

A GLANCE AT TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORIES

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Abstract

The problem of conceptualizing terrorist organization is still a controversial issue, even though it has been taken place in the literature heavily. In this essay, terrorist organizations will be approached in the context of organizational theories. Terrorist organizations will be introduced as exceptional structures besides being consistent with most of the organizational theories, departing from them in terms of strategies they adapt and life expectancy they experience. According to some theories such as institutional theory, population ecology approach and system theories, although being claimed to be excluded from the system by other organizations for they do not resemble and even threaten the existence of others and although being wanted to be eliminated by the system, terrorist organizations can be able to survive more than these theories contend.

Key Words: Terror, Terrorist Organizations, Organizational Theories.

Terör Örgütlerine Örgüt Teorileri Perspektifinden Bir Bakış

Özet

Terör örgütlerinin kavramsallaştırması sorunu, her ne kadar akademik yazında geniş olarak yer almış olsa da, hala tartışmalı bir konudur. Bu makalede, terör örgütleri, örgüt teorileri bağlamında ele alınacaktır. Terör örgütleri, pek çok örgütsel teoriyle uyumlu olmakla beraber, benimsedikleri stratejiler ve yaşam süreleri bakımından bu teorilerden uzaklaşan istisnai yapılar olarak tanıtılacaklar. Kurumsal teori, popülasyon ekolojisi yaklaşımı ve sistem teorisine göre diğer örgütlere benzemedikleri ve onların varlıklarını tehdit ettiklerinden ötürü sistemin dışına itilmek ve hatta elimine edilmek istenmelerine rağmen, terör örgütleri, bu teorilerin iddia ettiğinden çok daha fazla hayatta kalabilmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Terör, Terör Örgütleri, Örgüt Teorileri.

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars from different branches of social sciences have engaged in an effort to unravel the phenomenon of terrorist organizations by introducing new theoretical approaches and conceptualizations. But to date, most of the academic studies carried out related to terrorist organizations surprisingly have focused specifically on how the threats and damages of these organizations on societies could be managed. In other words, not the organization itself but the effects of these organizational activities on their environments have been the subject of these studies.

The most important factor underlying this situation is presumably the limited scope of studying the structures and characteristics of these organizations due to their hidden features (Merari & Friedland, 1985; Smith & Morgan, 1994). Another issue that seems to be problematic regarding terrorist organizations is that the extensive literature in the field of terrorism falls into the trap of being ideologically biased (Deutsch, 1953; Gellner, 1983; Huntington, 1968; Horowitz, 1985). Dealing with these organizations objectively and examining them in terms of their organizational characters, structures and mechanisms would be a late, but a significant contribution to the literature instead of identifying these organizations subjectively on the basis of their negative effects on society. So, this study seeks to move beyond generating a simple classification of these organizations attempting to locate these organizations among organizational theories.

In this paper, the reality of terrorist organizations will be analyzed from the paradigm of organizational theories. It will be stressed that even though these organizations perform planning, organizing, executing and controlling functions in order to achieve a particular goal as all other organizations do, within the context of determining and practicing a strategy, apart from any other organization, they adopt a peculiar strategy intended for threatening and even eliminating the presence of supra and infra systems they live in. But despite the strategy pursued by the general system excluding these organizations out of the system, they are able to live more than the institutional, adaptation and system theories estimated.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. EMERGENCE OF TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Terrorism is a very complex phenomenon from the perspective of emergence. It is difficult to make generalizations about terrorist organizations since there are so many types of these organizations. Different types of terrorist organizations also have different causes of emergence. It may be too simplistic and erroneous to explain an act of terrorism by a single cause (Hudson, 1999: 15). Since terrorist organizations are the products of diverse and divergent social,

political and economic conditions, the causes of emergence need to be searched through these multi-dimensional lenses, including historical, cultural, economic, social and political factors.

However, despite these difficulties, there have been so many attempts to place these organizations on a firm theory, including an explanatory definition and causes of their emergence. The basic classical argument for the emergence of terrorist organizations is that the modernization process had a harrowing effect on society and created a desire to weaken the legitimacy of the state and therefore, promoted terrorist organizations to surface out for achieving this desire (Deutsch, 1953, Huntington, 1968; Horowitz, 1985).

Different levels of explanations are articulated when analyzing the emergence of terrorist organizations as individual, group, national or organizational level. While psychological arguments are usually made at the individual and group levels such as those scrutinizing why individuals join and stay in a terrorist group (Crenshaw, 1990; Sageman, 2004; Hudson, 1999), arguments at the societal and national level concentrate on the relations among cultural, economic, historical and particularly socio-political characteristics of the society such as democratization, legitimacy and ethnic character.

Crenshaw asserts that there are some social and political conditions that make terrorism to occur (Crenshaw, 1990). According to Crenshaw (1990), the preconditions for terrorism can be listed as modernization, industrialization, urbanization, discrimination and lack of opportunity for political participation. Many authors hold the same view with Crenshaw that modernization process had a harrowing effect on the social fabric of society that promotes the emergence of terrorist organizations through the weakening of the legitimacy of the state (Deutsch 1953; Gellner 1964; Huntington 1968; Rokkan & Urwin 1982; Horowitz 1985; Giddens, 1990). State legitimacy refers to popular support and belief of the citizens of a country regarding the political system (Forsythe, 1993). It involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain a popular belief among its citizens that the existing political institutions and actors are the most appropriate for the society (Lipset, 1963). Engene (1998) supported the view that domestic terrorism in western democratic states is systematically related to problems of state legitimacy.

While some authors claim that a democratic government system is frequently associated with a lower likelihood of terrorism because it has various alternative channels for self-expression and propaganda through which people's demands and dissatisfactions can be directed (Engene, 1998; Eckstein & Gurr 1975; Rummel, 1995; Gissinger & Gleditsch 1999), the actual effects of the democratization on the terrorism are under dispute (Carothers, 2003: 403).

Poverty and income inequality regarded as other basic modernization-related factors that has been claimed to be conducive to the emergence of terrorist organizations both in developed and less-developed countries. Some authors, on the other hand, contend that most terrorist activities occur particularly within the poor or underdeveloped countries, and consider poverty and state weakness as the most significant and robust risk predictors for terrorism compared to socio-economic inequality, lack of democracy, or discrimination factors (Collier & Hoeffler, 2001). Others supported this argument by revealing that economic development in a country reduces the likelihood of trans-national terrorism and recommended promoting the economic development and reducing the poverty as an important tool for combating terrorism (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: 88; Li and Schaub, 2004: 253). However empirical studies have not yet been able to link terrorism to either poverty or to any other social, economic, political or psychological factors that may be construed as a peculiar cause on its own (Crenshaw, 2003).

On the other hand, Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens (2006) argue that many of the previously identified “causes” of terrorism emergence can be viewed in terms of human rights. For them, other external factors may only serve as stimulants for terrorist activities. Looking at the emergence of terrorist organizations around the world, many times it is observed that terrorism occurs in conjunction with the violation of basic human rights confirming Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens (2006).

In short, there seems to be many factors asserted to be the key responsible for the emergence of terrorist organizations. But which of these factors come to front as dominant is totally bound to the contingencies of the organization where it rise up.

B. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Sauter and Carafano (2005: 66) combined the definitions of terrorism from different sources and found that many of them contained some common elements:

- To be conducted by sub-national groups,
- Basic strategy is to create fear and panic in society through perpetrating a widespread and fierce violence towards defenseless civil targets,
- Aim to affect the public opinion with their activities,
- Main goal is to change the political order,
- Basic drive is political, religious or ideological,

- Based on criminal actions.

We will expand these characteristics with the followings: the secrecy in their structure, not to be attached to any social norm and institutions such as law and morality, maintaining sources from illegal ways, to be called as “terrorist organizations” by other organizations not by themselves and to be able to use advanced technology. Now, let us take a look at some prominent characteristics of terrorist organizations.

Terrorist Organizations are secret organizations. Secrecy and uncertainty are among the most striking features of terrorism (Ferracuti, 1982: 135). In order to survive and achieve success in their activities, terrorist organizations have to keep their mechanisms and structures hidden due to being perceived as a threat by all other organizations and considering all other organizations as a threat. If they are known and deciphered, that would mean they are in the process of disintegration.

Smith and Morgan (1994) emphasize the clandestine nature of terrorist organizations as one of the fundamental characteristics of these organizations. Leaderless cell type structures that consist of a few people with nick names and secret codes used in communication could be cited as some of the examples of stealthy structure of terrorist groups. These cell type networks including several terrorist cells which do not have any connections with each other and do not bound to a hierarchy give terrorist organizations more secrecy.

Their basic drive is political, religious or ideological. Terrorist organizations are neither charity nor totally economically driven organizations. They can have ideological, religious or political motives. The purpose of terrorism, according to organization members, is mostly for promoting the well-being of society. So, the murders committed and the activities performed are the distress which should be stood on behalf of the well-being of society. These are called social-oriented terror activities (Zakaria, 2003: 142).

However, some scientists have defined these organizations not as profit-making organizations but as interest groups which have economical motives. According to the rational choice perspective (Landes, 1978; Sandler, Tschirhart, & Cauley, 1983; Crenshaw, 1990; Enders & Sandler, 2000; Frey, 2004), terrorism has been placed under the frame of “*homo economicus*” for understanding human behaviors. Accordingly, this approach considers that terrorist organizations usually act and watch for their own interests. These interests could not be just for income or wealth, but also can be for welfare, power, leadership and reputation.

Their main goal is to change the political order. Although innocent people or noncombatants suffer from the activities of terrorist organizations (Stern, 2003), the real target is, in fact, either state organizations or the group of states. Terrorists aim to incapacitate government directly or indirectly (Ferracuti, 1982:

135). People who do not have the required military and political tools for fighting against political authorities might adapt asymmetric war method. These organizations which cannot fight against states through a direct war, pursue asymmetric methods of war.

They are not attached to any social norms or institutions such as law and morality. Probably this is the most important feature which distinguishes terrorist organizations from other organizations. Terrorist organizations do not act legally as others do, and they are not linked to any social norm and institutions. When compared to other organizations, this provides terrorist organizations an opportunity to move freely in a wider area. Therefore, they accept every means and methods as legal in order to achieve the target. But, at the same time, this feature also prevents terrorist organizations from attaining a broad public acceptance by the community members.

Their basic strategy is to create fear and panic in society through perpetrating a widespread and fierce violence towards defenseless civil targets. One of the accepted ways of distinguishing terrorism from other forms of violence is the deliberate and systematic use of coercive intimidation (Wilkinson & Stewart 1987). Ruthlessness and extraordinary violence are regarded as the most essential elements for terrorists' success (Ferracuti, 1982: 135).

Laquer (1999) stated that the most important strategy of terrorist organizations was to create fear, doubt, stress and paranoia among citizens. Terrorist organizations use violence against civil and defenseless targets which are under the protection of governments in order to influence governments and public or force them to demonstrate certain type of behaviors. Boyle (2003: 156) argues that terrorist organizations lead to changes in policy on the part of the terrorized party by causing fear and demoralization. Moreover, they use this violence untimely and extensively in order to create a permanent disturbance and discomfort. This strategy is considered to be more important than the physical and material damages these organizations cause (Stern, 2003).

Terrorist organizations aim to affect public opinion with their activities. Although the main targets of terrorist organizations are governments and political will, these organizations try to influence public opinion and put pressure on political will by affecting the public opinion in order to impose their demands to political authorities.

They achieve their purposes by paralyzing daily life, generating common fear and spreading the feel of insecurity among ordinary people (Cooper, 2001: 883). The purpose in creating fear among people is to generalize the thought that everybody could be the target of terrorist activities. The public opinion which is distressed from the violent and pervasive activities of terrorist organizations come

to a position in which the governments are urged to adhere to the demands of terrorist organizations in order to escape from this uncomfortable situation.

Terrorist organizations provide financing through illegal means. Above, we mentioned that terrorist organizations commit their activities in illegal areas. Similarly, they provide the money they need through illegal means, such as drug trafficking and smuggling. Hence, they can easily provide the money needed for their widespread organizational activities. The ability of providing easy and quick financing illegally gives them a serious advantage in terms of enrollment and employment of the sympathizers they seek.

They do not define themselves as terrorists. On the contrary, these organizations are called as "terrorist organizations" by other organizations. No activity is a terrorist activity by itself. The activities are evaluated as terrorist activities by the targets of these activities and general public opinion. Sometimes it is really hard to assess whether an organization is a terrorist or a freedom fighter organization.

To be able to use advanced technology. Technological innovations have provided terrorist groups with new and unprecedented means of destruction, first and foremost the introduction of dynamite and explosives (Crenshaw, 1990: 115). Significant technological developments such as the expansion of using internet and other communication channels are thought to be critical tools for the development of terrorist organizations.

II. TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF ORGANIZATION THEORIES

In this part, we will investigate which organization theory can be adapted in understanding terrorist organizations. Of course, a terrorist organization cannot be explained completely with just one theory. This is also valid for all other organizations. Every organization can reflect some features of organization theories in different levels.

Some authors contend that the determinants of strategies terrorist organizations pursue are organizational rather than political or ideological (Oots 1986, Rapoport, 1977). The organizational approach suggests that terrorist organization's main goal is 'survival', like any other organization whether public or private (Olson, 1998; Oots, 1986). This approach explains terrorist organizations' behaviors as struggle for survival usually in a competitive environment (Crenshaw, 1990). From the organizational point of view, terrorist organizations are like firms competing in an environment in which they simply strive to survive and accomplish their organizational goals.

What makes the investigations harder in studying terrorist organizations is that these organizations' acts are assumed to appear inconsistent, erratic and unpredictable (Crenshaw 1990). They do not consider cost and benefit analysis to be purely political or just for economic motives. So, it is difficult to explain the actions of terrorist organizations by just one organizational theory since we have little or no information about the inner processes of these organizations.

Now, we will analyze the most popular organizational theories and assess which one of them reflects the characteristics of these organizations more. The applicability of fundamental management theories on the phenomenon of terrorist organizations will be discussed.

A. CLASSICAL ORGANIZATION THEORIES-TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Classical organization theories have focused on the formal organizational structure and methods to increase pure efficiency other than the human factor in an organization (Taylor, 1947; Weber, 1947; Fayol, 1949). Their basic point was rationalism. They asserted that organizational principles were universal and valid in all organizations.

Terrorist organizations carry various features such as enrolling members based on the merits, training, commanding, promoting incentive system, supervision and coordination, as all other organizations do. But, these organizations are differentiated from other organizations on the point of standardization. There are no standards for structuring and functioning within these organizations. So, they exhibit unique and extraordinary structures and behaviors time to time.

When they are compared to bureaucratic organizations, before all else, there is not a system of procedures consisting of formal rules and regulations in terrorist organizations. Furthermore, the authority used in terrorist organizations is not considered to be legal. These organizations survive with the human factor. If their leaders die or leave the organization, they usually enter in the process of disintegration. This type of leadership is neither legal nor based on a standard election process, but it is a charismatic one.

When being handled with these aspects, it can be argued that terrorist organizations carry the basic qualifications of classical organization theories, but they do not match up with these theories exactly. Terrorist organizations do not have any standard organizational structures and they do not operate on formal systems or rules. They go on with individuals without any regular basis.

B. NEOCLASSICAL ORGANIZATION THEORIES-TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS.

The classical approaches stressed the importance of formal organizations. Based on the Hawthorne Experiments, neoclassical theorists stressed the importance of individual or group behavior and emphasized social or human relations rather than the formal organization (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1943). Looking at terrorist organizations, it is apparent that the focus is not the buildings, machines or other facilities; but the people living in those organizations. Usually, the organization itself is just composed of a small group of people without a particular working place or any particular equipment. Sometimes, people living in other organizations for their whole life can form a terrorist organization just for a joint action through using an effective communication between each other. From this point of view, terrorist organizations could be associated with neoclassical theories in one way or another.

“*Exploitative Authoritative Model*” which is the first system of System 1-4 model of Rensis Likert from neo-classical organization theories seem to match up with the structure of terrorist organizations somewhat (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007). In terrorist organizations, not only the people outside the organization but also their own members are exploited intensely. Their deficiencies in human rights flunk these organizations out in terms of giving value to human. However, a strong and unquestionable authoritarian structure prevails in these organizations. This structure is established on discipline and obedience to authority in a level which is close to military organizations.

Looking at organizational structure as intergroup connections, this model is at times in harmony with the structuring of terrorist organizations. Actually, these groups do not know even each other in some terrorist organizations. Every group only knows its own members and communicates with them.

C. CONTINGENCY AND SITUATIONAL APPROACHES-TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

The contingency theory suggests that there is no ideal organization structure and type of behavior which is valid at any time and any place for the organizations in order to survive and thrive (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1973). The situational approach is also based on the parallel belief that there is not a universal strategy for all situations (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Woodward, 1965; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). These approaches defend that everything related to the organization depends on conditions and situations. Organization structure is a dependent variable. This variable is determined by internal and external independent variables. The most important independent variables are technology, environment, and size.

When it is thought that terrorist organizations show differences according to time and place, behave and take shape according to environmental conditions, it can be argued that terrorist organizations are in harmony with the assumptions of contingency theory. But, there is a slight difference. The independent variables mentioned above consist of unique factors such as contra-terror tactics, political atmosphere, and people's attitudes towards these organizations.

D. ADAPTATION THEORY-TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Institutionalism suggests that the structures and behaviors of organizations are determined by institutional beliefs, expectations, and pressures in their vicinities (Scott, 2004). As a natural result of this hypothesis, it is accepted that the structures and mechanisms of organizations acting in the same environment would resemble each other (Powell & Dimaggio, 1991). This resemblance is called "isomorphism".

However, it cannot be said that the operating manner and the structure of terrorist organizations supports this theory. Because terrorist organizations are the exceptional organizations which emerge as a reaction to legal institutional structures and they want to change or eliminate these formal institutional structures instead of adopting institutional directions and pressures. Moreover, these organizations do not show similarities with other organizations acting in the same environment. Rather than, they have closed organizational structures.

Population ecology examines and deals with the organizations as a group living in an environment competing with each other in order to survive (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Environment retains or eliminates organizations in a process resembling natural selection (Carroll & Hannan, 2000). Therefore, in the same ecosystem, there appears to be a similarity among the organizations which manage to survive by adapting themselves to environmental conditions. This is called "isomorphism" (Hannan et. al., 2007). As it is seen, there are similarities between population ecology approach and institutionalism approaches. Both of them give right to life to the organizations which adapt to the environment.

If the situation is evaluated in terms of terrorist organizations, the environment mentioned here is the state organization which is positioned in the first place, and then law, culture, economy, religion, ethnic structure, and so on factors come as a part of the environment. It is clear that terrorist organizations operate for modification or elimination of the environment rather than adapting to it. In other words, they struggle with the environment. But, if it is accepted as a prediction that these organizations will be abolished by the environment sooner or later, then it can be argued that adaptation approach matches up with terrorist organizations. But in terms of life expectancy, sometimes, terrorist organizations do live much longer than the adaptation theories predict or indicate.

But, for sure, it cannot be claimed that terrorist organizations show similarities with other organizations living in the same environment. Therefore, as a result, it is understood that terrorist organizations partially overlap with the institutionalism and population ecology which are two theories of adaptation approach.

System approach suggests that every organization should be dealt with in a particular environment by establishing connections with interconnected sub-systems (Senge, 1990). A system is comprised of components, functions and processes (Albrecht, 1983; Bakke, 1959). System approach examines the parts composing the whole system and the interrelations within the parts. It deals with the organizations as open systems which have relationships with their environments (Capra, 1997).

It can easily be contended that terrorist organizations are closed systems in this respect. Neither they have strong relations with the outer systems in their vicinities nor do they have close relations with the sub-systems of their own organizations. Therefore, they disconnect from infra and supra systems, and even they are in conflict with many other systems in their environments.

Terrorist organizations have gained the ability of surviving in spite of the system and environment pressure. But, that does not mean this situation goes on like that. In other words, the presence of terrorist organizations ends after a certain period as happened to the other organizations. Circumstantially, it is possible to perceive this termination as predictions suggested by adaptation and system approaches, or as a result of their own dynamics.

In other words, terrorist organizations have extraordinary and inadaptible structures within the general system, but they cannot be coped with easily and they cannot be eliminated in a short period of time by the system. It is thought that this situation is due to some unique features of terrorist organizations such as to be hidden, not to be attached or bound to law, moral and any other social norms or restrictions and have no financial difficulties.

Indeed, not to be attached to the rules of social regulations provides these organizations an incredible ease of motion and freedom of movement. Furthermore, they do not have any financial difficulties since they get financing from illegal means. In spite of the fact that terrorist organizations do not adapt themselves to ecosystems, supra and infra systems they live in, they can surprisingly survive much longer than other organizations due to the features mentioned above.

E. RATIONAL APPROACH-TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Some authors stated that efficiency of an organization can be equal to their rationality (Simon et. al., 1950; Waldo, 1984). Organizational rationality is

understood as the economic efficiency of the organization. They take the concept 'efficiency' in terms of tangible results. But on the contrary, Golembiewski (1965) stresses the importance of some other properties such as morality.

Adapting the rational approach to the terrorist organizations, it could be argued that these organizations consciously prefer their strategies and make their decisions rationally in order to attain their goals much more effectively. They are goal oriented and rank their strategies according to their goals and their preferences. For example Crenshaw argues that terrorism is definitely not a product of individual decisions or personal developments, but rather the result of a group process and its rational decisions (Crenshaw, 1990). Despite the tactics they use and the strategies they pursue seem to most as inhuman and cruel, these behaviors could lead them to achieve their goals (Brannan et. al., 2001; Laqueur, 1987). In other words, these behaviors can easily be described as rational from this organizational perspective (Enders & Sandler, 2002; Hoffman, 1998). Rational choice theory would also help to understand and explain terrorist organizations' structures as chaos and complexity approaches would do.

F. CHAOS AND COMPLEXITY THEORIES-TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Some authors argued that although classical management structures and principles may be suitable for the organizations living in stable environments, they would not be effective in today's complex and turbulent environments (McElwee, 1998; Morris & Lewis, 1995; Stout, 1981). Chaos and complexity approaches refer to the nature where nonlinear relations operate by dynamic systems rather than linear and simple relations. Comprising of both components of stability and instability, organizations fix in a surprisingly balanced manner leading to deterministic chaos where a new organizational order comes up though it seems as if chaos rules around. Thus, all things tend to self-organize sooner or later into systems (Kelly & Allison, 1999: 5) in a manner that is difficult to predict and comprehend.

Arguments of chaos and complexity theories seem to have explanatory tools that could be used to understand and explain terrorist organizations. In a chaotic state, the impact of a small variable change could easily create a dramatically enormous effect (also known as butterfly effect) on an organization which is hard to predict beforehand. For this, additional theoretical and empirical studies are required in the field of organizational research on terrorist organizations because this research area is really sparse.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to general literature which identifies terrorist organizations in the context of effects on society and define them subjectively, these organizations are examined in this paper objectively within the frame of organizational theories and approaches. It is emphasized that terrorist organizations, in spite of having similar structures and mechanisms with other organizations in many aspects, differ from them in terms of various strategies adopted by these organizations successfully such as eliminating and disposing of the environment and the system they live in in spite of the pressures applied heavily by the environment and the system on them.

So, terrorist organizations do not support the arguments of institutional theory because they emerge and act as a reaction to the institutional structures and want to change or eliminate these structures instead of adopting them. These organizations have gained the ability of surviving in spite of the systematic and environmental pressures on them. Contrary to the adaptation and systemic approaches, terrorist organizations cannot be eliminated easily by ecosystem and can survive much longer than the theories estimates in spite of their anti-system and anti-environment strategies.

Although terrorist organizations represent many characteristics of classical organizational theories, they differ from them in terms of standardization because terrorist organizations exhibit unique and extraordinary type of conducts which are indeterminate and hard to predict beforehand. As to the formal and standard rules and procedures, these organizations again fall short of the criteria which bureaucratic organizations have. Furthermore, despite being closed system organizations, they show a successful conditional approach by modifying themselves and they can get results which are consistent to their objectives.

The characteristics of neo classical theories stressing the importance of individuals and groups rather than formal organization seem to match up to some extent to the terrorist organizations. With regards to authority, there is a charismatic leader equipped with an exploitative and authoritative leadership model. The assertions of contingency theory also seem to fit to the conducts and strategies of terrorist organizations for they adapt tactics according to the environmental conditions and time. They keep pace with the arguments of rational approach shaping and pursuing the strategies and goals of the organization intentionally and rationally.

Terrorist organizations have a closed system structure together with the basic features of classical systems. However, their basic properties are to be hidden, not to be bound to law, ethics and other social norms. They threaten to eliminate the presence of every other organization except their presence. They perpetrate violence against every kind of target in their vicinities, intended to reach

their goals. Let alone adapt and resemble to ecosystems, they go after the purpose of eliminating or changing the system and the environment they live in. But, contrary to the predictions of organization theories, they can survive much longer than these theories suggest due to the properties they have adapted. Therefore, they cannot be eliminated easily by the system.

Keeping in mind the chaotic and turbulent characteristics of the environment surrounding and struggling terrorist organizations and the ambiguous and mysterious structures and tactics of these organizations, organic approaches with respect to management such as chaos and complexity theories would add significant and original contributions to understanding and conceptualizing these organizations better.

This paper was an attempt to fill a gap in the literature as to the conceptualization of terrorist organizations from a perspective of organizational theories. It is hoped that this study will initiate new endeavors by conceptualizing terrorism and terrorist organizations from the organizational point of view more in depth.

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