

3.1 Assumption: Terrorism is caused by poverty

Hi there, welcome back. Last week, we discussed the state of the art of terrorism and counter-terrorism studies, and looked into the difficulties, the challenges when doing research on this phenomena and we also showed a number of research products. Well, this week we are going to look at five of these products. Five interesting assumptions either because it challenged or the opposite that's very much true. And it's they called [INAUDIBLE] to basis of policy making of counter terrorism measures. Well, it's good to test them, to compare them with evidence and compare them with literature.

Also, because terrorism is a complex and ever changing phenomenal and that requires us to update our theories and assumptions every now and then. Especially if they constitute the basis of policy making. The five assumptions that we're going to explore and analyze are the following. Terrorism is caused by poverty. That terrorists are crazy or insane. And the third assumption we're going to look at is terrorism is becoming increasingly lethal, it's getting more deadly. And then we'll look at the assumption that terrorism is predominantly anti-western. And finally we're going to look at whether or not terrorism is successful as stated by some.

The first assumption is about root causes of terrorism. It states that poverty causes terrorism. It is an idea that is almost as old as the first attempts to understand terrorism. Where does it come from? The study of terrorism. But it should be stressed that the statement, this assumption is mostly put forward by politicians and public figures. Well, here are two examples. The first one is from the former US Secretary of State, General Colin Powell who in 2002 said the following. He said, I fully believe that the root cause of terrorism does come from situations where there is poverty, where there is ignorance, where people see no hope in their life. And the second example of somebody who states that poverty causes terrorism is the South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. And in 2007 he said, you can never win a war against terror as long as there are conditions in the world that make people desperate. Poverty, diseases, ignorance.

Two excellent examples of very well-known public figures who have stated that poverty causes terrorism. Are these eminent persons right or wrong? Is poverty a root cause of terrorism? First we are going to answer, why is it Actually assumed that there is a link between poverty and terrorism. Well the basic idea is that poverty leads to a lack of opportunities to improve the quality of somebody's life. I think Collin Powell referred to that. And that could result in anger towards people who are better off. Or into blaming the government for the Lack of these opportunities, and grievances is a keyword here. In combination with the idea that tears our rational acts. It is argued by some, that violence might be the last resort to put their grievances, their anger, their frustration on the police who attend them.

Well, all those point effect that there is terrorism in poor countries and that's some terrorists indeed from the lower parts of society. And they subsequently assume a link Between the two, a co-relation between poverty and terrorism. We're going to look at that later on. And then finally it should be stressed that there are some terrorist organizations mainly extreme left wing organizations that claim to fight for the poor. Why does it matter? Why do we have to test this assumption? Well, obviously it has consequences for counter-terrorism measures. For instance, if you think that poverty is a root cause of terrorism, you might want to do a lot more about poverty. eradication, and of course that it's great for, for my humanitarian perspective. But you want to know it's really helpful to make the chance of a terrorist attack any smaller. But just like with many other different issues, counter terrorism policy makers are confronted with the problem of allocating scans resources. Money, time, people. And if you spend it on poverty eradication, you can't spend it on something else.

So we want to know if poverty is really a root cause of terrorism or not. And we have to decide whether it is important to eradicate poverty from a counter terrorism perspective. It's important in many other from many other perspectives, but is it also helpful in the fight against terrorism. I've shown a number of examples of Influential people who state that there's a link between poverty and terrorism, and I could have added many more. Well, interestingly, it's mainly

politicians that make that claim. Politicians, world leaders even that are responsible for strategies and policies on important issues, such as terrorism. And the idea of a causal link between poverty and terrorism, doesn't sound far-fetched. But is it true, or is it a myth?

Well, let's compare the statement with empirical data and academic research. Let us first have a look at some statistics, some examples. While studying the characteristics of individual terrorists, it seems strange to assume a direct link between poverty and terrorism. Most terrorists are not very poor, or much poorer than others. In fact, some terrorists are extremely rich. Think of Osama Bin Laden Perhaps the most well-known terrorist of our age, who came from a wealthy Saudi family.

And another example is the so-called Christmas Day bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who in 2009 tried to blow up a plane heading for Detroit. But he studied in London, and was of a well-to-do family from Nigeria. And there are many other examples of terrorists from upper or upper-middle class. Take, for instance, Anders Breivik, who killed almost 80 people in Norway. Or to take an example from the 1960s and 70s. from left-wing terrorism, Ulrike Meinhof, one of the key persons of the Rote Armee Fraktion. She also came from a well-to-do family, was highly educated, and had lots of opportunities in life. Studying the characteristics of Jihad terrorists in Europe. I found out that they were mainly children of migrants or migrants themselves. And they were of lower parts of society. But they were not poorer than other migrants or children of migrants. And the same holds for many terrorists in the less developed parts of this world. Many of them are perhaps not rich or not even middle class. but they are not poor than their fellow citizens. And this has been confirmed by quite a number of studies into the backgrounds of terrorists which we will discuss in a minute. I would like to go back to the map, I presented in the first week. The map showing the impact of terrorism in 2011. What do we see?

If we look at the map we see that Iraq, Afghanistan. Pakistan, India, Russia, and Nigeria are most often confronted with terrorism. Are these the poorest countries in the world? Well let's take the statistics, of the world bank, that ranked 185 states of which they gathered data. Now we see that Iraq is number 111, on that list. And it's considered a higher middle income country. And Pakistan, India and Nigeria rank between 150 and 139, and they're considered lower income countries. And Russia, number 55 on the list, is actually one of the richest countries in the world, a high income country. Well, the only country that is in the bottom part of this list is Afghanistan, but there are 15 other countries that are less developed. And the ten countries with the lowest per capita. Gross Domestic Product do not experience high or even moderate levels of terrorism with the exception of the Democratic Republic of Congo. And you'll also see that Somalia is also Often faced with terrorism, but the World Bank didn't have data.

Well was the situation, perhaps different in the past? Let's take the example of Left-wing terrorism in the 1960s and 1970s. It were countries like Germany, Italy and Japan that were most often hit by this type of terrorism. Well these countries, both then and today are among the richest in the world. So looking both at the individuals and at countries, there seems to be little support for the idea that poverty causes terrorism. But the assumption deserves a more in depth look.

I would like to present to you the detailed study by James Piazza, who looked at the link between poverty and terrorism. From different angles on a micro level. Well, in his study, he included many variables that could directly or indirectly be related to poverty, or associated with poverty. And, these factors or variables included Low levels per capita income. high levels of illiteracy, low life expectancy, and lack of employment opportunities. Well he looked closely at them, and he concluded that these poverty-related factors could not be linked to higher levels of terrorism.

Two scholars that did not use indicators of poverty on a macro level, but looked at individual cases, individual lives, were Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova. And in there very often quoted study from 2003. they investigated the assumed link between poverty, education and terrorism. And their research found focused specifically on the militant wing of Hezbollah, the Shiite Islamic group and political party in Lebanon. Well they looked at these cases, they looked at the lives of these persons, the history of these persons, their biographies. And then found out that and I quote here, any connection between poverty, education and terrorism is indirect, complicated and probably quite

weak. And they also concluded that terrorism is rather, and it shows you here, is caused by a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings of indignity and frustration that have very little to do with economics. We'll have a look at the reading list if you want to read the whole article of Krueger and Maleckova and the same holds for the other articles and reports I've mentioned.

So true or false, myth or fact? While studying the statistics and looking at the academic literature There is very little support for the idea of a direct link between poverty and terrorism. And some argued that there might an indirect link, but it's very difficult to prove. And yes, of course there might be individual cases where people are motivated to turn to terrorism because of poverty. But there is no evidence to support the idea that poverty is a root cause of terrorism.

So, what have we learned? The idea of a closer relationship between poverty and terrorism, is mainly put forward by politicians and public figures. But statistical data on individual terrorists and countries do not show a link between poverty and terrorism. And scholarly literature is quite clear about the lack of such a link. Therefore, this assumption we have to label a myth. In the next video we're going to explore the second assumption. The assumption that terrorists are crazy.

3.2 Assumption: Terrorists are crazy

In the previous video, we debunked the myth that poverty is a root cause of terrorism. In this video, we will explore the assumption that terrorists are crazy, insane or psychotic. Well, the logic behind this assumption is simple. How is it possible, how can we imagine why people would kill innocent victims, why they would even, in some cases, kill themselves in the act. In many societies, this is regarded as a kind of behavior that is at least difficult to understand, in particular, the idea of suicide attacks and that raises many questions. How can somebody do a thing like that? And the answer very often is, these people must be insane. And there are examples of persons whose behavior both as terrorist or in court, feed the idea of crazy terrorist, but are they? Are they different from us? Do they suffer from any social, psychological disorder, or are they not that dissimilar from people who do not commit terrorist attacks? Or in other words, are they perhaps quite similar to you and me?

Here you see the faces of a number of alleged and convicted terrorists, and many people have said that these persons were crazy. From left to right, first you see Ted Kaczynski, the so called unabomber, who amongst others send bomb letters to universities. And then Anders Breivik, the man who Killed so many people in Norway, a few years ago. And in the middle you see the face of Richard Reid, the so called shoe bomber, who try to blow up a plane, with a bomb that was hidden in his shoes. And then Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11, who didn't do the attack himself, but he planned it. Can he be considered crazy or not? And then finally, Major Nidal Hasan, working for the US Armed Forces, a psychiatrist who killed 13 of his colleagues in Fort Hood, Texas. Were they crazy or not, are they really that much different from us?

Well, I guess and I hope that many of you find it very difficult to understand how somebody can send a bomb letter knowing that people will be injured or killed or how somebody, like the case of Richard Reid, tries to blow up a plane or planned killing of thousands in New York, or kill his fellow colleagues. Often such violent acts evoke strong moral outrage that impedes us from a objective and proper analysis of the rational, and state of mind of terrorists. And because such acts are generally strongly condemned for good reasons, there is a tendency to regard these people as fundamentally different from us. Comparisons to mass murderers are easily drawn, and the same holds for school shooters. And we know that, in quite a few cases mass murderers and school shooters have been diagnosed with mental illnesses, and often times terrorists are put in that same category. A same category of persons who use indiscriminate and random violence, but there are differences.

The main difference between mass murderers and school shooters on the one hand and terrorists on the other is that the former are not politically motivated and terrorists are, if we at least agree on the definition of terrorism is an instrument to achieve certain political goals. Well, in other words, there seems to be a fundamental difference in terms of rationality and if there is rationality in the act, and if this is regarded as part of a mechanism that is linked to some ideological idea, can you still call this act crazy, or the behavior of an insane person? I would like to stress that understanding the rationale behind these acts, doesn't mean you cannot condemn it at the same time. So understanding doesn't mean condoning and you might also want to still consider this kind of rationality as an example of crazy thinking. I mean terms like crazy and sane are subjective concepts, so are they crazy or not? It's a difficult question, difficult to define and difficult to answer, why is it, nonetheless, to answer these questions?

If many terrorists indeed suffer from mental illnesses it has consequences for counterterrorism, it might require more cooperation with actors in mental healthcare. And, at the same time, it might lead to the conclusion that there is little we can do, as in every society there are people with all kinds of illnesses, mental illnesses, disorders and we cannot jail everybody just because they are not like you and I. And another consequence of this assumption is there is no use in investigating the motivations, the rationale of terrorists groups or terrorist individuals. I mean, there is no motivation or rationale, they're simply crazy.

Well, how have scholars and experts dealt with these questions? In the second week we've discussed the approaches in the study of terrorism, among them the rational or instrumental approach. Well, this approach strongly rejects the idea that terrorists are crazy. Terrorism is a

rational behaviour making terrorists rational actors that kill to achieve certain political goals. So, they don't kill because they're crazy, they kill to achieve something and also within this second approach in terrorism studies, the social-psychological approach, there is consensus that terrorists are not crazy. Jerrold Post for instance, one of the leading scholars in the field of the psychology of terrorists and author of the book *The Mind of the Terrorist*, is very clear on the question whether or not terrorists are very different from us. He stated it is not going too far to assert that terrorists are psychologically normal, that is, not clinically psychotic. And he also said, they are not depressed, and not severely emotionally disturbed, nor are they crazed fanatics. In fact, terrorist groups and organizations regularly weed out emotionally unstable individuals. They represent, after all, a security risk.

So even the organizations, they are very keen not to allow crazy people to be part of their organization, according to Jerrold Post. And then Louise Richardson, she noted at a level of the individual psychologies to have long argued that there is no particular terrorist personality and that a notion of terrorists as crazed fanatics is not consistent with the plentiful empirical evidence available. And allow me to also mention the Israeli scholar, Ehud Sprinzak, who would regard terrorists as fanatics. Yes they are fanatic, but he would also call them rational fanatics, even to describe suicide bombers. This is not to say that there are no terrorists that are clinically psychotic to use the term of Gerald Post. And there are some scholars, that have observed, mental disturbances, disorders among terrorists that are more frequent among them, than among the general population. And I would also like to stress that the lack of empirical evidence is partly related to the fact that it is very difficult to diagnose terrorists. Very few scholars have had the opportunity to interview and monitor terrorists the way psychiatrists normally can. Nonetheless, there's very little empirical evidence that suggests that terrorists are crazy, and many scholars agree on the rationality of their behavior, but more research is needed. That is why I would not label this assumption a myth, I would label it false.

In sum, we have to explore the idea that terrorists are creating, and although many people find it difficult to understand the behavior of terrorists in particular that of suicide terrorists, academic research has shown that terrorists are, clinically speaking, normal. This means the assumption that terrorists are crazy is false. In the next video, we will explore the idea that terrorism is increasingly becoming lethal.

3.3 Assumption: Terrorism is increasingly lethal

In the last video, we explored the assumption that terrorists are mentally ill or psychotic. And this video, we'll look into the assumption that terrorism has become more lethal, more deadly, in the past decades. This assumption can be interpreted in two ways.

First, you can look at the number of fatalities, the total number of people being killed in terrorist attacks. And you can also see it from a different angle by looking at individual terrorist attacks. Have they become more deadly? Are there today more victims per attack than in the past? It should be noted that these two sides are independent of each other, the origin of this claim or assumption can be linked to the idea that terrorism has been defining feature of our era, and that we live in a post 9/11 world. And it also rooted in the idea that the size and shape of terrorism is different, it's different now than in the past. After 9/11, it has become a very big threat, more so than in the past. Here are some examples of quotes by politicians, government agencies and scholars that hint at a new type of terrorism, one that is deadlier than in the past.

Well, the first quote is by Dick Cheney, who was then the vice president of the United States. And in 2004, he said, the biggest threat we face now as a nation is the possibility of terrorists ending up, in the middle of one of our cities with deadlier weapons than have ever before been used against us. Biological agents, or a nuclear weapon, or a chemical weapon of some kind to be able to threaten the life of hundreds of thousands of Americans. On the other side of the globe, you have the Australians and the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in that same year stated something similar. It stated, advances in weapons technology Are making them, the terrorists, more lethal than ever before, the range of weapons at the terrorists disposal is wide and increasing. And finally, a quote from a scholar, Peter Neumann, a German scholar working in London at King's College who in 2009 said, In the era of the new terrorism, the two considerations, violence and symbolic value seem to have merged, with mass casualty attacks against civilian populations being routine and intentional. Are these ideas and statements based on facts and proper analysis?

Well, unfortunately the attacks on 9/11 and the ones in Bombay, Beslam, Baghdad and Bali, they were facts and these and other deadly attacks cost the lives of many people. So, yes they are very lethal and they made headlines worldwide, sometimes for days. Well if you add then the many threats posed by terrorists groups to attack, including threatening to do so with weapons to be used in mass causality attacks. And also add the interest of certain groups in unconventional weapons and even weapons of mass destruction, then the idea of increasing legality becomes even stronger. And we did see in the street of Iraq, Pakistan, people that are willing and able to make more sophisticated explosives and to use them in suicide attacks. In other words, a worrisome combination of new techniques and tactics and maybe I should add different ethics and different codes, that make it possible for terrorists to kill more people and to kill more people at the same time. In a previous video I quoted Byron Jenkins, who in 1975 stated that terrorist want a lot of people watching, but not a lot of people dead, and I also said that in 2006, he rephrased that statement.

In 2006 he said, the most striking development is that terrorism has become bloodier in terms of what acts are committed and how many victims are involved. And in this publication in 1975, he described a number of constraints that the terrorist were facing at that time. these constraint included a sense of morality, a self-image, operational codes and practical concerns. Well, in 2006, he noted, these constraints gave way to large scale, indiscriminate violence and he rephrased his famous quote from 1975. And the new quote is as follows, he says, many of today's terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people dead. Is Bryan Jenkins right in assuming terrorist want a lot of people dead? And have terrorists managed to achieve that? Has terrorism become more deadly than in the past decades? Why should we investigate this assumption? Well, if terrorism is becoming more lethal, maybe we should devote more means to fight this very serious physical threat. But what if it's not? Well, we think it is. Maybe we have spent too much money on countering it. Money, scarce resources we could have used for other important issues, such as the eradication of poverty, making the world a better place. But if terrorism is indeed more deadly, Maybe we should look for tougher measures to fight it. But if it's not, maybe we should have a closer look at the proportionality

of the measures we have taken in the past. Maybe it has become less deadly and maybe we have overreacted after 9/11, 9/11 and other such attacks that gave us the impression, rightly or wrongly that terrorism attack has become more deadly.

Myth or fact, let us compare the assumption with empirical evidence. What are the number of people killed in terrorist attacks, and how does that develop over time? To answer that question, we use the background report, 9/11 ten years later, of the national consortium for the study of terrorism and responses to terrorism, also known as start, which is based at Maryland University. Here is a graph with the number of fatalities worldwide because of terrorism in the period 1991, 2011. So the period before and after the attacks on the United States. What do you see? Well you see that the numbers are pretty high in the early 1990s with 8 to 10,000 people being killed. Then it goes down 1995, goes up again to a pretty high number in 1997 and it reaches a relatively low number just before 9/11, still greater number of people killed because of terrorism. In 2000-2001 too many, but a relatively low level. And then 9/11 that itself cost three thousand lives shows an increase but also very quickly it goes back to pre 9/11 levels, and then from 2003 on you see a gradual increase which leads to a peak in 2007, 2008 of more than 12,000 or about 12,000 fatalities in those years. But since then the line again is going downward, so what do we make out of this? What do you think yourself, how would you describe this trend? I think it can best be described as a, a trend with ups and downs, but, you can't say that it's in general going up or down. And I think there are no indications for the future, it could go up again, it could go down even further. I think what you can say is that there is No general trend and it's definitely not one, that is only going upwards. But of course there are differences and this holds for terrorism in general, for you, for instance the trend is in downward one. But for South-Asia, unfortunately, the trend is up. But what about the lethality in terms of the number of people killed or injured per attack? Is there a clear picture regarding this part of the assumption?

Well again I would like to use the work of James Piazza who also was helpful in exploring whether or not poverty leads to terrorism, and in this study, an article of his from 2009, he explores data on victims per international terrorist attack. So, he doesn't look at all types of attacks, but he talks about international terrorist attacks, and he used the data of the terrorism knowledge base that was later incorporated in the global terrorism data base. Well, he shows that the number of victims per international terrorist attack has increased. His data showed that in a period of 1968, 1979, they were on average a little over two victims per attack and that includes both injured and killed, and that number has gone up. In the 1980's it was almost 4, and in the 1990's it increased to over 10 victims per attack, and in the first five years of the new millennium, so between 2000 and 2005, it increase even further to almost 11 victims. Well this provides us, I guess, with a clear picture regarding locality when looking at the number of casualties per attack. Unfortunately it has gone up in recent Decades and now the conclusion, myth or fact, true or false, is terrorism becoming more deadly? We already falsified the part of the assumption that says that terrorism kills more and more people each year, fortunately, that is not the case. But the part of the assumption that says That there are more victims per attack, more people killed and injured in each incident, well, that has gone up in recent years. Combining the two, I think we should conclude that the assumption that terrorism is increasingly lethal is partly true.

To sum up, we discussed the perception, that terrorism has become increasingly lethal, especially after 9/11. This is only partly true, the number of fatalities each year has gone up and down in the past decades, only the number of victims per attack has increased significantly. In the next video, we're going to look into the assumption that terrorism is predominately anti-western.

3.4 Assumption: Terrorism is predominantly anti-western

In the previous video, we looked into the idea that terrorism is becoming increasingly deadly. And in this video, we're going to explore the assumption that terrorism is predominantly anti-Western. Well, this assumption can be broken down into two parts.

First, we're going to focus on the targets. Are the targets of terrorism mainly westerners, or are they not? And then we look at rhetoric's. Is the language or the slogans. Is the discourse of terrorists mainly anti-western? Where does the assumption come from? What's the origin of the claim? Well, President of the United States George W Bush hinted at it in a speech which he delivered about 10 days after the attacks on his country in 2001. And in this speech or his address to the nation he said the following. Americans are asking "Why do they hate us?" They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble, and disagree with each other. Thus hinting at an anti-western idea, or an anti-western agenda.

And there are many interviews with Osama Bin Laden the then leader of Al-Qaida that are proof of an anti-western agenda. In an interview with Al Jazeera in 2002 for instance, he stated that the priority in this war at this stage must be against the infidels. The Americans and the Jews who have not stopped their injustice. And also scholars and experts have pointed at anti-western talk, and anti-western terrorist attacks.

Well, one of them is Walid Fharis, who wrote several books about what he calls Jihadism or jihadists. And the author describes and analyzes through multiple examples of terrorist groups and individuals how jihad has waged a war against the west. An ideological war against western civilization and democracy.

Some have argued that this anti-western jihadist terrorism, also known as Islamist terrorism, is a new type of terrorism. Martha Crenshaw, for instance, in a book published in 2000 stated the following. She said, several recent works focus on a New terrorism that is motivated by religious belief, and is more fanatical, deadly and pervasive than the older and more instrumental forms of terrorism the world has grown accustomed to. And she also shows that this new terrorism is described as anti-western terrorism originating in the middle east, that is linked to radical or fundamentalist Islam. And in the same book, which was published before 911, Martha Crenshaw also noted that. Alarm over the emergence of radical Islam was heightened by a combination of factors. The resort to suicide bombing in Lebanon and Israel. A general willingness to inflict mass civilian casualties, and anti-American and anti-Western targeting patterns.

Why is it important to test this assumption? If we continue to believe and continue to say the terrorism is predominantly anti-Western, of course we will strengthen this perception. But what if it not true. What if terrorism It's not mainly aimed against the west? Then, spreading the idea of anti-western Terrorism is not very helpful. In fact, in that case, we will help those who would like to threaten the west and we will make some anti-western groups a lot bigger than they are.

Moreover, we might contribute to the notion of a clash of civilization, as put forward by Samuel Huntington. Or we might strengthen this idea of a clash or struggle between Christianity and Islam. Again, this is not a good idea when the Facts do not support such a clash or such a struggle. Those kind of frames might for instance influence the way we look at each other. Well, the way we look at individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It can lead to generalization and stereotyping. And for instance in the West, it could lead to that some people might see their Muslim neighbor as a potential anti-Western person, as a potential enemy. And that is why we have to compare this assumption with facts.

Is terrorism predominantly aimed against Westerners or not? Or is it only rhetoric, only empty threats? Regarding the threats, it should be mentioned that there have been many calls for terrorist action against the West. I already mentioned Al-Qaida, which is of course one of the most important ones, but there are many other groups as well. But what about the facts on the ground?

Do these groups mainly target Westerners, do they mainly target the West? Well, there are many different ways to answer that question.

Let us first look at a geographical approach. Here's a map of terrorist incident or the terrorist, the impact of terrorism in 2011. Well, we see that the regions that suffered the most from the terrorism are not in the west. The West is, is confronted with very low levels of terrorism. Look at North America, South America, Western Europe, Australia, and compare that with the figures and the colors in the middle East. Compare it with Iraq, or South Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and in Africa. It's also mainly Muslim countries that are faced with terrorism. North Africa, Nigeria, mainly the northern part. And also Russia has a lot of terrorism, but it's also mainly the southern part, the Caucasus region, the Muslim part of that country.

So not the West, actually, the Muslim world is most often confronted with terrorism. And who are being killed in these attacks? In all of the countries mentioned, the overwhelming majority of the victims are Muslim. And there are many sources that conform this. And the data are striking. Well, here you have the figures of the United States National Counter Terrorism Center. And in their report on terrorism 2011, they say that Muslims suffered between 82 and 90%, 97% of terrorism related fatalities. It appeared 2005, 2010, worldwide.

And other sources show that even in Iraq. In the years after 2003, meaning, in the years after the US led the invasion. Where there was an enormous presence of western troops, the majority of the attacks by al-Qaeda affiliates was against fellow Muslims, not against Western troops. So the rhetoric may be predominantly anti-Western, but the victims are Muslim not Westerners.

And what about the situation in the West? The few attacks in the west, are they perhaps predominantly anti-western? According to Europol's terrorism situation and trend report, 2013, there was 17 deadly victims in the European Union in 2012. And less than half of them were the result of terrorist acts by religiously inspired groups, that's the political correct term for Islamist or Jihadist terrorism.

They also say that there were a total 219 attacks, and they were mainly carried out in France and Spain. But they are carried out by terrorists Groups that are called separatists or F mo-nationalist group. And a religiously inspired to has carried Out only 6 attacks within the European Union in 2012. And one of them was the attack by Mohammed Mira of a veteran from the fight in Afghanistan, who in an around his hometown Toulouse in France killed 7 people. Thus, even in Europe, most of the attacks cannot be labeled anti-western. What about North America? What about United States? According to the statistics of the United States State Department for the year 2012, there were no casualties because of anti-Western terrorism on US soil.

So the assumption that terrorism is predominantly anti-Western, is it true, partly true, false, or should we call it a myth? Well, I guess we see a mixed picture. The rhetoric of Al Qaeda and other islamist or jihadist group is definitely anti-western. And these religiously inspired groups seem to dominate the current wave of terrorism. They're responsible for high number of attacks and many victims.

However, when we look at these victims or Look at the targets, we see that includes relatively few westerners. The main group of victims of these attacks are other Muslim countries and other Muslims. And in the West the majority of the attacks are linked to separatist groups, right wing groups, left wing groups, but not anti-Western groups. Therefore, I guess, we can label this assumption as partly true or even false, depending whether you regard rhetoric as important as people killed in terrorism. Well, having said that, I think it's more appropriate to label this assumption as falsified.

To sum up, the rhetoric of much of today's terrorism is anti-Western, but its victims are not. They're not westerners, they're Muslims. Combining these two observations, we label The assumption that terrorism is predominantly anti-western false. In the next video, we will investigate the idea that terrorism is successful.

3.5 Assumption: Terrorism is successful

In a previous video, we discussed the assumption that terrorism is predominantly anti-western, arriving at the conclusion that it's partly true, or even false. In this video, we will investigate the idea that terrorism is successful. Who's saying the terrorists are successful? I guess I partly contributed to that, by repeatedly stating that terrorism is making headlines, and it's high on political agendas. That's true. And isn't that what terrorists want? Is that a success? Is it enough to be talked about in political forum? Well, I guess that's not enough. And if you take the definitions of terrorism, it very often contains the words, political goals. And that's helpful when determining levels of success for terrorism. And if you agree that terrorism is an instrument to achieve certain political goals by means of violence and intimidation, the criteria should be twofold.

First, does terrorism create attention and cause fear? And then the second question, do terrorists achieve their political goals? These are relatively simple criteria to Measure the success and compared it with empirical evidence. Think of public opinion polls, or discourse analysis, and with academic literature. And of course, there are many different ways to, and many different criteria, to measure the direct or indirect success of terrorism. Here are a few examples. Terrorism might be called successful if They reach a high number of casualties. Or when they are perceived as powerful actors, with whom a government or any other actor has to deal with, or negotiate with. Or when the terrorists avoid capture or death, and when the organization itself is able to survive, and the continuity of the organization. If they last for decades is that is, maybe not also an example of success.

Well, what most academics have done, they have simply looked at the stated political aims of these organizations, and have just looked at whether or not they achieve these particular goals. Well, I think that's too narrow, and I think one also has to look at the level of fear and media coverage. Perhaps, these are not goals in itself, but they are important intermediate goals. Without that attention, without that levels of fear, the political goals will surely not come. And, I would also like to add that being feared, and being hurt, might be an important goal to some terrorists organizations on its own. Well, we'll look at that later. Let us first explore the level of success In terms of the achieved political goals of terrorist organizations.

Why do most scholars primarily focus on political goals, when trying to determine whether or not terrorism is successful? What can be linked to the very important rational, or instrumental approach, in studying terrorism. According to that approach, terrorism is an instrument to achieve certain goals. Employed by rational individuals, who are making some sort of cost-benefit analysis, to determine their tactics and strategy. And, with this line of thought, it can be assumed that terrorists, somehow, think that there is at least a small chance to achieve some of their political goals. Well, of course, there are other approaches to look at the success of terrorism and their other authors, who have a different take on this. This holds, for instance, for Max Abrahms, Who has repeatedly challenged this rational or instrumental approach. In his publication, *Why terrorism does not work*, he analyzed 28 terrorist organizations that are on the designated... this list of designated terrorist organizations of the United States Department of State. While he analyzed these groups, and his analysis yielded two distinct conclusions. First, the groups accomplished their policy objectives only 7% of the time. Only 7% of the time. Second, the level of success depends on tactical choices, in particular target selection. And, he shows that groups whose attacks on civilian targets are outnumbered. The attacks on military targets, systematically, fail to achieve their policy objectives.

These findings suggest that terrorists groups rarely achieve their policy objectives, and that the poor success rate is inherent to the tactic of terrorism itself. You fail if you attack civilians. That's really the bottom line. And according to Abrahms, the outcome of this study challenges the dominant scholarly opinion, that terrorism is strategically rational behavior. How can it be, if terrorism, obviously, provides very, very limited political return for the efforts of the terrorists? Other authors have reached similar Conclusions about a lack of success for terrorists. Raising of course the question, why do they continue their struggle, if it doesn't lead to achieving political goals?

Paul Wilkinson, for instance, noted that some terrorists appear to believe that terrorism will always work for them, in the end, by intimidating their opponents into submitting to terrorists demands. But he also observes, that terrorists only Very rarely succeeded in achieving some of their strategic goals. And he mentioned that, there are only few exceptions in recent history, which occurred in the period of anti-colonial struggles against the British and the French. And he, gives the example of the Front de la Liberation Nationale in Algeria, which he considers a success. But I'm not sure if you want to label that terrorism. And in the period after that, in the post-colonial period, there's not a single case of a success for terrorism, in terms of seizing control in any country. And Wilkinson says that, the use of terrorism as a weapon, by insurgents, has backfired and alienated the local population.

Another important author that has looked into the success of terrorism is Brian Jenkins. In an article, in 2006, he expresses worries over increased professionalism of terrorists, and the increase in, casualties caused by terrorism. But he's skeptical about their success. He observes that terrorists have escalated their violence, developed new methods of financing their operations, explored new communication strategies, and created new organizational models. But he also notes, they have yet to achieve their own stated long range objectives, and he calls that the paradox of terrorism. Terrorist often succeed tactically, and thereby, gain attention, cause alarm, and attract recruits. But their struggle has brought them no success measured against their own stated goals. In that sense, terrorism has failed, but the phenomenon of terrorism continues, according to Jenkins.

How do these findings relate to the case of Al Qaeda? Is Al Qaeda successful? Or is it likely to succeed in achieving its stated goals in the future? Well, one of the problems is that, it's difficult to define Al Qaeda. Are we talking about core Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Al Qaeda and its closest affiliates in Iraq, the Magra, the Arab peninsula. Or are we also talking about the network of Al Qaeda, including a wide range of organizations that somehow are ideologically linked To the organization. And what about its political goals? Well, I guess we look at core Al Qaeda and its closest affiliates. What were, or are their political goals? Well, the problem is that they are rather vague and seem to change all the time. They include, or have included, the establishment of a Pan-Islamic Caliphate, the overthrow of known Islamic regimes, and the expulsion of all foreigners from Muslim countries. And of course, the killing of Jews, Americans, and other so called infidels.

Well, how successful has Al Qaeda been? Well, looking at these scores, what do you think? I think they've failed miserably, at the cost of many lives of innocents from Washington to New York, and from Baghdad to Riyadh, and Amon. So at a very, very high price. Nonetheless, Al Qaeda has managed to drag the United States and its allies, into a costly war in Afghanistan, and military operations in other parts of the world. And many authorities in many countries still have to invest in countering the threat posed by Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and it's sympathizers. Despite the fact that many of its leaders have been captured or killed, Al Qaeda is still making headlines. And this raises the question, whether or not, one should only measure the success of terrorist groups, like Al Qaeda, by solely looking at the extent to which they have reached their stated political goals. What about high levels of fear, or the enormous investments they force to counterterrorism, or the fact that threat posed by terrorism is still high on the political agenda. Should that not also be considered a sign of success? And if so, how successful have terrorism and terrorist organizations been in recent years?

If we look at the success of terrorism in terms of making headlines, it's clear that terrorists are very good at that. Or maybe I should rephrase that and say That terrorists, and the media, are very good at that. After all, it's not the terrorists that write the headlines, it's the journalists that do so, because there is demand for it. Because you and I expect them to do that. Well, there are quite a number of studies that have looked into the use of the word terrorism in the media, in various media reports. And it shows that terrorism has, indeed, been making headlines, almost on a daily basis, in many parts of the world. And, there is this study, by Iyengar and Kinder in 1987, that shows that between 1981 and 1986. More news stories were broadcast by the three TV networks in the United States ABC, CBS, and NBC on terrorism, than on poverty, unemployment, racial inequality, and crime

together. This is a study from a couple years before 9/11, actually quite a number of years before 9/11.

So in the mid-1980s, even then, terrorism was making headlines, more often than poverty, unemployment, racial inequality, and crime all together. And there are many other studies that have looked into media coverage, in general, about terrorism, and of course, the media coverage about after 9/11. While in the immediate aftermath of this, the unprecedented attacks on the United States in 2001, the general conclusion is that the reporting of it was also unprecedented. It went on for days, and really all parts of the world were confronted with the images, the horrible images. Well, you've probably seen them.

But also, the attack on the Boston marathon, managed to make headlines worldwide, even though the attack was a relatively minor one. Three fatalities, or course, three too many, and there too many injured as well. But, it is a minor attack compared to terrorist incidents in Iraq, Colombia, India, or other places. Nonetheless, even on the other side of the planet, in Fiji, it made headlines. And the Fiji Times reported, about it and produced a lengthy article with pictures. And it read as follows: Fijians living in Boston, United States, remained indoors as authorities began investigations into two bomb blasts. Targeting thousands of people participating in the Boston Marathon, so, unfortunately, terrorism managed to make headlines terrorism, in terms of spreading dread and fear, we have to look at public opinion polls of recent years.

Take for instance the famous Gallop polls. Several times each year they have asked Americans how worried they are, that they or a family member could become a victim of terrorism. And about a quarter of the Americans held this concern in April 2000, which was a decrease, compared to a figure of 39% in the mid 1990's, in 1996. And it then registered highs of 58 and 59%, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, in its first weeks, after these events, but has then since varied between 28 and 48%. In early 2013, after the Boston Marathon Bombing, this number was 40%, which is still, more or less, the same as the level of 1996. While one could argue that the Americans are, more or less, back to pre 9/11 levels of worries over terrorism, still a pretty high number, I should say.

Well, the same holds for Europe. The Eurobarometer, which is a public opinion poll by the European Union, shows that concern over terrorism, also, had its ups and downs in the past decade. And that it's back at pre 9/11 levels, which are significantly lower than in the United States. Nonetheless, even today, in many western countries, terrorism is among the top ten worries of its populations. Unfortunately, there are few public Opinion polls outside the western world that specifically focus on terrorism, and that ask questions about terrorism on a regular basis. So, what to make of all these ideas and facts about the level of success of terrorism.

Well, it depends very much on your definition of success. Very few terrorist organizations achieved their stated political goals, but they do manage to attract a lot of media attention. The levels of fears are caused by their actions, however, do not last forever. They gradually fade out after a few years. So, the terrorists get the attention they seek, but otherwise, they are not very successful. I think, therefore, that we should label this assumption as partly true. In this video, we try to measure the success of terrorism.

We learned that terrorist organizations are not very successful in achieving their political goals. But they do manage to attract attention, and some terrorists, attacks can lead to high levels of fear. Therefore, we label the assumption that terrorism is successful as only partly true. Next week we will investigate five assumptions on counter terrorism, and compare them with empirical evidence and academic literature. I hope to see you back Next week.