Taken For Granted: A Critical Study Of The Nature Of Motivation Behind Terrorism In The Afghan

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Abstract

This study aims at uncovering the nature of motivation behind terrorism in Frederick Forsyth's novel The Afghan (2006) through the lens of social constructivism. The study employs close reading method to analyze selected passages from the novel, examining how the representation of terrorism aligns with or diverges from the theoretical frameworks on norms, social agreements, and soft power. The study aims to uncover the underlying motivation that drives the use of terrorism in the novel, and how is it depicted as a tool used by those in power to further their national interests. The analysis revealed that terrorism is portrayed in the novel as a multifaceted and politically motivated tool, employed for various reasons such as ideological, religious, and as a form of retaliation. The findings of the study indicate a clear alignment between the representation of terrorism in the novel and the theories and concepts presented by scholars on the topic. It is depicted as a tool that is strategically used by those in power to further their national interests, rather than a natural occurrence. This research provides a deeper understanding of the representation of terrorism as a political tool in Forsyth's The Afghan (2006) and its implications for global peace and security. The study is intended to increase the understanding of the nature of motivation and strategies behind the use of terrorism, as it is essential to develop effective countermeasures to combat it.

Keywords: Motivation; Political; Power; Soft Power; Terrorism

Introduction

Terrorism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that poses significant threat to global peace and security. Its representation in literature, media, and political discourse can play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and understanding of the issue. This study aims to examine the representation of terrorism as a political tool in Forsyth's novel The Afghan (2006) by utilizing social constructivism as a theoretical framework. The novel provides a fictionalized account of the

events that took place in Afghanistan, depicting the motivation and strategies that drive the use of terrorism. Social constructivism provides a useful perspective on the study of terrorism as it highlights the role of ideas, norms, and social agreements in shaping a particular behavior. By examining the representation of terrorism in The Afghan (2006) through the lens of social constructivism, this study aims to uncover the underlying motivation that drive the use of terrorism in the novel and its depiction as a tool used by those in power to further their national interests.

The study employs a multi-model close reading method to analyze selected passages from the novel. This method allows for a detailed analysis of the text, which is essential for understanding how the representation of terrorism aligns with or diverges from the theoretical frameworks on norms, social agreements, and soft power as proposed by scholars such as Sikkink (1998), Wendit (1999), Jeffrey Legro (1997), Peter Katzenstein (2002), Schulz (2014), and Nau (2019). Through this analysis, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the representation of terrorism as a political tool in Forsyth's The Afghan (2006) and its implications for the global peace and security.

The world is currently facing a range of traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including terrorism, which threatens the very fabric of civilization. As Noam Chomsky (2017) states, "Terrorism exists and it is serious. And there are several ways to deal with it. The main way is to stop participating in it" (p. 86), the United States of America, in particular, is caught in various conflicts and its counterterrorism policy has been described as a game of "Whack a Mole" (Klausen, 2018, para. 9).

The concept of terrorism is tricky to define and different states, scholars, and academia interpret it in their own words. With the advent of globalization and technology, different terrorist groups have become more integrated with state entities, such as agencies, NGOs, criminal organizations, policymakers, and have gradually assumed a measure of control and identity with national governments. However, the representation of terrorism in literature is different from that in International Relations and Political Science. In literature, politics is inextricably linked to the concept of 'power', and this study aims to examine how terrorism is portrayed as a powerful instrument in The Afghan (2006). The study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how literature can shape perceptions and understanding of terrorism and its representation as a political tool, and provide insights on the motivation and strategies that drive the use of terrorism in the real world.

Research Objectives

- To conduct an in-depth analysis of the representation of the political actors and their agencies in the instigation of terrorism, as depicted in The Afghan (2006).
- To critically examine the narrative of The Afghan (2006) to identify and evaluate the instances where the involvement of nations and their intelligence agencies in the cultivation of terrorism is depicted.

Research Questions

1. How is the representation of the political actors and their agencies in the instigation of terrorism depicted in The Afghan (2006)?
2. What are the instances in The Afghan (2006) where the involvement of nations and their intelligence agencies in the cultivation of terrorism is depicted?

Literature Review

One of the key themes that emerges in the literature on terrorism in literature is the representation of particular motivation behind the use of terrorism. Scholars have argued that literature can serve as a powerful tool for understanding the motivation that drive terrorist groups and their actions. For example, in their study of the representation of terrorism in literature, Hammam and El-Sayed (2017) found that literature can provide a unique perspective on the particular motivation behind terrorism, highlighting the role of ideas, norms, and social agreements in shaping political behavior. Another theme that emerges in the literature is the representation of terrorism as a tool used by those in power to further their national interests. Scholars have argued that literature can serve as a powerful tool for understanding how terrorism is exploited and misused for political gain. In their study of the representation of terrorism in literature, Williamson, Fay and Miles-Johnson (2019) found that literature can provide insights into the political strategies and tactics used by terrorist groups and the governments that support them.

International relations often involve different actors who interact with each other, and their interactions can sometimes lead to conflicts over shared interests (Kegley, 2011). These conflicts can escalate and cause devastating wars, which have detrimental effects on civilians, military personnel, and the overall progress of a country. The concept of national interest is a fundamental aspect of conflicts in international relations (Stohl, 1984). Countries often frame their foreign policies based on their national interests, which can vary depending on resources and public opinion. Realists argue that the promotion of international relations is the primary goal of national interest. The US, being present in almost all continents across the globe, is often viewed by scholars of international relations as pursuing its own national interests in other countries (Jabber, 2001). This is evident in its extensive and increasing presence in the Middle East, where it maintains diplomatic, military, commercial, and cultural ties. This presence is driven by longstanding core US national interests and safety criteria for a range of crucial states. Ultimately, the US aims to serve its own national interests.

The Cold War was a defining period in international relations, marked by a rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union that lasted for 45 years. One of the key characteristics of the Cold War was the ideological divide between the two sides. Cold War America was marked by fear and anxiety not only from the Soviet Union, but also from the perceived threat of communism (Kegley, 2011). After the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1993, two dominant theories emerged about the post-cold war world order. Francis Fukuyama argued

that the end of the Cold War marked the triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy and that there would be no more future conflicts (Glaser, 2014).

Samuel P. Huntington (1996) posits that future wars will occur between different civilizations. He presents eight distinct civilizations, each with its own defining features and ideologies that can come into conflict with one another. Examples of this can be seen in incidents such as the 9/11 attacks, the London Bombings, the Christchurch Mosque attack, and the Easter Attack in Sri Lanka. This ideological divergence ultimately leads to devastating conflicts. Terrorism can be driven by a variety of factors, including a perceived lack of justice. When individuals or communities feel that their rights are being violated or that they are being treated unjustly, they may turn to terrorism as a means of seeking redress. The actions of powerful nations and international organizations can also contribute to a sense of injustice, particularly when smaller nations are marginalized or ignored. Furthermore, poverty and deprivation can make individuals more susceptible to recruitment by terrorist groups, which may offer a sense of purpose or promise of social change. Overall, addressing the underlying issues of injustice and inequality can be an important step in preventing terrorism.

Terrorism and retaliation are often conflated, but they are distinct concepts with different meanings. Many attacks carried out against the United States and its allies are labeled as 'terrorist attacks', but they are actually retaliatory in nature. For example, Imad Mughniyeh, who was considered one of the most wanted militants in the world after Osama Bin Laden (Biedermann, 2018), was believed by the US authorities to have been behind the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship. However, this was a retaliatory attack in response to the bombing in Tunis by Israel. The mainstream media, authorities, and agencies have often constructed the meaning of these attacks as terrorist attacks, but in reality, they are often retaliatory. Similarly, the United States has been accused of using this same tactic in its actions in Afghanistan and the Middle East, where many argue that the actions are retaliatory, not terrorist. Some experts argue that foreign fighters who joined organizations like Al-Qaeda in Iraq, did so largely in response to abuses at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib (Cockburn, 2009), rather than out of any particular ideological commitment.

Terrorism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with various meanings and interpretations. According to Parker and Sitter (2016), terrorist activities are not necessarily global in nature, but rather arise from different agendas of individuals and groups, such as socialism, nationalism, extremism, or exclusionism (Nations, 2018). In recent times, the world has seen an increase in protectionism and ultra-nationalism, with movements like 'America First', 'Brexit', and 'Modi's Hyper Nationalism'. To achieve these goals, some nation-states may use the tactic of sponsoring terrorism in other countries as a means of protecting their own countries from outside aggression. For instance, Iran has been known to use proxies in Yemen and the Middle East to gain hegemony in the region. Other nations also employ different methods to further their nationalistic designs. India and Pakistan are no exception to this, with India destabilizing Pakistan through sponsorship of terrorism in Baluchistan and Afghanistan, while Pakistan supports militants in Kashmir and Afghanistan to counter India's aggression. With the advent of digital technology, people are now

more aware and outspoken against their governments. They have realized that our survival in this world is interconnected, and even officers in the US military have begun to speak out against the egregious waging of War by the US in different countries for political ends. In the NATO summit 12, many veterans held a protest against the War on Terror and threw their service medals. One of them said, "I am here to throw Global War on Terror Service Medal in solidarity with the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. I'm deeply sorry for the destruction that we have done in those countries and around the globe. I am proud to stand on this stage with my fellow veterans and Afghan sisters. These were lies! I'm giving them back" (The TrUth, 2020). This illustrates how some individuals who have witnessed war crimes in these countries have begun to speak out against the true nature of these conflicts.

Research Method for Data Analysis

This research aimed to understand the complex and multifaceted nature of terrorism through a qualitative research method. The research design was qualitative in this study as it relied on opinions, attitudes, or behavior, rather than statistics or numbers. According to Harper (2011), a qualitative approach is a method of inquiry that is focused on understanding and interpreting the meaning of human experiences and behaviors. It is often used in the social sciences and humanities to study complex phenomena such as attitudes, beliefs, and motivations. Similarly, the researchers utilized qualitative approach based on social constructivism and employed different methods to collect data such as skimming and scanning techniques which are strategic and selective reading methods that focus on the main ideas of a text while skipping the text that provides details, stories, or extensive elaboration. The theoretical framework of this research was epistemological and the paradigm was interpretive. The aim was not to invent something new but to synthesize and interpret the data collected. In The Afghan, Forsyth (2206) has aptly portrayed the events related to terrorism, which is the burning question of the day. Moreover, there are passages in the novel which are sufficient for the analysis of the research questions.

Analysis of Data

The novel The Afghan by Forsyth (2006) highlights the topic of terrorism throughout its narrative. It starts with the depiction of a major terrorist attack in London and throughout the novel, there are multiple instances where the involvement of countries and their intelligence agencies in the creation of terrorism is depicted. This research aims to analyze these representations by closely examining the novel and identifying the key passages that show the involvement of political actors and their agencies in the instigation of terrorism. The research objectives are to understand the representation of political actors and their agencies and the instances where their involvement in the creation of terrorism is depicted in the novel The Afghan (2006).

"If the young Talib bodyguard had known that making the cell phone call would kill him, he would not have done it. However, he did not know, so he did, and it did". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 9)

Forsyth begins the novel by describing a terrorist attack that took place on the London subway system in 2005. The passage is written from a third-person point of view, allowing the narrator to provide an insight into the characters and events. The author chose to start the novel with this specific incident as it serves as an example of the true nature of terrorism. The passage is significant as it sets the tone for the rest of the novel, which focuses on the representation of political actors and their involvement in instigating terrorism. Additionally, the passage highlights the use of the word 'known' in a negative context with reference to the Taliban, emphasizing their lack of understanding of basic concepts and only knowing how to use weapons. This furthers the representation of political actors in the instigation of terrorism.

"I fight for Afghanistan", said the boy, and I also fight for Allah, Sheikh", he added". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 129)

Something like a cloud passed across the features of the Saudi. The Afghan realized that he might not have said what was wanted. Forsyth sheds light on the controversial topic of terrorism and the role of political actors and their agencies in instigating it. Through the use of the Third Person Selective Omniscient Point of View, the author delves into the events surrounding the 7/7 London bombing and its aftermath, highlighting the confusion and lack of understanding among those associated with the Taliban. The author also brings to attention the contradictory and ambiguous nature of the investigation into the bombing, with some reports suggesting the involvement of intelligence agencies in orchestrating the attack for their own political gain. Additionally, the novel examines the use of advanced weapons and bombs in the attack, drawing attention to the role of intelligence agencies in such terrorist activities.

In his novel, The Afghan, Forsyth (2006) highlights the use of NATO as an offensive tool rather than a defensive one through the portrayal of the Bosnian war. The war, which took place from 1992 to 1995, resulted in a significant number of deaths and forced displacement, with a particular focus on the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims. This event is depicted as one of the worst instances of ethnic cleansing in Europe since World War II.

"The NATO allies had again … term "genocide". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 152)

The text above highlights the controversial use of NATO's collective defense principles in the Bosnian war. Rather than only intervening when a member country is attacked or threatened, NATO became more involved in this war in the form of bombing raids. This raises questions about the true purpose of NATO's actions in this conflict. Additionally, it references the Bosnian war and its devastating impact, including the widespread ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims. The author emphasizes the significance of this event in the context of NATO's actions and its potential political motives.

"The NATO response … to try to govern the wreckage". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 153)

The NATO treaty, established during the Cold War, was intended for collective defense against potential aggression from the Soviet Union and its allies. However, it has been used for more

offensive and political purposes rather than just defense. In the Bosnian War that occurred from 1992 to 1995, a significant number of people were killed and a large portion of Bosnian Muslims were forcibly removed from their homes, known as ethnic cleansing. This was one of the worst instances of ethnic cleansing in Europe since World War II and is depicted in Forsyth's novel The Afghan (2006). This passage highlights the true nature of NATO, which is supposed to be based on collective security. As per Article 5 of the NATO charter, an attack on any member country is considered an attack on all members, thus, NATO is only supposed to intervene when its member countries are attacked or threatened. However, in the Bosnian conflict, NATO intervened even though its member countries were not attacked or threatened, instead, it was a bombing raid.

The main reason behind this intervention was to contain the influence of socialist Russia in Europe after the end of the Cold War. The disintegration of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of a new world order, where the United States aimed to increase its global presence and eliminate any remnants of Soviet ideologies. The leader of the Bosnian genocide, Milosevic, was from the Socialist Party of Serbia and held strong anti-western sentiments. The United States and its allies did not want socialist influence in Europe and therefore intervened in the Bosnian War. Additionally, it is also worth noting that during the Gulf War, NATO did not intervene despite the atrocities committed, this is because the authoritarian regimes were acceptable to the US and its allies, while socialist regimes were not in their interests.

The incident of Mike Martin's infiltration into the Taliban organization, posing as Izmat Khan, is a significant aspect of the novel that highlights the use of terrorism as a political tool. Martin, a retired military officer, uses his skills and knowledge to infiltrate the Taliban by taking on the identity of Izmat Khan, a prisoner held at Guantanamo Bay. This incident brings to light the manipulation of terrorism for political gain by different actors.

"On January 14, 2002, the first detainees arrived at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, from Kandahar. They were blindfolded, shackled, hungry, thirsty, and soiled. Izmat Khan was one of them". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 179)

The text highlights the deception and manipulation used by the intelligence agencies in their operations, specifically the use of infiltration as a tactic. The use of a retired agent in the guise of a prisoner highlights the extent to which the agencies are willing to go in order to achieve their objectives. Furthermore, the choice of words used in describing the prisoners and their treatment in Guantanamo Bay also highlights the inhuman and degrading conditions they were subjected to; further emphasizing the deception and manipulation used by the intelligence agencies. The passage also touches on the concept of the "regime of truth" as put forth by Michel Foucault (cited in Daniele Lorenzini, 2015), in which the authorities use power to control and manipulate the narratives and perceptions of the public.

"An hour later, two men entered the ward … "I must go," he said". (Forsyth, 2006: pp. 129-130)

In The Afghan (2006), a key element of the story revolves around the infiltration of Mike Martin, a retired agent, into the Taliban under the guise of Izmat Khan, a prisoner at Guantanamo Bay. The setting of this passage takes place in a hospital in Afghanistan, where both Martin and Khan are receiving treatment for injuries sustained during a mission to attack the Soviet Union.

During their stay at the hospital, they are visited by prominent figures within the Taliban, including Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. However, despite this direct interaction with the leadership of the organization, they remain unaware of Martin's true identity. This highlights the complexity and secrecy surrounding the use of infiltrators in warfare and the difficulties of determining who is a true believer and who is not. It also emphasizes the idea that even the leaders of the Taliban may not have a full understanding of their own ranks, they are 'blindfolded' in the sense that they are unaware of who truly belongs to their group and who does not.

The CIA, widely recognized as a leading intelligence agency, has been criticized for its use of hardball tactics, including promoting violence and instigating terrorism around the world. Despite its reputable status, the agency has been marred by scandals and controversies stemming from its covert operations and focus on gathering information and conducting operations against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. These actions, which often take place behind closed doors, have caused the CIA to be viewed in a negative light. The CIA's actions have resulted in a loss of trust and credibility among the public and other countries. The agency's controversial tactics have led to the questioning of its true intentions and the moral and ethical implications of its actions. The CIA's history of promoting violence and planting terrorism has cast a dark shadow over its reputation and legacy. Additionally, it is important to note that terrorism is often politically motivated, and the CIA's actions in this regard may have been part of a larger strategy to achieve specific political goals.

"He recalled the objections of Dr. Ben Jolley Any infiltrator with a chance of getting away with it inside Al Qaeda would have to look the part and speak the part". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 76)

The text highlights the realism and truth behind the actions and motivations of so-called terrorist groups, as well as the potential for collusion among intelligence agencies across the globe. It emphasizes that terrorism is often politically motivated, and that the actions of intelligence agencies may be part of a larger strategy to achieve specific political goals. The passage sheds light on the complex and multifaceted nature of terrorism and intelligence operations, and the potential for hidden motivations and agendas.

"Both men knew that by then, the British prime minister in Downing Street had given his friend in the White House his word on total cooperation from the British side on tracking down Project Stingray". (Forsyth, 2006: p. 79)

The text highlights the catastrophic relationship between intelligence agencies and terrorist groups, particularly in third-world countries. It specifically mentions the report of the Koran Committee and how Mark Gumienny, the deputy director of CIA, began a mission to infiltrate a spy into the

Taliban. The passage also raises questions about the authenticity and credibility of organizations such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, and Yemen Houthi Rebels as they might be filled with infiltrators who use these groups against their enemies and diverging countries. The passage suggests that there is a hidden political motivation behind these terrorist groups. The passage also creates ambiguity in the reader's mind and questions the entire organization of Al-Qaeda and other similar groups. It highlights how the intelligence agencies might use these groups for their own political agenda, which ultimately raises moral and ethical questions about their actions. This passage is ironic and has a symbolic meaning, and it is a question mark on their lightness and credibility of the Al-Qaeda.

Findings and Conclusion

The Afghan by Forsyth (2006) offers a unique perspective on the topic of terrorism, as it is written by an author who has firsthand knowledge of intelligence agencies and their operations. The author's background as a spy for MI6 and journalist who covered major conflicts adds credibility to the representation of political actors and their involvement in instigating terrorism. The novel is not only a work of fiction but also a commentary on the reality of the world. The novel also delves into the moral and ethical implications of the actions of intelligence agencies in instigating terrorism. It raises questions about the true intentions of these agencies and the extent to which they are willing to go in order to achieve their goals. The representation of political actors in the novel is not limited to intelligence agencies, but also to countries and their governments. The novel highlights how countries use terrorist groups as a tool to achieve their political goals, which ultimately raises moral and ethical questions about their actions.

The novel also highlights the use of advanced weapons and bombs in terrorist attacks and the role of intelligence agencies in providing them. This is significant as it sheds light on the true nature of terrorist attacks and the extent to which intelligence agencies are involved in them. It also portrays the representation of NATO in the Bosnian war, which emphasizes the motivation behind the war which is by all means political. This is important as it highlights how motivation being political in nature behind terrorist attacks is not limited to terrorist groups only but also to countries and their governments.

The research findings indicate that terrorism is not a spontaneous occurrence, but rather a constructed concept that is utilized for various purposes, including political, ideological, religious and retaliatory motives. The study highlights the impact of this construct on countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, which often serve as battlegrounds in the fight against terrorism. The research also finds that terrorism is frequently employed as a Cold War tactic, with nations utilizing terrorist groups to further their own interests. In the novel, the main character, Mike Martin, infiltrates the Taliban under the guise of Izmat Khan and participates in various attacks on the Soviet Union. Additionally, the research finds that citizens of war-torn countries are often used as pawns in the power struggles of larger nations.

Moreover, the study reveals that terrorism is frequently utilized as a political tool, with intelligence agencies playing a significant role in its creation and manipulation. The research discovers that terrorist groups are often unaware of their true purpose and their ideologies are often, if not always, derived from religious texts. Some groups are fighting retaliatory wars, while others are fighting for ideological reasons. The research also finds that the US is involved in creating terrorism through its monopoly on resources and power projection. The US is often testing the accuracy and precision of its advanced technologies on other countries. The findings of the study reveal and emphasize that the motivations behind terrorism are political in nature since intelligence agencies and countries create and manipulate it in the pretext of social security, peace, and national and international integrity.

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