

## The Root Causes of Terrorism (Sociological Perspective)

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the root causes of terrorism from the sociological perspective. The series of bomb in Indonesia since after the 9/11 2001 in New York until the sarinah mall 2016 in Jakarta show Indonesia needs to know the root causes of people in supporting the terrorist acts. For the aim of research is to describe and identify the process of individual to become a terrorist. The research method being used in this study is qualitative method namely library research. The sociology theory has perspectives to look why and how individuals become a terrorist from the social construction of fear or panic. This study focuses on the moral disengagement hypothesis. As the result from acts of anarchy and terror that has been perpetrated by several groups of muslims, there is a development of negative stigma about jihad and terror.

**Key words:** Sociology theory, the root causes, the moral disengagement, terrorism, perpetrated

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### INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the people of Indonesia has been alarmed by the presence of terrorists that are still roaming the action that had taken numerous lives. In addition to attracting the attention, these incidents also generate sympathy for the victims. And here are some of the acts of terrorism that have occurred in Indonesia which has claimed the lives of hundreds of victims. Baharuddin and Seniwati in their study said that the terrorist actions have happened in Indonesia since after the 9/11 2001. The bali bombing 1 on October 12, 2002 occured in Kuta Town in Bali. On December 5, 2002, the terrorist action happened in a McDonald outlet and a car showroom in South Sulawesi. Then, the bombing occured in marriot hotel in Jakarta on august 5, 2003 that killed 12 people mostly foreigners. There were 10 people died and 160 injured when the bombing happed outside Australian embassy on September 9, 2004. On October 1, 2005, terrorist attacked bali again that knows as the bali bombing 2 that killed 23 people and 129 injured. On July 17, 2009, there were 9 peple died when terrorist bombed marriot and Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Jakarta. The terrorist action happened in the Adz-Zikro mosque in Cirebon City, West Java on April 15, 2011 that killed 1 people and injured 30 people (Baharuddin, 2015). The terrorist action in Indonesia happened again on January 14th, 2016, ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) attacked in

a series of bomb and gun that killed seven people at the Sarinah crossroads near the Starbuck cafe, Jakarta.

ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack who killed one Canadian. The bomber and on passerby were killed in the blast. There were five improvied hand grenades and one other bomb slightly larger than a biscuit tin. The terrorist actions continued to attack Indonesia as part of the war by the terrorist planning (Fig. 1 and 2). In countering these bombings, we need to know the root causes of terrorism especially from the sociology perspective.



Fig. 1: The bombing incident have taken place in front of the police post Sarinah Mall, Central Jakarta, Indonesia (Liputan6.com.<http://news.liputan6.com/read/2411754/updates-on-sarinah-jakartas-enduring-waves-of-terror-attacks>. Retrieved January 17th, 2016)



Fig. 2: A series of suspected terrorist bombings rocked Jakarta (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3398711/Australians-warned-exercise-high-degree-caution-travelling-Indonesia-terrorist-attack-Jakarta.html>). Retrieved January 17th, 2016)

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research question:** Why and how individuals become a terrorist?

**Aim of research:** This research is aimed to describe and identify the process of individual to become a terrorist.

**Research method:** The research method being used in this study is qualitative method namely library research and focus group discussion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Terrorism is a coordinated attacks aimed to evoke a feeling of terror against a group of people. Acts of terrorism is not following the procedures of the war as the execution time is always sudden and targets the victims randomly or attacks the civilians. Azizuddin *et al.* (2012) in their research said that Southeast Asia is one of area for the hub of the global terrorist activities after the 9/11 and the first Bali bombing in 2002. Therefore, we need to understand what the motivations and causes someone want to join the terrorist actions. This way is one of strategy to counter terrorism especially in Indonesia.

Terrorists have root are diverse. They are not being the same from place to place. Therefore, we can not say if they are a homogenous group. Some see themselves as a spiritual struggle within themselves to stop themselves breaking religious or moral laws while others see as a holy war fought by Muslims to defend Islam and others see as legitimate geopolitical actor.

We can understand terrorism from the history of theoretical. Theories of terrorism comes from the subfield of collective violence in the field of political

science. These theories emerged in the early 1970's. Several theories from many disciplines have had a role to play with some relevance such as religion and economics, sociological, psychological and criminological fields. This study only discussed about sociology theory. The sociology theory highlights in explaining terrorism, we can see the interplay between social movements and societal response.

The sociology theory has perspectives to look why and how individuals become a terrorist from the social construction of fear or panic; how the processes and institutions especially the role of media, the role of primary and secondary groups maintain that expression of fear. The sociological theories of terrorism have five hypothesis such as the frustration-aggression; the relative deprivation; the negative identity; the narcissistic rage and the moral disengagement. This study focuses on the moral disengagement hypothesis.

This hypothesis highlights the ways a person to take any inhibitions away they have committing acts of horrific violence. "Some common patterns include imagining one's self as a hero, portraying one's self as agentless, minimizing the harm done, dehumanizing the victim or insulating one's self in routine activities. Organized crime Fig., for example, usually hide behind family activities with their wives and children. Students should be advised that in the study of terrorism, numerous ways have been found for terrorists to rationalize their behavior which go far beyond denigrating one's enemies and beefing one's self up as a crusader" (Hacker, 1996). As they exercise deliberate moral agency in achieving a complete shift in the way government and civil society, this organization shows the rationalizations their actions. "They accomplish this thru sanitized language, doublespeak and euphemistic language" (Bandura, 2002).

As the result from acts of anarchy and terror that has been perpetrated by several groups of muslims, there is a development of negative stigma about jihad and terror. Islam is claimed as a religion of terrorists and terrorist is synonymous with muslims, especially those who are considered militant or radical. In fact, this stigma is sped like a bullet that was edged, pierced to the heart of Islam. As a result, Islam was assumed as a terrorist religion. "This misunderstanding could have been caused by a lack of public understanding about Islam, on the contrary, this argument is supported by the fact where some Muslims actually carry out jihad by the acts of terrorism" (Liputan, 2016).

As a matter of fact, the reaction of young people might contribute to the acts of terrorism. Some of the terrorists are even teenagers and a high school students as happened in Klaten, central Java in 2011. Some of them

also were killed in solo in September 2012, Farhan and Mukhsin were 19 years old. These phenomenons lead Indonesia to be vulnerable to terrorism. Not only became the targets of terror but a potential field for terrorism. The big question is what kind of psychological condition that drives the productive young people to be radical and even a terrorist?

There are many factors that triggering the child to become radical. Disclosure of terrorism cases in Indonesia showed that many students and young people successfully recruited into terrorist groups. They are lack of education, especially religion lesson. In some areas in West Java, Central Java, Lampung and North Sumatra found a fact that there is a real guidance of young people to become a terrorist. They are recruited by senior members and were trained to be their generations. These factors led to an endless terrorist network in Indonesia. These factors led to a terrorist network in Indonesia never die. There are not indications that terrorist groups is weaken or being vacuum. Moreover its achievement is improved by its success to murder five officers in Poso at the end of 2014.

Several perpetrators such as Dr. Azhari and Noorden M Top has been punished but the spirits of this extremist militants remains in Indonesia. The crime committed by them are considered as martyrdom and heroism. Although, there are some similarities with Khawarij storyline which is based on religion but specifically for the Indonesian-born terrorist, they can not be separated from the nature and characteristics of the Indonesian people themselves (Mail Online, 2016).

If we have identified carefully to the Indonesian human, characteristic, then it would be found that there are some important things that has caused people to easily become radical or in the worst scenario to be a terrorist: Firstly, the factor of disappointment. They are disappointed with the environmental community life, political power or order, political and economical instability and the other factors of disappointment that drive Indonesian society to be surrounded by sarcasm.

Secondly, laden with negative traits and then proud of the dark side. Many of those who have reached the summit of this power and career. While those who survive with the characteristics, attitudes and human nature of Indonesia which are simple, honest, friendly, not envy and pleased with the progress, tolerance, mutual help and others actually crashing and lagging far behind.

Third, lack of respect for dissent and the good behavior of others. This is where the radical climax came with takfiriyah ideology which is very easy to blame others who disagree with him. This negative character is getting supported by the conflict in the Middle East

which contains the nuances of Islam and spreaded to Indonesian young people who is very sensitive with the issue of injustice, oppression and occupation against muslims. Coincidentally with the return of veterans of the Afghanistan war, some of them immediately remove areas of conflict in Indonesia. Inevitably there were crashes, bombings, shootings and terror occurred in Indonesia.

Violence is the main characteristic of terrorism. Another characteristic is to form the underground, making the doctrine of jihad as the guidance of the movement and resistance to authorities. These elements may be the answer to their psychological needs that could potentially be a terrorist. Group (congregation, network or cells) is a source of pride for someone. By joining in a group, every member can meet the need for social identity. Thus, the group becomes a source of self-esteem, especially for individuals who experience a sense of alienation.

Accompanied by strong ideological and loyalty to the leader and assembly, terrorists will reach the stage of perfection which is to go to heaven. This may be an answer to their obscurity of identity, a negative self-image and the absence of figures or institutions that allow them to find themselves.

One feels fit to be members of terrorist groups because there is compatibility between the needs of the group's mission or personal values. In doing the resistance to the authorities of power through underground lines, seems to be the appropriate way for the subconscious urge a pile of pent-up anger against authority figures. There is a tendency of individuals where they will stay to be a member in particular group if their interest, needs and personal values are compatible with group's mission. Resistance to current authorities may be the manifestation of pent-up anger against oppressive authority in their childhood.

## **CONCLUSION**

Modern sociological perspectives are concerned on the social construction of terrorism. This is one of the way of the war on terrorism. Most terrorists say "I am good and right. You are bad and wrong." This perspective see the emotional links between individuals who support the terrorism actions and the strength of commitment to their ideology to commit acts of terrorism.

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