

**Is Terrorism Really a Weapon of the Weak?
Testing the Conventional Wisdom**

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Abstract

The idea that terrorism is a “weapon of the weak” is such a deeply held conventional wisdom that it has become almost a cliché in the terrorism literature. But little rigorous empirical research has tested directly the contention that weaker groups are more likely to employ terrorism.

Preliminary research calls this contention into question. This paper explores the most prominent arguments to develop specific hypotheses about group strength and the prevalence of terrorism. It uses a new data set measuring the use of terrorism by rebel groups in civil conflicts, as well as a number of measures of rebels’ strength, to examine systematically whether weaker groups are more likely to employ terrorist tactics. I find surprisingly little empirical support for the conventional wisdom. Terrorism does not in fact appear to be used more by weak groups than by strong ones.

Terrorism is frequently said to be a “weapon of the weak.”¹ Indeed, this conception is so common in the terrorism literature that it goes beyond conventional wisdom into something of a cliché.² For some, this is simply part of the definition of terrorism. But the idea also implies a causal relationship, and a possible answer to the question of why some opposition groups resort to terrorism, while others do not. This notion, that weaker groups will be more likely to employ terrorism than stronger ones, is simply taken as a given; very little work has been done to test it empirically in a systematic or thorough way. Do arguments that terrorism is a weapon of the weak help explain variation in its use? In other words, is terrorism more associated with weak groups than with strong ones? That is the question this paper investigates.

When people say that “terrorism is a weapon of the weak,” what they mean by “weak” varies. This paper explores the most prominent arguments to develop specific hypotheses about group strength and the prevalence of terrorism. It then tests these by examining terrorism in the context of civil conflicts. Civil conflicts constitute a useful testing ground for this question because they provide variation in the outcome of interest. Rebel groups vary in their use of terrorism (some use it, some don’t; some use it at some times but not others; or use it more than others), and this provides empirical leverage that much of the terrorism literature sorely lacks. Data on civil war is also relatively well developed. Here I use a new data on the use of terrorism by rebel groups from 1970-2007. These data combine information from the PRIO-UCDP Armed Conflict Data (hereafter UCDP) with information from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

The paper proceeds as follows. I begin with a brief discussion of what I mean by the term “terrorism” since the term is contested and fraught. I then turn to what people mean when they say that “terrorism is a weapon of the weak” and draw out testable hypotheses from that discussion. Next, I explain the research design and data, and then present the findings. I find remarkably little support for the deeply held conventional wisdom that terrorism is a weapon of the weak. There is very little evidence that weak groups are more likely to employ terrorism, or that they employ more of it, than do stronger groups.

A Definition of “Terrorism”

Because it is such a loaded term, defining terrorism is notoriously contentious; as another cliché on the subject goes, one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter. This is perhaps particularly true in the context of civil wars.³ The term is also often used inconsistently. The media is often quick to label attacks on “us” by “others” as “terrorism,” while similar attacks by those more like “us” or against “them” get referred to in other ways.⁴ It is therefore important to

¹ Thornton 1964, p.89 credits Crozier for the “oft-repeated dictum.” In Crozier’s own words “terrorism is an instrument of the weak.” Crozier 1960, p.191.

² Among many, many examples, see, Crenshaw 1981, p.387; McCormick 2003, p.483. Merari 1993, p.231; Pape 2003, p.349.

³ On definitions, see McCormick 2003, p.473; Merari 1993; Stohl 2007.

⁴ Some conclude that we should therefore not use the term at all. Moore 2014. [cite Presidential address at Peace Science “Tilting at a Windmill? The Conceptual Problem in Contemporary Peace Science.”] I disagree. I think, rather, that the fact that others use the term in ways that are

be clear about what I do and don't mean by the term, and to apply the definition consistently.

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.* This definition is narrower than many in the literature that arguably encompass all attacks by all rebel groups in all civil wars.⁵ But it is broader than those that draw a mutually exclusive distinction between terrorism and guerilla warfare or insurgency.⁶ Both the overly broad and the overly narrow definitions preclude the examination of terrorism in civil wars. The former because all rebels are considered terrorist, the latter because none are. In neither case is there any variation to give us leverage on why some groups, sometimes, employ terrorism, while others do not.

Like many, but by no means all definitions of terrorism, mine focuses on deliberate attacks on civilians.⁷ Violence against civilians distinguishes terrorism, which only some groups engage in some of the time, from the “normal” attacks on military targets that all rebels engage in by definition. 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.⁸

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.⁹ Much of the literature on the treatment of civilians in civil war, including prominent work by Weinstein and Kalyvas among others, focuses on this type of violence.¹⁰ Targeting civilians in this fashion is

sloppy, hypocritical, biased, and otherwise problematic increases the importance of academics using the term terrorism (and others like it) in ways that are thoughtful and as objective as possible, lest we cede the conversation to those less careful with the term.

⁵ 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).

⁶ These definitions preclude the examination of the relationship between group strength and terrorism that is our focus here (on which more below). For discussions and examples, see Schmid and Jongman 1988, esp. pp.13-18; Silke 1996; Cronin 2006, pp.31-32; Sambanis 2008.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Stanton 2008.

⁹ Stanton 2008, p.31. Kydd and Walter 2006, pp.66ff.

¹⁰ Weinstein 2007; Kalyvas 2006.

ubiquitous.¹¹ 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 be directly and materially aiding the enemy.¹² 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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).¹⁵ An attack on a public market, for example, is not intended, ultimately, to influence shoppers, but rather the government.

Note that 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) might thus be considered morally preferable to some non-terrorist groups.¹⁶ 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 judgments of the morality of a group’s cause influence our measurement of whether it used terrorism.

Critics of this definition might argue that the focus on indiscriminate violence against civilians is too narrow, for it leaves out some attacks and tactics that we do commonly think of as terrorism. It excludes assassination of public civilian figures, for example. It also excludes attacks such as those carried out in Paris in January 2015, which targeted Charlie Hebdo quite discriminately. Such attacks target civilians who are seen as culpable in some way in the eyes of

¹¹ In Stanton’s data there are only three rebel groups that do not engage in this type of violence against civilians.

¹² 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.

¹³ For a critical view of conceptions of “innocence,” see Kinsella 2011.

¹⁴ Crenshaw 1981, p.379; McCormick 2003, p.474.

¹⁵ Stanton 2008, pp.34-35. Stanton 2013.

¹⁶ On the relative morality of terrorism, see Crenshaw 1983, p.3 and Merari 1993, pp. 227-231.

the attacker and potentially to others as well. While there is not necessarily a bright line between such attacks and those on “ordinary” collaborators, there does seem to be a distinction between discriminate attacks on public figures and those meant to control the general population to induce collaboration with one’s own side or to deter collaboration with the enemy. It is an open question whether these more discriminate attacks on public figures have the same causes or effects as deliberately indiscriminate attacks on random civilians. [In future iterations of this project I will address this issue by using two sets of measures of terrorism, one which focuses on attack and target types most likely to be deliberately indiscriminate, and one which includes arguably more discriminate attacks (e.g., attacks on journalists or assassinations). For this latter measure the definition of terrorism drops “intentionally indiscriminate” but remains focused on public civilian targets.]

What Does it Mean to Say that “Terrorism is a Weapon of the Weak”? Hypotheses

The phrase “weapon of the weak” is bandied about in the terrorism literature, but not everyone means the same thing by it. Below, I unpack the main ways in which the concept is used and draw out empirical implications from the various arguments.

As noted above, the relationship between weakness and terrorism is more or less baked into some conceptions of terrorism. This is true in particular of definitions that attempt to distinguish terrorism from insurgency. Cronin, for example writes that “terrorism and insurgency are not the same, but they are related” and notes that terrorist groups can “escalate to insurgency or even conventional war,”¹⁷ suggesting that terrorism is a lower level of violence than insurgency or civil war. Guelke and Merari both note that in common usage, the term terrorism often refers to lower levels of violence or violence in the context of peace rather than war, that is, in stable (and especially democratic) societies.¹⁸ Merari also distinguishes the strategy of terrorism from that of guerilla warfare by arguing that the latter tries to establish physical control of a territory, and notes that terrorist groups tend to be much smaller.¹⁹ While these authors don’t explicitly include weakness in their definitions of terrorism (some do not explicitly define the term at all), an implicit feature of their conception of terrorism is that it is conducted by groups that are too weak to wage full-blown insurgency. 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

¹⁷ Cronin 2006, pp.31-32.

¹⁸ Guelke 1995, pp. 30-31. Merari 1993, p.217. This distinction becomes hard to maintain in “the war on terror” when everything regarding terrorism is a state of war. More important, having the regime type of the country involved be part of the definition of terrorism makes it impossible to examine whether democracies are more vulnerable to terrorism than other types of states.

¹⁹ Merari 1993, p.225.

practical reasons.”²⁰ Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle are most explicit; they define terrorism by the inability of the group to control territory.²¹ The relative strength of the government and the insurgent group is thus built in to the definition.

If terrorism is defined as violence perpetrated by groups too small or weak to wage civil war, then “terrorism is a weapon of the weak” by definition, and any attempt to explain terrorism with reference to group strength is circular. But non-tautological arguments about the relationship between strength and the proclivity to use terrorism can be drawn out of the literature.

In its most general sense, the notion that terrorism is a weapon of the weak refers to the fact that it is employed by groups that are less powerful than the opponent they fight against. “Terrorism is the poor man’s airforce” as the saying goes. Sometimes this is used as a justification for the use of terrorism. For example Sayeed Siyam of Hamas explained:

We in Hamas consider suicide bombing attacks. . . to be the card that Palestinians can play to resist the occupation. . . We do not own Apache helicopters ourselves, so we use our own methods.²²

Or as Peter Ustinov quipped “Terrorism is the war of the poor, war is the terrorism of the rich.” While this may be an accurate description of how terrorist groups justify their actions to themselves and others, it is not particularly helpful for understanding variation in the use of terrorism, because virtually all opposition groups are considerably weaker than the governments they face. Very few rebel groups own Apache helicopters, yet not all of them resort to terrorism.

Nonetheless, there is variation in the extent to which rebel groups are weaker than their opponents. The most straightforward empirical implication of the weapon of the weak argument is that rebel groups that are militarily the weakest, relative to the government they fight, should be most likely to employ terrorism.²³

H1: The weaker the rebels are militarily relative to the government, the more rebels will resort to terrorism.

As Crenshaw explains, “terrorism is a logical choice ... when the power ratio of government to challenger is high.” By power and weakness, she means the ability of the state to suppress

²⁰ Merari 1993, p.245.

²¹ Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009, p.34.

²² Sontag, Deborah. 3 February 2002. “The Palestinian Conversation.” New York Times. [check quote, quoted in Collard-Wexler diss, p.221 (late 2012 draft)]

²³ Merari 1993, pp.225-226, 245 emphasizes weakness in terms of group size or weaponry (although it unclear if weakness is part of Merari’s definition or description of terrorism, or a causal factor).

opposition, and the popularity of a group's cause.²⁴ This suggests somewhat different measures of weakness than military capacity. Others argue that state capacity (more generally, not only capacity to repress) affects relative strength, and thereby the use of terrorism. Laitin and Shapiro, for example, speculate that inefficient and poorly equipped government forces allow groups to wage effective guerrilla campaigns obviating the need for terrorism.²⁵ This suggests a second hypothesis about relative strength.

H2: Rebels facing more capable states will employ more terrorism.

Note that the popular notion that state failure leads to terrorism suggests just the opposite.²⁶

By a similar logic, Laitin and Shapir argue that groups who enjoy favorable conditions for insurgency, such as rough terrain, should be less likely to resort to terrorism.²⁷

H3: Rebels fighting on rough terrain will use less terrorism.

For others who use the phrase “weapon of the weak,” 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 of dissent.²⁸ Insurgency is also arguably an “underground” form of dissent, so this argument, like many in the terrorism literature may be an explanation of violence or civil conflict more than one of terrorism per se. But it is plausible to think that those opposition groups with the least popular support turn to terrorism rather than insurgency because the latter requires more manpower, or out of desperation.²⁹

H4: The less popular support a rebel group enjoys, the more it will resort to terrorism.

Relatedly, many scholars argue that terrorism is used not only to coerce an opponent but

²⁴ Crenshaw 2011, p.41-2.

²⁵ Laitin and Shapiro 2008, p.213. They offer this as one possible explanation for why we see so little terrorism in Africa.

²⁶ Coggins 2015.

²⁷ Laitin and Shapiro 2008, p.213 [check p#]

²⁸ DeNardo 1985, p.230. See also McCormick 2003, p.483. Crenshaw 2011, p.41-2. Lake [cite] defines extremism as holding preferences in the tail-end of the population's distribution; that is extremists have low levels of popular support by definition, and are more likely to use terrorism.

²⁹ Lins de Albuquerque [cite dissertation] 2014.

also to mobilize support.³⁰ Groups are thought to be particularly likely to use terrorism in this way in the early stages of a conflict, before “graduating” if possible, to guerrilla warfare, and ultimately to conventional warfare.³¹

H5: Terrorism is more likely in early stages of a conflict rather than later ones.

Note that if terrorism is used to mobilize support, 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, assuming this mobilization strategy works (an open empirical question) to increased strength.³² That is, the causal arrows run in both directions.

Others, however, 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.³³

H6a: Terrorism is more likely by groups that are on the verge of defeat.

H6b: Terrorism is more likely in later stages of a conflict.

Finally, some see a link between territorial control and the targeting of civilians. Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle argue that terrorism is more likely by groups who lack territorial control.³⁴ Kalyvas also argues that indiscriminate violence against civilians is more likely by groups that do not control territory effectively.³⁵ These arguments suggest that groups that lack the capacity to control territory will be more likely to resort to terrorism than those able to establish effective territorial control.

H7: Rebels who control territory are less likely to use terrorism.

³⁰ See for example, Pape 2003; 2005; Arblaster 1977, p.422.

³¹ See, for example, McCormick 2003, p.485. This stages of conflict notion is from Mao 1961(1937). However, Mao explicitly argues against terrorism (as defined here) as a tactic for successful revolution. Kalyvas 2006, p.169, also argues that political actors will move from indiscriminate toward discriminate violence.

³² Lake 2002 makes the argument that strength is endogenous to terrorism most explicitly.

³³ Downes 2008; Wood 2010.

³⁴ Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009; de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2013.

³⁵ Kalyvas 2006. Note, however, that as mentioned above, Kalyvas focuses in particular on violence to control the population (i.e., collaboration), which is outside of my definition of terrorism.

Given the prominence of the notion that terrorism is weapon of the weak, surprisingly little empirical work has evaluated the role of strength, conceived of in any of the ways outlined above. The relationship between relative strength and terrorism is largely taken for granted. Those studies that do examine this relationship empirically (sometimes only in passing), come to somewhat contradictory conclusions.

Studies that include empirical support for the general argument (H1) that terrorism is a weapon of the militarily weak include Stanton's quantitative work on terrorism in full-scale civil wars in the post-Cold War period, and Metelits's qualitative work on insurgencies and civilian targeting.³⁶ On the other hand, both Salehyan et al. and Vining find that stronger groups are associated with an increase in civilian targeting.³⁷ Meanwhile several other studies find no effect of rebel strength on terrorism.³⁸ Results are similarly contradictory on the effect of state capacity (H2). Chenoweth finds that the emergence of new domestic terrorist groups is higher (rather than lower as she expected) in countries with higher government capability, which provides some indirect support for the notion that relatively weaker groups (those fighting stronger governments) are more likely to use terrorism.³⁹ Hendrix and Young find state military capacity increases terrorism, but they find that state bureaucratic capacity has the opposite effect.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Coggins finds no effect of state failure on terrorism.⁴¹

The rough terrain hypothesis (H3) has not been put to systematic test, though in previous work, I found it to have little effect on terrorism.⁴² Nor, to my knowledge, have there been

³⁶ Stanton 2013; Metelits 2010. De la Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca 2012 argue that weaker rebels lead to non-territorial insurgency, which they label terrorism, but this finding is really about relative strength and the ability to control terrorism, not about whether rebels target civilians.

³⁷ Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014, pp.650-651; [cite Vining]. Looking at target selection within two decidedly terrorist movements, the IRA and the ETA, de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca find that "the greater the organizational resources nationalist terrorist organizations have for engaging in armed struggle" the more likely they are to carry out attacks meant to influence the government rather than to control the population. While this is logical, as weaker organizations have to worry more about their own security, it provides indirect evidence that terrorism as a coercive strategy (as opposed to the more ubiquitous use of violence against civilians to control the population) is a weapon of relatively stronger groups rather than weaker ones.

³⁸ See Fortna Forthcoming 2015; Fazal 2013; Stanton 2008. [others?].

³⁹ Chenoweth 2010.

⁴⁰ Hendrix and Young 2013.

⁴¹ Coggins 2015.

⁴² Fortna Forthcoming 2015.

empirical studies of the relationship between popular support and terrorism (H4), or between timing and terrorism (H5 and Hb), though Findley and Young find less terrorism in the period before civil war than during it, which runs counter to the notion that groups use terrorism as they mobilize strength to “graduate” to civil war.⁴³ Valentino et al. argue, in line with H6a, that groups turn to mass killing when conventional means fail; Hultman suggests that terrorism is used to signal resolve when a group is losing; and Wood shows that rebel targeting of civilians increases after material losses on the battlefield.⁴⁴ In support of H7, Salehyan et al show that territorial control decreases civilian targeting, de la Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca argue that groups who cannot control territory turn to terrorism, and Kalyvas argues that those without territorial control target civilians less discriminately than those with it.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Asal and Rethemeyer show that territorial control is associated with more lethal terrorism.

While many of these studies are suggestive, the lack of consistent findings suggests that the relationship between rebel strength and terrorism requires further analysis. Moreover, many of the most systematic studies listed above examine civilian targeting writ large, while the dynamics of violence against civilians to control collaboration among the population, and those of deliberately indiscriminate targeting of civilians may be rather different.

Data and Research Design

This paper evaluates the use of terrorism by rebel groups (aka violent non-state actors) in intrastate armed conflicts from 1970-2007. I use Fortna, Lotito, and Rubin’s (tentatively titled) Causes and Consequences of Terrorism data set (hereafter CCT), which uses the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) to measure terrorist incidents attributable to opposition group (SideB) actors in the dyadic version of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program data on intrastate wars (hereafter UCDP).⁴⁶ The data are comprised of 306 rebel groups in 128 conflicts in 78 countries. The unit of observation is the dyad-year, of which there are 1,728. Data on the dependent variable is missing in 55 dyad years, for an effective N of 1,673.

Dependent Variable

Determining which incidents and perpetrators in GTD can be attributed to which rebel groups in UCDP is a complicated task that entailed its own coding procedure, as described in

⁴³ Findley and Young 2012. Given that GTD includes many incidents that could be characterized as civil war violence, this could simply be picking up the overall escalation of violence, however.

⁴⁴ Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004; Hultman 2005 [cite APSA paper]; Wood 2014.

⁴⁵ [add cites]

⁴⁶ The UCDP data is also sometimes referred to as the UCDP-PRIO Armed Conflict Data. Data used here are from the 2013 version. The GTD data begin in 1970, hence the temporal scope analyzed here.

greater detail elsewhere.⁴⁷ The CCT data allow researchers to use varying levels of inclusion for what constitutes a match between a GTD perpetrator and an armed opposition group in UCDP. The narrowest set of matches (version A) code only perpetrators that are deemed direct matches (same name, obvious variant, or alias) and armed wings. A somewhat more inclusive set of matches (version B) includes those in version A as well as cases where the GTD perpetrator is faction or subset of the UCDP group or vice versa. A third version (C) includes the above plus groups that are part of the same conflict or movement and who fight together or are allied, as well as the many perpetrators in GTD which are listed only by a generic descriptor, so long as it applies to the group in question (e.g. “Kurdish separatists” are included in version C for the PKK). The most inclusive set (version D) includes all of the above, plus perpetrators that are unknown, so long as if the incident takes place in the country and during the years that UCDP lists an internal armed conflict.⁴⁸ Version A almost certainly undercounts the incidents a group carried out; version D without a doubt overcounts. Researchers can use these versions to check robustness to various ways of dealing with this tradeoff. In the analyses that follow, I use versions B and C.⁴⁹ The main difference between them is the inclusion of the “generic descriptors” that apply to the rebel group in question. [check robustness to version D].

The GTD definition of terrorism is deliberately very broad: “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.”⁵⁰ 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 out 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,
- 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.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ Fortna, Lotito, Rubin 2014.

⁴⁸ The category of unknown perpetrators includes effectively unknown, such as “armed individuals.”

⁴⁹ Versions A and B are quite similar in terms of the number of observations with 0 incidents, the number with 5 or fewer incidents, and the maximum number of incidents.

⁵⁰ GTD codebook, p.7.

⁵¹ GTD codebook, p.8.

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.⁵² The definition of terrorism used here requires that incidents meet the second and third additional criteria as well.⁵³ But even that restriction includes too broad a set of phenomena for my purposes. GTD, unfortunately, does not include measures of whether attacks were discriminate or indiscriminate. To capture the deliberately indiscriminate nature of attacks, CCT uses the attack type and target type variables in GTD to create proxy measures. The analysis reported here includes incidents that fulfill all three additional GTD inclusion criteria – that is, attacks on civilians, to send a message to a larger audience, for a political, economic, religious, etc. goal; but excludes assassinations, unarmed assaults, and unknown attack types, and includes only the following target types: business, airports/aircraft, educational institutions, food/water supply, private citizens/property, religious figures/institutions, telecommunication, tourists, transportation, or utilities.⁵⁴ [In future versions of the paper, I hope to examine a measure that includes discriminate attacks on public figures (eg assassinations or attacks on journalists) as well as a more restrictive measure that restricts attack type and target subtypes to zero in on the arguably most deliberately indiscriminate attacks.]

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the dependent variable. For version B of the dependent variable, which excludes applicable generic descriptors, there are no terrorist incidents in 58% of the dyad-years, and in 21.3% the number of terrorist incidents is between 1 and 5. The maximum number of incidents in a single dyad-year is 286 (that dubious honor belongs to Sendero Luminoso in 1984). When we include the generic descriptors, in version C of the dependent variable, there are no terrorist incidents in 41% of all dyad-year observations, 1-5 incidents in 22%, and the maximum number in a single year is 327 (again Sendero Luminoso takes the cake, though for this version the violence peaks in 1989).

⁵² 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 Program Manager Erin Miller, August 12, 2014.

⁵³ 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 GTD Program Manager Erin Miller, August 12, 2014.

⁵⁴ This excludes the following target types: government, police, military, abortion, journalists/media, maritime, NGOs, terrorists/non-state militias, violent political parties, and “other.”

[Figure 1 about here]

Independent Variables

To test the most straightforward weapon of the weak argument, that the militarily weaker rebels, relative to the government they face, affects the use of terrorism (H1), I use two measures from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan's (CGS) Non-State Actor data set.⁵⁵ The first is their measure of relative rebel strength, which is a composite of three factors: relative ability to mobilize supporters, to procure arms, and fighting capacity. It is measured on a 5-point scale from much weaker to much stronger. However, the vast majority of observations fall at the weakest end of the spectrum; much weaker (46% of dyad-years), and weaker (48%); only 6% reach parity with the government, and fewer than 1% are stronger or much stronger. As an alternative, I also use the fighting capacity component on its own. It is measured on 3-point scale: low (80% of dyad-years), moderate (19%), and high (<1%).

To measure government capacity (H2), I build on work by Hendrix and Young, who find support for the "weapon of the weak" argument when state capacity is conceived of as military capacity, but not as bureaucratic/administrative capacity (which they argue deters or represses terrorist activity).⁵⁶ Like them, I use a logged version of the Correlates of War CINC measure (which captures the state's share of global military capabilities) to capture the government's military capacity.⁵⁷

To assess the effect of rough terrain (H3), I use two measures from Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala: the percentage of the conflict area that is mountainous, and the percentage that is forested.⁵⁸ These measures do not distinguish among dyads – that is they do not capture the roughness of the part of an overall conflict zone in which a particular rebel group is active, but they are a big improvement on the country-level measures that are often used (e.g., from Fearon and Laitin). In the interests of space, I report only the results for mountainous terrain below; the results for forests are substantively similar. The mountainous measure ranges from 0 to 99.6% with a mean of 35.7%.

To test the effect of weakness in terms of popular support (H4), I use the mobilization capacity component of the CGS measure of relative strength. This measure distinguishes rebels with relatively low mobilization capacity (55% of dyad-years), from those with moderate capacity (40%), from the very few cases of high capacity (5%).

To test whether groups are more likely to resort to terrorism early in their struggle (H5), I include a measure of the time since the conflict began. Here, I use the year of the first battle related death (as coded by UCDP), not the year that it crossed the threshold to 25 battle deaths. This measure is far from perfect – if a group targets only civilians at the start of its struggle (as

⁵⁵ [cite CGS]

⁵⁶ Hendrix and Young 2013.

⁵⁷ The measures they use of bureaucratic capacity are available only after 1984. [H&Y also use a measure of military capability based on a factor analysis of military spending and military personnel, which I haven't yet incorporated here].

⁵⁸ Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009.

this hypothesis, and the ‘terrorists hope to grow up to be able to target the military’ argument would suggest), then a start date based on battle deaths (which exclude civilian targeting) is problematic. The most active use of terrorism will occur outside of this data set, in the years prior to the UCDP start date.⁵⁹ Nonetheless the measure of years since the start of the conflict should give us some indication of whether groups tend to use terrorism earlier in the conflict rather than later.

It is difficult to measure whether a group is on the verge of defeat without more fine-grained data on battle outcomes or the trajectory of conflicts than are now available. As a rough proxy (H6a), I code observations in which the rebels are defeated, and alternatively, those that are within 2 years of a conflict terminating in defeat for the rebels.⁶⁰ Data on conflict termination is from the dyadic version of the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset. These measures are less than ideal because if the gambit of resorting to terrorism is successful for groups that are otherwise on the verge of defeat, it should make that defeat less likely. That is, the measure will miss the very cases where it has succeeded. As an alternative, but also imperfect, measure (H6b), I also code the number of years from the end of the conflict to ascertain whether terrorism is less likely at later stages of a conflict, after other types of tactics have failed to achieve a group’s political goals.⁶¹

Finally, I use the Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan measure of whether the rebels control territory to test hypothesis 7. Of the dyad-years examined here, rebels control territory in 42.6%.

Controls

I control for several factors that might reasonably be thought to drive both the relative strength of rebels and governments and the prospect that terrorism is used. Regime type is thought to shape both the ability of states to repress terrorism effectively and the ability of rebel movements to recruit supporters.⁶² I thus include a measure of democracy, using Vreeland’s XPolity indicator, which removes the components of Polity that are “contaminated” by the presence of a civil war.⁶³

External support for rebels also has a direct effect on their relative strength, and has been argued to affect their incentives to turn to terrorism.⁶⁴ A dummy variable, from the UCDP

⁵⁹ The CCT data capture terrorist incidents in the 5 years prior to the conflict for just this reason, but other measures used in this analysis are coded only for the years the conflict is active, so multivariate analysis of these prior years is not possible.

⁶⁰ That is the year the rebels are defeated or the two years prior [Check robustness to year defeated and previous year only, and to including as defeat wars that end in low activity].

⁶¹ Note that both the measure of years since the start and the measure of years to the end are based on the overall years the dyad is in UCDP, and do not take into account the fact that conflict often stops or falls below 25 battle deaths for periods in between.

⁶² [cite relevant democracy and terrorism lit]

⁶³ Vreeland 2008.

⁶⁴ Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014.

External Support Data captures whether the rebels received support (including funding, weapons, access to territory, etc.) from any external party (states, diasporas, etc.)⁶⁵ Rebels received support in 53.9% of dyad-year observations.

I control for the incompatibility over which the war is fought, including a dummy variable that distinguishes conflicts over the government (54.7%) from those over territory. I also control for the annual number of battle deaths in the conflict to account for the fact that more intense conflicts are likely to see more incidents of all kinds, those in which civilians are deliberately targeted, and those in which the military is targeted. Stronger groups are likely to be involved in more intensive conflicts, so failure to include this measure would bias away from finding a relationship between rebel weakness and the use of terrorism. Data are from the PRIO Battle Deaths Data set.⁶⁶ Where available I use that data set's "best estimate" of annual battle fatalities, however this variable has quite a lot of missing data. Where it is missing I substitute the average of the low estimate and the high estimate. This variable ranges from 25 (the minimum for inclusion in the UCDP dataset) to 100,500 with a mean of 4,651. These data are coded at the level of the conflict, rather than the dyad.⁶⁷

Finally, I include two controls for time period. One captures the Cold War years covered in the data set: 1970-1989 to take into account the fact that the Cold War shifted the relative resources available to governments and rebels.⁶⁸ A second captures 1998-2007 to capture the fact that GTD changed its data collection procedures as the project was transferred from the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service to the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies in 1998.⁶⁹ The comparison category is therefore 1990-1997.

I examine several versions of the dependent variable and, correspondingly, employ 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 variable differentiating no incidents 1-5 incidents, and 6 or more (ordered logit); and the count of terrorist incidents (zero-inflated negative binomial [ZINB]). In all models, robust standard errors

⁶⁵ Data available at http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_external_support_data/.

⁶⁶ Lacina and Gleditsch 2005. Data available at <http://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/Battle-Deaths/The-Battle-Deaths-Dataset-version-30/>

⁶⁷ Dyadic battle death data are available only for the period after 1989.

⁶⁸ Kalyvas and Balcells 2010 argue that three characteristics of the Cold War helped rebels more than states, on balance: material support from superpowers, revolutionary beliefs, and military doctrine. An implication of their argument is that we should observe more terrorism after the Cold War against all but the weakest states. [cite other arguments that propensity for terrorism changes with end of CW]

⁶⁹ Data collection procedures were changed again in 2008 and 2011, but these data do not go up that far. The transfer in 1998 is also when GTD lost the data for 1993 entirely (according to lore, the punchcards literally fell off a truck).

are calculated with cases clustered by conflict.⁷⁰ In the interest of space, I report the ZINB results here, though I discuss results from other models if they differ substantively.

ZINB regression estimates two separate models and then combines them. An inflate model estimates whether the count is zero, and a count model estimates the number of incidents. This allows us to examine the effect of factors both on whether terrorism is used at all, and on how much it is used. But ZINB results must be interpreted with care across the two models because a positive coefficient for the inflate model means a positive association with zero incidents, while a positive coefficient for the count model mean a positive association with a larger number of incidents. The interpretation of the sign of the coefficients thus flips between the two models: that is, a positive coefficient in the inflate model means a negative effect on terrorism, while a positive coefficient in the count model means a positive effect on terrorism. To ease interpretation, in each table presented below I include the expectation of the weapon of the weak hypothesis on the left of the relevant variable name.

Results

The most straightforward weapon of the weak hypothesis (H1) suggests that the greater the military capability of the rebels, relative to the government, the less terrorism is likely to be used. We should thus expect positive coefficients for rebel strength and fighting capacity in the inflate models, and negative coefficients in the count models. As the ZINB results in Table 1 show, we see no significant effects of rebel strength, and indeed the sign of the coefficient is in the wrong direction in the inflate models. Using the fighting capacity component only, we see similar results – coefficients are not significant and sometimes even in the wrong direction. Overall, we see no significant effect of the rebel military capability measures. In other words, we see virtually no support for the primary hypothesis of the weapon of the weak argument.

Table 2 shows the results for hypotheses 2 and 3. Hypothesis 2 focuses on the strength of the state, measured here by its share of the world's military capabilities. If terrorism is used by rebels who are weak in the sense that they face a very strong government, we should see negative effects in the inflate models and positive effects in the count models. We do see the expected negative coefficient in the inflate model when version C of the dependent variable is used (that is, when generic descriptors that fit the rebel group in question are used to match incidents to rebels), and it only barely misses standard levels of statistical significance ($p=.055$), but it is not robust to an alternate matching method (version B). Nor do we see the expected positive effects in the count models, in fact just the opposite.⁷¹

Rough terrain is hypothesized to make it easier for rebels to conduct insurgency, making them less likely to resort to terrorism. H3 thus expects positive effects for mountainous terrain in the inflate models, and negative effects in the count models. For version B of the dependent

⁷⁰ [check robustness to clustering by country]

⁷¹ Version C is also significant and positive as expected in logit models, but again, not robust across alternative measures of the dependent variable, nor do we see the expected results in ordered logit models. For what it is worth, there is even weaker support for the argument that rebels facing strong states are more likely to use terrorism if I use an unlogged version of CINC scores.

variable, we see the expected direction in the inflate model, and the coefficient is significant. However, this effect is not significant for version C of the dependent variable (when applicable generic descriptors are included in the matching). Moreover, we see positive rather than the expected negative effects in the count models.⁷² In other words, we do not see robust evidence that rebels use less terrorism when they enjoy the rough terrain that favors insurgency.

Hypothesis 4 suggests that the more popular support for the rebel group, the less it will resort to terrorism. If this hypothesis is correct, we should see a positive effect in the inflate equation and a negative one in the count equation. Instead, in Table 3, we see just the opposite; the coefficient for the inflate equation is negative, while the coefficient for the count equation is positive. This relationship is statistically significant in the count model for version C of the data when applicable generic descriptors are included in the GTD-UCDP matching process. There is also a positive and significant relationship between mobilization capability and terrorism in the logit and ordered logits models (not shown). In other words, popular support is associated, if anything, with more use of terrorism rather than less as the weapon of the weak argument would maintain.

The notion that terrorism is used by groups early on in their struggle, before they mobilize enough support to wage full-scale guerrilla war (H5) suggests that we should see a positive effect for the age of the conflict in the inflate equation (i.e., a lower likelihood of zero incidents early on), but a negative association between the number of years since the start of the conflict and the count of terrorist incidents. Instead we see no significant effects, and coefficients in the inflate models that run in the opposite direction from that expected (Table 3). In the logit and ordered logit models the positive relationship between conflict age and terrorism is actually significant statistically. The measure used here is admittedly far from ideal, but I fail to find support for the idea that groups use terrorism first and then “graduate” to more conventional insurgent attacks on military forces, in fact the youngest rebel groups seem least likely to use terrorism.

Nor do I find support for the idea that groups turn to terrorism when they are on the verge of defeat (H6a). Table 4 shows results for a measure of whether a group is within two years of defeat by the government. This hypothesis would expect negative coefficients for the inflate models and positive ones for the count models. Instead we see no significant (and in version C positive) effects in the inflate models, and negative and significant (or close to significant) effects in the count models.⁷³ As noted above, this measure is problematic, as it misses cases in which a rebel group succeeds in avoiding imminent defeat by resorting to terrorism, but we do not see any evidence that groups turn to terrorism out of desperation as they are about to lose. The results are similar for Hypothesis 6b, which suggests that we will see more terrorism toward the end of conflicts, as groups turn to it after failing with other tactics. This would lead to positive effects

⁷² The results for forest cover (not shown) provide even less support for the weapon of the weak argument than do the mountainous terrain results. There is no significant effect of forest cover and the coefficients generally run in the wrong direction.

⁷³ A measure (not shown) that codes only the year of defeat as “verge of defeat” has the expected sign and is significant only for the inflate model for version B of the dependent variable, but this is not robust to version C, and in logit and ordered logit, we see a significant negative relationship between being on the verge of defeat and the use of terrorism.

for the measure of years before the end of the conflict (the farther from the end, the more likely to have zero incidents) in the inflate models, and negative ones in the count models (the farther from the end, the fewer incidents). While none of the coefficients are significant for this variable, the direction of the effects is the opposite of that predicted by this argument. The unexpected positive relationship between years from end of conflict and terrorism is robust and significant in logit and ordered logit models.

Last, I look at the effect of territorial control as a measure of rebel strength (Table 5). Rebels who control territory should be less likely to use terrorism according to this version of the weapon of the weak argument. We should thus see a positive effect in the inflate models, and a negative effect in the count models. We see no significant effect of territorial control.

Turning to the control variables, we see strong and consistent effects for regime type. Rebels are more likely to use terrorism against democratic governments (consistently negative and significant coefficients in inflate equations), and to use more of it (consistently positive and significant coefficients in count models). This finding is consistent with the literature on democracy and terrorism.

The effects of external support for rebels are much less consistent across model specification and are never significant. To the extent there is a pattern, we generally see negative effects in the inflate models and positive ones in the count models, suggesting that groups are, if anything, more likely to turn to terrorism when they enjoy the support of external backers, but not significantly so.

The relationship between annual battle deaths and incidents of terrorism is sometimes significant but the direction of the effect flip-flops across the two versions of the terrorism measure and across model specification [rerun with battle deaths rescaled so can see effects].

The effect of incompatibility type is quite consistent. We see a negative, though generally not significant effect in the inflate models and positive and consistently significant effect in the count models. That is, groups that are fighting over issues related to the government are responsible for much more terrorism than are those fighting over territory. While the incompatibility measure is not quite the same as a measure of secessionism, this runs counter to the conventional wisdom that those fighting to free what they perceive as their homeland are more likely to use terrorism,⁷⁴ but fits with arguments that secessionists are more careful to abide by international norms and laws of war.⁷⁵

Finally, while the association between the Cold War and the number of terrorist incidents is not robustly significant, it is fairly consistent: the coefficient in the count models is consistently negative, and generally but not always positive in the inflate models – that is, we see less terrorism in the Cold War than in the decade after.⁷⁶ We also see an effect of the GTD collection period. There is no significant effect in the inflate models, but we the number of

⁷⁴ See for example, Pape 2003; 2005.

⁷⁵ Fazal 2013; Fortna 2014.

⁷⁶ To the extent that the hypothesized effect here was driven by an argument about the effect of the Cold War on the relative strength of rebels and governments (Kalyvas and Balcells), this non-finding is further evidence against the weapon of the weak argument.

terrorist incidents recorded is consistently and significantly lower after 1998 than during the Pinkerton years. I expected the opposite – that as the GTD refined its search procedures it would find and record more terrorism, but perhaps as it refined its coding procedures, it has been more careful not to classify things as terrorism that do not fit the definition.

Conclusion

Given how deeply seated is the conventional wisdom that terrorism is a weapon of the weak, we see astonishingly little support for it empirically. For some, of course, it is true by definition. But if we take weapon of the weak arguments to be non-tautological explanations for why some groups resort to terrorism while others do not, we should expect to see a negative relationship between various aspects of group strength and the decision to target civilians in deliberately indiscriminate ways. In this paper, I have endeavored to spell out what people mean by “weak” when they say that terrorism is a weapon of the weak. For some, it is a matter of relative military capability – that militarily weaker groups, relative to the governments they fight, should be more likely to resort to terrorism. By the same logic, those fighting more militarily capable states should use more terrorism. Similarly, those that enjoy the advantages rebels have when fighting on rough terrain should use it less, as should those who are strong enough to control territory militarily. For others it has more to do with popular support; those who enjoy less support among the population should be more likely to resort to terrorism. Along these lines, some see terrorism as more likely early on in a conflict, before a group gains enough strength to wage war against military targets. For still others, terrorism is more likely turned to at the end of conflict, in desperation by a group that is on the verge of defeat.

While available measures to test some of these variations on the weapon of the weak theme are far from ideal, if the general idea is right that stronger groups are less likely to use terrorism and weaker ones more so, we would expect to see that show up in the data. My attempt to test these hypotheses turned up remarkably little support. In a few tests of some hypotheses, we see the expected relationships, but even here, the results are not consistent or robust, and for many other hypotheses we see no support at all for weapon of the weak arguments. Surprisingly often we see exactly the opposite, indeed there is stronger support for concluding that terrorism is a weapon of the strong than that it is a weapon of the weak.

More testing with better measures is clearly necessary. But this paper raises serious doubts about a deeply held conventional wisdom. Empirically, terrorism does not appear to be a weapon of the weak.

Figure 1: Distribution of the Dependent Variable

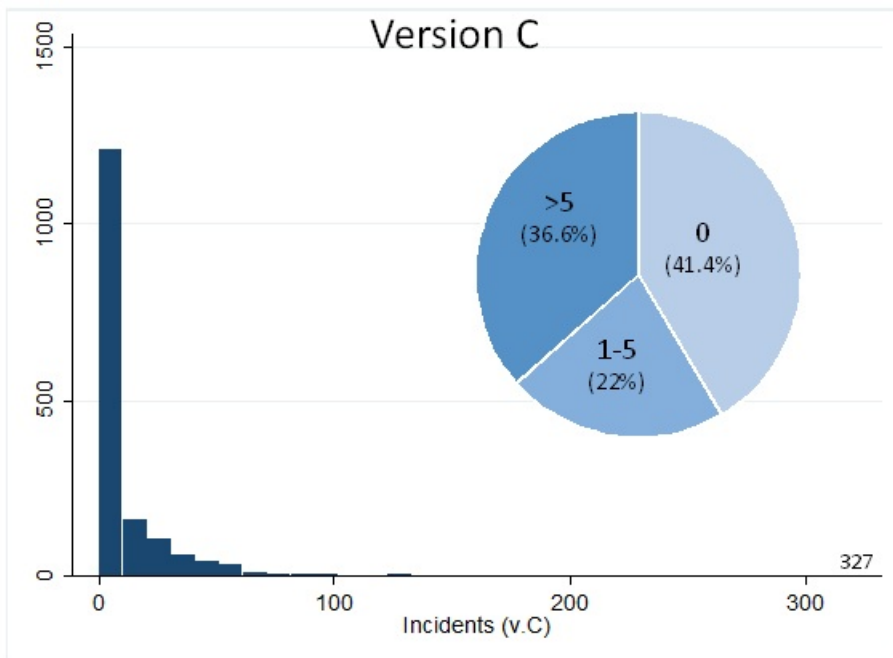
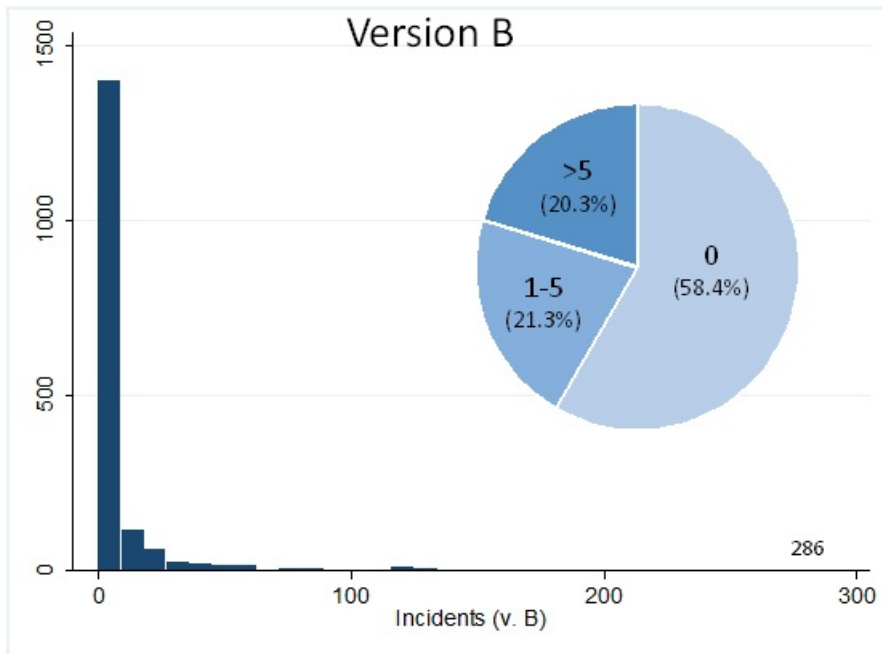


Table 1. Relative Military Strength and Terrorism (H1)

| Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial | Version B | Version C | Version B | Version C |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Count | | | | |
| [Expect –] Rebel Strength | -0.097 (0.256) | | -0.171 (0.384) | |
| [Expect –] Fighting Capability | | -0.323 (0.540) | | -0.161 (0.379) |
| XPolity | 0.174*** (0.027) | 0.165*** (0.035) | 0.119*** (0.032) | 0.122*** (0.034) |
| External Support | 0.246 (0.310) | 0.272 (0.396) | 0.094 (0.250) | 0.029 (0.218) |
| Cold War | -0.113 (0.246) | -0.144 (0.259) | -0.348 (0.190) | -0.350 (0.192) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -0.750** (0.254) | -0.690** (0.261) | -0.584*** (0.146) | -0.561*** (0.162) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | 1.307*** (0.322) | 1.382*** (0.406) | 0.915** (0.278) | 0.893** (0.276) |
| Constant | 1.017** (0.328) | 0.995*** (0.297) | 2.496*** (0.298) | 2.470*** (0.276) |
| Inflate | | | | |
| [Expect +] Rebel Strength | -0.777 (0.676) | | -0.224 (0.748) | |
| [Expect +] Fighting Capability | | -0.010 (0.973) | | 0.571 (0.517) |
| XPolity | -0.322** (0.099) | -0.304** (0.105) | -0.371*** (0.063) | -0.384*** (0.061) |
| External Support | 0.046 (0.685) | -0.184 (0.644) | -0.286 (0.545) | -0.440 (0.426) |
| Cold War | 0.046 (0.552) | 0.075 (0.504) | 0.676 (0.395) | 0.781 (0.438) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -2.568 (3.443) | -1.652 (1.256) | 0.019 (0.521) | -0.026 (0.555) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000* (0.000) | 0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | -0.561 (0.543) | -0.601 (0.612) | -0.444 (0.549) | -0.634 (0.586) |
| Constant | -0.323 (0.619) | -0.608 (0.645) | -1.261** (0.416) | -1.338** (0.430) |
| Inalpha | 1.004*** (0.205) | 0.956*** (0.185) | 0.472** (0.148) | 0.493*** (0.132) |
| N | 1163 | 1163 | 1157 | 1157 |

Robust Standard Errors (clustered on conflict) shown in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 2. State Military Capacity, Rough Terrain and Terrorism (H2-3)

| Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial | Version B | Version C | Version B | Version C |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Count | | | | |
| [Expect +] CINC (logged) | -0.186 (0.177) | -0.030 (0.099) | | |
| [Expect –] Mountains | | | 0.008 (0.008) | 0.006 (0.005) |
| XPolity | 0.185*** (0.031) | 0.126*** (0.033) | 0.156*** (0.033) | 0.122*** (0.027) |
| External Support | 0.175 (0.304) | -0.016 (0.199) | 0.308 (0.299) | 0.080 (0.204) |
| Cold War | -0.119 (0.241) | -0.359* (0.175) | -0.092 (0.242) | -0.315 (0.199) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -0.637* (0.276) | -0.583*** (0.144) | -0.553* (0.258) | -0.438** (0.141) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | 1.162*** (0.326) | 0.845** (0.307) | 1.262*** (0.291) | 0.862*** (0.249) |
| Constant | 0.050 (0.937) | 2.344*** (0.571) | 0.806* (0.374) | 2.227*** (0.377) |
| Inflate | | | | |
| [Expect –] CINC (logged) | -0.295 (0.446) | -0.573 (0.299) | | |
| [Expect +] Mountains | | | 0.028* (0.012) | 0.008 (0.011) |
| XPolity | -0.303*** (0.075) | -0.364*** (0.072) | -0.291*** (0.082) | -0.385*** (0.062) |
| External Support | -0.288 (0.567) | -0.599 (0.520) | -0.070 (0.579) | -0.376 (0.480) |
| Cold War | 0.047 (0.483) | 0.799 (0.441) | 0.162 (0.429) | 0.696 (0.487) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -1.066 (0.918) | 0.211 (0.498) | -0.975 (0.652) | -0.016 (0.612) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | -0.823 (0.613) | -1.106 (0.709) | -0.741 (0.570) | -0.454 (0.542) |
| Constant | -2.221 (2.447) | -4.351** (1.554) | -1.550 (0.917) | -1.678* (0.803) |
| Inalpha | 0.958*** (0.176) | 0.469*** (0.130) | 0.928*** (0.209) | 0.457** (0.149) |
| N | 1167 | 1167 | 1111 | 1111 |

Robust Standard Errors (clustered on conflict) shown in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 3. Popular Support, Early Stages, and Terrorism (H4-5)

| Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial | Version B | Version C | Version B | Version C |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Count | | | | |
| [Expect –] Popular Support | 0.208 (0.196) | 0.340* (0.158) | | |
| [Expect –] Years Since Start | | | -0.007 (0.015) | -0.003 (0.012) |
| XPolity | 0.176*** (0.029) | 0.135*** (0.029) | 0.198*** (0.043) | 0.127*** (0.032) |
| External Support | 0.128 (0.279) | -0.043 (0.212) | 0.320 (0.349) | 0.014 (0.212) |
| Cold War | -0.120 (0.240) | -0.318 (0.179) | -0.250 (0.254) | -0.358 (0.188) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -0.731** (0.255) | -0.547** (0.180) | -0.615* (0.273) | -0.582*** (0.150) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | 1.350*** (0.314) | 0.950*** (0.256) | 1.470*** (0.435) | 0.885*** (0.262) |
| Constant | 0.927** (0.314) | 2.213*** (0.247) | 0.914 (0.496) | 2.495*** (0.321) |
| Inflate | | | | |
| [Expect +] Popular Support | -0.655 (0.401) | -0.554 (0.462) | | |
| [Expect +] Years Since Start | | | -0.321 (0.359) | -0.090 (0.087) |
| XPolity | -0.300*** (0.075) | -0.390*** (0.065) | -0.249* (0.101) | -0.366*** (0.065) |
| External Support | -0.134 (0.491) | -0.262 (0.420) | -0.125 (0.765) | -0.616 (0.452) |
| Cold War | 0.155 (0.447) | 0.748* (0.381) | -0.329 (0.575) | 0.592 (0.463) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -1.823 (1.276) | -0.077 (0.526) | -0.694 (0.466) | 0.146 (0.510) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000** (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | -0.759 (0.535) | -0.511 (0.541) | -1.763* (0.696) | -1.015 (0.868) |
| Constant | -0.190 (0.660) | -1.181** (0.428) | 2.118** (0.730) | -0.081 (0.918) |
| Inalpha | 0.935*** (0.173) | 0.454*** (0.133) | 0.979*** (0.280) | 0.472*** (0.143) |
| N | 1156 | 1156 | 1167 | 1167 |

Robust Standard Errors (clustered on conflict) shown in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 4. Verge of Defeat and Terrorism (H6)

| Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial | Version B | Version C | Version B | Version C |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Count | | | | |
| [Expect +] Verge Defeat (within 2 yrs) | -0.807 (0.439) | -1.117** (0.363) | | |
| [Expect –] Years to War End | | | 0.027 (0.022) | 0.016 (0.016) |
| XPolity | 0.170*** (0.029) | 0.123*** (0.030) | 0.163*** (0.029) | 0.117*** (0.031) |
| External Support | 0.165 (0.302) | -0.025 (0.209) | 0.310 (0.271) | 0.058 (0.183) |
| Cold War | -0.065 (0.238) | -0.318 (0.181) | -0.115 (0.215) | -0.354 (0.187) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -0.728** (0.262) | -0.579*** (0.143) | -0.590* (0.262) | -0.526*** (0.130) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | 1.322*** (0.315) | 0.892** (0.271) | 1.336*** (0.327) | 0.884** (0.276) |
| Constant | 1.014** (0.309) | 2.497*** (0.263) | 0.673 (0.395) | 2.305*** (0.280) |
| Inflate | | | | |
| [Expect –] Verge Defeat (within 2 yrs) | -0.514 (1.662) | 0.202 (1.044) | | |
| [Expect +] Years to War End | | | -0.028 (0.030) | -0.035 (0.027) |
| XPolity | -0.298*** (0.080) | -0.377*** (0.061) | -0.288*** (0.073) | -0.365*** (0.074) |
| External Support | -0.281 (0.516) | -0.323 (0.452) | -0.191 (0.529) | -0.359 (0.454) |
| Cold War | 0.089 (0.467) | 0.698 (0.416) | 0.215 (0.455) | 0.859* (0.398) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -1.875 (1.513) | 0.033 (0.528) | -1.526 (0.979) | 0.042 (0.497) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | -0.642 (0.538) | -0.525 (0.556) | -0.783 (0.497) | -0.662 (0.501) |
| Constant | -0.524 (0.607) | -1.298** (0.427) | -0.230 (0.759) | -0.927 (0.500) |
| Inalpha | 0.977*** (0.188) | 0.475*** (0.135) | 0.935*** (0.191) | 0.461*** (0.138) |
| N | 1167 | 1167 | 1167 | 1167 |

Robust Standard Errors (clustered on conflict) shown in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 5. Territorial Control and Terrorism (H7)

| Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial | Version B | Version C |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Count | | |
| [Expect –] Territorial Control | -0.160 (0.273) | -0.321 (0.247) |
| XPolity | 0.175*** (0.029) | 0.126*** (0.028) |
| External Support | 0.199 (0.294) | 0.031 (0.210) |
| Cold War | -0.122 (0.233) | -0.350 (0.189) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -0.764** (0.267) | -0.581*** (0.144) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | 1.306*** (0.307) | 0.925*** (0.268) |
| Constant | 1.062** (0.350) | 2.529*** (0.294) |
| inflate | | |
| [Expect +] Territorial Control | -0.433 (0.579) | 0.116 (0.465) |
| XPolity | -0.289*** (0.074) | -0.365*** (0.062) |
| External Support | -0.244 (0.536) | -0.394 (0.442) |
| Cold War | 0.112 (0.471) | 0.676 (0.413) |
| GTD period: 1998-2007 | -1.927 (1.861) | -0.012 (0.538) |
| Battle Deaths | 0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Incompatibility: Govt | -0.711 (0.560) | -0.414 (0.554) |
| Constant | -0.297 (0.716) | -1.334** (0.517) |
| Inalpha | 0.956*** (0.195) | 0.485*** (0.136) |
| N | 1162 | 1162 |

Robust Standard Errors (clustered on conflict) shown in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001