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Problematizing Afghan Refugees as a Determinant of Terrorism in Pakistan

Abstract: Terrorism is considered one of the major challenges for the economy of Pakistan. Different factors such as poverty, inflation, illiteracy, corruption, and political instability are responsible for the persistent terrorism incidents. However, the role of Afghan refugees in terrorism is largely ignored in the literature. Therefore, this paper studies the relationship between Afghan refugees and terrorism while controlling for inflation and the growth of per person income. The recently developed Autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) cointegration testing is employed to carry out the empirical analysis. Annual time series data dating back from 1979 to 2017 is used to estimate the specified models. The results indicated that indeed terrorism incidents in Pakistan are positively and significantly influenced by Afghan refugees both in the long run as well as in the short run. Similarly, a positive but statistically insignificant relationship is observed between inflation and terrorism. Moreover, per person income growth and its relationship with terrorism came as a surprise. The causality exercise revealed that per person income is unilaterally causing both terrorism and refugees. Moreover, terrorism and refugees are also unilaterally related. The study recommends based on the findings that Pakistani policy makers shall focus to implement appropriate policies to send back Afghan refugees to their country. Besides, proper checks on macroeconomic policies are also needed to tackle higher inflation and subsequently terrorism would be eradicated.

Keywords: Afghan Refugees, Terrorism, Pakistan, ARDL Modeling

1.0 Introduction

Pakistan suffered a lot from the problem of terrorism during the last few decades. The economy of Pakistan is witnessed to be the serious victim of the problem of terrorism during the last few decades. The economic cost because of the problem of terrorism is estimated to be US \$ 126.79 billion during the period 2001 to 2016 (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2017-18). More than 50000 people have lost their lives including 15,700 army personals. Both physical and human capitals are destroyed owing to persistent terrorism. Khan (2013) articulated that owing terrorism, the economic growth of Pakistan and FDI declined while at the same time military expenditures raised significantly. Despite the enormous cost paid by Pakistan in the war against terrorism, it has been wrongly labelled as terrorism-sponsoring country (Nizami et al. 2018).

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Looking into the adverse consequences of terrorism for the economy, it is natural to ask what really causes terrorism in Pakistan? In literature various contending factors are held responsible for the persistent problem of terrorism. The study of Ismail and Amjad (2014) shows that inflation and per capita GDP are the dominant factors behind terrorism in Pakistan. Similarly, Nizami et al. (2018) commented that psychological factors are the main drivers of terrorism in Pakistan.

In this paper, we deviate from the traditional literature on terrorism and its determinants. We focus on the role of Afghan refugees in the process of terrorism which is rather a neglected area in the literature. The European Union law enforcing agency (Europol) aggressively promoted the idea that refugees can accelerate the terrorism problem in the host countries (Crisp, 2017). Refugees from a war-affected country are indeed very vulnerable to terrorism and crimes. Choi and Salehyan (2013) pointed out that it is a fact that refugees are indeed the victims of violence, but at the same time they can also be responsible for spreading conflict and instability in their host countries. Refugees' camps especially in the developing countries like Pakistan are the breeding points of terrorism. Terrorists targets the refugees as they are not only soft target but at the same time are vulnerable to terrorism and crimes. Consequently, it becomes difficult for the law-enforcing and counter-terrorism forces to distinguish between the terrorists and innocent refugees. The study of Fayyaz (2018) shows that Afghan refugees have impacted terrorism positively in Pakistan and have also badly affected the environmental quality.

The section wise organization of the paper is as follows. Section 2 discusses relevant literature about the potential relationship between refugees and terrorism. Modeling and methodology are shown in section 3. The penultimate section of the paper reports and analyzes results. The last section of the paper consists of concluding remarks and policy implications.

2.0 Refugees and Terrorism

In the literature, there is a serious debate about the relationship between refugees and terrorism. Refugees bring so many problems for the host countries. Great concerns are shown by different countries and agencies regarding the involvement of refugees in terrorism related activities recently. The European Union law enforcing agency (Europol) aggressively promoted the idea that refugees can accelerate the terrorism problem in the host countries (Crisp, 2017). According to Grierson (2016), ISIS are targeting refugees in Europe in order to polarize the European population. Refugees are the soft target for different terrorist's groups as they are mostly deprived segment of the society.

Normally refugees are involved in weapons and drugs trading, smuggling and other illegal activities. In other words, refugees cause various socio-economic problems including higher crimes and terrorist activities. Nowrasteh (2017) reported that 20 individuals have carried out terrorist attacks in the United States during the period from 1975 to 2015. According to Borthakur (2017), the huge inflow of refugees from Afghanistan to Pakistan has created several demographic and security problems for the Pakistan economy. It implies that indeed the increased inflow of refugees up to some extents is responsible for terrorism. Similarly, Estrada et al. (2019) developed a DGE Model for terrorism and showed that refugees and poverty are the drivers of terrorism.

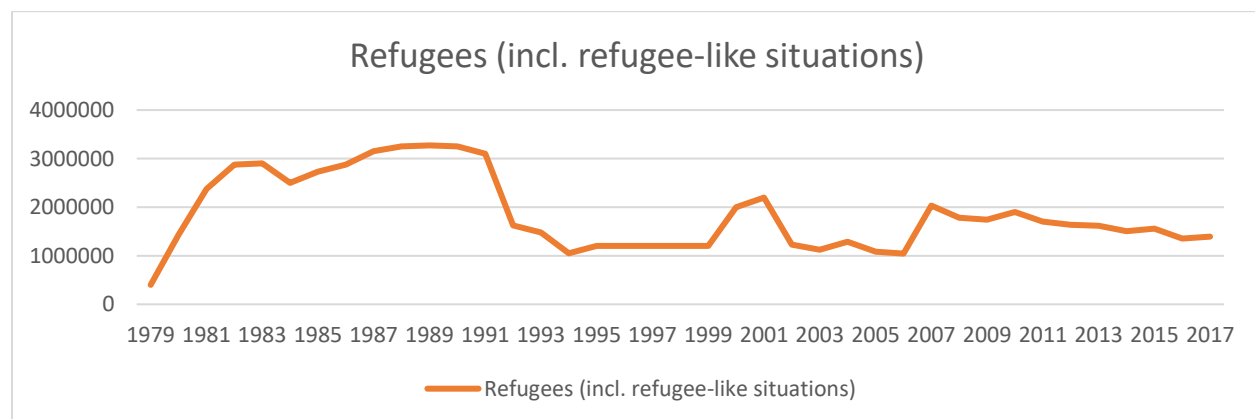
Bove and Böhmelt (2016) empirically showed that refugees accelerate terrorism in the host country if they are originating from terrorist-prone countries. Looking this argument into discussion,

Afghanistan itself is suffering from terrorism during the last few decades and hence Afghan refugees may be adding to the problem of terrorism in their host countries. Pakistan is hosting millions of Afghan refugees for about five decades now and hence it is likely that terrorism in Pakistan.

2.1 Afghan Refugees in Pakistan (Historical Overview)

Afghan refugees knocked the door of Pakistan during early 1970s. After the President Mohammed Daoud coup in 1973, about 2000 people who were the loyalist of the ousted government sought asylum in Pakistan (see e.g., Borthakur, 2017). Pakistan opened its border for the Afghan refugees with open heart. However, the increased migration to Pakistan was only observed in 1979 when the USSR attacked the republic of Afghanistan. Due to war, many Afghans tried to escape the country in search of peace and better living conditions. In 1979 400000 million people migrated to Pakistan. In the next couple of years, the number of refugees increased to 2. Still, the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan is too high.

Figure 1: Trend in Afghan Refugees in Pakistan



Note: Author own calculation from UNHCR Data

3. Modeling and Methodology

3.1 Specification of Empirical Model

The objective behind this paper is to identify the potential relationship between Afghan refugees and terrorism by focusing on the economy of Pakistan. As mentioned earlier, terrorism could be impacted by different factors such as poverty, inflation, sluggish economic growth, political instability, and corruption etc. All these factors have been modeled by different researchers while studying the causes of terrorism (see e.g., Tahir, 2019, Ismail and Amjad, 2014). However, the impact of refugees on terrorism is relatively an under-researched area both in the theoretical and empirical literature. The following model is proposed for empirical testing.

$$\ln ter_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln ref_t + \beta_2 \ln inf_t + \beta_3 \ln pc_t + U_t \quad (1)$$

In expression 1, the dependent variable is terrorism which is measured as the number of terrorist incidents annually. The main independent variable is Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. At the same time, we have also included inflation rate and per capita GDP in our model as control variable as they affect terrorism one way or the other as shown by contemporary research on the determinants of terrorism (Amjad and Ismail, 2014, Tahir, 2018). For the refugees population, we have used the total number of refugees including those who live in refugee-like situations. Further, we have taken only Afghanistan-based refugees living in Pakistan. The reason behind considering only Afghanistan-based refugees is that Pakistan is mainly hosting refugees from Afghanistan. Inflation is captured through the growth of consumer price index and per capita GDP is approximated in constant US Dollars which is the standard practice in the literature.

3.2 Data Sources

Data on terrorism is obtained from the Global terrorism database which is publicly available. Data on refugees is collected from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Similarly, statistics on inflation and per capita GDP are taken from World Development Indicators (WDI).

3.3 Estimation Techniques

The most suitable tools for the time series data are the cointegration techniques. The OLS method is not suitable due to the unit root issue which is very common in time series data. There are a few cointegration techniques available. These include the Johansen testing and the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL). The ARDL is proposed by Pesaran et al. (2001). The present study also uses the ARDL testing for analysis. Equation 1 could be re-written in the ARDL framework as given below.

$$\Delta \ln gti_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{n_1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln f_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \gamma_1 \ln gti_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \ln ref_{t-1} + \gamma_3 \ln f_{t-1} + \gamma_4 \ln pc_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (2)$$

$$\Delta \ln ref_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^{n_1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n_2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln f_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \gamma_1 \ln ref_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \ln gti_{t-1} + \gamma_3 \ln f_{t-1} + \gamma_4 \ln pc_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (3)$$

$$\Delta \ln f_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^{n_1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln f_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n_3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \gamma_1 \ln f_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \ln gti_{t-1} + \gamma_3 \ln ref_{t-1} + \gamma_4 \ln pc_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

$$\Delta \ln pc_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^{n_1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln f_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n_3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n_4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \gamma_1 \ln f_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \ln gti_{t-1} + \gamma_3 \ln ref_{t-1} + \gamma_4 \ln pc_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (5)$$

In all the equations presented above, the parameters $(\beta_1 - \beta_4)$ measures the short run while the parameters $(\gamma_1 - \gamma_4)$ stands for the long run relationships. The null hypothesis rejects it while the alternative hypothesis accepts the presence of cointegration among the variables. The decision will be made on the values proposed by Narayan (2004).

$$H_0: \gamma_1 = \gamma_2 = \gamma_3 = \gamma_4 = 0 \quad (a)$$

$$H_1: \gamma_1 \neq \gamma_2 \neq \gamma_3 \neq \gamma_4 \neq 0 \quad (b)$$

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Unit root testing

Results for the unit root testing are provided in the following Table 1. The unit root testing is important to identify the order of integration of variables as ARDL modeling does not handle variables integrated of order more than one. To examine the unit root problem, the most widely used ADF and PP tests are applied. At levels, both trends and intercept are considered while applying the ADF and PP tests. At first difference, only intercept is considered which is a standard practice in the literature.

Table 1. “Unit Root Testing”

ADF Test Results			
Variables	Level	Difference	Decision
Terrorism	-2.941	-4.107***	I(1)
Refugees	-3.546**	-5.167***	I(0)
Inflation	-2.651	-7.501***	I(1)
Per capita GDP	-2.581	-4.148***	I(1)
PP Test Results			
Terrorism	-2.288	-3.766***	I(1)
Refugees	-3.590**	-5.172***	I(0)
Inflation	-2.765	-7.482***	I(1)
Per capita GDP	-3.154	-4.119***	I(1)

Note: Authors own calculation using Eviews 9.0.

The results of both the tests shown in Table 1 indicated that terrorism, inflation, and per capita GDP are non-stationary at level. On the other hand, the refugees’ population is stationary at level according to results shown in Table 1. However, at first difference, all variables are stationary. The order of integration of variables is mixed.

4.2 Bound Testing

After the identification of the order of integration of each variable, we carry out the bound testing. The bound test is applied to the estimated models (2-5). Results are displayed in the following Table 2.

Table 2: ARDL Results

“Dependent Variables”	“Test Results”	“Decision”
F (LNTER/LNREF, INF, LNPC)	5.92**	“Co-integrated”
F (LNREF /LNTER, INF, LNPC)	8.29***	“Co-integrated”
F (INF /LNTER, LNREF, LNPC)	1.27	“Not Co-integrated”
F (LNPC /LNTER, LNREF, INF)	2.95	“Not Co-integrated”
	Lower Bound I (0)	Upper Bound I (1)

1 %	(5.17)	(6.36)
5 %	(4.01)	(5.07)
10 %	(3.47)	(4.45)

Note: Authors calculation from Eviews 9.0

The bound testing results displayed in Table 3, indicated the presence of cointegration among the selected variables (terrorism, refugees, per capita GDP, inflation) when terrorism is used as dependent variable. The calculated F-test value is 5.92 which is higher than the critical values both at 5 and 10 percent level of significance. The presence of cointegration confirmed the long run stationary relationship between terrorism, refugees, inflation, and per capita GDP for Pakistan economy. Similarly, the presence of cointegrating relationship is also confirmed for the estimated equation 3, where the dependent variable is refugees as the calculated F-test value is 8.29 which is greater than the critical values reported in the bottom of Table 3. On the other hand, we could not find evidence about the presence of cointegration when inflation and per capita GDP are used as dependent variables. In the next step, we designed the models for the short run relationships as provided below.

$$\Delta \ln gti_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{n1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln inf_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \delta_1 ECT_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (6)$$

$$\Delta \ln ref_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^{n1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln inf_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \delta_2 ECT_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (7)$$

$$\Delta \ln inf_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^{n1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln inf_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \delta_3 ECT_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (8)$$

$$\Delta \ln pc_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^{n1} \beta_{1i} \Delta \ln pc_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n2} \beta_{2i} \Delta \ln inf_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^{n3} \beta_{3i} \Delta \ln gti_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n4} \beta_{4i} \Delta \ln ref_{t-i} + \delta_4 ECT_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (9)$$

In equations 6-9, the term *ECT* represents the error correction term. The ECT basically is used for exploring the adjustment speed of models. Normally, in the short run there is disequilibrium. While in the long run there is equilibrium. Therefore, the ECT shows how the models correct itself from the short run towards the long run. Therefore, the ECT term is indeed very important in the ARDL.

4.3 Discussion on Results

Table 3 includes our results. The long run results are shown in the upper portion of Table 3. The lower portion of Table 3 includes the short run findings.

Table 3. Long Run and Short Run Results

Variables	“Coefficients”	“S.E”	“t-test”
Long run			
REF	1.762*	0.919	1.916
INF	0.102	0.065	1.573
LNPC	16.579**	8.192	2.023
Short run			
ΔREF	0.861**	0.391	2.203

ΔINF	0.050	0.032	1.542
ΔPCG	8.106*	4.155	1.950
ECT (-1)	-0.488***	0.123	-3.969
DW test	1.860		
Adj-R-Squared	0.885		

The long run findings are depicted in the upper portion of Table 3. According to the results, Afghan refugees have casted positive impact on the problem of terrorism in Pakistan. The point estimate suggests that 1 percent increase in Afghan refugees in Pakistan would increase terrorism by 1.762 percent which is indeed alarming. A wise policy in terms of the current findings is that Pakistani policy makers should say no to Afghan refugees to get rid of the problem of terrorism. The statistics presented and discussed in section two suggested that Afghan refugees have started moving back to Afghanistan. However, still more than a million Afghan refugees are living in Pakistan and hence imposing severe threat for the economy of Pakistan in terms of terrorism.

Even the short run results suggest that the relationship between Afghan refugees and terrorism is positive and significant statistically. In terms of magnitude, the point estimate indicated that 1 percent inflow of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, terrorism would increase by 0.861 percent approximately. The significant impact of Afghan refugees on terrorism in Pakistan both in the short run and long run shall be taken serious by the policy makers of Pakistan. Rather than focusing on additional military operations, the policy makers of Pakistan shall re-visit the policy towards Afghan refugees. In the light of the results, it could be said that Pakistan has paid a huge price (higher terrorism), for the friendly and welcoming policy towards Afghan refugees during the last few decades. Therefore, in the present scenario, if expelling of Afghan refugees is not possible due to the pressure from the international community and UNHCR, still some efforts are required to restrict them to certain defined places. Further, strict monitoring is also required of the camps where currently Afghan refugees are residing. These measures would help policy makers of Pakistan to eradicate the problem of terrorism from the country.

Inflation rate has impacted terrorism although positively in the long run, however, this relationship is at standard level insignificant. Inflation adversely affects individuals both in terms of real income and purchasing power and hence they are left with only one choice to indulge in illegal activities including terrorism for higher income to fulfill the basic needs. The apparent reward is usually greater in illegal activities where the terrorist groups extend lucrative offers to needy and unemployed individuals. The short run results also indicated a positive but insignificant relationship between inflation and terrorism. The insignificant positive relationship between inflation and terrorism is an indication that inflation could only be blamed partially for terrorism. Other factors could be more important in explaining terrorism.

The findings regarding per capita GDP and terrorism are surprising. The findings indicated that terrorism would be influenced positively with the rise in per capita GDP both in the long run as well as in the short run. Also, this relationship is significant at the 5 percent level. The reasons behind the positive relationship between per capita GDP and terrorism are indeed hard to pin down

as wealthy people normally avoid terror-related activities. It is logical to think that higher GDP per capita is not the solution for all problems. Choi (2014) articulated that higher economic growth cannot cure all problems and further, empirically demonstrated that an increase of 1 percent in industrial growth would cause a 2 percent increase in suicide attacks. Similarly, Enders et al. (2016) also demonstrated a positive relationship between per capita GDP and terrorism. Moreover, the study of Gassebner and Luechinger (2011) also provided some evidence about the positive impact of per capita GDP and terrorism.

The error correction term has an expected negative coefficient and at standard level, this relationship is significant statistically. The point estimate suggests that the speed of adjustment of the estimated models is 0.488 percent which is reasonably good. It implies that the short run disequilibrium is corrected towards the long by 0.488 percent. The significant and negative coefficient of error correction term further provides support to the long run results.

4.4 Diagnostic Checking

Diagnostic checking of the estimated models is important to confirm the reliability of the results. For this purpose, following the previous literature (Ahmed et al. 2019), several tests are carried out. Results are reported in the following Table 4.

Table 4: Diagnostic Checking

Testing	“F-Statistic”	Decision
“LM Test”	1.124(0.570)	No “Serial correlation”
“Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey”	1.104(0.378)	No “Heteroscedasticity”
“Jarque-Bera”	4.089 (0.129)	“Data is normal”
“Ramsey Test”	0.145 (0.705)	“Correct functional form”

Different diagnostics are shown in Table 4. The LM test and its probability indicated that the estimated model is free from the problem of serial correlation. The White and Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey tests provided evidence against the presence of heteroskedasticity in the estimated model which is desirable. Similarly, the Jarque-Bera test confirmed the normality of the data as the null hypothesis of normality is not rejected. Finally, the Ramsey test and its probability reflected support for the acceptance of the null hypothesis and hence the correctness of the functional form is validated.

4.5 Stability Testing

The stability of the residuals is also tested by applying the well known CUSUM and the square of CUSUM tests. The graphical presentation of both the tests is presented in Figure 2 and 3 respectively. It can be inferred from both the figures that the estimated lines are lying within the critical limits and hence the residuals are stable. In other words, the stability of the residuals is confirmed, which is desirable for the reliability of the results discussed earlier.

Figure 2: Stability Testing (CUSUM Test)

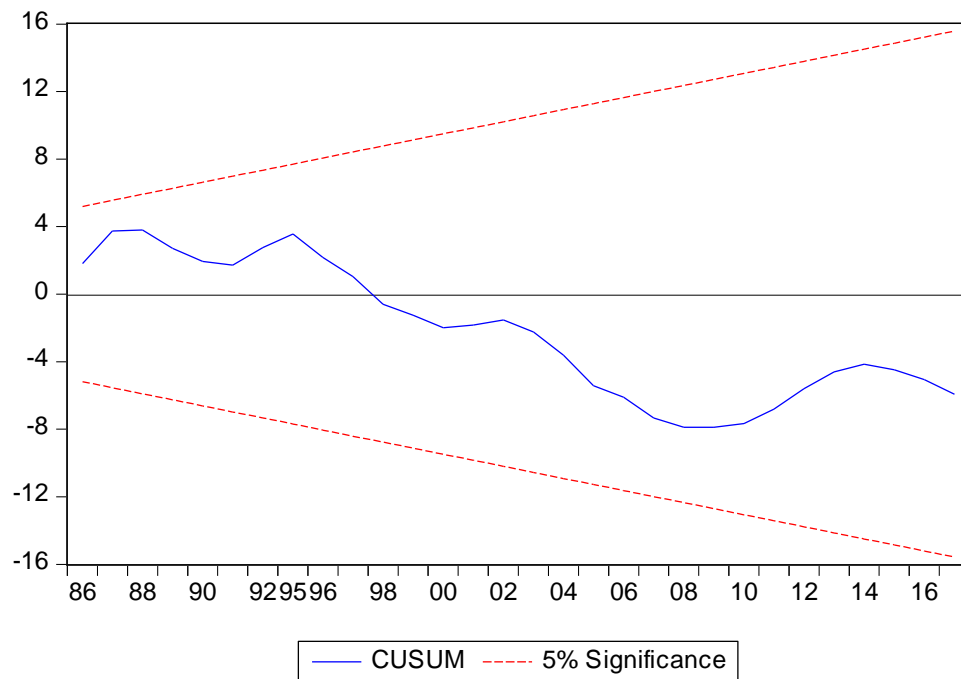
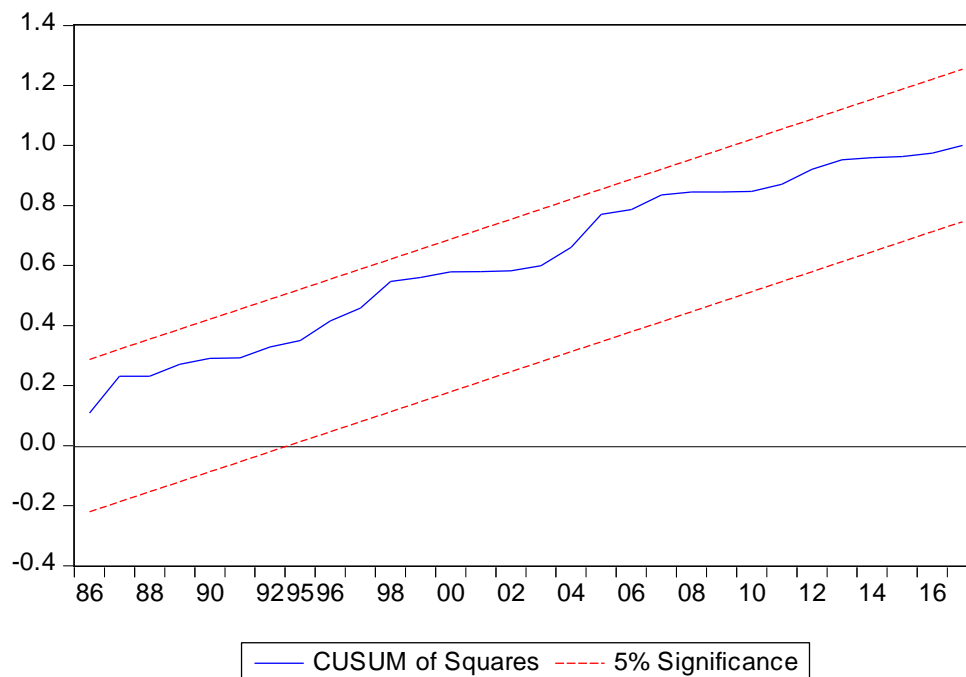


Figure 3: Stability Testing (Square of CUSUM)



5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has focused on the economy of Pakistan to study the potential relationship between Afghan refugees and terrorism. We also included inflation and per capita GDP in our model as contemporary studies have identified their dominant role in terrorism. Annual time series data spanning over the period 1979-2017 is utilized in the empirical analysis. The specified models are estimated with the help of ARDL modeling approach.

The obtained results are interesting. According to the results, Afghan refugees have provided fuel to the problem of terrorism in Pakistan in both in the long run as well as in the short run. The results are in line with the perception hypothesized. In recent times, a general perception has been developed among the resident of Pakistan about the active role of Afghan refugees in different socio-economic problems including terrorism. Therefore, a wise strategy in the light of the present study is to change the friendly and welcoming policy towards afghan refugees that Pakistan has exercised for the last few decades. This policy shift will help the policy makers to eradicate the terrorism problem from the country. Similarly, per capita income and its impact on terrorism is against our prior expectation. However, multiple factors could be responsible for this unexpected relationship. For example, per capita income growth may not be the cure of all problems such as terrorism reduction. Therefore, it would be better for policy makers to focus on some other contending factors such as income inequality, unemployment and political instability while devising policies for terrorism reduction. Lastly, tight control over the inflation rate is also necessary as it affects the real income and purchasing power of ordinary people. This could be done by following relatively strict monetary policy. In conclusion, it could be better for the policy makers of Pakistan economy to re-visit the friendly policy towards the Afghan refugees exercised for the last few decades and pay proper attention towards controlling inflation to get rid of the problem of terrorism.

5.2 Policy Implications

Based on the empirical analysis carried out in this paper, we suggest the following points.

- 1) *The policy makers of Pakistan economy are suggested to get rid of the refugee's population as they are causing the terrorism problem worse. Alternatively, some restrictions could be placed on their free movement in the country so that to minimize the chances of their involvement in terrorist activities.*
- 2) *Targeted efforts are required to bring a significant reduction in inflation as it adversely influences the real income and purchasing power of ordinary people. Policy makers could divert some funds from other sectors and provide some subsidies on basic consumables. This policy of subsidy would help the ordinary people to get access to basic needs easily and hence the feeling of deprivation would fall. The government could also start some welfare programs such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), to help the extremely poor segment of society. They could also think of revising the amount of BISP as it is directly related to the poor segment of society.*
- 3) *Although income per capita and its impact on terrorism did not appear according to the prior expectation. However, admitting the fact, that income growth may not be the cure for all problems, it is suggested that significant improvement in growth of per capita income is necessary as it is linked with improved standard of living which is the ultimate purpose of all economic activities.*

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