An Insight Into Global Terrorist Groups: An Empirical Analysis Of Their Structure And Economic Conditions

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Abstract
We investigate the outlook of the global terrorist groups by introducing global terrorist evaluation indicator. In Global Terrorist Evaluation Index (GTEI), we assign ranks global terrorist groups based on the five factors, i.e., its (i) sphere of influence in terms of location of its attack(s), (ii) manpower, (iii) financial stature, (iv) lethality in term of intensity of terror created, and (v) experience, in terms of time span since inception of terrorist group. We find that, based on GTEI, the ISIS is the most lethal and most specialized terrorist group among the four global terrorist groups (ISIS, Al-Qaida, Taliban, and Boko Haram). This study introduces a new approach to examine the terrorist groups by considering the various dimensions of the terrorist groups. Moreover, this index offers an alternative approach for counter terrorism policies.

Keywords: Al-Qaida; ISIS; Taliban; Boko Haram; GTEI

JEL Classifications F15, F19

1. INTRODUCTION
The emergence of terrorist groups and subsequent acts of terrorism can be explained in various ways. Most of the existing studies either attempt to establish motives behind involvement of individual(s) and/or group(s) in acts of terrorism or a link between macroeconomic indicators and terrorism acts (Khan & Yousof, 2017). Both approaches have somehow improved understandings of the issue. For instance, individual motives for joining a terrorist group are low level of education and income. The existing studies, for example Piazza (2011), GTD (2016)¹, Stanford University (2016), and Degeral (2016) are mostly focusing on an individual terrorist group such as, Al-Qaida or ISIS, Taliban, and Boko Haram, henceforth, end up with a narrow base and analytical approach. Therefore, a large portion of the available literature

¹It is recorded by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) based at the University of Maryland (Web Link: http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/).
lacks comprehensive and information-based research framework and fails to cover various dimensions of the terrorist’s groups.

To have a comprehensive investigation of all possible dimension of the issue under review, this research study investigates evolution, classification, and economic conditions of global terrorist groups by introduction a-novel approach labeled as Global Terrorist Evaluation (GTEI) Index, which takes care of all possible aspects including sources of finance, men-power, ability to strike (i.e., intensity and collateral damage caused by the attacks) of terrorist organization.

In this perspective, the second section of this paper gives a detailed account of global terrorism. The third section includes an in-depth overview of the four leading global terrorist groups, ISIS, Al-Qaida, Taliban, and Boko Haram. The fourth section provides comparative analysis of global terrorist groups in terms of their location of attacks, size of terrorist groups, intensity of terrorism and sources of finance. The fifth section gives an introduction of global terrorist evaluation index and its key indicators, and the sixth section of the paper presents the application of GTEI on global terrorist groups. The last section concludes the paper.

2. Brief Overview of Global Terrorist Groups

In 2015 four global terrorist organizations, i.e., ISIS, Taliban, Al-Qaida, and Boko Haram were responsible for 74 percent of all terror-based fatalities. Among the organizations, ISIS is the deadliest during 2015. As ISIS executed 252 terror attacks in different cities during 2015 that resulted in 6,141 deaths. On the other hand, Boko Haram was responsible for 5,478 deaths while Al-Qaida accounted for 1,620 deaths during this period. In this period, the Taliban’s operations in Afghanistan resulted in 4,502 deaths, 29 percent higher than the previous year (GTD, 2016). Even though these fatalities are 2 percent lower than the fatalities caused by these global terrorist organizations, however their percentage share of all deaths has increased from 66 percent in 2013. To sum up, these four terrorist organizations took the lives 17,741 humans across the world during 2015.

a. ISIS Terrorist Group

ISIS is also known as ISIL, Islamic State of Iraq and Syrian, or Daesh. It is a global terrorist organization, with its roots in Syria and Iraq. ISIS emerged from Iraq based al-Qaida, after its fragmentation and got worldwide fame after its active involvement in the Syrian civil war.

This organization has been founded by the Abu Musab ul-Zarqawi, an Al-Qaida off-shoot who was assassinated in 2002 in a military operation in Iraq. Soon after, the organization has witnessed manifold growth in terms of its allegiance and/or merger with the likeminded terrorist organizations and networks like AL-Qaed a and gained a noticeable stature among the ranks of existing global insurgent groups and organization. ISIS network got further strengthened after its merger with Al-Qaida into, in 2006. However, the general perception regarding the lethality of ISIS o was of moderate level till 2009. However, the scenario has been totally changed after Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took over the ISIS as its leader, in 2010. Soon after, ISI came into the limelight, mainly owing to the stark difference of its top leadership from the rest of terror groups, t For instance, Baghdadi was highly educated and had secured a doctorate degree (Degerald, 2016). Moreover, Baghdadi further strengthened the ISISI by merging various Syrian and Iraqi insurgent groups in 2013., This expansion led to the occupation of major parts of Iraq, including big cities like Fallujah and Mosul by ISIS in 2014. Thus, ISIS has controlled a significantly large area of Iraq and
Syria, which constitute a territory of hundreds of thousands square miles, almost equivalent to the total area of Austria. Moreover, during this period, the manpower of the ISIS has also been increased manifolds, i.e. it was within the range of 20,000 to 31,500 combatants (Lister, 2014).

Based on the mentioned performance in a short span of time, ISIS has been able captured a vast area of the eastern Syria and Iraq. ISIS inspired for establishment of an Islamic state with a “Caliph” as a head of state. During the peak of its strength, ISIS was actively pursuing terrorist attacks in Iraq and Syria. However, it deeply desired to expend its influence on the border areas of Jordan and Lebanon (Khan & Ruiz Estrada, 2015; Khan & Ruiz Estrada, 2017; Khan, 2018). The distinctive feature of ISIS was its popularity and support among the Muslim youth of Europe and North America.

The terrorist group ISIS has expanded their activities, outside Iraq and Syria, into around 19 countries during 2013 to 2015. The driving force behind this success was its access to advanced modes of communication including internet and social media platforms. ISIS took full advantage of the situation in Syria and sectarian violence in Iraq to appeal the desperate and least educated of Europe and North America. Strikingly, ISIS has been able to attract around 25,000 aspirants and combatants, across the globe from countries and regions far beyond its control, with interesting composition. Astonishingly, more than 4,500 of the mentioned combatants hailed from the Western block, while almost 250 from USA. Henceforth, citizens of more than 110 countries have joined the ISIS. Furthermore, the data of ISIS fighters (please refer to Table 1 & Figure 4), reveals that most of its new recruits belong to Tunisia. Overall, the ISIS these combatants have low level of education attainment, prolonged unemployment, and no or fewer job opportunities available for them in their homelands (see Figure 2). Besides, in case of attracting local ISIS combatants, the Syrian civil war has played the role of catalyst to attract them towards ISIS. The mentioned factors yielded a great deal of appeal, fame, attraction, for ISIS in terms of increase in the number of its combatants. This ever-strongest position to the fall of Mosul, the second-largest city of Iraq, into the hands of ISIS in June 2014. Subsequently, - Baghdadi, declared caliphate in the regions/areas under the ISIS control, which has given further strengthen the ISIS’s stature and help attract new foreign fighters towards its ranks and files. The ISIS can be distinguished from the rest of the terror organizations and networks based on its remarkable success to attract to influence, inspire, and attract vulnerable and despondent Muslim youth brought up in the Western countries confronted with identity crisis, racial profiling, deprivation, and even segregation from the mainstream society.
Figure 1: Organizational Structure of ISIS

Commander in Chief (Caliph)  
(Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi)

Deputy Iraq  
(Abu-Muslim Al-Turkmani)

12 Governors of Iraq

Deputy Syria  
(Abu Ali Al-Anbari)

12 Governor

Cabinet  
(Baghdadi’s Advisors)

Shura Council  
(Religious & Military Affairs)

Leadership  
Financial

Military  
Legal Council  
Fighter Assistance Council  
Security  
Intelligence Council  
Media Council

Source: Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium

Figure 2: Education Level vs Occupation Status of ISIS Terrorists Recruits
Figure 3: Sources of Revenue of ISIS Terrorist Group

Source: IEP (2016) Calculations

Figure 4: ISIS Foreign Fighters Flow

Source: IEP (2016) Calculations
The main sources of financing of ISIS are petroleum products proceeds, taxation, local and foreign findings/donations, and kidnapping of foreigners for ransom from the host country. For instance, ISIS has kidnapped Japanese nationals and they were released in return for ransom paid the Japanese government. Furthermore, France has paid $14 million for the release of four French journalists held by ISIS. Moreover, they used to collect toll tax from vehicles and trucks passing the areas under their control. The other source of income for ISIS was bank reburies in area attacked by them. That’s why, ISIS was one among the richest terrorist organizations with almost US $ 2.38 billion wealth (see Figure 3). The ISIS also got support of the local people by food distribution, organizing recreational activities for their kids, and provision of health services to the local communities, where the government fails to do so. In turn, ISIS gained the sympathies of the local people (Giovanni, Goodman & Sharkov, 2014).

Table 1: Foreign Fighters in ISIS Terrorist group by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>2275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stepanova (2015)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel/Palestinian</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Besides, strong, and stable source of finance and local support, ISIS, also had access to advanced technology and weaponry. According to Corera (2016), in the early stages of Iraqi and Syrian conflict, most weapons were taken by ISIS belong to Iraqi and Syrian forces. However, by the end of 2015, the ISIS looked for other noteworthy sources. ISIS was getting hand to ammunition of Eastern Europe origin. There exists strong evidence that the governments of the United States and Saudi Arabia legally bought and delivered the ammunition through Turkey (Khan, 2017).
b. Al-Qaida

Al-Qaeda (AQ) is one of the biggest operating and jihadist terrorist group in the world. As early as 1979 during the Cold War, the seeds of major security threat to the entire globe were being sown through open support of Afghan Jihad by the global players. Subsequently, in the northern Afghanistan, Mujahidin were gathering from all over the world, armed mainly with their fierce faith and determination to vague jihad against the much advanced and bitterly equipped the Soviet military. At the same time, the Muslim world witnessed the Islamic revolution in Iran that led the creation of an Islamic ideological state (Gunaratna, 2002).

Formally, Al-Qaida was founded by two persons, Usama bin Laden, and Abdullah Azzam in 1988. However, Usama bin Laden (Saudi Arabia resident) was assassinated in 2011 while Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian Sunni scholar, was killed in 1989. Osama bin Laden came to Afghanistan in 1980 to join the USA backed Afghan Jihad against Russia. Besides USA, Bin Laden was among the major supporter and financier of this Afghan Jihad (cited). After growing influence of Bin Laden, Jalaluddin Haqqani, the pioneer of Haqqani group, had forged an alliance with Bin Laden land in mid 1980s. During this time Bin Laden was based in the treacherous mountainous region between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Later, the region became a military base for training of Mujahideen recruits from Afghan, Middle East, and the other countries (Hoffman, 2007). Later, this military camp became a haven for jihadists belonging to the Al-Qaeda and its other ideological affiliates as communication and coordination hub.

Figure 5: Organizational Structure of Al-Qaida
The group is accused of involvement in the large-scale terrorist attacks in world fame metropolitans New York, London, and Madrid. These acts led to the NATO led military intervention and occupation of Afghanistan under the global war against terrorism, with objective to fight out and eliminate the Al-Qaida leaderships. Subsequently, many Al-Qaeda’s affiliates including members of its top leadership have been either killed or captured. This resulted into a dysfunctional Al-Qaida, with no centralized command and control system. To overcome this setback, Al Qaeda has adopted a decentralized command and control structure by using regional cells, and affiliated organizations, known as franchises (see Figure 5).

Al-Qaeda and its affiliates were believed to be the masterminds and/or perpetrators of terrorist attacks in 12 countries across the globe during 2015 as compared to attacks across 14 number of countries in 2014. The highest numbers of countries ever attacked by the Al Qaeda was 16 countries during 2011. When we look at the lethality factor of Al Qaeda, it along with its six most prominent affiliates were held responsible for 1,620 deaths in 2015, which is reflect a decline of 17 percent as compared to the previous year figure. This was mostly due to diminishing striking power of its deadliest affiliates like al-Shabaab.

c. Al-Qaida’s Affiliate Groups

In 2015, al-Shabaab was responsible for 836 deaths, which reflects a fall of 18 percent as compared to the 2014 figures. The group was behind the most lethal strike on Kenya’s Garissa University College attack, in 2015, that caused 147 death of mostly civilian targets. Another Somalia based Al-Qaeda stalwart is Harakat al-Shabaal-Mujahideen, which was actively in hot pursuit of creation of Islamic of Somalia under the inspiration of ISIS. Despite strong inspiration of IS, Al-Shabaab remained an al-Qaida affiliate. The group was a prime target for Kenyan forces in 2015 and 2016 owing to its potential striking capabilities across the border into Kenya. After flexing mussel and using its military might against the group, Kenya was able to eliminate the striking power of the group. Al-Nusra Front was among the most lethal affiliates of Al-Qaeda after by Al-Shabab, known to be Jabhat al-Nusra. The group was actively involved in the Syrian civil war since 2012. The group has resulted into a huge human toll during 2014 and 2015 with killing 488 and 611 people, respectively. The group remained committed to Al-Qaeda despite ISIS forceful attempts to bring it under control in 2013. However, the group parted its way with Al-Qaeda in 2016, which is believed to be a deliberate move avoid potential air strikes and a potential signal to display willingness towards future negotiations rather than an ideological shift. The group has also stirred in fight among various militant and sectarian militia groups, actively involved in Syria, by taking an on slot on ISIS, Harakat Ham, Hezbollah in 2015 and subsequently bringing down 270 members of the mentioned militant outfits including forces loyal to the Assad regime.

Another affiliate of Al-Qaeda, AQAP (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) has killed 155 people through its terrorist acts in 2015, which accounted for 62 percent of fatalities caused by it during the previous year. AQAP is still operated in Yemen but low intensity due to its falling popularity and influence because of ISIS subsidiaries growing presence and influence in the country. AQIM is also operates in Algeria and Mali since 2007, and has been involved in 11 attacks during 2015, including deadly attacks on members of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), with a total human toll of 15. The group was responsible for terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire targeting tourists in early 2016.
Al-Qaeda was also present in Lebanon via the Abdullah Azzam Brigade, since 2004. However, the brigade became dormant since the capture of its top leadership in 2013 and avoid claiming responsibility for any act of terrorist act and causality associated with it. The latest to the Al-Qaida network was Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent which came to being in September 2014. The group has claimed responsibility for the deaths of secular bloggers and publishers in Bangladesh after being suspected by local authorities.

3.2.1 Financing of Al-Qaeda

Table 2: Source of Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Revenue</th>
<th>US$150 Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Funding Source</td>
<td>Organized Franchises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Financing Activities</td>
<td>External Donations, Kidnapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GTD (2016)

The Usama Bin Laden’s family fortune and personal donations from Gulf states are major sources of finance of Al-Qaeda. Moreover, it has diversified portfolio of unlawful business concerns. Al-Qaeda has more effective organizational structure with central command and control and franchises spread across the world. This organizational structure allows for centralized flow of command and decentralized execution with regional considerations. However, owing to the local groups ambitions to grab opportunities for financial and political gains, the regional affiliated might diversify the sources of finance. For instance, Al-Shabaab used to generate sources of finance through taxation, extortion, and coal trade. Moreover, the al-Nusra Front, just like ISIS, finance itself through the oil proceed, ransom money by kidnapping foreigners in Syria, and personal donations from the Golf States. However, some of the Al-Qaeda affiliates like AQAP resort for criminal activities. For example, AQAP has robbed Al Mukalla central bank and was involved in extortion proceed from oil and telecom industries (Schneider & Caruso, 2011).

3.2.1.2 Taliban

The Taliban was founded in 1994 by Mohamad Omar (the former Taliban Leader). The group existed even before its formal inception, in the form of a loose alliance between two sub-groups of Mujahedeen and Pashtun tribesmen, who raged Jihad against USSR in early 1980s. The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996 and ruled until 2001. The Taliban took control of the Kabul 1996 and ruled the country till 2001, when it was ousted by the American-led NATO alliance after invasion of the country. Since 2001, Taliban has raged guerilla warfare against the NATO alliance. However, since from the 2013, with major withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, the influence and lethality of Taliban is on gradual rise increased capability to strike. In particular, 2015 the Taliban proved to be the deadliest by causing 4,502 deaths through 1,094 separate acts of terrorism, which amount for a staggering rise of 29 percent in fatalities followed by a sharp rise of 23 percent in 2014. Moreover, 2015 was among the worst years of Afghan civil war with a tragic death toll of around 18,000 mostly police and civilians. It is believed that The Taliban want to increase the areas under their control and weaken the existing government to consolidate its position before any negotiation and agreed power sharing plan. To achieve this goal, the Taliban indiscriminately targeted Afghan Police through 543 attacks and subsequent 2,259 deaths during 2015. The Taliban
undertook these in the form of assaults on Police checkpoints and outposts or ambush and surprise attacks on Police patrols. Moreover, the Taliban have also been able to carry out major and bold operations like targeting the police headquarters that accounted for around 20 percent of total attacks on Police. The purpose of such attacks was to display their fire power. To attack their difficult targets in Police with strong security presence, the Taliban opt for suicide bombings. In 30 suicide attacks on Police, Taliban has killed 193 people during 2015, which were the deadliest with an average of 6.4 fatalities per attack as compared to that of two fatalities per attack by non-suicide attacks (GTD, 2016).

**Figure 6: Organizational Structure of Taliban**

[Organizational diagram with details on Taliban leadership hierarchy]
i. Financing of The Taliban

Table 3: Source of Financing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Revenue</th>
<th>US$400 Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Funding source</td>
<td>Opium and Heroin Smuggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Financing Activities</td>
<td>Taxation (Usher &amp; Zakat), Extortion, External Donations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GTD (2016)

The trafficking and marketing of contraband like opium, heroin, etc. used to be the largest source of revenue for the Taliban, with estimated earnings of US$200 million per Annum. Moreover, the Taliban also received fees from the Drug traffickers for in rout protection of their commodities, and markets. This protectionist approach encouraged the poppy production in Afghanistan, and it became the largest opium producer in the world. According to the reports, in a short span of time, i.e. just three years (from 2012 to 2015), the area under opium cultivation in the Taliban controlled regions has been increased by 19 percent. Various types of religious taxes, i.e., usher², and the zakat³ used to be the second largest source of finance of the Taliban. The Taliban also collects a handsome amount of revenue by imposition of taxes on services, such as water supply for drinking and irrigation or locally generated electricity (Aglionby, 2016). Moreover, the rapid growth in construction, transport, telecommunication, and mining sectors has increased the revenue of Taliban manifolds through handsome extortion money in return for security in the areas under control. According to the UN Security Council Report (2012), the Taliban has been able to generate US$400 million worth finances through the mentioned various sources (Coolsaet, 2016; & Keddie, 2009). According to Ashour (2015), in recent past, the Taliban have received revenue of US$ 200 million from the opium trade. Besides, according to the unconfirmed sources, countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates are suspected to fund the Taliban through Islamic charities and other institutions operating in these countries (Hegghammer, 2006; & Sedgwick, 2015).

3.2.1.3 Boko Haram

The Boko Haram terrorist group is also known as Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da’wah wa’l-Jihād and more recently Islamic State’s West Africa Province (ISWAP). The name Boko Haram has an interesting background. The literal meaning of ‘Boko’ in Hausa language is book (referring to the writings, literature, and books of Western or foreign origin) while 'Haram' refers 'forbidden', 'ungodly' or 'sinful' in Arabic. If both words are put together, 'Boko Haram' literally means 'book is sinful' (Danjibo, 2009; & Adesoji, 2010). Hence, after full interpretation of Boko Haram turns out to be “a prohibition of the Western education.” Thus, the ideological basis of Boko Haram is based on a complete rejection of Western system of education, culture, and modern science with its misperceived Western origin. Furthermore, according to Danyibo (2009), the objectives of Boko Haram are inspired by and deep rooted in the Maita sine uprisings of the early 1980s. The Boko Haram was formally founded in 2002, when Mohammad Yusuf opened a religious

²one-tenth to one-twentieth per cent of agricultural produce
³2.5 per cent of the wealth, over and above the minimum level, held for one entire year.
complex including an Islamic school in Maiduguri, Nigeria, which attracted students from poor Muslim families across the country. Reportedly, Yusuf used the school to convert and recruit future jihadist. Boko Haram expanded rapidly in Yobe state, where it set up its another base, nicknamed “Afghanistan,” near the Nigeria-Niger border in 2003. Prior to 2009, the group did not seek to overthrow the Nigerian government, and Yusuf instead preached a doctrine of withdrawal (Shapiro, 2013; & Farouk, 2014). Based on the organizational planning, war tactics and modus operandi, this terrorist group is like the Taliban.

The group resorted to acts of violence and sabotage following the murder of its leader Mohamad Yusuf by the Nigerian government in 2009. Subsequently, the new leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau, pledge to avenge his leader’s death and vowed to rage jihad against the apparatuses of state of Nigerian and the United States of America in 2010. Since then, Boko Haram strive for establishing an Islamic state within Nigeria, the country with a deep-rooted wedge among its Christian population in south and the Muslims in north. It is worth to mention that Sharia laws are being enforced completely in nine while partially in three states, all belong to North of the country, out of the total 36 states of Nigeria. Boko Haram has strong linkage and ties with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and more recently with ISIS and the Boko Haram gets financial support, and military and social media use training from these counterparts. However, the group formally announced its allegiance (bayat) with ISIS by recognizing the ISIS lead, al Baghdadi, as the Caliph of Muslims in March 2015. On the other hand, Boko Haram has been alleged of joint training activities with Al-Shabaab, the Al-Qaeda affiliate in Somalia, which suggests the nature of its allegiance with ISIS.

**Figure 7: Organization Structure of Boko Haram**
The Boko Haram used to be amongst the deadliest terror groups of Africa during 2014. However, in the following, it has lost its lust due to a visible reduction in the number of its attacks and subsequent deaths, with an 18 percent reduction in the number of deaths from terrorist acts during 2015 as compared to that of 2014. Boko Haram is also on the hit list of the Multinational Joint Task Force, a joint military coalition of Western African nations i.e., Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The prime target of the group is Nigeria, with figures of 75 and 92 percent of its all-deaths toll during 2015 and 2014, respectively. However, due to the military operation in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, the momentum of terrorist activities raged by Boko Haram has been shifted to the neighboring countries such as Cameroon and Chad. Boko Haram has also been engaged in terrorist attacks across five African countries during 2015. Boko Haram keep on striking the Cameroon and Chad, which resulted in a death toll of 527 and 206, respectively, during 2015 (GTD, 2016).

Source: Onuoha (2012)
3.2.2 Source of Financing of Boko Haram

Table 4: Source of Funding of Boko Haram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Revenue</th>
<th>US$25 Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Funding Source</td>
<td>Kidnapping for Ransom and Extortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Financing Activities</td>
<td>Bank Robberies, Illegal Mining, External Donations, Drugs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GTD (2016)

According to the GTD (2016), the Boko Haram lack a sophisticated financial structure unlike the other global terrorist organization like ISIS. The major sources of finances of Boko Haram are ransom and extortion money. According to the United Nations Security Council, Boko Haram has also involved human trafficking to finance its operation along with other sources like bank robberies, illegal mining, and provision of safe routes to drug cartels through Nigeria.

3. Comparison of the Global Terrorist Groups

In this section, we undertake comparative analysis of the global terrorist groups, based on: i. their location of attacks, ii. intensity of terrorism, iii. sources of funding, and iv. size of global terrorist groups in the following subsections.

4.1 Location of Attacks of Global Terrorist Groups

According to the available data on modus operandi and pattern of terrorist attacks, the selection of targets for the attacks are diversified based on their geographic and regional location with respect to the stronghold of these groups. For example, the attacks carried out by ISIS are not just limited to Iraq and Syria but are widespread. The footprints of ISIS can be traced as far as Europe and South Asia.

Moreover, Al-Qaeda striking capabilities are spread across Afghanistan, Pakistan, Middle East, and even Europe. However, in case of Taliban, it has limited but lethal striking capabilities within two countryside, Afghanistan and Pakistan. As far as Boko Haram is concerned, it is capable of raging terrorist acts in countries like Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad.

So, to conclude, the mentioned global terrorist organizations and/or groups are not limited to a single country but can strike across the international borders. Moreover, based on the cross border striking power and/or capability, ISIS is more capable of carrying out terrorist across the nations (please refer to Table 5 for further details).

Table 5: Location of Attacks of Global Terrorist Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISIL</th>
<th>Al-Qaeda</th>
<th>Boko Haram</th>
<th>Taliban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Chad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Comparison of the Manpower i.e., Size of Global Terrorist Groups

The review of terrorist groups’ organizational structure reveals that these groups have thousands of active members across the globe. Among these terrorist groups, ISIS has an estimated manpower of around 30,000 fighters. Taliban are ranked as the second highest among the global terrorist groups in terms of its manpower, with approximately 25,000 hard core fighters. Furthermore, Boko Haram is the third largest terror group based on its manpower with as strength of 25,000 active members. However, the current manpower of the Al-Qaeda, after significant decline, is around 4000. To sum up, ISIS has the largest manpower with highest number of fighters among the mentioned four terrorist groups. Strikingly, ISIS is still popular among the diverse group of people and its manpower is on rise with an increasing number of young man and women are joining the organization from different countries across the globe (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Size of Global Terrorist Groups
4.3 Financial Stature

We assess the financial stature of these terrorist groups through their capability to generate finances or revenue per annum. According to the assessment, ISIS(ISIL) is the richest among these groups, with US$2000 million revenue per annum. While Boko Haram turns out to be the poorest among these groups, with an estimated annual revenue of US$25 million per year. This comparison can also be directly related with the influence and political might of the terrorist group actively involved in the countries with weak political systems and institutions (please refer to Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Comparison of Annual Revenue of Global Terrorist Groups**

Source: GTD (2016) & Author’s Own Estimation

4.4 Capability in terms of Ability to Strike and Lethality in terms of Death Toll

Based on global terrorism database (2016), Taliban is ranked as the most capable to strike terrorist group, by conducting the highest number of terror incidents that is 1094 among the four global terrorist organizations/groups in 2015. The ISIS is ranked as the second most capable group among these groups. The least capable among these terrorist attacks was Al-Qaeda, with 368 attacks. However, the Boko Haram...
was able carry out 491 attacks. However, when look at the death toll of these attacks, - ISIS is most the lethal with 6141 deaths, followed by Boko Haram with 5478 deaths, Taliban with 4502 kills, while Al-Qaida with 1620 of deaths. Moreover, in terms of total number of injuries, top the list with 6208 causalities, followed by Taliban with 4685 people injured, Boko Haram with 3376 causalities and Al-Qaida with 969 of injured victims.

Based on these hard facts explaining various dimensions of global terrorist groups, we can conclude that among the four global terrorist groups, ISIS is the most lethal in terms of highest fatalities and injuries rates per terrorist attacks as compared to the rest of the rest of three global terrorist groups (please see Figures 10 and 11).

**Figure 10: Death from Terrorism by Global Terrorist Groups**

![Diagram showing death from terrorism by global terrorist groups](image)

Source: GTD (2016)

**Figure 11: Global Terrorist Groups Terrorism Intensity**

![Chart showing terrorism intensity of global terrorist groups](image)

Source: GTD (2016) & Author’s Own Estimation

5 **METHODOLOGY**

This research work employs secondary data, collected, and filtered from different online data sources such as Global Terrorism Database (GTD), South Asian Terrorism Portal, BBC news, Al-Jazeera news, etc.
In this study, we use a composite index, developed for this study, to evaluate the four global terrorist organizations/groups, i.e., ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Boko Haram, Terrorist Evaluation index (GTEI). We investigate these global terrorist organizations/group based on five parameters i.e. (i) location of terrorist attack indicator(ii) terrorist group manpower indicator (iii) Financial status or ranking indicator (iv) Lethality or striking power indicator (v) Experience and/or expertise indicator of terrorist group. We employ the following general function for the measurement of Global Terrorist Evaluation Index in this study.

\[ GTEI = f(\varepsilon, \kappa, \chi, I, T) \]  \hspace{1cm} (1)

Where,
\( \varepsilon \) = location of terrorist attack indicator
\( \kappa \) = terrorist group manpower indicator
\( \chi \) = Financial status or Ranking Indicator
\( I \) = Lethality or striking power Indicator
\( T \) = The number of years the terrorist group is active

We use the above-mentioned explanatory variables as key factors to find the global terrorist evaluation index (GTEI).

6. Application of GTEI to Global Terrorist Organizations or Groups (ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and Boko-Haram)

As per our GTEI Index, the ISIS has the highest GTEI value (0.713), followed by the Taliban has GTEI score (0.48), and Al-Qaida has GTEI value (0.438) while Boko Haram GTEI score is (0.312). Furthermore, the based on our GTEI index, ISIS occupies level 3 of the index, which refers more classified and emerged indicator of terrorist organizations or group. Based our index, two terrorist groups i.e., Taliban and Al-Qaida are placed in level 2, which indicate that these groups are moderate emerged and classified. According to the GTEI, Boko Haram is placed at level 1, which marks the group to be least emerged and classified terrorist group as compared to its counterparts. As per the GTEI score of Boko Haram, this terrorist group is the least emerged and classified terrorist group among the four global terrorist organizations and groups (see Figure 12 & Table 6). When we apply GTEI indicator to global terrorist organizations and groups, we find the ISIS as the most emerged and classified terrorist group among the sample of four global terrorist organizations and groups. Our results are supported by the facts that this ranking and classification of ISIS is based on the group’s strongest manpower (i.e. numbers of fighters) as compared to the other global terrorist groups. Moreover, this claim is supported by the highest lethality and striking power of the group (i.e. the number of fatalities and injuries per terrorist attack) as compared to the rest of three global terrorist groups. In fact, ISIS terrorist group has been involved in more than 70 percent of terrorist acts and activities across Iraq and Syria. The group has highest number of foreign fighters, belonging to more than 110 countries, with more than 40,000 strengths. These characteristics make ISIS a global terrorist network. The group has the capability to carry out the terrorist attacks in Europe (e.g., terrorist attacks in France) and Asia (e.g., deadly attacks in Bangladesh).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terrorist Group</th>
<th>GTEI</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taliban</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qaida</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>0.312</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>GTEI</td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>Level-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taliban</td>
<td>0.480</td>
<td>Level-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qaida</td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>Level-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boko Haram</td>
<td>0.312</td>
<td>Level-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Own Estimations

**Figure 12: Application of GTEI to Global Terrorist Groups**

Source: Author’s Own Estimations
7. Conclusion

The main concept behind this study is evaluation of the global terrorist groups. This study thoroughly investigates four global terrorist groups, and organizations, i.e., ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and Boko Haram, considered to be responsible for the highest number of terrorist activities across the globe. In this study we focus on factors like sphere of influence in terms of location of its attack(s), manpower, financial stature, lethality, and experience of terrorist groups and organizations. We construct GTEI and apply on the mentioned terrorist groups and organizations. We find among the mentioned groups and organizations, ISIS to be the most emerged and classified terrorist group among the rest of the groups. The possible explanation behind the highest ranking is it vast sphere of influence, strong and diverse manpower, highest financial stature, greater lethality, and in-depth experience as compared the rest of terrorist groups and organizations. Based on these characteristic ISIS is an eminent threat not only within its sphere of influence (Iraq and Syria) but outside it (Asia, Europe, etc.) as well and possess a potential threat across the globe. This study is unique as its attempts to ranks the selected global terrorist groups and organizations based on GTEI indicator, which can be further expand. These ranking can used by the counter terror policy makers to assess the potential threat level of a particular terrorist group. Although the GTEI at early stage of its development and gives rough idea about the emergence and classification of a particular terrorist group based on the aforementioned factors of a terrorist group. However, by further refinement of GTEI, more diverse and accurate outcomes can also be achieved being a part of future research agenda. Furthermore, this indicator will help the policies makers to revisit their approach towards assessment of the terror groups and organizations and device counter terrorism policies according to the prevailing emergence and classification of a group and/or organization. This will help improve the not only preemptive but reactive responses to curtail terrorism and its perpetrators.

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References:

Appendix
The details of the model as below

(a) Location of terrorist attack indicator
We define this factor based on the geographic position of the terrorist activities. The terrorist group involves in widespread attacks based their geographical position is assigned more weight during the comparison of the global terrorist groups. The notion of geographic factor is based on the intuition that higher and widespread are attacks by a terrorist group greater will be its striking power and influence.
We adopt the following method for the location-based o terrorist attack growth rate.

\[ \varepsilon_i = \frac{\varepsilon_0 - \varepsilon_{\text{min}}}{\varepsilon_{\text{max}} - \varepsilon_{\text{min}}} \quad 0 \leq \varepsilon_i \leq 1 \quad (3) \]

Where (\( \varepsilon_0 \)) is the number of terrorist location attacked by a particular terrorist group, (\( \varepsilon_{\text{max}} \)) is the highest number of countries attacked by the terrorist group among the sample of global terrorist groups, and (\( \varepsilon_{\text{min}} \)) is the lowest number of countries that are targeted and/or attacked by the mentioned global terrorist organization/groups.

(b) Financial Stature or Ranking Indicator
The second key factor of our proposed global terrorist evaluation index is the current financial ranking of a global terrorist organization and/or group.

\[ \chi_i = \frac{\chi_0 - \chi_{\text{min}}}{\chi_{\text{max}} - \chi_{\text{min}}} \quad 0 \leq \chi_i \leq 1 \quad (4) \]
Equation (4) represents the change in the financial ranking of the global terrorist group \( \chi \), where \( \chi_0 \) is the current financial position of that particular terrorist group, \( \chi_{\text{max}} \) is the highest financial ranking of a particular group amongst the other global terrorist groups, and \( \chi_{\text{min}} \) is the lowest financial ranking of the group of this terrorist group as compared to the other terrorist groups.

(c) **Terrorist Group Manpower Indicator**

This factor is an attempt to measure the manpower of a terrorist group in terms of its active members engaged in terrorist acts. We use the following mathematical formula for finding growth of manpower of a particular group.

\[
\kappa_i = \frac{\kappa_0 - \kappa_{\text{min}}}{\kappa_{\text{max}} - \kappa_{\text{min}}} \quad 0 \leq \kappa_i \leq 1 \quad (5)
\]

Where \( \kappa \) is the manpower indicator, \( \kappa_0 \) is the existing manpower of a particular terrorist group, \( \kappa_{\text{max}} \) is the highest number of manpower the global terrorist group, and \( \kappa_{\text{min}} \) is the lowest number of manpower global terrorist groups.

(d) **Lethality or Striking Power Indicator**

Here in this sub section, we attempt to estimate the striking power of a global terrorist group by using the following parameters for a particular time.

i. Total number of attacks by that terrorist group
ii. Number of deaths, caused because of these attacks, by a particular terrorist group
iii. Number of Injuries in these attacks that were undertaken by terrorist group

We assign weights to above mentioned sub-factors, according to the global terrorism index (GTI). We use the following the function for striking power.

\[
I = f(\ell B + hH + \pi R) \quad (6)
\]

Where; \( \ell = 1 \), \( h = 3 \), and \( \pi = 0.5 \)

Furthermore, we employ the following procedure for obtaining the striking power growth rate.

\[
I_i = \frac{I_0 - I_{\text{min}}}{I_{\text{max}} - I_{\text{min}}} \quad 0 \leq I_i \leq 1 \quad (7)
\]

Where \( I_0 \) is the value of striking power of that particular terrorist group, \( I_{\text{max}} \) is the highest value of striking power of terrorism among the global terrorist group, and \( I_{\text{min}} \) is the lowest value of striking power that among the global terrorist groups.

(e) **Experience and/or Expertise Indicator of Terrorist Group**

This sub indicator or factor of GTEI explains experience or expertise of a terrorist group in terms of the number of years it has been involved in terrorism activities. It is expected more experienced is a terrorist group greater will be in the impact and/or lethality of its terrorist activities as compared to the least experience terrorist group(s). This sub indicator can be expressed as below.
\[ T_i = \frac{T_0 - T_{\text{min}}}{T_{\text{max}} - T_{\text{min}}} \quad 0 \leq T_i \leq 1 \quad (8) \]

Where, the \((T_0)\) is the number of years since a particular terrorist group has been created, \((T_{\text{min}})\) refers to the least experienced terrorist group among the global terrorist groups, while \((T_{\text{max}})\) is the most experienced terrorist group among the global terrorist groups.

**Global Terrorist Evaluation Index (GTEI)**

We apply the principal component analysis (PCA), after calculating the growth rates of the five sub-dimensions of the GTEI, to assign relative weights to the indices of the five sub-parameters or dimensions of global terrorist groups.

Finally, we add the weighted indices of the five sub-parameters or dimensions of a global terrorist group and calculate the GTEI score for a particular terrorist organization or group, by writing the following equation,

\[ GTEI = \Phi \varepsilon + \Omega \kappa + \alpha \chi + \lambda I + \infty T \quad (9) \]

Where the symbols \((\Phi \varepsilon), (\Omega \kappa), (\alpha \chi), (\lambda I)\) and \((\infty T)\) are the weight values of location of attacks growth, size of the arm forces of terrorist group growth, financial position of terrorist group growth, intensity of terrorism caused by terrorist group growth and time span of terrorist group growth respectively.

\[ 0 \leq GTEI \leq 1 \quad (10) \]

The GTEI indicator value for a particular terrorist organization or group ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 represents the least emerged and classified global terrorist group and 1 represents the highest emerged and classified global terrorist group. This can be further divided into three levels

1) Less emerged and classified terrorist organization or group = 0 to 0.33 (level 1)
2) Moderate emerged and classified terrorist organization or group = 0.3301 to 0.66 (level 2)
3) High emerged and classified organization or terrorist group = 0.6601 to 1 (level 3)