CHOOSING TERROR:
REBELS' USE OF TERRORISM IN INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT 1970-2010

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Note to Boulder seminar participants: What follows is the theory and (quantitative) research design of a larger project for which I do not yet have empirical results. I look forward to your feedback, in particular, on the ideas and hypotheses as well as my measure of terrorism, and my empirical strategy.

Acknowledgments
This paper is part of a larger project examining the causes and consequences of terrorism in civil wars. It has benefitted greatly from discussions of the larger project, inter alia, at a Festschrift panel in honor of Martha Crenshaw at APSA 2008 for which the basic idea of examining terrorism in the context of civil wars germinated, and since then at the MIT Security Studies Program, at Yale, Penn, Pitt, Duke, UVa, Cornell, Ohio State (twice), Princeton, George Washington's Elliott School, and U Chicago, a PRIO Workshop on Violence and Non-Violence, in Oslo as well as several ISA and APSA panels. Thanks to participants, and especially discussants, at these presentations for comments. Special thanks also to David Cunningham, Jessica Stanton, and Reyko Huang for sharing data, and to Max Abrahms, David Altman, Audrey Kurth Cronin, Nisha Fazal, Mike Findley, Jeff Goodwin, Lise Howard, Stathis Kalyvas, David Laitin, Todd Sescher, Jake Shapiro, Paul Staniland, Abbey Steele, Pablo Yanguas, and Joe Young for very useful comments; and to Mike Rubin and Nick Lotito for extremely valuable research assistance and collaboration on the data. Thanks to Martha Crenshaw for comments on early thoughts on the project, and especially for her continuing mentorship and friendship.

Abstract

Why do some rebel groups use terrorism as a tactic while others do not? Why some opposition groups engage in terrorism while others do not is of obvious importance both to the study of terrorism more generally, and to policy makers. But most existing studies of terrorism are not well-equipped to answer this question as they lack an appropriate comparison category. This project examines terrorism in the context of civil war to remedy this problem.

I argue that terrorism is more likely to be used when it is expected to be most effective, namely against democratic governments, and when the otherwise prohibitive legitimacy costs of using terrorism are expected to be lowest. I argue that legitimacy costs vary with government regime type, rebel aims and rebel funding sources. This paper derives hypotheses from the theory, as well as from prominent alternative arguments, including the notion that terrorism is a weapon of the weak, and that it is caused by competition among groups (outbidding). It describes the data on armed opposition groups involved in internal armed conflicts from 1970-2010 that will be used to test the hypotheses quantitatively, as part of a much larger multi-method study of both the causes and consequences of terrorism.

Why do some rebel groups use terrorism as part of their fight against the government while others eschew this tactic? Why, for example, have a number of armed opposition groups in India, including the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), and the Naxalites (a.k.a. the People's War Group), employed terrorism, while others, including the Kuki National Front and the All Bodo Student Union (ABSU), have not? Why have Kurdish rebels in Turkey employed terrorism while those in Iraq largely refrained from doing so. Why do some groups, such as the PKK in Turkey or UNITA in Angola, resort to terrorism in some periods but not others?

Why and when some groups use terrorism is of obvious importance to our understanding of terrorism; however, while the literature on the causes of terrorism is vast, most existing studies of terrorism are not particularly well equipped to answer this question for a simple reason – they lack an appropriate comparison set. While some studies of terrorism make comparisons across terrorist organizations, and others examine why some countries have been the target of terrorism more than others (mostly focused on transnational terrorism), terrorism studies have not, until recently, systematically compared conflicts in which terrorism is used to those in which it is not.[1] Many theories of the causes of terrorism conflate arguments about why conflict occurs with arguments explaining the use of terrorism as a specific form of violence.

This project uses civil conflicts as a universe of cases in which to isolate and address the fundamental question of why some groups use terrorism while others refrain from doing so. Rebel groups engaged (by definition) in a deadly fight against the government represent a

[1] For exceptions, see Wood 2010, Abrahms 2012, and more recently, Stanton 2013 and Thomas 2014. [add other recent exceptions]

relatively comparable set of opposition groups, only some of whom, some of the time, choose to target civilians indiscriminately as a way to coerce the government to concede.[2] Why? Terrorism, while often representing seemingly "random" violence, is not a tactic chosen at random. It is, I assume, used strategically by rational groups attempting to achieve political change.[3] I argue that considerations of legitimacy and rebels' relationship with several different populations and audiences play an important role in rebels' decision-making about the use of terrorism.

After discussing the thorny issue of defining terrorism in a way that is useful for this project, I develop a theory based on the expectation that terrorism will be used when it is likely to be most effective, namely against democratic governments, and when the otherwise prohibitive legitimacy costs of using terrorism are lowest. I argue that legitimacy costs vary with government regime type, rebel aims, and rebel funding sources. I derive a series of testable hypotheses from the argument, as well as from several alternative arguments prominent in the literature: particularly the notions that terrorism is a "weapon of the weak," and that it is more likely when rebel groups compete for support among the population they claim to represent, in a process of "outbidding." The paper goes on to describe the data I am developing to test these arguments quantitatively, as part of a much larger multi-method study of both the causes and consequences of terrorism.

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[2] This paper is limited to examining the use of terrorism by rebels rather than by the government (state terrorism). I thus sidestep the question of whether the definition of terrorism should be limited to non-state actors. On definitions, see more below.

[3] [Add cites to lit on non-rationalist, expressive uses of terrorism].

Civil Wars as a "Laboratory" for Studying Terrorism

Many studies of terrorism entail research designs that include remarkably little variation in the phenomenon under study.[4] The most systematic examine variation among terrorist groups,[5] while some examine variation in the targets of terrorism.[6] But much conventional wisdom on terrorism has not been tested systematically because so few have compared groups that use terrorism to those that do not.

I attempt to remedy this problem by using data on civil wars to compare rebel groups that use terrorist tactics with those that engage in non-terrorist violence.[7] Comparing groups all of which are involved in civil conflicts allows us to disentangle effects on the onset of conflict from effects on the strategic choice to employ terrorism. Data on civil wars, while still in need of much improvement, are also relatively well developed, allowing me to explore and control for a number of factors the literature suggests should affect the use of terrorism.

The study of terrorism and the study of civil wars have generally proceeded in isolation from one another.[8] However, if we think of prominent cases such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) or Hamas, the

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[4] For a similar critique of work on democracy and counterinsurgency, see Lyall 2010.

[5] See, for example, Bapat 2006; 2007; Cronin 2006; Jones and Libicki 2008; McCormick 2003, and the literature reviewed therein; Shapiro 2008.

[6] Among many examples, see e.g., Chenoweth 2010; Li and Schaub 2004; Weinberg and Eubank 1998. Much of this literature has focused on transnational and international rather than domestic terrorism, though the latter is the most common form of terrorism.

[7] I use the terms *civil war* and *civil conflict* interchangeably here.

[8] Notable exceptions include Sambanis 2008; Stanton 2013; Findley and Young 2012. See also Boulden 2009.

Irish Republican Army (IRA), the PKK in Turkey, or the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines, it is clear that much terrorism takes place in the context of civil conflicts. Indeed, while the focus of the quantitative literature has been on transnational and international terrorism to the exclusion of domestic terrorism, the vast majority of terrorism, 75-85% by most estimates, is domestic.[9]

Defining Terrorism

Because it is such a loaded term, defining terrorism is notoriously contentious; as the cliché goes, one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter, and this is perhaps particularly true in the context of civil wars.[10] For the purposes of this paper, *I define terrorism* as *the systematic use of intentionally indiscriminate violence against public civilian targets to influence a wider audience.* The ultimate aim of this type of violence is to coerce the government to make political concessions, up to and including conceding outright defeat. This definition is narrower than many in the literature that arguably encompass all rebel groups in all civil wars, so as to allow for distinctions among rebel groups.[11] But it is broader than those that draw a distinction, often based on group size or strength, between terrorism and guerilla warfare or insurgency, such

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[9] Enders et al. 2011, p.323; LaFree and Dugan 2007, p.187; Asal & Rethemeyer 2008, p.447 While a focus on transnational terrorism might be more policy relevant from the US perspective, domestic terrorism is much more important globally. Furthermore, as a practical matter, it is not clear what the non-terrorist comparison category would be for transnational terrorist groups.

[10] On definitions, see McCormick 2003, p.473; Merari 1993; Stohl 2007.

[11] Indeed, a surprising amount of the terrorism literature uses the terms *terrorism* and *rebellion* or *insurgency* interchangeably (e.g., Berman 2009), or could do so with no loss of meaning (e.g., Hoffman 2006, p.40).

that they exclude all rebel groups.[12]

Like many, but by no means all definitions of terrorism, mine focuses on deliberate attacks on civilians.[13] Violence against civilians distinguishes terrorism from "normal" rebel attacks on military targets. However, Stanton's research shows that almost all rebel groups (and almost all governments involved in civil wars) attack civilians in some way or another, making violence against civilians too broad a criterion by itself to distinguish terrorist rebel groups from others.[14]

The most common strategy of civilian targeting is what Stanton refers to as "control" and Kydd and Walter refer to as "intimidation." This is the use of violence to ensure civilian cooperation with one's own side and to deter civilians from collaborating with the enemy.[15] Much of the literature on the treatment of civilians in civil war, including prominent work by Weinstein and Kalyvas, focuses on ths type of violence.[16] Targeting civilians in this fashion is ubiquitous.[17] But this is not what we normally think of as "terrorism," in part because the innocence of its victims is not as clear cut – its victims are targeted because they are perceived to

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[12] These definitions preclude the examination of the relationship between group strength and terrorism. For discussions and examples, see Schmid and Jongman 1988, esp. pp.13-18; Silke 1996; Cronin 2006, pp.31-32; Sambanis 2008.

[13] Cronin 2002/2003, pp.32-33 lists the deliberate targeting of the innocent among "aspects of the concept that are fundamental" to the definition of terrorism. The others are its political nature, non-state character, and its seeming randomness.

[14] Stanton 2008.

[15] Stanton 2008, p.31. Kydd and Walter 2006, pp.66ff.

[16] Weinstein 2007; Kalyvas 2006.

[17] In Stanton's data there are only three rebel groups that do not engage in this type of violence against civilians.

be aiding the enemy.[18] I exclude this type of violence from my definition. Focusing instead on deliberately indiscriminate violence, I seek to capture that which makes terrorism so terrifying – its randomness – and so abhorrent – the explicit, even intentional innocence of its victims.[19] Anyone going about his or her daily business, riding public transportation or doing their shopping, could be a victim of such attacks.

This definition also captures what the literature often refers to as the "symbolic" nature of terrorism – that it aims not to influence the victims of the violence but to send a political message to a wider audience.[20] Here the distinctions Stanton draws between different strategies of violence against civilians are particularly valuable. She distinguishes strategies of "coercion," which in more recent work she labels "terrorism," from the abovementioned control (and other strategies, such as cleansing or destabilization) by focusing on the "the use of violence as a means of forcing the opponent to take a particular desired action – to agree to negotiations, to reduce its war aims, to make concessions, to surrender." This strategy is "intended not to coerce civilians themselves, but to coerce *the opponent* into making concessions" (her emphasis).[21] An attack on a public market, for example, is not intended, ultimately, to influence shoppers, but rather the government.

This definition focuses on the tactics used by rebel groups, the types of attacks they carry out – not the cause for which they fight. Some groups who employ terrorism (such as the ANC)

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[18] This is not to condone the targeting of civilians for the purposes of control, only to distinguish it from an arguably even worse (from an ethical standpoint) form of violence against civilians.

[19] For a critical view of conceptions of "innocence," see Kinsella 2011.

[20] Crenshaw 1981, p.379; McCormick 2003, p.474.

[21] Stanton 2008, pp.34-35. Stanton 2013.

might thus be considered morally preferable to some non-terrorist groups.[22] Rebel groups may be "terrorists" and "freedom fighters" simultaneously. And while we can condemn terrorism as a tactic, it is important that we not let our judgements of the morality of a group's cause influence our measurement of whether it used terrorism.

The Causes of Terrorism Literature

The vast literature on the causes of terrorism, particularly on why terrorism rears its ugly head in some places rather than others, sheds light on the question of why some rebel groups employ terrorism while others do not. Most relevant for my purposes are theories and studies at the level of analysis of the group. I am less interested here in why individuals might join a terrorist organization. While the ability to recruit individuals is arguably relevant at the group level, many studies at the individual level of analysis are really explanations of why individuals join illegal violent political organizations, not why they would join a terrorist rebel organization as a opposed to a non-terrorist one – that is, they are more general explanations of why men (and sometimes women) rebel.[23] Similarly, many theories of why terrorism occurs in some places rather than others are better thought of as explanations of the onset or occurrence of conflict more generally, not of terrorism (as defined here) specifically.[24] Some studies of why countries

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[22] On the relative morality of terrorism, see Crenshaw 1983, p.3 and Merari 1993, pp. 227-231.

[23] See, for example, Lee 2011. For a review of some of the psychological explanations of individual choices to employ terrorism, see McCormick 2003, esp. pp.490-495. See also Gurr 2010.

[24] This is true of many organizational and strategic explanations of terrorism, and some explanations linking democracy or lack of political opportunities to terrorism. Crenshaw 1981; 2011; Hoffman 2006; Schmid 1992; Li 2005. Lai 2007 explicitly uses Fearon and Laitin's 2003 explanation of where insurgencies will likely occur to explain "the production of terrorism."

are the victim of transnational attack are also not particularly relevant for my purposes.[25]

Much of the literature on the causes of terrorism is directly relevant, however, in that one can derive from it testable hypotheses about why some rebel groups engaged in civil wars would turn to terrorism while others would not. The burgeoning literature on the treatment of civilians during war is also obviously pertinent to my question (although as noted above, some of it focuses on violence to control collaboration that is excluded from my definition).[26] The literature suggests a laundry list of variables thought to be related to terrorism, including: the relative strength of the rebel organization, the regime type of the government it is fighting against, whether it fights for independence from a (perceived) foreign occupier, an organization's aims, the way it funds its fight, whether it fights on rough terrain, whether the struggle is characterized by religious differences, and others. I build on a number of these arguments to develop what is, I hope, a more coherent theory of terrorism in civil wars that focuses on variation in the efficacy and costs, particularly the legitimacy costs, of terrorism. Other arguments from the laundry list provide alternative explanations to my own.[27]

Indeed, much of the terrorism literature could easily substitute *rebellion* or *insurgency* for *terrorism* with no loss of meaning.

[25] For example, Savun & Phillips' 2009 explanation that states with active foreign policies are more likely to be targeted by transnational terrorism would not apply to domestic terrorism.

[26] Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007: Salehyan et al. 2012; Wood Forthcoming; Valentino et al. 2004; Downes 2008.

[27] The set of variables examined here by no means exhausts the list of factors that might make rebel groups more likely to choose terrorism. The literature has identified several others, including learning from other rebel organizations (Horowitz 2010) and past political instability (Sánchez-Cuenca 2006), which can be explored as this project develops. Others are essentially random factors such as "impetuous personalities" (DeNardo 1985).

The Efficacy and Legitimacy Costs of Terrorism

The theory begins from two premises. First, I assume that rebel organizations are rational actors, assessing alternative means for achieving their political ends.[28] It follows, though it is perhaps trivial to say so, that we should expect to see terrorism used when and where its benefits are highest, and its costs lowest. Second, because terrorism is, by definition, used to influence a wider audience (that is, someone other than the immediate victims), its costs and benefits should be assessed with this in mind.

There are several potential audiences to consider. The primary audience is, of course, the government, which rebels hope to induce to make concessions or to give up the fight. There are also secondary audiences, those whose support rebels attempt to win, and those rebels hope to induce to put pressure on the government. Within the country, there is an "aggrieved" population, on whose behalf the rebel organization claims to fight.[29] There are also civilians on the "other" side of the conflict – those who generally support the government or generally consent to be governed by it. For lack of a better term, I refer to this group as the "mainstream." It includes both "complicitous civilians"[30] who benefit from and support the state and its use of violence against the rebel group, and "fence-sitters" who are neither members of the aggrieved

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[28] The assumption of rationality is more controversial for terrorists than for many other political actors. This assumption does not speak to the "rationality" of a group's goals, nor certainly to the morality of their tactics, only to whether a group assesses the potential costs and benefits of alternative means to achieving those goals. In future iterations of this project, I hope to explore the possibility that the choices groups make are shaped by available repertoires of action, habit, and organizational inertia.

[29] Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson 2007, p.369.

[30] The term is from Goodwin 2006.

group nor necessarily supporters of the state's policies toward it.[31] Finally, there is international public opinion and support, particularly among countries (great or regional powers, neighboring states, those housing relevant diaspora populations) in a position to aid or put pressure on one side of the civil war or the other.

The benefits of terrorism for achieving a rebel group's political aims are, I argue, lower than many think. While the effectiveness of terrorism is hotly debated, the predominant argument is that terrorism "pays" – indeed, that is often proffered as an explanation for it use.[32] However, while terrorism is a relatively low-cost way to inflict pain on an adversary in a war of attrition, it has no direct military value; it cannot be used to take or hold territory, nor does it degrade the opponent's military capacity (since by definition, it targets civilians). The costs of using terrorism can also be substantial. Terrorism signals weakness rather than strength; it makes a negotiated settlement (and concessions to rebels therein) harder to reach; it can backfire by rallying the mainstream population around the flag; it is likely to alienate fence-sitters and all

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[31] The distinctions among these audiences are more clear cut in some conflicts than in others. In an ethnic conflict the aggrieved are relatively easy to identify (e.g., Tamils for the LTTE in Sri Lanka). In ideological conflicts the aggrieved might consist of a class (peasants, say). In other conflicts, the line between aggrieved and mainstream may be less clear cut with a larger population of fence-sitters in between. This might be true in a conflict over the role of religion in government (e.g., Islamist groups in much of the Middle East), where there may be more of a continuum of preferences rather than a dichotomy. The South African example provides another illustrative example. While non-whites were clearly the aggrieved (whether they were active in the struggle or not, they represented the population the ANC claimed to fight for), and white supporters of the South African government and the system of apartheid were clearly "complicitous," many liberal whites were fence-sitters, while some particularly active white members of the anti-apartheid movement identified as aggrieved; indeed some were themselves rebels.

[32] For arguments that terrorism is effective, see Pape 2003; 2005; Kydd & Walter 2006; Bueno de Mesquita & Dickson 2007; Gould & Klor 2010, Wood 2011. For a contrary view see: Abrahms 2006; Cronin 2009; Jones & Libicki 2008; Fortna Forthcoming 2013.

but the most diehard supporters domestically, as well as potentially powerful international actors; and it can be, and often is, used by the government to justify draconian measures to crush the rebellion. Empirically, terrorism is not particularly useful for achieving rebels' primary political goals.[33]

All that said, it is likely to be more effective in some situations than in others, and its costs are likely to be lower in some cases than in others. I argue that variation in the legitimacy costs of terrorism is particularly important for explaining why it is used by some groups but not others. An emphasis on legitimacy costs leads me to focus on the effects of democracy, rebel aims, and rebel funding sources in explaining why some rebel groups resort to terrorism while others do not.

Regime Type

The relationship between democracy and terrorism has generated significant theoretical and empirical debate.[34] Terrorism is likely to yield higher benefits and lower costs against democratic governments than against autocrats for several reasons. First, democratic governments are likely more sensitive to civilian loss of life.[35] If terrorism is meant to work by inflicting pain on civilians who then pressure their government to make concessions, then it

[33] For a fuller discussion, and evidence that terrorism is not effective for achieving political goals, see Fortna Forthcoming.

[34] For a good overview, see Chenoweth 2010. Much of the empirical work has focused on transnational terrorism (for exceptions see Savun & Phillips 2009; Stanton 2013). As Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009, p.37 point out, it is not always clear how the theoretical arguments about domestic regime type apply to transnational as opposed to domestic terrorism.

[35] Stanton 2008; 2013.

stands to reason that the more accountable the government is to popular pressure, the more likely this strategy will work. Democracy provides a much more direct line from those who bear the costs of terrorism – civilians – to those it is ultimately intended to influence – the government than does autocracy.

Second, terrorism against democracies may entail fewer legitimacy costs in terms of alienating potential supporters. Terrorism is seen as reprehensible in large part because it targets the innocent. But in the eyes of the aggrieved population, and possibly among some international audiences, civilians in some countries are seen as more responsible for their government's actions than in others. Specifically, citizens of democracies may be seen as more complicitous in government policy because they have voted the government into power.[36] Terrorism may thus be relatively less likely to backfire in terms of mobilizing support among the aggrieved, and internationally, when its victims are democratic voters than when they are disenfranchised citizens of autocracies.[37]

Finally, democracies may be more susceptible to an effective strategy of provocation. Terrorism is often said to be used to ellicit an overreaction by the government that entails a crack-down on the aggrieved population, which then leads to greater support for the rebel

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[36] Goodwin 2006

[37] Stanton 2013 offers a further reason, arguing that "rebel groups facing democratic governments are likely to have difficulty winning support from international actors" because of norms favoring democratic forms of government. This limits the other options rebels have to increase costs on the government, making terrorism relatively more attractive. I would argue that the mechanism is slightly different, or at least that an additional mechanism is at work. Those who rely less on international support need worry less about alienating that support by using terrorism. All else equal, those who oppose democratic governments have less to lose in terms of international legitimacy. In so far as this concerns material support, this effect should be captured by rebel funding, discussed below.

group.[38] Walter and Kydd argue that such a strategy is most effective when rebels can goad the government into a "middling level of brutality."[39] A "too hard" government willing and able to resort to extreme levels of brutality in its fight will be able to wipe out the rebels and the constituency they claim to represent.[40] A government that is so committed to human rights that it does not crack down on the aggrieved population is "too soft" to provoke. Because they start toward the "soft" end of the spectrum, but often feel pressure from citizens to react to terrorist attacks, democracies may be more likely to be provoked by terrorism into the "just right" (from the rebels' perspective) part of this Goldilocks equation. Moreover, if a rebel group is able to provoke a democracy to overreact, this helps to undermine the government's legitimacy, resting as it does on protecting the political and human rights of its citizens. Against a democracy, terrorism and the overreaction it provokes can thus increase support for rebels among the aggrieved population by demonstrating the legitimacy of its cause, and reduce support for the government by undermining its legitimacy in the eyes of both the mainstream population and the international community.

The costs and benefits are reversed when rebels try to use terrorism to provoke autocracies. The potential costs of provoking an autocracy are very high, because autocracies are more likely respond with extreme measures to crush the rebellion and eliminate its supporters. Furthermore, such brutal measures do less to undermine the legitimacy of autocratic governments because their legitimacy (such as it is) rests not on protection of citizens' rights but

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[38] Kydd and Walter 2006, esp. pp.69-72; Lake 2002; Crenshaw 2011, p.119. Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson 2007.

[39] Kydd and Walter 2006, p. 70.

[40] Arreguín-Toft 2001, p.109.

on the ability to maintain order and stability.

> *H1: Rebels fighting against democratic regimes will employ more terrorism than those fighting non-democratic governments.*

Note that these arguments differ from those in the terrorism literature that suggest democracies are susceptible to terrorism because they have trouble repressing or preventing and policing terrorist groups.[41] Most of these arguments should apply, and often are applied to insurgency and rebellion more generally, not only to terrorism as defined here.[42] That is, democracies should have more trouble fighting both terrorist rebel organizations and non-terrorist rebel organizations. Indeed, one might think that the types of careful and sensitive police work thought to be effective against terrorism per se might be a strength of democracies relative to autocracies, rather than a weakness. The provocability argument that I outline above, should apply only to terrorism, and not to attacks on military targets to the extent that one thinks that the outrageous nature of attacking civilians indiscriminately is inherently more provocative, particularly in democracies. Similarly, the "less backlash" legitimacy cost argument linking democracy to terrorism centers on the relative illegitimacy of targeting civilians in democracies vs. non-democracies, not on the legitimacy of targeting soldiers or military assets. These arguments are thus capable of explaining why terrorism is more likely in civil wars in

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[41] Cronin 2006, p.31; Crenshaw 1981, p.383. Li 2005; Pape 2003, pp.349-350. See also Eubank and Weinberg 1994; Wilson and Piazza Forthcoming 2013. But see Lyall 2010 for evidence that democracies are no more likely to lose against insurgencies more generally.

[42] This is true also of arguments that terrorism is related to a lack of opportunities for political participation, such that terrorism should be less rather than more likely in democracies. Crenshaw 1981; Schmid 1992; Sambanis 2008. See also Li 2005; and Drakos and Gofas 2006.

democracies, even though civil war itself is less likely.[43]

Rebel Aims

There are number of existing arguments linking the war aims of rebels with terrorism. Terrorism is often thought to be a tactic used by groups with particularly extreme aims.[44] This argument is often tautological, but it need not be so (see below). Pape argues that suicide terrorism is motivated by the goal of national liberation.[45] Stanton argues that those with exclusive goals, a category that consists of separatist rebels and "religious extremists," are most likely to conduct high-casualty terrorist attacks.[46] A number of authors argue that religious motivation contributes to terrorism.[47]

These arguments combine a number of different components of rebel aims that are sometimes conflated, but should be disentangled: religious vs. non-religious motivation, extremist vs. more moderate aims, and secessionist vs. non-secessionist goals.

Religion

The domestic legitimacy costs of religious conflicts may differ from those of non-religious conflicts. Identity conflicts in general (including conflicts pitting people of different

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[43] See for example, Ellingsen et al. 2001.

[44] DeNardo 1985. Hoffman 2006. See also Kydd and Walter 2002.

[45] Pape 2005, p.23.

[46] Stanton 2013, esp. p.[12 in ms].

[47] See for example, Pape 2005, p.22; Hoffman, Ch.4.

religions and/or ethnic groups against each other) make for relatively clear distinctions between "us" and "them" in a way that makes it easier to demonize the other side.[48] This can lower the legitimacy costs of targeting civilians among rebel fighters themselves and among the aggrieved population more generally.[49] Religion is considered a particularly salient type of identity, which may sharpen this effect relative to non-religious identity conflicts.[50] Stanton argues that religiously motivated rebels appeal to a more narrow base than other types of revolutionaries, and are thus less concerned about alienating the general population by inflicting high casualties on civilians.[51] Finally, we might expect that religious conflicts have particularly profound effects on legitimacy costs since religion is, after all, a legitimating device.[52] Those fighting for a divine cause can, perhaps, more easily justify killing "infidel" civilians, reducing the potential for backlash among the co-religious aggrieved population.[53] These arguments focus on two

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[48] Pape 2005, p.22. Pape lists two other reasons (besides demonization) for the connection between religious motivation and terrorism that are less applicable here: 1) that a religious divide raises fears that the occupier will seek to transform society, which pertains more to cases of foreign occupation (groups defending the status quo ante) than to group that seek to split away to form a new country (groups challenging the status quo), but see discussion of extremism below; and 2) that religious difference makes it easier to "relabel suicide attacks that would otherwise be taboo as martyrdom instead." Unlike many of his arguments which apply to terrorism more generally, this last applies specifically to suicide attacks, which can include attacks on military as well as civilian targets.

[49] Asal & Rethemeyer 2008 refer to this as "othering."

[50] Lindberg 2008 and Svensson 2007 argue that conflicts over religion are, respectively, more intense and less likely to result in negotiated settlement.

[51] Stanton 2013, esp. p.[12 in ms].

[52] Hoffman 2006, p.89; Juergensmeyer 2003.

[53] Cronin 2002/2003, p.41. Asal & Rethemeyer 2008 argue that terrorists for whom the audience is supernatural (God), are much more lethal than secular terrorist organizations. Berman 2009, however, agues that the lethality of "radical religious" terrorist groups is driven not by religion itself but by their ability to control defection and solve the collective action

somewhat different aspects of religious conflict: the first on othering dynamics, the latter on religious inspiration and legitimation.[54]

> *H2a: Civil wars that pit different religious groups against each other are more likely to entail terrorism than those that do not.*
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> *H2b: Rebels who make explicitly religious claims are more likely to use terrorism than those who do not.*

Religiously inspired rebels may also have less to lose in terms of legitimacy with fence-sitters among the mainstream population to the extent that religious rebels will impose their own way of life should they prevail.[55] On this last point, however, it is important to distinguish between religious motivation and extremism. The frequent use of the terms together: *religious extremism* occludes the fact that not all religiously inspired rebels aim to impose their own religion on others, and not all who seek to transform society and impose their own way of life on others are religiously motivated.[56]

Extremism

Arguments about extremism and terrorism run the risk of tautology: groups that use extreme tactics such as terrorism are considered extremist, therefore extremist groups use

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problem by requiring sacrifice as a form of costly signaling.

[54] See Lindberg 2008 p.49ff for a discussion of this difference. See also Svensson 2007.

[55] Pape 2005, p.22.

[56] Examples of work that associates religious motivation with extremism include Hoffman 2006, pp.127-8; Berman 2009; Cronin 2002/2003, p.41; Stanton 2013.

terrorism by definition.[57] The argument need not be circular, however. Lake proposes a definition of extremism as preferences that lie in the tail end of the distribution of a society's population.[58] This definition is problematic, however, if we want to compare groups in societies of differing levels of political polarization; Lake explicitly assumes a random distribution of preferences within society.[59] In highly polarized societies, a significant segment of the population may share the preferences of a group that is nonetheless advocating something very far from the status quo. Is such a group more or less extreme than one in a different society that aims for something closer to the status quo, but that fewer people in the society support? For example, if a majority ethnic group, such as the Hutus, want to depose a minority government run by Tutsis, is this less extreme by virtue of the fact that more people want it than if a minority, such as the Mohajirs in Pakistan, presses for more government jobs and economic opportunities? For better or worse, the issue is moot. The fine-grained public opinion data that would be needed to measure the distribution of preferences is hard to come by in the best of circumstances; in war-torn countries, getting accurate, cross-national public opinion data about whether people share the goals of illegal and violent organizations is likely impossible.

My conception of extremism sidesteps these issues. I conceive of extremism as the distance between a group's stated goals and the status quo – those who want to change things

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[57] In the terrorism literature and in many popular accounts, the terms *extremists* and *terrorists* are often used more or less interchangeably. See, for example, Dalacoura 2006.

[58] Lake 2002, p.18. The conception of extremism in DeNardo 1985, p.231, distinguishing "purist elements" from moderates and pragmatists who are more willing to compromise, is also non-circular, though it is extremely hard to measure a priori.

[59] Lake also includes in the definition that "extremists currently lack the means or power to obtain their goals" thus conflating relative strength with goals.

more dramatically are more extreme than those demanding less drastic change.[60] As a practical matter, we can compare the goals of groups relative to the status quo within different types of civil wars. A distinction is often made between wars fought for central control of the government, and those fought over the status of territory.[61] Among each of these a distinction can be made between moderate and extreme goals, as follows.

Among rebels fighting for the center, extreme goals entail efforts to transform society and government in some fundamental way. The extremist category thus includes groups that aim to transform a capitalist society into a communist or socialist one (e.g., the FARC in Colombia), or vice versa; fundamentalist religious groups that aim to transform a secular society into one governed by religious law (e.g., al-Gamaa al-Islamiyya in Egypt); and those who aim to end or replace a monopoly of power in the hands of one ethnic group (for example, the ANC's goal of ending apartheid, or Hutu rebels' goal of deposing the Tutsi in Burundi). Moderates, on the other hand, include non-identity based rebels fighting a power struggle to obtain the reins of power for themselves, but not to transform the basic political or economic structure of society (the struggle between Lissouba and Sassou-Nguesso in Congo-Brazzaville is a good example), as well as minority groups fighting for greater rights within a given political system, but not to change the system altogether (e.g., the MQM fighting for economic opportunity for Mohajirs in

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[60] In the same spirit, Chenoweth and Stephan 2011 distinguish between maximalist goals that aim fundamentally to alter the political order, and more limited goals.

[61] The UCDP Armed Conflict Data, for example, distinguish incompatibility concerning government, i.e. "the type of political system, the replacement of the central government, or the change of its composition" from incompatibility concerning the status of a territory, which in civil wars refers to secession or autonomy. Similarly, Fearon 2004 distinguishes between rebels who aim at the center, and those who aim at "exit" or autonomy.

Pakistan, referenced above).[62]

Among groups fighting over the status of territory, there are those whose stated goals entail only autonomy within existing borders of the state (e.g., the United Wa State Army in Myanmar/Burma),[63] and those who aim to break away and form an independent state (e.g., the PKK in Turkey or GAM in Indonesia). The latter have more extreme aims than the former. The 2x2 in Figure 1 shows the distinction.

Figure 1. Moderate vs. Extremist Goals

Goals	Territory	Government/Center
Moderate	Autonomy	Power struggle
Extreme	Secession	Transform society

It is not immediately obvious, other than the tautological reasoning referred to above, why the extremity of a group's goals would affect its propensity to terrorism as opposed to other forms of violence.[64] There are, however, a few reasons why we might expect terrorism to be

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[62] Note that *extremism* here is not necessarily pejorative. This author views the ANC's extremist goal of ending apartheid as much more just than many that are more moderate under this definition. Removing our own political biases from the definition is precisely the point.

[63] Autonomy aims are rare among conflicts that have reached the level of full-scale war.

[64] DeNardo 1985, p.231 offers what is essentially a selection effect argument for a link between extremism and terrorism that flips the direction of the causal arrow. He contends that repression of a dissident movement "boils down" its supporters such that moderates and pragmatists are willing to compromise or are otherwise dissuaded from continuing the struggle leaving only "purist elements" behind. These purists are most likely to resort to terrorism. Conflicts that have not ended through compromise or the defeat of rebels group are thus more likely to involve rebels with extreme goals, who are more likely to use terrorism. Many conflicts with moderate (would-be) rebels are likely selected out of this study, but that does not explain why, of the wars that are selected in, rebels with extreme ends are more likely to use extreme means. Nor is the causal mechanism between "purists" and willingness to use terrorism specified.

more common among extremist groups. First, it may be that those who aim to move their societies farther from the status quo are more willing to "play the long game." They know that the kinds of dramatic changes (whether to the whole society or to a country's boundaries) are hard to come by and will not come quickly. For these groups, then, organizational survival may be relatively more important. As I show elsewhere, terrorism enhances the life span of rebel groups.[65] In other words, extremist groups may be more likely to forego winning political concessions in the short term in order to live to fight another day in pursuit of much longer term objectives. This makes terrorism a relatively more attractive strategy.

There are two additional reasons that the legitimacy costs of terrorism may be relatively lower for extremists than for moderates. First, the aggrieved population may be more likely to be on board no matter what tactics the rebels use (more likely to feel the ends justify the means) when the aggrieved population desires more radical change from the status quo. The use of terrorism may thus alienate potential supporters less under these circumstances. Note, however, that this will only obtain if the aggrieved population largely shares the extreme goals of the rebel group.[66] Second, when a rebel group desires more dramatic change, there may be fewer "fence-sitters" among the mainstream population – it is harder to be undecided about one's position on a conflict, or to have some sympathy for a cause, that would alter the status quo more drastically.[67]

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[65] Fortna Forthcoming. See also Wood 2010.

[66] That is, the group is extreme from the perspective I use here – wanting larger change from the status quo, but not extreme from Lake's perspective – farther out in the distribution of opinion than the aggrieved population. Under Lake's conception, the opposite relationship should hold – by his definition, an extremist's position is farther from the median preference of the population, including the aggrieved, so they should be less on board with disagreeable tactics.

[67] Again, this depends on the distribution of preferences among the population. If extreme groups represent one "hump" of a polarized, bimodal distribution, there will be fewer fence-

Again, this means that there are fewer people whose potential support will be lost if a group resorts to terrorism.

> *H3: Rebel groups with moderate goals (power struggles or autonomy) will be less likely to use terrorism than those with extreme goals (transform society or secession).*

However, there are arguments specific to secessionist conflicts that complicate this picture.

Secessionism

Pape's argument, that suicide terrorism is motivated by the goal of national liberation suggests that terrorism should be more likely in secessionist conflicts.[68] Similarly, Stanton argues that separatist rebels are more likely to use terrorism because they need not worry about alienating mainstream civilians they hope eventually to govern.[69]

Contrary to Pape and Stanton, however, Fazal's work suggests that rebels fighting secessionist conflicts have incentives to avoid terrorism. She argues that separatist movements are more likely to comply with the laws of war because they desire to become accepted members of the international system. De jure independence requires more than just physical control of territory. It also requires recognition of independence by the international society of states. In other words, independence requires legitimacy in the eyes of other states. Rebel groups who aim

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sitters than if the distribution is more normally distributed.

[68] Pape 2005, 23. Indeed, Pape's conception of struggles against occupation include both international occupations and secessionist conflicts to break apart existing states. On this distinction see Collard-Wexler et al. Forthcoming. More recently, Pape and Feldman 2010 argue that suicide terrorism occurs against foreign occupation by a democracy.

[69] Stanton 2008, esp. Chapter 5. In more recent work, Stanton (2013) argues that secessionists and others with exclusive goals are more likely to use high-casualty terrorism.

to create their own states must therefore be much more concerned about their international legitimacy than rebels who want to take over the government of already existing states. Secessionist rebels therefore have greater incentives to show that they will be upstanding members of international society, should they be allowed to join the club. A prominent way that they can do this is to show that they are in compliance with international law, including laws that prohibit targeting of civilians; and that they subscribe to international norms; including the norm against terrorism.[70] Secessionist rebels thus pay much higher international legitimacy costs for terrorism than non-secessionist rebels.

> *H4: Rebels fighting to create an independent state will be less likely to employ terrorism than rebels fighting for other goals.*

Together then, H3 (on extremism) and H4 (on secession) suggest countervailing effects for secessionist conflicts. The extremity of secessionists' aims pushes toward terrorism, in part by reducing domestic legitimacy costs, while the need for international recognition pushes against terrorism. The combination suggests that we should see the least terrorism in autonomy and power struggle conflicts, somewhat more in secessionist conflicts, and the most in conflicts to transform societies.

> *H5: Rebels that seek to transform society are most likely to employ terrorism, followed by secessionist rebels, followed by those with more moderate goals.*

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[70] Fazal 2013; Fazal Forthcoming. Hoffman 2006, pp.85-86 suggests that this dynamic may be particularly true after the end of the Cold War when other impediments to independence fell away, making terrorism more counter-productive to secessionists. Note that Fazal proffers a second explanation for a negative relationship between secessionism and terrorism: that secessionists will be reluctant to target civilians in the homeland they hope to rule, and lack the capability to reach the rest of the country. I would argue that this could actually lead to a greater reliance on terrorism for attacks outside of the homeland, as they are relatively easier to conduct at larger distances than are attacks on military targets.

Rebel Funding Sources

A focus on legitimacy costs suggests that how rebels support and fund their fight will have important implications for whether they use terrorism. Rebels can fund their rebellion through a number of different sources, or a combination thereof: including local civilian support, foreign support from states or diasporas, and/or easily "lootable" resources such as gems or drugs. Rebels should be loathe to "bite the hand that feeds them."

Groups that do not rely on local civilians need worry much less about alienating potential supporters among the aggrieved population than will those who depend on this population for their material survival. Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians are a particularly poor way to win the "hearts and minds" of the civilian population. Those who rely on foreign support must worry about alienating their sponsors. For these rebel groups, the domestic legitimacy costs of terrorism may be replaced by international legitimacy costs. Some patrons may care more about the norm against terrorism than others. Following Salehyan et al., we might expect the legitimacy costs of terrorism to be higher for groups funded by democratic sponsors than by non-democratic ones.[71] The international legitimacy costs of terrorism may also be higher after September 11, 2001, and the subsequent elevating of the importance of the anti-terrorism norm (led by the US). Finally, groups that rely on easily extractable natural resources, including gems and drugs, to finance their fight should pay the lowest legitimacy costs for terrorism. This suggests several hypotheses:

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[71] Salehyan et al. 2012 argue that while external sponsorship in general increases rebel abuse of civilians, sponsorship by democratic states, who care more about human rights, reduces rebel abuse. They look at all types of targeting of civilians together, but to the extent that we think democracies care more about the anti-terrorism norm (as well as human rights more generally) a similar logic may apply to terrorism.

H6a: Rebel groups financed by "loot" are most likely to use terrorism, followed by those who rely on foreign sponsors, with those who rely on local civilians the least likely to use terrorism.

H6b: Rebels funded by foreign democracies will be less likely to employ terrorism than those funded by foreign non-democracies.

H6c: The negative effect of democratic external sponsors on the use of terrorism should be greater after 2011 than before.

Note that this reasoning differs from Weinstein's argument linking funding sources to the treatment of civilians. Weinstein argues that rebels who have access to natural resources or external sponsorship to support their fight are much more prone to indiscriminate violence against civilians than are those who rely on local civilians. But the mechanism Weinstein proposes is different because the type of violence against civilians he focuses on is different. In Weinstein's story, to the extent that rebels target civilians intentionally, they do so to control the population – to encourage collaboration with the rebels and deter collaboration with the government. This type of violence to control the population is, as noted above, the most common, indeed ubiquitous, form of violence against civilians in civil war. But it is not, by my definition, terrorism. For Weinstein, rebels would prefer to be able to target civilians discriminately, for this is much more effective as a way to control civilians. The variation for Weinstein comes in rebel groups' ability to discriminate. He argues persuasively that rebel groups with access to "easy money," as it were, from external sponsorship or natural resources, tend to attract opportunistic fighters and to have trouble controlling their interactions with civilians. As he puts it:

> Groups commit high levels of abuse not because of ethnic hatred or because it benefits them strategically but instead because their membership renders group

leaders unable to discipline and restrain the use of force.[72]

In Weinstein's argument, this type of abuse happens "naturally" if rebel groups cannot prevent it. But this is very different from the type of strategic, deliberately indiscriminate targeting of civilians – terrorism – that I examine here.[73] Variation in the deliberate choice to use terrorism cannot be explained by variation in the ability of rebel leaders to control their rank and file, but rather by variation in the legitimacy costs associated with this choice.[74]

Alternative Arguments

Relative Strength

That terrorism is a "weapon of the weak" is perhaps the most common explanation of why some groups choose terrorism while others do not.[75] Scholars of terrorism emphasize different aspects of groups' strength, or lack thereof. For some it is weakness in terms of popular political support that matters; those with fewer supporters do not have "safety in numbers" and so turn to underground tactics such as terrorism rather than pursuing other forms

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[72] Weinstein 2007, p.20.

[73] The violence Weinstein focuses on is neither intentionally indiscriminate, nor "symbolic."

[74] Note, however, that Berman 2009 argues that variation in the ability to control the rank and file in another way, to prevent their defection, is positively related to the effectiveness of terrorism and insurgency more generally.

[75] Among many, many examples, see, Crenshaw 1981, p.387; McCormick 2003, p.483. Merari 1993, p.231; Pape 2003, p.349. For some (e.g., Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009), weakness, or some element thereof, is part of the definition of terrorism, making this argument circular.

of dissent.[76] For others it is weakness in terms of group size or weaponry,[77] or lack of territorial control,[78] or the absence of factors that would allow effective guerilla organization, such as rough terrain or inefficient and poorly equipped government forces.[79] As Merari puts it, "One might say, that all terrorist groups wish to be guerillas when they grow up. They are unable to do it because of practical reasons."[80] Others argue that indiscriminate attacks on civilians are used by those who are desperate in the face of defeat, suggesting that groups are more likely to turn to terrorism later in the conflict, after other methods fail.[81]

Many scholars argue that terrorism is used not only to coerce an opponent but also to mobilize support.[82] Groups that are weak in terms of political support are said to be particularly likely to use terrorism in this way, especially in the early stages of a conflict.[83] This complicates the causal relationship between rebel group strength and the choice of terrorism as a tactic, however, for it suggests that while initial weakness leads to terrorism, terrorism should lead

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[76] DeNardo 1985, p.230. See also McCormick 2003, p.483.

[77] Merari 1993, pp.225-226, 245 (although it unclear if weakness is part of Merari's definition or description of terrorism, or a causal factor).

[78] Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009; de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2013. On territorial control and indiscriminate violence to control the population, see Kalyvas 2006.

[79] Laitin and Shapiro 2008, p.213.

[80] Merari 1993, p.245.

[81] Downes 2008; Wood 2010.

[82] See for example, Pape 2003; 2005.

[83] See, for example, McCormick 2003, p.485. The idea that terrorism is used in early stages of conflict, then rebels "graduate," if possible, to guerilla warfare, and ultimately to conventional warfare is often attributed to Mao 1961(1937). However, Mao explicitly argues against terrorism as a tactic for successful revolution. Kalyvas 2006, p.169, also argues that political actors will move from indiscriminate toward discriminate violence.

(assuming this mobilization strategy works) to increased strength.[84] That is, the causal arrows run in both directions.

Nonetheless, the conventional wisdom is certainly that the weaker the rebel group relative to the government, the more likely the group is to use terrorism. Indeed, this assumption is so taken for granted in the terrorism literature, that it has become a cliché. Empirical work on this hypothesis is embryonic, however.[85] The study of terrorism in civil wars allows us to test the weapon of the weak argument, and its variants, directly:

> *H7a: Militarily strong (relative to the government) rebel groups are less likely to use terrorism that militarily weak rebels.*
>
> *H7b: The less popular support a rebel group enjoys, the more likely it is to use terrorism.*
>
> *H7c Rebels who do not control territory are more likely to use terrorism.*
>
> *H7d: Rebels fighting on rough terrain will be less likely to use terrorism.*
>
> *H7e: Terrorism is more likely in early stages of a conflict rather than later ones.*
>
> *H7f: Terrorism is more likely by groups that are on the verge of defeat.*

Group competition: outbidding & spoiling

Another rather prominent argument in the terrorism literature is that groups resort to terrorism in a process of outbidding each other as they compete for popular support among the aggrieved population. Bloom links suicide bombing to a process of competition among terrorist

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[84] Lake 2002 makes the argument that strength is endogenous to terrorism most explicitly.

[85] For indirect evidence in support and against, see, respectively Chenoweth 2010's finding on government capacity, and De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2006 on rebel organizational resources. For more direct, but contradictory, evidence, see Stanton 2008; 2013. Coggins Forthcoming; Hendrix and Young 2013; and Wood Forthcoming.

groups for financial or popular support and argues that the practice will spread when the aggrieved population supports the targeting of civilians.[86] Kydd and Walter argue that outbidding arises when there are multiple groups vying for leadership of the aggrieved population, and that population is uncertain as to which group best represents its interests.[87] Chenoweth also argues that domestic political competition increases incentives for terrorist outbidding.[88] The outbidding argument suggests that:

> *H8: Rebel groups are more likely to use terrorism when other groups are involved in the same conflict than when they are the only rebel group representing the cause.*

Empirical evidence for this hypothesis, is mixed at best, however.[89] Nor is it entirely clear why the aggrieved should support groups that use terrorism in this way.[90]

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[86] Bloom 2005, p.1. See also Pearlman 2011.

[87] Kydd and Walter 2006, pp76ff.

[88] Chenoweth 2010. She tests this on transnational terrorism, but the logic applies to domestic terrorism as well.

[89] One cross-national attempt to test the outbidding hypothesis finds almost no support for it, beyond the Arab-Israeli case in which it was developed. Young and Findley 2011. Another finds that competition increases terrorism only among religious organization where violence is perceived as acceptable [and then apparently not even significantly so]. Nemeth 2013. Crenshaw 2011, pp.211-212 addresses a related argument, that competition among groups to maintain their recruits will create incentives for groups to continue to use terrorism, but finds anecdotal evidence against it.

[90] Kydd and Walter 2006 argue that it can be advantageous to be represented by an agent who will drive a harder bargain than oneself, and use of extreme tactics may signal a tougher negotiating stance. This argument discounts the cost of continued conflict to the aggrieved population, however. Supporting a group whose reservation price is higher than one's own by definition means ruling out settlements one would prefer to ongoing conflict. For further development of this critique of the outbidding logic, see Fortna Forthcoming.

Islam

In the popular imagination, at least in the West, terrorism is often associated not just with religious conflict, but with Islam in particular. Some scholars have connected terrorism to concepts of jihad or to the importance of martyrdom in Islam.[91] While I am skeptical of the notion that some religions are more likely to spawn terrorists than others, it is worth investigating the question empirically.

H9: Terrorism is more likely to be used by Muslim rebel groups.

I also control for several other variables which have been found associated with terrorism: population, GDP per capita, and region (most notably whether the civil war was fought in Sub-Saharan Africa), as well as for conflict intensity.[92]

Data and Methods

To begin to evaluate the hypotheses drawn from my own theory, and from alternative

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[91] Esposito 2002; Lewis 2003. For a discussion, see Piazza 2009. While Moghadam 2008 links the spread of suicide attacks to a culture of martyrdom associated with Shia Islam, he makes quite clear that this pertains to the suicide part of the mission more than the terrorism, and distinguishes this phenomenon from "localized" conflicts (e.g., Israel-Palestine, Turkey-Kurds or Sri Lanka-Tamils) that would be more pertinent to this study. Other scholars e.g., Hoffman 2006 and Juergensmeyer 2003 who discuss religious motivation and terrorism are careful to note that the connection is not unique to Islam, although many treatments of religion and terrorism focus their attention on all or mostly Muslim groups that have targeted the West. See for example, Berman 2009.

[92] On population size and terrorism, see Chenoweth 2010; and Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009. On economic conditions, see Burgoon 2006; and Li and Schaub 2004 [others]. On the absence of terrorism in Africa, see Boulden 2009, p.13; Fortna Forthcoming. Laitin and Shapiro 2008 surmise that the Africa finding may be the result of terrain and relative strength, variables whose influence are assessed directly here.

explanations, I am in the process of developing a data set covering all armed opposition groups in internal armed conflicts (≥25 battle deaths) from 1970-2010. These data build on existing data sets, including: the Uppsala Conflict Data Project-PRIO Dyadic Armed Conflict Data (ACD) (and several data sets compatible therewith); the Global Terrorism Database (GTD); and Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan's Non-State Actor data (NSA).[93] The data cover the 404 government vs. non-state actor dyads in ACD involved in internal or internationalized internal armed conflict – that is, in civil as opposed to interstate or extra-systemic conflict – active after 1970 when GTD coverage begins. The unit of analysis is the dyad-year.

The Dependent Variable

Measures of terrorism by rebel groups are derived from information in GTD. The GTD unit of analysis is the terrorism incident. Linking non-state actors in the ACD data to perpetrators in the GTD data is not straightforward, however. If a non-state group (side B) in ACD is listed in GTD as carrying out attacks in the country identified by ACD as side A, then all is well. For some groups, names may not match up but it is not difficult to work out, for example, that the group ACD identifies as JIG in Uzbekistan is what GTD refers to as the Islamic Jihad Group (IJG), or with a bit more research that "Tayeb Al-Afghani's Islamist Group" refers to the GIA in Algeria (since Tayeb al-Afghani was an early leader of that group). However, for some conflicts, GTD lists separately groups that are arguably lumped together in ACD and vice versa (e.g., in Thailand ACD lists the "Patani insurgency" while GTD identifies the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), Mujahideen Islam Pattani, and Young

[93] Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2013; LaFree and Dugan 2007. Harbom, Melander, and Wallensteen 2008.

Liberators of Pattani, among others). Other groups are associated with each other (Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan), or join, split apart, change names, and otherwise behave in ways that makes deciding what and who to count difficult. GTD also often lists as perpetrator not a specific group but a generic descriptor that may or may not apply to the group in question (e.g., Kurdish separatists). Finally, a very large number of incidents in GTD list the perpetrator as "unknown" or effectively unknown (e.g., "gunmen" or "hooded individual").

Merging GTD with ACD has therefore required a relatively major research effort in its own right. Along with two RAs turned co-authors, Nick Lotito and Mike Rubin, I have identified all perpetrators listed in GTD incidents that occurred in or targeted a state involved in an ACD civil conflict during the years of that conflict. These perpetrators were then paired with each rebel group (side B) in the conflict, resulting in 8880 potential matches. Each of these was coded by a team of RAs to identify various levels of matches, including: direct matches, armed wings, umbrella groups and factions, allied and affiliated groups, generic descriptors, and unknown and to separate these from perpetrators that are clearly not the rebel group in question (see appendix A). Coding many different levels of matches allows for flexibility (and robustness checks) in dealing with the problem of under- vs. over-counting. If one includes only GTD groups that are direct matches, then one is surely under-counting the incidents attributable to a particular group. However, if one includes less direct matches, including generic descriptors, then one is surely over-counting. Our strategy is to create several versions of the dependent variable, ranging from a most conservative minimum measure that includes incidents only by perpetrators who are direct matches or armed wings, to one that includes umbrella and factions as well, one that also includes generic descriptors that apply, and a final maximum that includes

also all incidents by unknown perpetrators in the country.[94] We can then see how the under/over counting issue affects results in robustness checks. In the descriptive statistics provided below, I use a fairly conservative measure that includes armed wings, umbrellas, factions, but not generic descriptors or unknowns, and report some of the other measures in footnotes. Figure 1 shows the different match levels for one case, the GIA in Algeria.

[Figure 1 about here]

A further complication arises from the fact that GTD deliberately encompasses a broad array of incidents, such that many events included in GTD do not fit the narrower definition of terrorism used here. GTD's definition is: "The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation."[95] In practice, GTD includes events that meet three basic criteria (the incident is intentional, entails some level of violence or threat thereof, and the perpetrator is a sub-national actor), plus at least two of three additional criteria:

1) the act is aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious or social goal,

2) there is evidence of intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey a message to a larger audience beyond the immediate victims,

[94] The latter versions of these measures will necessarily double (or more) count some incidents in countries where more than one group is active (e.g., each "perpetrator unknown" incident and many general descriptor incidents will be attributed to each of them).

[95] GTD codebook, p.7 [full cite].

3) the action is outside the context of legitimate warfare, i.e., against international humanitarian law "particularly the prohibition against deliberately targeting civilians or non-combatants."[96]

By definition, any deliberate attack by a rebel group involved in a civil war group meets the three basic criteria, as well as the first additional criterion.[97] The definition of terrorism used here requires that incidents meet the second and third additional criteria as well.[98] But even that restriction leaves us with too broad a set of phenomena for our definition. GTD, unfortunately, does not include measures of whether attacks were discriminate or indiscriminate. To capture the deliberately indiscriminate nature of attacks on which our definition of terrorism focuses, I rely on a the attack type and target type and subtype variables in GTD to create a proxy measure. The main measure includes only armed attacks and bombing/explosions that target public civilian targets: businesses (e.g., restaurants, groceries), tourists, transportation (including air), education, food/water supply, private citizens (including unnamed civilians, markets, public

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[96] GTD codebook, p.8.

[97] Indeed, according to GTD coding notes, all incidents "perpetrated by a group with an established political agenda (e.g., Taliban, Maoists, separatists)" are coded as meeting this criterion, under something the staff refers to as the "bake sale" rule, as in, "the Taliban can't hold a bake sale without it serving a political goal." Email communication with GTD's Erin Miller August 12, 2014.

[98] For groups with established political agendas such as those under consideration here, the only incidents that fail to meet the second criteria include personal attacks and infighting within or between groups. Note also that in "active military situations" (the GTD determination of which is based in large part on the existence of a UCDP conflict), off-duty military personnel are considered combatant targets. The non-combatant category thus includes civilians, police (but not paramilitary police agencies), and military non-combatants such as military medical, clergy, or peacekeeping personnel. Incidents that "indiscriminately target military entities with a reasonable likelihood of harming civilians" can also satisfy the third criterion, but these would then include a non-military target as one of the targets coded. Email communication with Erin Miller of GTD. August 12, 2014.

areas, etc. but not arguably more discriminate targets such as named civilians, political party members, etc.). I also create a less restrictive measure that includes more attack types and target subtypes for robustness' sake. I am also developing a measure that gets at indiscriminate attacks against specific groups, particularly ethnic or religious groups. The full set of included and excluded attack and target (sub)types in these three measures are described in appendix B.[99]

Finally, because my focus is on terrorism in the context of civil conflicts, I exclude transnational incidents, that is, my measure of whether a rebel group employs terrorism is based only on incidents that take place in the country experiencing the civil conflict, against targets associated with that country.[100] Note also that GTD data is missing entirely for 1993, so these observations are dropped from the analysis.

For each dyad-year, then, I measure terrorism based on the count of domestic incidents, meeting all 6 inclusion criteria, and the attack and target type criteria, that are attributable to a specific rebel group.

Of the 334 rebel groups for which we have data so far, 169, or slightly over half are responsible for at least one incident that meets my definition of terrorism in GTD, while 165 are not responsible for any.[101] Moreover, most rebel groups refrain from using terrorism the vast

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[99] Inclusion of some subtypes is arguable – see those marked [?] – [I welcome feedback on these].

[100] CCT includes information on these transnational attacks, but they are excluded from the analyses shown here.

[101] [add figures when include generic descriptors & unknowns]. The 70 groups for which we do not yet have data are much less likely to be involved in terrorism, however, so the true number resorting to terror at some point in the conflict is probably closer to 40-45%. While we haven't yet checked the missing groups thoroughly, the most likely reason they are missing is that there are no GTD incidents at all in the relevant country during the years of the conflict, for example, Trinidad & Tobago in 1990 or Burkina Faso in 1987. As these examples suggest, most missing

majority of the time. There is no terrorist incident in 79% of all dyad-years, and in 93% the count is 5 incidents or fewer (see Figure 2).[102] Even if we include generic descriptors, and the double-counting that entails, we see no terrorism in 71% of dyad-years and 5 incidents or fewer in 90%. Only if we include unknown perpetrators do we see terrorism as a relatively common practice – with at least one incident in 58% of dyad-years and over 5 incidents in 32%.[103] However, some dyad-years see extraordinarily high amounts of terrorism; the annual count variable ranges from 0 to 149 incidents.[104] Sendero Luminoso has the dubious distinction of being the most intensive user of terrorism in these data, accounting for seven of the eleven dyad-years in which the terrorist incident count is higher than 80. Other high-count dyad years include CPI-Maoist rebels in India in 2010, the FMLN in El Salvador in 1982 and 1983, and the TPP in Pakistan in 2010.

[Figure 2 about here]

The count of terrorism incidents can be analyzed in several different ways, employing several different statistical models: a simple dummy variable distinguishing dyad-periods in which at least one terrorist incident occurred from those with none (logit); a trichotomous

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groups are military forces involved in coups, in which terrorism is very unlikely (and I intend to drop coups from the analysis in the end for just this reason).

[102] The figures are similar (81% and 94% respectively) if we restrict to direct matches, excluding armed wings, umbrellas and factions.

[103] The use of terrorism is of course higher with a less restrictive measure (including more target and attack types), with no terrorism in 75% of dyad-years under the most conservative count, and 33% under the least conservative.

[104] The range is 0 to 549 for the least conservative level of matching (including even unknown perpetrators).

variable differentiating no incidents 1-5 incidents, and 6 or more (ordered logit); and the count of terrorist incidents (zero-inflated negative binomial).

Independent Variables

Democracy (H1) is measured with Vreeland's X-Polity scores since the presence of a civil war in the country is likely to bias the normal Polity scores.[105] Data on religious differences between rebels and the governments they fight (H2a) are available from Lindberg, while data on whether groups make explicitly religious claims (H2b) are available from Svensson.[106]

I do not yet have a measure of extremist vs. moderate goals (H3 & H5) for conflicts over government.[107] My measure of secessionist rebels (for H3 & H4) is based on Bridget Coggins' data on secessionist movements.[108] For all dyads in which ACD codes the incompatibility as territory (rather than government), I have checked whether the group corresponds to a secessionist movement in Coggins. Coggins' inclusion criteria require, inter alia, that a formal declaration of independence has been made.[109] This measure is imperfect for my purposes because Coggins does not code whether specific rebel groups explicitly demanded secession,

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[105] Vreeland 2008.

[106] Lindberg 2008 and Svensson 2007.

[107] For a previous paper (Fortna Forthcoming) on a more limited set of cases (full-scale civil wars after 1989), I coded this myself, and presumably will need to do so again here.

[108] Coggins 2011.

[109] Ryan Griffiths' data [cite] relaxes this assumption and is used for robustness checks, since the practice of declaring independence shifts over time. Fazal Forthcoming. However, since part of what I am trying to assess is the extremism of territorial claims, information about whether a group has declared independence, a relatively radical step, is useful.

only whether there was a (possibly larger) secessionist movement, so in situations where several groups fight for the same territory, I cannot distinguish those who fight for independence from other more moderate groups who may claim only to fight for autonomy. It is, however, a reasonable proxy for secessionist rebel groups.

Available data on how rebels finance their rebellion (H6a-c) pose a tradeoff between breadth and depth. Two data sets include detailed information on rebel financing, including measures of reliance on civilian sources, but these cover only full-scale (>1000 battle death) wars in the post-Cold War period.[110] Data on lower levels of conflict going back to the 1970 exist on external financing, (and specifies the external sponsor so that regime type can be identified) and data exists on the presence of natural resources, including gems and drugs ("loot") in the conflict zone.[111] If one is willing to make the assumption that groups without access to lootable resources or external support are most likely to rely on civilians for financial support, these measures can be used as reasonable proxies. However, since these funding categories are not mutually exclusive, the measure is imperfect at best.

Rebel strength is measured relative to the government, based on NSA's 5-point indicator, which ranges from much weaker to much stronger. This variable summarizes assessments of the rebel group's ability to mobilize supporters, arms procurement ability, and fighting capacity. I test the basic relative military strength hypothesis (H7a) with both this summary variable, and the fighting capacity component on its own. I use the mobilization capacity variable as a proxy for popular support (H7b). NSA also codes whether the rebel group controls territory, allowing

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[110] Huang 2012 [Cite also Testerman's data]

[111] [cite UCDP's External Support data and Buhaug et al, and Lujala]

for testing of (H7c). To test the rough terrain hypothesis (H7d) I use data on the percent of the territory in which fighting takes place (the conflict zone) that is mountainous or forested, from Buhaug et al.[112] A measure of conflict age (time since conflict start date) is used to test H7e.

The outbidding hypothesis (H8) is tested with measures of the number of groups listed by UCDP as being involved in a conflict.[113] I rely primarily on a dummy variable distinguishing conflicts involving only a single group from those with two or more rather than a continuous measure because there are a few conflicts for which UCDP seems to have thrown up its hands at the sheer number of rebel groups and lumped them together as "Kashmir insurgents" or "Sikh insurgents" in India, or Patani insurgents" (Thailand).

Population and GDP/capita data are available from Gleditsch.[114] I include a dummy variable for conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa.[115] Because we should expect more terrorism where the conflict is more intense, I control for minor (25-9999 battle deaths/year) vs. major armed conflict (1000+). More fine-grained data on battle-deaths per year are available only post-1989,

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[112] Buhaug et al. 2009. This measure is preferable to Fearon and Laitin's 2003 measure of mountainous terrain in the country as a whole for obvious reasons. However, it is not available for the full time period, and unlike the country-wide measure can not easily be extrapolated to cover more recent conflicts.

[113] This not a perfect measure as it captures only groups that are otherwise coded by UCDP as making up separate dyads in the conflict. Some very small groups are thus not included. GTD data could be used to identify many of these smaller groups and competitors, but only those that employ terrorism (as defined by GTD), so would entail selecting on the dependent variable to some extent.

[114] [get updated data; add cite].

[115] I follow the UN classification and include Sudan as part of North Africa rather than sub-Saharan Africa.

but will be used for that subsample because it is quite likely that much of the variation in terrorist incidents year to year is driven by changes in the intensity of the conflict overall.

Caveats

Because I focus on terrorism in the context of civil wars, I am not capturing all terrorist organizations in this study. As noted above, this study excludes transnational and international terrorist groups that attack primarily across borders rather than in their home state. While what we learn here may help shed light on the question of transnational terrorism, it cannot fully explain why transnational terrorist groups form, or why some countries are more likely to be the victim of transnational terrorism than others.[116]

The very smallest terrorist groups are not included in these data, nor are groups that do not combine terrorist attacks against civilians with at least some attacks on government military forces. By some counts and some definitions of terrorism, the majority of terrorist organizations are excluded from data on civil conflicts.[117] By covering the most deadly groups, this study arguably covers the most important ones, and comparable data on non-terrorist as well as terrorist groups are only available for conflicts above a certain level of lethality.[118]

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[116] For empirical studies addressing the latter question, see Burgoon 2006; Drakos & Gofas 2006, Li 2005; Li & Schaub 2004, Weinberg & Eubank 1998, among many others.

[117] For example, of the 395 terrorist groups identified by the MIPT data base from 1998-2005 only 39% had actually killed anyone. Asal and Rethemeyer 2008. In a database of Domestic Terrorist Victims, the mean number of fatalities among terrorist organizations is 40.6, and the median number killed is 3! Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009, p.35. While I do not (in this iteration) restrict my measure of terrorism to fatal incidents, the focus on groups involved in civil wars, who are by definition deadly, excludes "terrorist" groups that have killed no one.

[118] These data allow me to examine why groups involved in a civil war choose to use terrorist tactics, but not why terrorism (or any violent opposition for that matter) escalates to civil war. It

However, the selection of groups into the data used here is worth considering carefully, because it truncates variation on some independent variables. The very weakest groups, those unable ever to mount even a minor armed conflict (>25 battle deaths/year), are excluded, for example. It is thus possible that at this very weak end of the spectrum, opposition groups are more likely to resort to terrorism than those I examine here. Testing the "weapon of the weak" argument across the full spectrum of group strength would require data on opposition groups in conflicts under 25 battle deaths, that do not select on the dependent variable (to my knowledge, such data do not exist). Because democracies are less likely to be torn apart by civil wars than autocracies, the selection of civil conflicts may also affect our estimates of the relationship between regime type and terrorism.[119] These problems are substantially alleviated in the data used here, which cover both major and minor armed conflicts, but they are not eliminated completely. Results from this analysis must be interpreted with these selection biases in mind.

Conclusion

The theory laid out above proposes that terrorism is most likely to be used where it is expected to be most effective, and where its legitimacy costs are lowest. I argue that effectiveness and legitimacy should vary with the regime type of the government, rebel aims (religious difference, extremism, secessionism), and rebel funding sources, and derive a number of testable hypotheses from this theory. Previous analysis of a more limited set of cases, and

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takes two to tango; only if the government responds with sufficient military force for the conflict to be coded as a civil war will the group end up in the data used here. Sambanis 2008, pp. 33-34.

[119] But note that over 30% of the dyad-periods here represent rebel organizations fighting against democracies, including, for example, Israel, India, the United Kingdom, and Turkey.

early analysis a very preliminary version of these data (prior to coding all possible GTD perpetrator matches) found support for many of these hypotheses and cast doubt on alternative arguments.[120] I have found consistent support for the effect of regime type for example, as well as some support for the notion that secessionist rebels are less likely to resort to terror, and that religious difference between rebels and governments make terrorism more likely. I have also found surprisingly little support for the weapon of the weak argument or the outbidding argument. Given limitations with existing data however, I am not fully confident in the findings to date. The data I am developing here will allow for much more accurate evaluation of whether the choice to use terrorism is indeed driven by efficacy and legitimacy cost calculations, as I hypothesize, and of more thorough investigation of some conventional explanations for terrorism.

The literature on terrorism has exploded (no pun intended) since 2001 for obvious reasons. The literature includes many good systematic studies of variation within terrorism. But its ability to answer some fundamental questions has been hampered by the fact that much empirical research has selected on the dependent variable. Meanwhile, research on a fuller spectrum of opposition groups has been limited by the lack of good data on the use of terrorism. This project uses variation in the use of terrorism by rebel groups to advance our understanding of an important question for policy makers and academics alike: when and why do rebel groups choose terrorism?

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[120] Fortna Forthcoming.

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Figure 1. Matching Levels Example

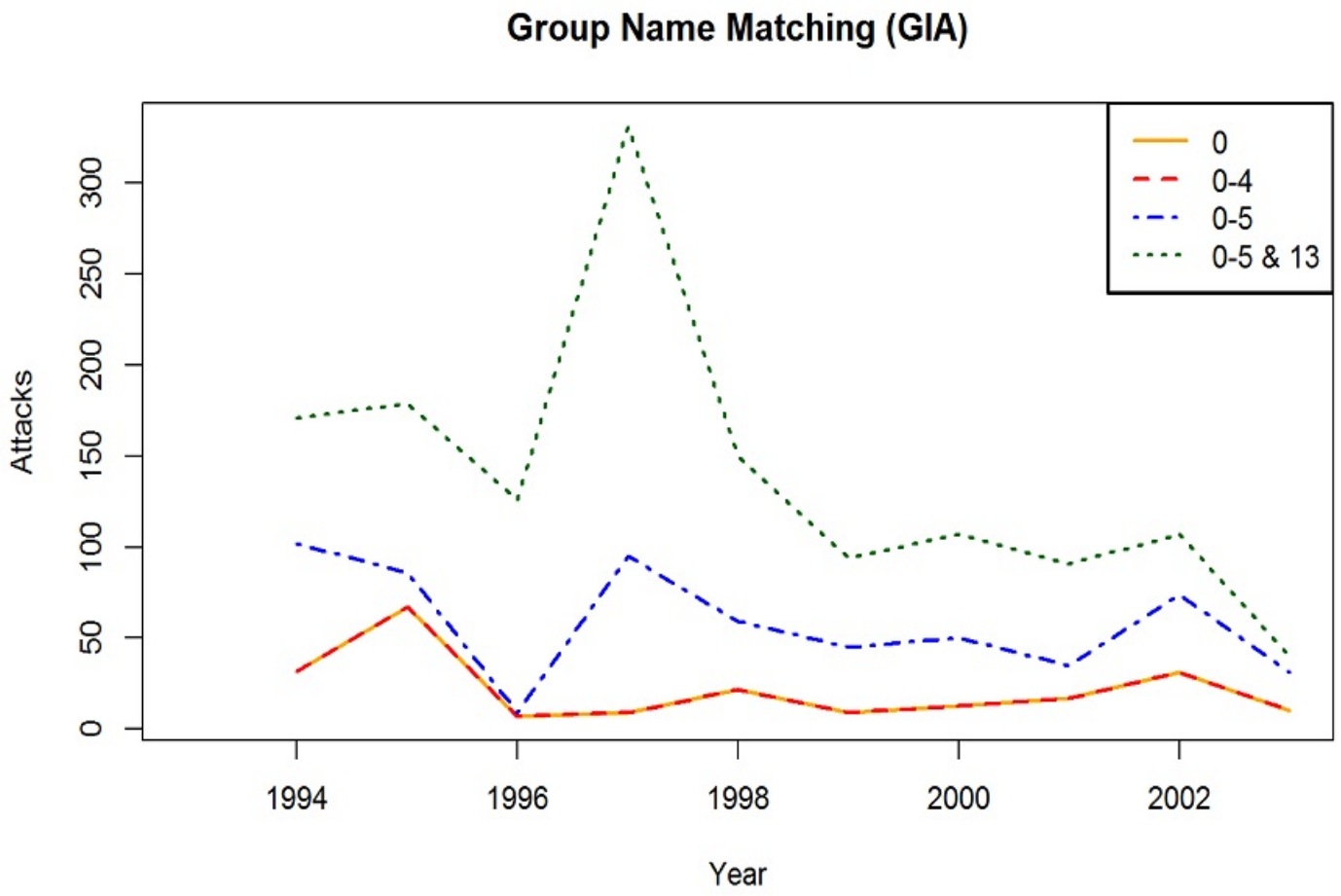
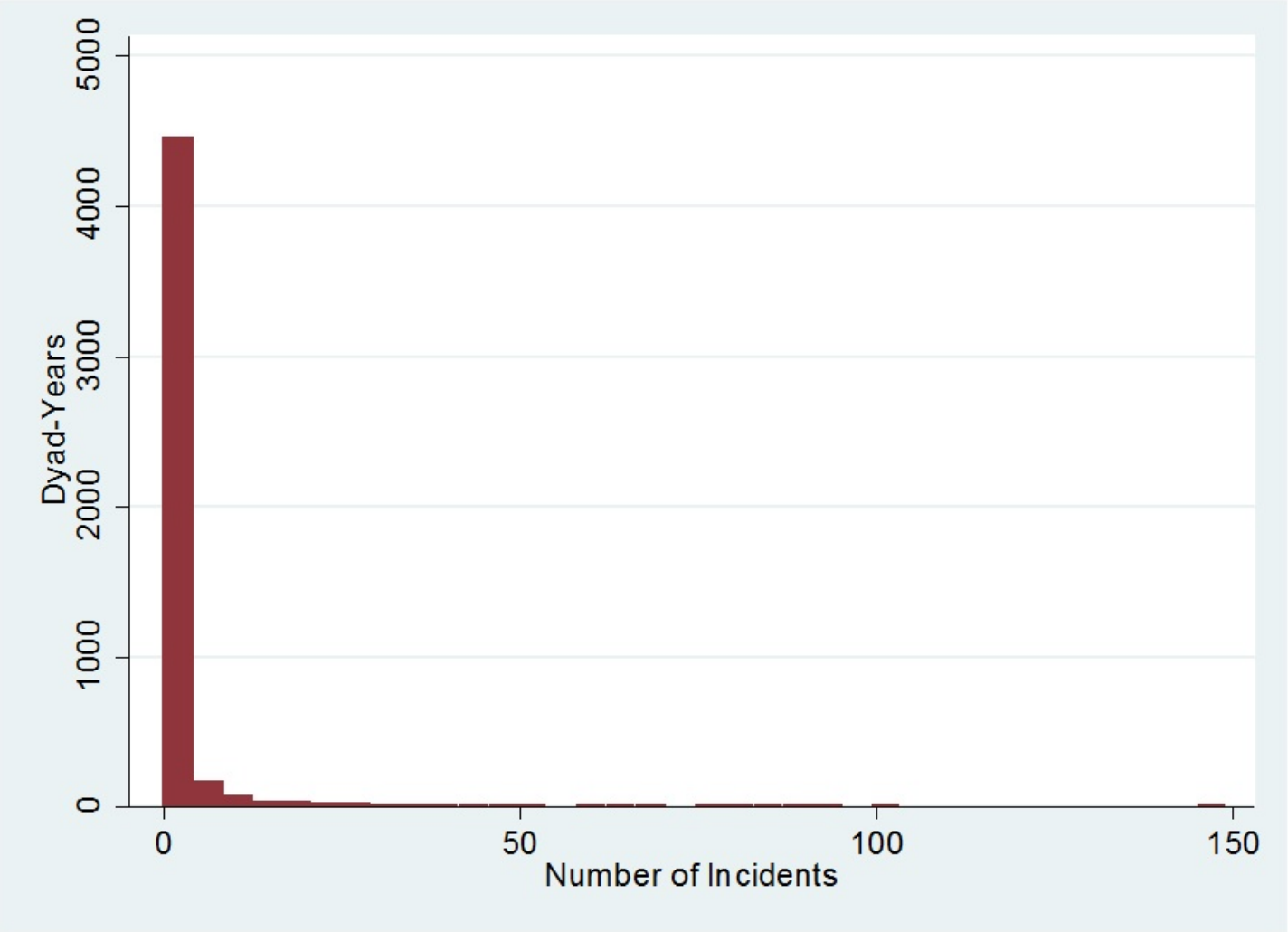


Figure 2. Distribution of Terrorist Incidents



Appendix A. Coding ACD SideB - GTD Perpetrator Matches

Match Levels:

0 direct match
1 armed wing
2 GTD broader than/umbrella of SideB
3 GTD faction/subset of SideB
4 allied or affiliated, same movement
5 general descriptor, applies to SideB

13 unknown or general descriptor vague or too general to describe group

Not a Match:

6 separate movement, allied
8 same conflict, never allied or rivals
10 different ACD actor
11 specific group ≠ SideB, not in ACD
12 general descriptor, does not apply

Missing:

-99 insufficient info to code
-98 general descriptor, unclear if applies
-97 connected, not clear how
-96 connected, changes over time

Appendix B: GTD Attack and Target Types included in Measures of Deliberately Indiscriminate Terrorism

GTD		Main measure	Less restrictive	Identity group targeting
Attack Type				
Assassination				
Hijacking			✓	
Kidnaping			✓	
Barricade Incident			✓	
Bombing/ Explosion		✓	✓	✓
Unknown			✓	
Armed Assault		✓	✓	✓
Unarmed Assault				
Facility/ Infrastructure			✓	✓
Target Type	subtype			
Business	gas/oil		✓	
	restaurant/bar/café	✓	✓	
	bank/commerce		✓	
	multinational corporation		✓	
	industrial/textiles/factories		✓	
	medical/pharmaceutical		✓	
	retail/grocery/bakery	✓	✓	
	hotel/resort	✓	✓	
	farm/ranch		✓	
	mining		✓	
	entertainment/cultural/ stadium	✓	✓	
	construction		✓	
	private security company		✓	
Government (general & diplomatic)	all			

Police	all			
Military	all			
abortion related	all			
airports/aircraft	aircraft	✓	✓	
	airline officer/personnel	✓ [?]	✓	
	airport	✓	✓	
educational inst.	teachers/professors/instructors	✓ [?]	✓	
	schools/universities/bldgs	✓	✓	
	other personnel	✓ [?]	✓	
food/water supply	all	✓	✓	
journalists/media	all		✓	
maritime	civilian	✓	✓	
	commercial	✓ [?]	✓	
	oil tankers	✓ [?]	✓	
	ports	✓ [?]	✓	
NGOs				
other	ambulance/fire fighters/refugee camps/DMZs	✓ [DMZ?]	✓	
unknown			✓	
private citizens/property	unnamed civilians / unspecified	✓	✓	
	named civilians		✓	
	religion ID'd	✓	✓	✓
	students	✓	✓	
	race/ethnicity ID'd	✓	✓	✓
	farmers	✓	✓	
	vehicles/transportation	✓	✓	
	market/plaza	✓	✓	
	villages/cities/towns	✓	✓	
	houses/apts/residence	✓	✓	
	laborers/specific jobs	✓ [?]	✓	

	processions/gatherings	✓	✓	✓
	public areas	✓	✓	
	memorials/cemeteries	✓	✓	✓
	museums/cultural	✓	✓	✓
	labor union related		✓	
	protestors		✓	
	political party members / rallies		✓	
religious figures / institutions	religious figures		✓	✓
	places of worship		✓	✓
	affiliated institutions		✓	✓
telecommunication	all		✓	
terrorist/nonstate militias	all			
tourists	all	✓	✓	
transportation	all	✓	✓	
utilities			✓	
violent political parties				