.

In all of these four cases, there was a clear sign of childhood abuse, family discord, narcissism, employment suffering, and other motivators that would have triggered their minds to pull off organizations and terrorist attacks. All of these create a trauma in people, and as the trauma keeps growing into you either consciously or not, there is a high possibility that it can lead to PTSD, which makes them aggressive and frustrated in nature, followed by criminal acts.

### DISCUSSIONS

The main aim of this review paper was to get a clear understanding as to why terrorists become who they are, and the trigger factors involved for them to commit crimes such as terrorist attacks, bombings, assassinations etc. There are various psychological factors that are associated with individuals becoming terrorists in the future. PTSD, narcissism, urge to take revenge, paranoia, anxiety, abuse etc., are all some of the factors associated with crime. There are various social and religious factors that are connected to becoming terrorists, and even these social and religious factors are related to psychological factors. Getting socially influenced by other individuals, having a religious motivation like taking revenge on individuals who disregarded a particular religion in some way, are all some motivations or reasons for revenge that terrorists generally have.

Narcissism is a major factor that is associated with terrorism. Narcissism is excessive interest in or admiration of oneself. It involves a sense of entitlement, a lack of empathy, and a need for admiration. Narcissistic personality disorder involves a pervasive grandiosity, an extreme desire for attention, and a willingness to exploit or mistreat others, which was the case of Osama Bin Laden. Yet, narcissists can be fragile too, and prone to outbursts of humiliated rage. In other words, narcissism is the claim that you are superior to others, which is pretty much every terrorist organization's head's main belief. When narcissists feel humiliated, they generally turn out to become really aggressive and lash out violently. Having been abused as a child can be humiliating for some individuals, especially men, due to the social stigma around. This humiliation can be a constant traumatic factor in some individual's life, which will make them aggressive and revengeful in nature, and will eventually lead them to commit violent and heinous crimes such as terrorism. This is one main reason as to why almost every terrorist is narcissistic in nature.

Religion also plays a major role in terrorism, and is also a main factor for developing PTSD in individuals. All religions have different beliefs and systems, and every individual has a different perception of their particular religion. Individuals or group organizations who get into terrorism also have a religious motivation. A religious motivation according to them means, supporting and standing up for their religion, and committing these acts in favour of their religion. Religion is also associated with PTSD. Individuals who had a childhood where their religion played a major role, for example, being degraded by other people due to their religion, experiencing social stigma and being left alone etc., can cause trauma in individuals. As these keep expanding when one grows, the trauma keeps increasing too, which will generally lead to PTSD. All of these factors have a high chance of bringing out aggressive behaviour in individuals, which will make them commit violent acts.

Various terrorists like Osama Bin Laden, Timothy McVeigh, George Peter Metesky etc., have all suffered from some form psychological triggers like a poor family upbringing, being kept away from family members, and even mental health disorders like depression, narcissism and schizophrenia. This can give an explanation as to how the main heads of terrorist organizations start an organization in the first place. For example, Osama Bin Laden starting up Al Qaeda. Osama Bin Laden has influenced many individuals to be a part of Al Qaeda and has brainwashed them to an extreme level which is one reason why Al Qaeda is still active.

### CONCLUSION

This study has widely indicated the importance of understanding why terrorists become who they are, and the psychological factors that are associated with terrorism and getting into terrorist acts. Psychology is present in everything we do, and it's the same way with crimes. When an individual or a group of people commit a crime, it's important to not only focus on how, where, and when the crime happened, but also why the individual or the group was motivated to commit a crime in the first place. It's the same case in terrorism. It is important to understand the causal factors as to why individuals become terrorists, the traumas that they have faced, and the

sole reason for them to be motivated to commit terrorist acts.

From this study, it can be concluded that a good number of terrorists that were interviewed by research scholars, have been abused physically or emotionally as a child, or had bad family relationships, or experienced personal loss of their loved ones by similar attacks like bomb blasts, killings etc. A lot of terrorists have also joined organizations with the use of force, i.e., they were forced to join terrorist organizations out of their own will. Due to a bad childhood, bad parenting, and other traumatic factors, individuals tend to get into the field of crime. As said in the paper, revenge is a major factor of terrorism. Taking revenge is a main motivational factor that almost every terrorist has. Due to all the psychological trauma that these individuals have faced in their early lives, there is a high possibility that they have undiagnosed PTSD and other correlated factors like narcissism, depression, anxiety etc. and all of these plays a major role in getting into terrorist organizations.

## FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Terrorism, studying about the reason behind terrorist attacks and understanding the behavioural aspects of terrorists is of major importance at all times. Terrorism is a kind of criminal act which has been on the run for years now, and will most probably continue to haunt the world. Studying about the psychology behind terrorists will help massively when it comes to creating awareness, and reducing such crimes. This research paper can be expanded to get a clearer understanding about why individuals turn out to be terrorists, what is the connection between PTSD and terrorism and the various other psychological trauma or issues individuals face in their life which leads them to commit such crimes or vice versa. This research can be further studied in a quantitative method using proper statistical analysis for a better conclusion and understanding.

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