DEBUNKING THE SPECTRE OF TERRORISM: A SOCIAL CAPITAL APPROACH[1]

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Abstract: This paper aims to debunk the spectre of terrorism through social capital. At the advent of the twenty-first century, the menace of terrorism becomes a global phenomenon. Undeniably, terrorism is an evil. The central thesis of social capital theory holds that social relationships matter. There are three central elements of terrorism: politics, terror and ideology. Terrorists plan political strategies using certain kind of ideology to create terror. To deal with all these three elements of terrorism, social capital can be an effective weapon. For explicating the core contours of social capital theory, I draw on Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. To deal with political, violent and ideological foundations of terrorism, I assert that social capital can be useful for countering all of these foundations. Putnam's binding and bonding strands of social capital can potentially empower people to develop a social network between people, institutions and states to debunk political, violent and ideological roles of terrorism. Thus, a social capital of intellectuals can repudiate the ideological foundations of terrorism for bringing about global peace.

Key Words: Civil Society, Politics, Global Peace, Cosmopolitanism, Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Robert Putnam.

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1. *Introduction*

In the inception of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels stated: "A spectre is haunting Europe–the spectre of communism"[1]. After about 150 years, in the inception of the twenty-first century, a new spectre appeared, the spectre of terrorism, which has not only haunted one continent but the entire world. In the age of globalization, terrorism is a global problem; without the distinction of developed and non-developed states, whole globe is suffering from the menace of terrorism.

Terrorism is a political tool used for acquiring particular goals through terror, violence or force. Terrorism as an evil in human world is the result of a certain kind of collective action which can be debunked through a certain kind of collective action. Social capital is one of the numerous arrays of collective actions. The idea of social capital holds that mutual relationships have 'value' like an economic capital. The first order social capital theorists include Pierre Bourdieu, James S. Coleman and Robert D. Putnam. Social capital can be used as an effective tool for dealing with the spectre of terrorism. Social nexuses between individuals, groups, institutions and states can have joint commitments to empower themselves for eradicating the menace of terrorism. Bourdieu's and Coleman's theses of social capital generally and Putnam's two strands of 'vertical' and 'horizontal' social capital particularly can contribute for empowering the civil society for debunking the politics of terrorism.

In section 2, I will briefly explain the term, terrorism, its kinds and foundations whereas section 3 will explain the central theses of the social capital, posited by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. In section 4, I will explicate how social capital could be helpful in dealing with the spectre of terrorism. In the end, section 5 will conclude the paper.

2. *Explanation of Terrorism*

The term, 'terrorism' has many connotations, which are commendatory or pejorative. On one hand, it is regarded as commendatory act for acquiring certain ends, and the actors are known as freedom-fighters. On the other hand, it is regarded as pejorative act, and the actors are known as terrorists or *terror-actors*. It is whether a fight for freedom or unfreedom, politics, violence and ideology are three common elements in both connotations of terrorism. The pejorative strand of terrorism is

not a threat against particular groups but the entire humankind. In *What's Wrong with Terrorism*, Robert E. Goodin contends that terrorism is neither a psychopathology nor an ideology but a political tactic that creates terror in society for political interests[2]. Goodin has correctly identified the motives behind the terrorists which are, of course, political. To support his claim, Goodin holds that terrorism is a political problem because it uses political strategies to gain political goals[3]. Goodin significantly conflates politics and violence in terrorism. In the similar vein to Goodin, Bruce Hoffman also argues that terrorism entails political aims. Hoffman states that "Terrorism is thus violence–or, equally important, the threat of violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim"[4]. Drawing on Goodin's and Hoffman's arguments, it can be safely inferred that politics is a cardinal element in terrorism.

Eqbal Ahmad (1933–1999), a Pakistani scholar, has identified five types of terrorism in his lecture, *Terrorism: Theirs and Ours* (2006). The five types of terrorism categorized by Ahmad are (i). state terrorism, (ii). religious terrorism, (iii). criminal terrorism, (iv). pathological terrorism, and (v). political terrorism[5]. The general features of all kinds of terrorism contain three vital underpinnings: (i). politics, (ii). violence and (iii). ideology.

Terrorism is a political device that terrorists use to attain particular gains through terror, violence or coercion. In spite of the fact that terrorism has different typology, politics lies in its centre. This is not the politics of individuals but groups which creates a kind of social capital, a negative social capital for acquiring power. To show power, they gather wealth by unfair means and use different strategies for terrorizing innocent people. Sometimes, it makes people hostage by plane-hijacking or kidnapping.

Terrorism is generally considered as the 'violence against innocent civilians'[6]. Certainly, violence is an evil created by no other forces than human beings themselves. As James Mill states that "Human pains [evils] and pleasures [goods] are derived from two sources: They are produced, either by our fellow-[hu]men, [and] by causes independent of other men"[7]. Mill is not wrong because terrorism is an evil created by human beings themselves. The innocent victims who do not even know why they are being terrorized or killed. Eqbal Ahmad states: Terrorists

"focus[es] on the use of coercive violence, violence that is used illegally, extraconstitutional[ly], to coerce. And this definition treats terror for what it is, whether the government or private people commit it"[8]. Terrorists do terrorism to produce terror in society so that they can get their demands accepted. To use innocent people in terrorism is entirely unethical, unconstitutional and illegal.

Ideology plays a vital role in terrorism. Intellectuals create ideologies while actors follow them. Ideologies divide society into different segments. Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), a neo-Marxist Italian political theorist, defines and determines the role of intellectuals in society. According to Gramsci, "All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals"[9]. He makes distinction between two kinds of intellectuals: traditional and organic. Organic intellectuals support one's own group, class or nation. In addition, in a book, *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (1928), Julien Benda (1867–1956), a French philosopher, has stated that "Our age is indeed the age of the intellectual organization of political hatreds. It will be one of its chief claims to notice in the moral history of humanity"[10]. Benda refers it to the age of twentieth century. In the similar vein of Benda, Edward Said and Eqbal Ahmad have argued that bad intellectuals are responsible for the existence of intolerance, violence and coercion in society[11].

3. *Explanation of Social Capital Theory*
The central thesis of social capital theory asserts that 'social relationships' enhance the productivity of human conducts. There are two kinds of capitals: economic and non-economic. Economic capitals are concerned with economic resources while non-economic capitals are concerned with culture, education, science and language. Interestingly, the suffix, 'capital' has appeared commonly in contemporary epoch. A short list of non-economic capitals includes social capital, cultural capital, human capital, educational capital, moral capital and political capital.

In short, social capital theory bolsters individuals, who are the main source in building social networks to achieve their interests, which they could not acquire individually[12]. In *Essays on Politics and Society*, John Stuart Mill articulates that "There was a time when neither roads, nor canals, nor drainage, nor irrigation, nor banks, nor schools, nor encouragement of arts, letters, or science, could possibly exist except as

the work of the government. In an advanced stage of civilization these things are better done by voluntary associations, or by the public indiscriminately"[13]. Mill's thesis is more relevant in the contemporary society because under the guise of non-government organizations, numerous informal associations are working for the development of humankind.

Although, the phenomena of social capital begin with the origin of human society, however, the scientific research on social capital was started in the twentieth century by Bourdieu and it was developed by Coleman, and Putnam has brought to its heights. These three social capital theorists have reached the similar findings that social relationships contribute for the development of humankind. However, Bourdieu and Coleman applied their research to education, and Putnam to politics. Notably, these social capitalists have looked for the constructive role of the social capital. In a nutshell, social capital is a resource which depends upon collective relationships. Bourdieu searched the problem of inequality regarding education in Algeria and found that people embedded in a cultural capital and social capital[14] enable themselves to acquire a better position in education. He equates cultural and social capital to economic capital.

Similar to Bourdieu, James Coleman in North America, being a rational choice theorist reached the same conclusion that people in collaboration can find the solutions of their problems. According to Coleman, social capital comprises structure and function. By structure, family, friends' group and work place association, political party, and so on. By function, he means that they (group) can manage the things in a better way what people intend to do. The third major social theorist, Robert Putnam, the American political scientist, worked in Italy and America and tried to find out the ways how people live together and to what extent they have cohesion and cooperation. He searched a problem how people can manage together to make democracy workable and successful. He explored in Italy that the territory where people are familiar with other and would have more sociality are better governed areas as compare to the areas where people have less connection with each other. The rate of crime is more in the area where people cohesion is weak. It can be concluded that social relationship is a good way to live a reasonable life.

In the second phase, Putnam tested America's social life and he empirically compared the epoch of America that was depicted by Alexis de Tocqueville in the 17th century in his book, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville narrated that social life in America is inspiring and worthwhile. People have many associations and connections in everyday life. This is the reason why democracy was successful in states. Putnam aptly observed the social structure of the contemporary America and conceived that there is a continuous decline in sociality in social life for some decades. He blamed electronic media, such as television to kill the sociality. He is of the view that people must develop a habit of social capital to make this life better.

(i). *Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital*

A European social theorist, Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), has been regarded as one of the primary social capital theorists who acquired his ideas of 'cultural and social capitals' in analogous to the idea of economic capital by considering social class and its types of inequality. Bourdieu's mind was pregnant with the idea of 'cultural capital' in the 1960s when he was working with Kabyle community in Algeria on an educational project investigating the academic performance of students from various social classes[15]. After confronting the problem on how inequality in social world could be explained, Bourdieu theorised the concept of habitus to connect human agency and objective structured world. By explaining the idea of habitus, Bourdieu thought that "groups were able to use cultural symbols as marks of distinction, both signaling and constituting their positions in the social structure. He gave force to this view by using the metaphor of 'cultural capital', pointing to the way that groups traded on the fact that some types of cultural taste enjoy more status than others"[16]. He also stated that "it is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory"[17].

According to Bourdieu, the capital not only forms but also regulates the social world. Social world contains two kind of capitals; Economic and non-economic. Economic capital is concerned with economic resources. The idea of non-economic capital comprises numerous forms of capitals such as cultural, educational, scientific, political, linguistic, and social capital. Each form of capital is relative to its field; scientific field gives rise to scientific capital, educational field produces educational capital, cultural field generates cultural capital and social field leads to a social

capital. Bourdieu stated that "capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force engraved in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible"[18] .

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu found the idea of cultural capital by examining the hypothesis on how unequal academic productivity of students from various classes would be explained[19]. He observed that dominant groups adopted cultural judgement to influence other[20]. Bourdieu's cultural capital consists of three kinds: The embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. The embodied state of cultural capital explicates the phenomenon of learning, refinement, and adaptation by individuals. Individuals assimilate culture personally. This form of culture cannot be exchanged like material property, gifts and money but can only be attained inadvertently over time in a particular society (the embodied state of cultural capital is concerned with how evolution of a self in a society-cultural environment makes a self of a person who lives in that culture.

This idea that individuals accumulate culture personally is a significant attribute in Bourdieu's capital. Individuals learn an embodied state of culture as they learn language; this process of learning is automatic, spontaneous, conscious and unconscious. The objectified state of cultural capital exists in corporeal substances like monuments, writings, instruments, and paintings, etc. The cultural things have both economic values and symbolic values, and so economic capital and cultural capital emerge respectively. These cultural artefacts are autonomous in the sense that they are beyond human wills and are common to all agents. The institutionalized state of cultural capital provides neutral properties to the goods such as an academic qualification holds the value acceptable in social world. It provides a power of instituting the value for its recognition[21].

Social Capital

Bourdieu defined the term, 'social capital' in two different places with almost striking similarities: *The Forms of Capital* (1986) and *The Social Structures of Economy* (2005). In *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu states that "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources

which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition"[22]. In *The Social Structures of Economy,* Bourdieu writes that "Social capital is the totality of resources activated through a more or less extended, more or less mobilizable network of relations which procures a competitive advantage by providing higher returns on investment"[23]. The staple of both definitions of social capital is based on the 'resources' accumulated by individuals by their mutual relationships. Each member of a group who forms social capital is entitled to the credit of the capital: For instance, one is credited of the social relationships in a family, class, school, party, etc.[24].

Bourdieu regarded social capital as a social process which is not naturally determined but influenced by human factors. "The network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term"[25]. The long run existence of social capital requires continuity. "The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed"[26]. So, Bourdieu argues that the survival of social capital depends upon constant mutual relationships.

(ii). *Coleman's Theory of Social Capital*
James Samuel Coleman (1926-1995), an American sociologist, established his idea of social capital by explaining the academic proficiency in a social inequality that he adopted to comprehend the problem of collective action[27] through methodological individualism in rational choice theory[28]. Rational choice theory agrees with the doctrine of classical economic theory that individuals' behaviors are regulated by their self-interest. In this context, the social interaction is an exchange. Coleman, in the tradition of rational choice theory, envisioned society as an accumulation of individual actions. He held that the social phenomena would be described by analyzing the individuals' inclinations and their behaviors. Coleman considered social capital a way to explicate how individuals are enabled to interact with each other[29].

According to Coleman, "Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they

facilitate certain actions of actors – whether individuals or corporate actors - within the structure"[30]. He characterised social capital as a resource of advantage for individuals with its function and structure. Coleman's structural aspect of social capital is based on the micro-level structures of interactions including family and work groups that engage individuals or corporate agents to act in many ways[31]. As a chair is recognized by its function in spite of dissimilarities in its form and structures, social capital is acknowledged with its diverse functions that actors at different levels possess for their particular ends; for instance, South Korean radical students[32].

Social capital, similar to other kinds of capital, is useful that enables individuals to obtain particular goals which would not be achievable in its absence. Further, social capital is not exchangeable like physical capital, but it may be confined to particular activities. The consequence of social capital would be productive or negative[33]. Coleman found in several educational studies in America that social capital was only a source for powerful persons but would also be useful to weaker and marginalized people. It is a resource, because it has possibility of reciprocity and of networks whose connections would regulate great level of trust and shared values[34].

(iii). *Putnam's Theory of Social Capital*
Robert David Putnam (1941–) has revitalized the idea of social capital; and thus, it has gone across the disciplinary boundaries in the contemporary world. Although Bourdieu and Coleman have already theorised the notion of the social capital, yet Putnam gave a new perspective in both academic and practical arenas. Putnam took the project to understand how state institutions could be made to work in Italy and America. He regarded the escalation of television and the electronic revolution as the main reasons of the decline of social capital in America: People are being alienated under the influence of new electronic technology that affects the civic life[35].

According to Putnam, "the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value . . . social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups"[36]. In 1993, Putnam defined the term 'social capital' as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions"[37]. Subsequently, in 1996, he refined his idea of

social capital as "features of social life-networks, norms, and trust- that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives"[38]. In his seminal work, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000)*,* Putnam stated:

> Social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense, social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue." The difference is that "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations[39].

Putnam takes social capital with a wide range of characteristics such as networks, reciprocity and trustworthiness. He, being a political scientist, has approached social capital through empirical enquiry. Moreover, he has classified two kinds of social capital, bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital exists among communitarian groups comprising ethnic fraternal organizations, country clubs and women reading circles. Bridging social capital bridges up the groups across different social landscapes including worldwide religious organizations, civil right movements, and various youth service groups[40].

4. Terrorism and Social Capital
The social capital can be a useful tool for debunking the menace of terrorism by acquiring the required power through social networks. It can be developed at different levels which are horizontal and vertical, and local and global: a social capital of civil society, a social capital of civil society and the public and non-public institutions, and a social capital between civil society, institutions and states. This social capital ranges from horizontal to vertical (civil society and institutions) and from local to global (civil society, institutions and states). To deal with three tools of terrorism, social capital can work differently.

To debunk the connection of politics and terrorism, political conflicts can be resolved through dialogue rather than terrorism. Civil society, institutions and states can effectively contribute to promote the culture of dialogue through public reasoning, policy-making and education. In these arenas, the civil society, institutions and states can squarely contribute for creating a social capital to force *terror-actors* to adopt the politics of dialogue than the politics of terrorism. It is not violence, but peace is the best device for social justice. Civil society, institutions and

states can create a violence free society through a robust social capital by alienating terrorists from society. The robust social capital can debunk both the terrorists and their supporters in society. There are certain remarkable instances at individual, social and state level. For instance, Pakistan has rendered considerable sacrifices for peace. In first two decades of twenty-first century, Pakistan shows tremendous examples at three level. Mr. Aitzaz Hussain Bangash set an example at individual level. He can be considered as a metaphor of social capital against terrorism at individual level.

For instance, Aitzaz Hussain Bangash, a 9th grader at Ibrahimzai High School, Hangu district, of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, gave his life for combating terrorism on January 6, 2014. It is reported that about two thousand students including teachers were present in the morning assembly in the school. Mr. Bangash was late for the school and he had to wait at the gate to finish the assembly meeting; he found a weird boy wearing the school uniform. Aitzaz observed something suspicious in the boy and he asked the boy why he intended to enter the school. Aitzaz understood his intentions and he held him to keep him away from the school. He blew himself and Aitzaz gave his life[41]. Aitzaz's sacrifice saved many lives in the school. At social level, the required information can be shared to the concerned institutions. After Aitzaz Malala Yousafzai set another example of valor. Like Anne Frank, a German young girl in Hitler's regime, whose diary was published posthumously entitled *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947), Malala, a Pakistani young girl wrote diaries and spoke on media against Taliban's regime in the valley of Swat, Pakistan. Frank was executed by Nazi forces while Malala was attacked to murder in 2012, but she was luckily survived. On her heroic defiance against Taliban's militant ideology and her ardent commitment for girl's education, Malala was awarded Noble Peace Prize in 2014.

Terrorism cannot be debunked without debunking the ideology of terrorism. A social capital of constructive intellectuals can contribute for creating a peaceful society. Unfortunately, intellectuals have played negative role in creating harmful ideas that divided humankind into several segments. There is need to produce intellectuals who promote human solidarity from cosmopolitan point of view. Such intellectuals whom Gramsci and Benda called traditional intellectuals can promote the peaceful society. Pejorative ideologies can be debunked through

'cosmopolitan intellectuals' in academia, journalism and politics. In history, Diogenes, Cicero and Kant were cosmopolitan intellectuals. Cosmopolitan intellectuals who assert that any division in society other than human is detrimental to humankind.

5. *Conclusion*

To sum up, the paper has attempted to expound two things: first, it explores the problem of terrorism, its kinds, elements and its potential threat to humankind. Second, it suggests the solution of the problem through the cannon of social capital. Terrorism is one of the greatest menaces to humankind in the present epoch. Although terrorism has different kinds, three elements comprising politics, violence and ideology are common in its all kinds. Terrorists construct political ideology and make strategic actions to create fear and terror in society for their vested interests. Ideologies, which mostly are detrimental, are created, sustained and promoted by pseudo-intellectuals.

Social capital theory, which contains a wide range of ideas of social cohesiveness, social solidarity, and social power, generally claims that social associations matter in society because it works as a capital similar to that of an economic capital. Social associations can be of two kinds: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal social associations develop social nexus between the members of a civil society while vertical associations develop social relations between civil society and state and non-state institutions at local and global level. Both strands of social capital can challenge the three elements of terrorism.

Endnotes

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