

A Systematic Approach to Defeat Regional Terrorism and Political Violence in Pakistan: Prospects of Youth Employment through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

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Abstract : In recent times, terrorism has been a major area of concern globally. Terrorism is ranked the number one concern across many countries, followed by political violence and poverty. The natural response to terrorism and violence across the countries is to increase expenditure on counterterrorism. This project study aims to explore the importance of job creation through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (a leading mega-project of the Belt and Road Initiative) to help Pakistan's socio-economic situation and lead to minimize terrorism and violence across the country and help Chinese companies complete their multi-billion dollar projects peacefully. During the last two decades, Pakistan has been through severe insurgencies, political violence, and terrorism, which also caused a disturbance in delaying many developmental projects, including the CPEC project, and killed dozens of Chinese citizens working in Pakistan. One major area of debate is whether or not economic factors have any role to play in determining the extent of political violence and terrorism in Pakistan. The notion of a China-Pakistan economic corridor across the Karakorum Mountains to Gawadar faces severe challenges. Counterterrorism concerns are likely to be a persistent source of tension across the CPEC projects in different regions across the CPEC route in Pakistan. China's promise to help industrialize Pakistan will ultimately lead to youth employment and prosperity. We hypothesize that youth unemployment can explain incidences of terrorism in Pakistan in the recent past. One of the main causes of these adverse situations is the unemployment of youth, who can become readily accessible to militant organizations for recruitment and training. This research project builds on existing research investigating the root causes of political violence and terrorism by considering youth unemployment as a measure of economic deprivation. We focus on the terrorism incident count data for 2001-2022, using negative binomial regression models. Literature suggests that, in the exogenous model, youth unemployment tends to increase political violence and domestic terrorism. Given concerns about the endogeneity of youth unemployment in these models, we will use two kinds of corrections: instrumental variables and lagged variables. To control for endogeneity, we intend to incorporate total population, military expenditure, foreign direct investment, and CPEC investment as instrumental variables.

Keywords : regional terrorism, political violence, youth employment, CPEC, belt and road initiative, Pakistan, China

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