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The Dilemma of Terrorist Retaliations Against Schools in Sectarian Conflict Regions: The Case of Lebanon

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ABATRACT

Islamic terrorist attacks on schools in regions wracked by sectarian conflict and political instability have soared for the last decade, disrupting educational processes and causing traumatic injuries. This article discusses key motives for terrorists to target schools and argues that the recent escalation of war against Islamic terrorist groups will stimulate brutal retaliations on soft civilian targets including schools. The article demonstrates that the lack of school protection strategies, the sectarian division and political conflict, the growing capabilities of ISIS, and the Syrian sectarian war have increased terrorist attacks in Lebanon and could further lead to ruthless retaliation against schools.

KEYWORDS

Educational facilities; lebanon; middle east; schools; sectarian conflict; retaliation; terrorism

Introduction

For the last few decades, communities in Middle Eastern countries have suffered tremendously from sectarian violence and barbaric terrorist attacks which have severely impacted individuals' lives, horrified communities, degraded the quality of education, and caused a great number of fatalities. The absence of political stability in many parts of the Middle East in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, which is a revolutionary movement of violent and nonviolent demonstrations and protests and civil wars in the Arab world that began on December 18, 2010, has led to considerable chaos and a sharp increase in terrorist activities. Globally, the number of suicide bombings almost doubled in 2014 from the previous year. According to a comprehensive report from the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies, at least 3,400 people were killed in such attacks in 2014, compared to 2,200 in 2013. Suicide bombings totalled 592 in 2014, up from 305 in 2013. The countries with the most suicide bombings in 2014 were Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Libya (Rosner, Yogev, & Schweitzer, 2014). This upward trend is expected to continue in 2015 because of the instability in several countries, the increasing numbers of sectarian and ethnic conflicts and the growing strength and capabilities of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al-Qaida.

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Educational facilities in regions of conflict and insecurity have suffered violent attacks driven by a variety of reasons and motives, leading to the closure of schools, the destruction of school buildings and the deaths of students and staff. The growing number of terrorist attacks on educational facilities during the past decade in numerous African, Middle Eastern, and South and South East Asian countries has become a global challenge (Miller, 2014; O'Malley, 2011). A recent report shows that 9,600 attacks that involve the deliberate use of violence in ways that disrupt and deter provision of or access to education occurred in 70 countries between 2009 and 2013 (Coughlan, 2014a). These attacks on students, teachers, and buildings were not accidental or arbitrary, but they appeared to be a new retaliatory strategy adopted by terrorist groups to inflict physical losses, terrorize communities, disrupt education, and pressure governments to grant concessions. Terrorist attacks on educational infrastructures have especially traumatic effects because of the fear they generate and the losses they cause. The horrific scenes of dead children's blood-covered bodies can humiliate governments, frustrate communities, and accelerate the granting of concessions. The pattern of making concessions to terrorist organizations over the past two decades might have encouraged terrorist groups to pursue even more ambitious attacks on civilian and public facilities (Pape, 2003).

For the past decade, the majority of Islamic terrorist attacks have been concentrated in three main regions: the Middle East, South and South East Asia, and Africa. Although the vast majority of attacks have been directed against military and other civilian infrastructures, uncoordinated attacks have occasionally targeted schools, school buses and students in Pakistan, Israel, India, Afghanistan, Thailand, Syria, Nigeria, Yemen, and other countries. Recently, attacks on educational infrastructures have become more frequent and more coordinated, particularly in Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand, and Afghanistan, where the right to education has been deliberately targeted, students killed or abducted, and the educational process disrupted. However, in Middle Eastern countries, attacks on schools and students remain sporadic and triggered mostly by sociopolitical issues, most recently by the growing sectarian tension and violence across Arab countries.

Therefore, determining the motives behind attacks on educational facilities could facilitate the development of preventive measures and the implementation of intervention security strategies to reduce the impacts of terrorism on education and its infrastructures. However, a comprehensive understanding of the motives behind Islamic terrorism cannot be achieved without taking into consideration the complex interactions of socioreligious and sociopolitical aspects and their influences on the individual's perception and behavior in the context of a collectivistic culture. This article aims first to provide explanations of the motives driving Islamic terrorist groups' intentions to attack civilian and educational facilities. Second, this article demonstrates that the sectarian division of Lebanon, the engagement of Hezbollah in the Syrian civil war and the rise of ISIS have increased the likelihood of such tragic attacks occurring in Lebanese territory.

Motives behind the rise of Islamic terrorism

Terrorism can be defined as "acts of violence intentionally perpetrated on civilian noncombatants with the goal of furthering some ideological, religious or political objective" (Borum, 2007). Scholars investigating the roots and motives of terrorism have suggested that Islamic terrorism is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions and persistent feelings of indignity and frustration (Berrebi, 2007; Juergensmeyer, 2000; Krueger & Malečková, 2003). In the following section, the motives behind rising Islamic terrorism are scrutinized. Have hopelessness and anger driven by decades of deprivation, marginalization, humiliation, and other injustices been responsible for the rise of retaliation attacks on civilian targets committed by frustrated Islamic extremists?

Perceived injustices have long been cited among the chief motives that lead to terrorism. A desire for revenge can be a common reaction intended to remedy injustices against one or others (Crenshaw, 2001; Hacker, 1976). Justice theories and research confirm that emotions have direct impacts on the relationship between the experience of injustice and the tendency to retaliate (Allred, 2000; Bies & Tripp, 2002; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Emotions are the mechanism that can link perceptions of injustice and behavior (Weiss, 1999). For instance, anger can play a chief role in the relationship between injustice and retaliatory behaviors. Hostility, for example, is associated with the desire for revenge, directing action against the perpetrator, punishing behavior, and retaliatory impulses (Allred, 1999; Averill, 1982; Weiner, 1985). When a person experiences anger, he/she may engage in "anger-driven retaliation" in order to stop the transgressor's harmful behavior, prevent future occurrences, or "balance the scales" (Allred, 2000; Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, & Raia, 1997). Thus, anger can motivate individuals to become hostile and to act aggressively to deter future injustices (Bies & Tripp, 2002). Once these emotions are triggered, they can energize the individual to retaliate against the ones responsible for such injustice (Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005).

Gaining revenge can accomplish a range of goals for terrorist organizations, including redressing perceived injustices, restoring self-worth, deterring future injustice (Hassan, 2010), strengthening support, and helping recruitment. Perceived injustices can arise from economic, ethnic, racial, legal, political, religious, and social grievances held by individuals, groups, or institutions (Ross, 1993). Those who have been terrorized, suffered death and destruction caused by unjust governments and consequently feel helpless and hopeless have been shown to have a higher inclination to join terrorist groups and make terrorism a way of life (Akhtar, 1999; Field, 1979).

Acts of terrorism have been shown to be motivated by extreme humiliation caused by political injustice. Perceived injustices and humiliation are prominent in terrorists' biographies and personal histories (Borum, 2007). Humiliation is a complex, intense, personal, emotional experience of the destruction of historically and culturally grounded perceptions of self-worth, self-respect, and dignity. Evidence suggests that a sense of collective grievances, political marginalization, and

the violation of cultural codes of honor and shame can inflict humiliation. In addition, researchers have shown that periods of imprisonment and incarceration often produce sentiments of injustice, abuse, and humiliation (Della-Porta, 1992). Post, Sprinzak, and Denny (2003) found that the prison experience was intense, especially for Islamist terrorists, and reinforced negative perceptions of terrorist groups. Thus, life experience stands as one of several factors that motivate individuals to become terrorists.

The current literature on life experience emphasizes three strong, closely connected experiential themes—injustice, abuse, and humiliation—that might trigger terrorism. For instance, the publication of photographs of prisoner abuse committed by American troops in the Abu Ghraib prison were felt and seen to humiliate not only the Iraqi prisoners but all Iraqis. In the months after the photographs' release, daily suicide bombing attacks increased dramatically in Iraq (Hassan, 2010). Revenge for humiliation inflicted by an oppressor is an ancient cultural tradition with direct links to the current violence in the Middle East (Victoroff, 2005). The hopelessness arising from persistent political and economic oppression, humiliation, and social injustices in Islamic societies has increased young people's vulnerability to religious extremism and facilitated the process of radicalization and the transformation of extremists into terrorists. The widespread totalitarian form of government in Middle Eastern countries has contributed to the sense of frustration and hopelessness and accelerated the rise of extremist Islamic ideology in the Muslim world, which has fuelled the growth and success of terrorist organizations.

Islamic terrorist leaders have repeatedly blamed the plight of Muslim people on Western powers and aggressively accused local governments of committing injustices on their people. Perceived brutality and injustice serve as justification for committing retaliatory violence against government institutions, including civilian facilities (Borum, 2007). Terrorists frequently name injustices against Muslim countries committed by Western powers and the stripping of personal identity, dignity, security, and freedom by governments as motives for joining terrorist groups (Crenshaw, 1986; Post et al., 2003; Taylor & Quayle, 1994). In Osama bin Laden's November 2002 "Letter to America," he lists Al Qaeda's motives for the September 11, 2001, attack: Western support for military actions against Muslims in Somalia, for Russian atrocities against Muslims in Chechnya and for Indian oppression of Muslims in Kashmir; Israeli aggression against Muslims in Lebanon; the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia; U.S. support of Israel, and U.S. sanctions against Iraq (Plotz, 2001). This letter demonstrates the retaliatory motive behind the September 11 attacks. In addition, the largely unsuccessful 1993 bombing and cyanide gassing of the World Trade Center by Arab Muslims was seen as revenge for the 1991 American attack on Iraq, launched exactly two years earlier (Mylroie, 2000). Egypt provides another recent example of revenge motivating terrorist activities. When Egypt's Islamist President Mohammed Morsi was forced from power in 2013 and security forces cracked down on his Muslim Brotherhood supporters, imprisoning and humiliating them, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (Champions of Jerusalem), which has links to the Muslim Brotherhood, directed retaliation attacks against the Egyptian army and police. The

group has been involved in suicide bombings, drive-by shootings, assassinations, and beheadings (BBC, 2015). As well, a Canadian Islamic terrorist, who was identified to be Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, killed a ceremonial guard at Ottawa's war memorial and then burst into Parliament Hill on October 22, 2014, stated in a video message on a phone found in his abandoned car that he committed the attack in retaliation for Canadian military intervention in Afghanistan and the Canadian government's intention to send troops to Iraq. His statement expresses a desire for revenge for the West's military deployment in Afghanistan and Iraq (The-Daily-News, 2015). The downing of the Russian A321 passenger jet with 224 people on board en route from Egypt's Sharm-el-Sheikh to St. Petersburg on October 31 has been proclaimed by the ISIS as an act of retaliation. In a movie released by IS, a Slavic-looking man speaking both in Russian and Arabic, addresses President Vladimir Putin, warning the Russian leader that he would regret targeting ISIS in Syria. He threatens to continue taking down planes, invading countries, and killing people in retaliation for Russia's military operation in Syria. Thus, all the previously mentioned attacks including the recent disastrous Paris attacks have clearly demonstrated the retaliatory motives behinds the majority of terrorist attacks in Middle Eastern countries.

These groups' success in gaining support in their own communities has been limited by their rigid interpretations of Islamic law and the level of atrocities they have committed. However, such groups still pose tremendous threats and can launch massive attacks against civilian targets and destabilize countries. For instance, in the year of 2014, the ISIS gained momentum and recruited across borders and continents because of well-made propaganda portraying its militants as jihadists and heroic, victorious warriors. The rise of Islamist terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula, ISIS in Iraq and the Levant, the Taliban in south Asian countries, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis in Egypt, and Shabaab in Somalia, can be directly linked to the perception of political injustices, humiliation, hopelessness, and frustration caused by one or more factors, such as continual defeat, humiliation, and political oppression. Thus, revenge for deprivation, political marginalization, and humiliation stands as a prominent motive in the spread of Islamic extremism and a credible explanation of the global rise of Islamic terrorism.

Why are schools a high risk for attack as opposed to other soft targets?

With the growth of Islamic terrorism, the nature of terrorist targets has changed. In order to achieve political gain, terrorist groups direct their attacks on innocent civilians and symbolic value objects. However, attacks which result in a high number of civilian causalities and attract maximum media coverage become top priorities on the agenda of the most Islamic terrorist groups especially when the potential success is high. Terrorist groups consider the potential benefits of attacking a particular target as opposed to the cost needed for execution and the probability of success. In this context, definitions of "Hard" and "Soft" targets become useful. "Hard targets" are highly secured establishments that have often symbolic characters, such as military bases, airports, embassies, and government buildings. Despite the fact that

the potential success of terrorist attacks on hard targets is often low, terrorist groups have shown a deep desire for taking such risk (Kydd & Walter, 2006). On the other hand, soft targets represent unprotected and low security sites like busses, restaurants, schools, hotels, sporting events, and worship places where people congregate in large numbers. Unlike hard targets, which require the use of highly trained team of militants and exhaustive planning, information and resources, soft targets offer terrorist groups an advantage in that they can frequently be attacked by a single operative or small team using a simple attack plan. Thus, soft target attacks are usually easier to execute and have high rate of success that often result in severe emotional and physical impacts on civilian population.

Schools appear as attractive targets as opposed to other soft targets because they are defenseless, hold large numbers of children, and operate on predictable schedules (Dube, 2012), offering the potential for mass casualties. The difficulties involved in the development and implementation of strategies to protect school facilities and educational institutions against terrorism and the absence of effective precautionary measures to reduce the vulnerability of schools have increased the risk of terrorist attacks on school busses, school children, educators, students, and educational institutions. The recent terrorist attacks reveals the high risk of educational institutions and school children in region of armed and sectarian conflicts while provides basic understanding behind the deliberate attack of terrorist groups on educational facilities as oppose to other soft civilian targets. Although there is a wide variety of soft targets that attract terrorists, schools and educational facilities remain the most abundant and unprotected targets and have always attracted attacks by terrorist groups as the impact can be devastating in terms of damage and intimidation (Bradford & Wilson, 2013). Although attacks on educational facilities have inflicted property damages, physical injuries, and casualties, the exposure to such traumatic events have triggered negative publicity and left severe psychological impacts on those who witness them, particularly young children (Browne, 2003). However, according to Bradford and Wilson (2013), terrorists motivated by religious ideology such as Islamic terrorist groups would be less concerned by the negative publicity arising from attacks on children. Thus, simply by being accessible, difficult to protect and located in regions of insecurity or sectarian conflict, school facilities are at high risk and more desirable targets than other soft ones for terrorist groups who seek to express resentment against western education, inflict mass casualties, attract media coverage, or retaliate against aggressions committed by government military forces. Increasingly, the intention of terrorist groups to choose educational facilities rather than other soft targets seems to be a strategic choice in revenge circumstances against military action (Gosling, 2016) or in attack against western education.

The brutal attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan has been a deliberate act of revenge against the Pakistan army who killed militants' women and children in North and South Waziristan. In the aftermath of the Peshawar massacre, Taliban group admitted that the attack on the children of Pakistan's military was a mean to make them "feel the pain" in revenge for the deaths of their own families

in the offensive on the tribal areas where various factions have their bases. The self-proclaimed planner of the Peshawar school massacre has said:

> This is obvious if you will attack us we will certainly go for a revenge for our families. If our women and children die as martyrs, your children will not escape. We will fight against you in such a style that you attack us and we will take revenge on innocents. I want to tell the Pakistan government, and the directors, teachers and students of the army's affiliated institutions, that you are the ones strengthening this un-Islamic democratic system. (Williams, Wyke, & Iqbal, 2014)

The Islamist group Boko Haram has clearly admitted on several occasions that targeting schools is a religious duty and that they intend to continue, regardless of global public opinion or international human rights law (Matthews, 2014).

The terrorist group behind the attack at university students in Pakistan has threatened to attack more universities and schools. Khalifa Umar Mansoor's terrorist group stormed the Bacha Khan campus in the town of Charsadda, Pakistan, gunning down 21 students and teachers, and triggering a gun battle that lasted for hours before the four gunmen were killed. He claimed that Pakistan's educational institutions provide the future workforce for the military and the government—all of which work against the "will of God." "We have decided to target schools, colleges and universities from now on. We will demolish the foundation of this evil system" (Agbonlahor, 2016). Furthermore, the sectarian conflict in Syria has resulted in massive revenge attacks on schools and school children. According to Save the Children Organization, schools inside Syria have been indiscriminately bombed, destroyed, commandeered by armed groups, or turned into torture centers (Save the children, 2015).

Thus, by attacking educational symbols as opposed to other soft targets, terrorists seek a high number of fatalities of women and children that attracts maximum media coverage. It has been shown that terrorist groups crave media attention to grow and survive (Doran, 2002; Perl, 2002; Richardson, 2006). The extensive media coverage that attacks on schools and school children receives provides the terrorist group with a platform from which they can advance their cause, gain attention, and inspire fear in targeted communities and respect among their supporters (Perl, 1997). Despite increased security measures, the vast majority of educational facilities in regions of sectarian conflict and insecurity are impossible to protect, any attempt or strategy to secure these facilities aims to calm public fears and not to prevent a terrorist attack. The effective measures in preventing terrorist attacks lie in intelligence that aims to stop terrorist attacks before taking place.

Motives behind terrorist attacks on educational infrastructures

Attacks on educational Infrastructures seem to be relatively infrequent: only 2% of all terrorist attacks have targeted educational facilities, causing only 1% of all deaths from terrorist attacks (Miller, 2014). More than 70% of all terrorist attacks on educational targets between 1970 and 2013 (2,365 attacks) caused no deaths. Although attacks on educational facilities are expected to yield high casualties, these events

Table 1. Countries with most terrorism against educational institutions 2004–2013 (E. Miller, 2014).

Country	Fatalities in Attacks on Educational Institutions (2004–2013)
Russia	351
Iraq	339
Nigeria	289
Pakistan	179
Syria	138
Afghanistan	126
Thailand	113
Kenya	50
India	45
Sri Lanka	21

Note. Adapted from "Background report. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)," by E. Miller, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.start.umd.edu/

show evidence to the contrary. The average of lethality of attacks on educational targets is 0.8 deaths per attack, compared to 2.3 deaths per attack for all other types of targets combined (Miller, 2014). Although no accurate global figures exist on attack types (e.g., abductions, torture, threats of violence) or the number of attacks on schools and universities, these statistics are available for specific countries, as shown in Table 1.

Terrorism has changed over time, and terrorists' motives for attacking educational facilities vary according to countries' unsettled political disputes, socioreligious beliefs, and sociopolitical injustices. Although Islamic terrorism against education has become a reality and a serious threat, no general theory explains its roots and motives. Understanding the motives behind terrorist attacks on education, though, is critical for the development of strategies to reduce the impacts of this tragic phenomenon.

A closer look at recent attacks on educational facilities reveals a deep hostility towards western civilization, liberal education, and human-rights values, such as tolerance, peace, women's rights, freedom, and democracy. Such negative attitudes towards Western values and education have long existed and been preached by Islamic group leaders in some Muslim communities, without being properly addressed by public officials. The leaders of Islamic extremist groups and movements have bluntly and constantly expressed their resentment of secular education and modern human civilization. Negative propaganda portraying secular education as destructive to society is commonly propagated by Islamic societies. Such propaganda has consistently claimed that western education which teaches freedom and liberates the mind encourages sins and is harmful to Muslim societies. In addition, the poor educational opportunities and high poverty rates in rural areas and the peripheries of developed cities throughout the Middle East that have persisted for decades, have nurtured negative attitudes towards education and human values. Poor educational approaches, styles, and processes have created an environment conducive to the spread of Islamic extremism and the rise of terrorism. A lack of education can permit the development of poor, hopeless, miserable, blindly obedient individuals easily manipulated by political or religious authorities. Such individuals usually develop a deep sense of hatred of educated individuals, education

facilities, and those perceived as responsible for their misery. Religion becomes their only comfort, a second life their only hope and the ideology of revenge pleasant and favorable.

All the positive impacts that education has on the quality of life of individuals and communities have been ignored and disregarded by Islamic extremist scholars to justify their negative views and hatred of western education. For instance, on March 25, 2006, Mohammed Hanif, the self-styled spokesperson of the Taliban Leadership Council, issued a statement explicitly threatening to attack schools in Afghanistan because of their curriculum. Similarly, on April 27, 2006, antigovernment Afghan warlord, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, issued a press statement vowing to continue jihad against the "infidel forces [that] had been forming [an] education system and syllabus for Afghans to divert our youth from Islam to Christianity" (Kavkazcenter, 2006). Islamic extremists resent education and western civilization, distort their image and hold education responsible for social corruption in Muslim communities. In addition, the Taliban's assassination attempt on Malala Yousafzai, a girl known for supporting education and human and women's rights in her native community where the Taliban had banned girls from attending school, offers clear evidence of extremist Islamic groups' hostility to education and human rights and values (Beyer, 2001). As well, Taliban militants' 2006 killing of Safia Ama, a dedicated Afghan teacher running an underground school for girls, represented an attack on those who defend human rights and the right to education.

A number of school buildings in African, South and South East Asian, and Middle Eastern countries have been bombed and burned, and students shot and abducted because of their support of or participation in education. On December 16, 2014, Tehrik-i-Taliban militants snuck into the Army Public School in the north-western Pakistani city of Peshawar and opened fire on school staff and children. They killed 145 people, including 132 schoolchildren from 8 to 18 years old, before a rescue operation by the Pakistan Army's Special Services Group killed all seven terrorists and rescued 960 people. This terrorist attack was the deadliest copycat of the 2004 Beslan school hostage crisis in the North Ossetia-Albania region of the Russian Federation (Spencer, 2014). In another tragic event on October 1, 2014, two car bombs exploded in the central Syrian city of Homs, killing 48 people, including 41 children leaving school. First, a car bomb was detonated in front of the Ekrimah primary school, followed minutes later by a second suicide car bomber. Images from this tragic attack show parents searching for their children amid scattered schoolbags on bloodied ground as a car burns nearby (MEE, 2014). On November 21, 2002, in Israel, a Hamas militant bomber blew himself up on a bus crowded with schoolchildren, killing 11 people and injuring almost 50 others. On June 18, 2007, the Thai government ordered the permanent closure of 700 schools in the country's three southernmost provinces after a week of bombings and shootings directed at schools, teachers, and security personnel guarding teachers. In Afghanistan, more than 400,000 children reportedly were prevented from attending school in 2009 due to the destruction of schools and widespread fears created by threats issued to parents, children, and teachers (O'Malley, 2011). All such attacks indicate the existing

of strong and consistent motives that drive Islamic terrorists to attack educational facilities, or a persisting urge to destroy educational symbols.

Attacks on schools and education are not limited to Middle Eastern and South Asian countries. In Nigeria, the Islamist group Boko Haram, whose name means "Western education is a sin," has launched waves of deadly raids against educational institutions. The recent abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls in Nigeria by Boko Haram militants should alert the international community to the threat of Islamic extremism to education. Moreover, the assault shows the powerful and the effective role of education in enlightening people and in transforming communities (Coughlan, 2014b; Matthews, 2014). These tragic incidents, among others, lead to an extremely important question: What motivates deliberate attacks on educational facilities and innocent children on their way to school?

Identifying the motives behind these cruel attacks requires digging into the sociopolitical circumstances that have dominated the views and behaviors of Muslim and Middle Eastern peoples for centuries. It is important to acknowledge that the Middle East is a region of ancient civilizations, where religious beliefs, misconceptions, and social traditions have been blended and woven into the cultural setting and individuals take great pride in their religion, dignity, and historical heroes, battles, and victories (Baytiyeh & Naja, 2014). Dignity is deeply embedded as a sacred religious belief. Any action intended to protect or restore dignity, including violence, can be justified; therefore, revenge becomes a normal, celebrated behavior at both the individual and collective levels.

The cultural emphasis on religious supremacy and the glorification of personal and collective dignity can justify harsh violence against those responsible for inflicting humiliation. According to humiliation–revenge theory, humiliation and the accompanying internal pressure to seek revenge can be a psychological factor that drives terrorist violence (Juergensmeyer, 2000). Feelings of revenge have been shown to be a common characteristic among individuals who choose to join terrorist organizations (Crenshaw, 1981). Robbing people of their dignity and humiliating them can motivate them to commit terrorist attacks on those perceived as responsible for their humiliation and defeat. For instance, the oppression of the early Christians, embodied in the image of Christ on the cross, partly inspired the First Crusade (Armstrong, 2001). Revenge for humiliation inflicted by an oppressor can be linked to present-day violence in the Middle East. Palestinian psychiatrist, Eyad El-Sarraj (2002), has observed that humiliation is a specific, important factor motivating young suicide bombers. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, the late political leader of Hamas, confirmed this notion in a statement published in 2001, three years before his death in targeted killing by the Israeli Defense Forces: "To die in this way is better than to die daily in frustration and humiliation" (Juergensmeyer, 2000). Other authorities have also proposed that humiliation, inflicted either by parents in early childhood or political oppressors later in life, can provoke terrorism, but no quantitative research has yet explored this hypothesis (Crayton, 1983; Stern, 2003; Volkan, 1997). In Muslim communities that place an extreme value on dignity, it seems reasonable that humiliation can act as an urge driving individuals and groups to justify and

commit violent retaliation on innocent civilians. The idea that the feeling of humiliation gives rise to a passion for revenge is familiar in forensic psychiatry and criminology and likely contributes to many nonpolitical murders (Brooks, Thomas, & Droppleman, 1996; Miller, 1993; Schlesinger, 2000).

For instance, the Taliban claimed that its attack on the Army School of Peshawar was an act of revenge against the Pakistani military for targeting Taliban families. A Taliban spokesman declared, "We selected the army's school for the attack because the government is targeting our families and females" and "We want them to feel the pain" (Khorasani, 2014). Similarly, the suicide bomb attack on Ekrimah School in a proregime neighborhood of Homs was an act of revenge against crimes committed by the regime against civilians.

Poverty and poor-quality education in African and South Asian countries have contributed to increasingly negative attitudes towards western education and human rights values and have led Islamic extremists to hold education responsible for social corruption in Muslim communities. Whereas, in the Middle East, the injustices and humiliations long perpetuated by totalitarian regimes have inspired and reinforced a culture of extremism and revenge that can be linked to barbaric attacks on human values, particularly educational symbols.

The approach of taking revenge on educational facilities is a newly adopted tactic by Islamic terrorist movements to pressure governments to grant concessions. Any success by this retaliatory campaign against schools and students would be devastating to the educational systems in Middle Eastern communities affected by conflict and insecurity.

The rise of ISIS has increased the risk of terrorism on civilian targets

The Islamic State's influence and model are spreading. Even in many Middle Eastern countries where the Islamic State does not have a strong presence, its rise is radicalizing their populations, stimulating sectarianism, and destabilizing governments. Although Al Qaeda remains a threat, ISIS terrorist attack capabilities have thus far exceeded any other terrorist groups. Since mid-October of 2015, ISIS has conducted four historic attacks; on October 10, it was the bombings in Ankara, Turkey, which the government has blamed on ISIS and which killed more than 100 people in what was reportedly the worst terrorist attack the country had ever seen. On October 31, it was the explosion of a Russian jetliner over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, which killed 224 people in the worst aviation disaster in Russian history and which was the second-deadliest jihadist terrorist attack outside of a war zone since 9/11. On November 12, it was the Beirut bombing, also claimed by ISIS, which killed more than 45 people in the worst violence Lebanon has seen since its civil war of the 1990s (Gilsinan, 2015). On the evening of November 13, 2015, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks including mass shootings, suicide bombings, and hostage-taking occurred in Paris, and its northern suburb, Saint-Denis. The attacks were the deadliest in France since World War II and the deadliest in Europe since the Madrid train bombings in 2004 (Nossiter, Breeden, & Clark, 2015). After Paris attacks, the Russian

government tightened its security measures for schools' protection, and in Belgium, some schools were closed due to antiterrorist raid operations. Thus, the excessive acts of brutality committed by this group against civilian targets have triggered deeper concern about schools' safety and precaution measures.

A recent report claimed that more than 4,000 covert ISIS gunmen had been smuggled into western nations among the chaotic waves of refugees. They are following the route taken by refugees and migrants fleeing, travelling across the sparsely-guarded 565-mile Turkish border, then on boats across to Greece and through Europe. This infiltration aimed to carry out revenge attacks on civilian targets in the West in retaliation for the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes (Brown, 2015).

Obviously, ISIS has used extreme violence and brutality to attract attention and more followers. ISIS has gained international attention by beheading prisoners and enemies, and then posting pictures of the violence on social media. They seem very strategic in the attacks they take. ISIS is more popular with young people and has more followers than any other terrorist groups because its savagery, hostile treatment, and killing of hostages help its recruitment (Chowdhury-Fink & Sugg, 2015; Wong, 2014).

Factors that increase the risk of terrorism attacks against Lebanese schools

Lebanon is a small country located along the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, bordering Syria in the north and the east and Israel in the south. Since gaining independence from France in 1943, Lebanon has undergone periods of political turmoil and wars, intermingled with times of prosperity as a regional center for finance and trade. Lebanon is governed by a parliamentary democratic republic based on a confessional approach to politics, which is a form of consociationalism. Consociationalism has been regarded as the most appropriate democratic model for divided societies (Lijphart, 2006) as it aims to support governmental stability, power-sharing arrangements, democracy, and violence prevention. Under this power-sharing structure, certain governmental offices are reserved for specific ethno-religious communities. For instance, Lebanon's president is always a Maronite Catholic, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament a Shia Muslim. The law thus guarantees representation to the country's three most prominent confessional groups (Friedman, 1989). The country has 18 sectarian communities which live as separate nations under the umbrella of the Lebanese republic. The confessional state of Lebanon has kept society deeply divided and promoted sectarianism over nationalism. Although Lebanon has witnessed periods of intense terrorist activity alongside times of peace and tranquillity since independence, the escalation of terrorist attacks on civilians has become more pronounced since the year 2013 as shown in Table 2.

Confusion among Lebanese sectarian communities about national identity and other major political issues have led to violent conflicts, sectarian wars, and population redistribution, which have widened the divide between these communities. Since independence, confessional disputes over national identity have divided Lebanese society (Salibi, 1988). Although the Ta-if peace agreement that ended the

Table 2. A summary of terrorist activities in Lebanon (Jan. 2013–Dec. 2015).

Date	Location	Method	Targeting	Dead	Injured
Nov. 12, 2015	Southern Beirut	Suicide bomber	Civilians	43	200
Nov. 6, 2015	Arsal	Blast	Military vehicle	0	5
Nov. 5, 2015	Arsal	Bombing	Civilians	5	15
Oct. 5, 2015	Eastern Lebanon	Blast	Hezbollah bus	unknown	unknown
Jan. 10, 2015	Trípoli	Suicide bomber	Civilians	9	50
Sept. 20, 2014	Eastern Lebanon	Bombing	Hezbollah	unknown	unknown
Sept. 19, 2014	Arsal	Blast	Military	2	3
June 27, 2014	Beirut	Suicide bomber	Civilians	0	11
June 24, 2014	Beirut	Suicide bomber	Civilians	0	12
June 20, 2014	Eastern Lebanon	Suicide bomber	Pólice checkpoint	1	32
March 29, 2014	Arsal	Car bomb	Military	3	4
Feb. 22, 2014	hermel	Suicide bomber	Military	3	17
Feb. 19, 2014	Beirut	Suicide bomber	Iranian center	8	128
Feb. 1, 2014	Hermel	Explosion	Civilians	4	23
Jan. 21, 2014	Southern Beirut	Suicide bomber	Civilian bus	4	46
Jan. 16, 2014	Hermel	Car bombing	Civilians	5	42
Jan. 2, 2014	Southern Beirut	Blast	Hezbollah office	4	77
Nov. 19, 2013	Southern Beirut	Suicide bomber	Iranian embassy	22	146
Aug. 23, 2013	Trípoli	Car bombing	Civilians	56	280
Aug. 15, 2013	Southern Beirut	Car bombing	Civilians	27	300
Julv 9, 2013	Southern Beirut	Car bombing	Hezbollah	0	50

civil war in 1990 addressed this concern by defining Lebanon as an Arab state with a distinct Lebanese character, remaining concerns over such issues still threaten social stability. The assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in February 2005 further divided Lebanon and led to the emergence of two political wings: the March 8th coalition, which is characterized by loyalty to the Syrian regime and strong ties to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the March 14th coalition, which is characterized by a strong commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty and independence and close ties with the United States, Saudi Arabia, and European countries. These two political camps could not find common grounds on which to collaborate or reconcile their differences about how to strengthen the political stability of the state. Instead, they accused each other of disloyalty and conspiracy. Their political dispute has erupted into violent conflict on several occasions during 2005 and 2008, resulting in the deaths and injuries of innocent Lebanese people.

With growing sectarian tensions and conflicts across the Middle East and the escalation of Syria's sectarian war, in 2013 the Lebanese cabinet declared a neutralization accord as a precautionary political measure. Supported by rival political leaders, including Hezbollah, the neutralization accord aimed to disassociate Lebanon from regional conflicts, particularly the crisis in neighboring Syria. A few months later, Hezbollah declared it stillborn and launched military action to support the Syrian regime. Since then, Lebanon has been subjected to suicide and car bombings and rocket and artillery attacks carried out by ISIS and other Islamic militant groups.

According to security reports, Lebanon is again caught in the middle of regional conflict, and many security sources fear that the country might be entering a dangerous phase. ISIS has warned that the next phase of action will be intense and that the suicide bombers who struck Jabal Mohsen in January 2015 will not be the last.

Security reports indicate that terrorist groups intend to carry out bloody attacks in Lebanon (Mortada, 2015). Recently, with all security checkpoints in Southern Beirut, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle loaded with explosives was successful in remotely detonating the motorcycle first before detonating himself among the rescuer volunteers in November 2015, killing more than 50 innocent people and injuring over 280 ones. Lebanese security services have counted more than 200 affiliated members of ISIS who have returned from Syria and are suspected of preparing to commit attacks in Lebanon. Sources estimate that approximately 30 Lebanese youths have been assigned to carry out attacks in Lebanon, while ISIS has decided to begin underground operations in Lebanon, according to security sources (Mortada, 2015). For instance, on October 31, 2014, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security issued a security warning about possible attacks by Islamic terrorists against American and other international schools in the Middle East and western teachers employed at these schools.

Although the Hezbollah's engagement in the Syrian conflict has assisted the Syrian regime in regaining towns and positions along the north-east border with Lebanon and defeating the Free Syrian Army and rebels, the engagement has also added to the suffering of the Syrian people, humiliated the Syrian and prompted the movement of large numbers of refugees into Lebanon. This defeat and humiliation of Syrian rebels in their home country have increased the risk of retaliatory attacks in Hezbollah strongholds territories of Lebanon and induced a state of fear, stress, and panic among Lebanese communities over retaliatory attacks by terrorist groups that might target civilians.

Thus, the sectarian nature of Lebanese communities, the deep political divisions of Lebanese political groups over regional conflicts and Hezbollah's direct military engagement against Syrian rebels pose a terrorism hazard. These circumstances can motivate Islamic extremist retaliatory groups to grow, network, and operate comfortably underground and successfully attack targets. The Lebanese government's weakness in preventing Hezbollah's military engagement in the Syrian crisis and in controlling the country's northern and eastern borders with Syria has permitted the actualization of these hazards into consequences. Recent suicide car bombings and other terrorist attacks, which have triggered fear and panic in the country, demonstrate the capability of these groups to hit their targets with reasonable accuracy and the high vulnerability of Lebanon's essential public facilities.

None of the numerous attacks targeting civilians, public places, and military positions in Lebanon over the years 2013 and 2015 have directly targeted educational facilities. However, during 1981 and 1989, the American University of Beirut witnessed a series of terrorist attacks: a bombing that destroyed the administration building and injured four people, the assassination of university President Malcolm Kerr, and the kidnapping of foreign professors and administrators.

Terrorists might have hidden reasons and motives to change their intentions to target schools, especially when such attacks become cost effective. Terrorist threats can be determined by the attractiveness of the target. For instance, a terrorist organization wishing to strike an essential government building might divert the attack

to a less attractive facility whose lower security level gives a higher probability of success. Therefore, the high number of Lebanese students attending unprotected, structurally vulnerable schools and colleges, combined with the existing hazard manifested in the recent terrorist attacks on Lebanese civilian targets, should give rise to deep concern about the consequences of such potential hazards to schools and students.

In order to establish a credible ground for the existing terrorism risk on Lebanese educational facilities, terrorism hazard and structural vulnerability must both exist. A school building that can resist the high impulsive blast loading caused by a terrorist attack has low structural vulnerability and a lower risk of such a hazard. This low vulnerability greatly depends on the building's engineering design and structural detailing. Generally, seismically designed or retrofitted buildings exhibit good performance when subjected to blast loading due to their ductility behavior, characterized by excessive inelastic deformation without failure, and due to redundancy which can prevent progressive failure (Naja & Bany, 2008). However, it is important to understand that the structural response to blast loading is very different than that to a seismic event (Crawford, 2002). Recent seismic risk assessments of school buildings in Lebanon found high structural vulnerability and low resistance capabilities to earthquake loading (Naja & Baytiyeh, 2014). Combined with the high terrorism hazard created by the sectarian division of Lebanese communities and Hezbollah's military engagement in the Syrian crisis, the high structural vulnerability of school buildings to impulsive terrorist blasts poses a credible, rational basis for the risk of terrorist attacks on the Lebanese educational facilities. As the risk of earthquakes causing catastrophic disasters in Lebanon cannot be underestimated (Naja & Baytiyeh, 2014), synchronized terrorist attacks on educational institutions could severely threaten the country's fragile political stability, trigger sectarian violence, and disrupt educational processes.

In this scenario, a large-scale, synchronized attack on educational institutions could be highly advantageous for terrorist groups as it could:

1. Inflict mass casualties in the affected areas, possibly killing, injuring or traumatizing hundreds of children; disrupting education in major Lebanese cities and towns; creating tremendous amounts of panic and stress among parents and families; and pressuring the government to station more military personnel around educational institutions to prevent future attacks
2. Escalate sectarian tension among Lebanese communities and necessitate the deployment of military resources and personnel to prevent eruptions of sectarian violence, weakening the military capacities on Lebanon's eastern border, and giving terrorists opportunities to commit more aggressive attacks.
3. Destabilize the fragile political system and create a chaotic situation.

Fatal attacks of such catastrophic magnitude could be motived by retaliation for Hezbollah's military engagement in the Syrian crisis, the desire to humiliate the security and military agencies, destabilize the political system and exhaust the government's resources to handle internal security issues. In these circumstances, where schools' vulnerability to terrorism hazard is high, and community resilience is low,

Lebanon will face an imminent tragedy. Furthermore, the lack of an executable emergency plan, protective measures, and clear intervention strategies that aim to reduce the risk and mitigate the impacts of such events on schools may motivate terrorists to commit a brutal attack against schools and to induce a horrifying mass-casualty event. Because Lebanon has no antiterrorism security legislation to protect schools or any other national critical infrastructures, governmental authorities have never taken the initiative to implement the necessary mitigation strategies, have failed to improve the resistance capabilities of school buildings across Lebanon, and have never prioritized safety procedures that could mitigate losses and destruction caused by aggressive acts of terrorism. Multiple coordinated terrorist attacks on several major urban schools in Lebanon will be catastrophic at all levels. Thus, Lebanese government officials should be aware of such risk and should propose initiatives to prevent such events from happening by:

- Relying on intelligence measures which can detect attacks before they occur and prevent terrorists from achieving their goals.
- Deploying of security surveillance forces to prevent or hinder attacks.
- Strengthening the structural component of schools buildings. This strategy becomes essential to save lives and facilitate rescue missions.

Implementation of all three defense mechanism is essential to protect schools. However, the last two—security surveillance protection and structural strengthening—are the most effective mitigation strategies for protecting educational facilities.

Conclusion

The world is undeniably facing a new and challenging era of terrorism in which terrorist operations are highly efficient, strategically coordinated, well designed, and professionally executed. Defeating this emerging state of terrorism requires an advanced level of strategies. Unless properly designed security plans are enforced and suitably developed mitigation strategies are implemented, schools and children will deeply suffer from the impacts of such attacks. The article argues that the lack of security protection plans, the sectarian division of Lebanon, Hezbollah's engagement in the Syrian civil war, the structural vulnerability of school buildings, and the improved capabilities of ISIS, have indeed increased the risk of terrorist retaliatory attacks on Lebanese educational facilities. Any such events would have detrimental effects on the country's political stability and educational system. Unfortunately, Lebanese public officials' failure to act on this potential hazard and to take adequate precautions and security measures against such events can be considered fatal negligence. Hiding from reality will not reduce the hazard or the vulnerability of schools or eliminate students' fear. Only when government officials acknowledge the potential tragedies of such attacks, take the necessary precautionary and security measures and promote awareness and preparedness among students and staff can such a risk be mitigated and children can be protected.

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