POLS 429: International Terrorism
Lecture 34 (04.22.2020):
How Terrorism Ends?

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Quick review
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Introduction
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Why Terrorism Ends?
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Overview

Review

WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

- Lone-wolf Terrorism: definitions.
- The uniqueness of lone-wolf terrorists.
- Identify a profile for lone-wolf terrorists: older than average, mostly unemployed, illegal activities background, links to other networks.
- The lethality of Lone vs. group attacks? Strong CT capabilities $\rightarrow$ easier 'path' for lethal lone-wolf attacks.

Questions??

The end of terrorism

PUZZLES

- The duration of survival for groups.
- Why individuals choose to remain or leave terror groups?
  1. Group attributes.
  2. Inter- and Intra-group dynamics.
  3. Political setting/environment.

Ross and Gurr (1989)

- Diminished coercive capabilities. Why?
- Effective CT campaign.
- Popular support burnout or backlash.

The end of terrorism

Conceptual challenge

- How to operationalize the end of terror groups?

- **(1) Group no longer exists/uses violence**.

- Measure: number of attacks.

- Estimate likelihood of future attacks (Jones and Libicki 2008).

- **(2) Group removed from a state's terror list**.

- High variance and subjectivity in lists (FBI).

- Indicates a state's motivation.

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TERRORISM CAMPAIGN

- Methods leading to terror groups' demise (Cronin 2009):
  1. Leader decapitation.
  2. Negotiation.
  3. Success: political objectives.
  4. Failure: public or group.
  5. Repression.
  6. Reorientation.
  7. Cross-generational failure.

- Examples. ▸ GroupsEnd

The end of terrorism

INTERESTING RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Groups that 'return to the scene': PKK (Turkey).

- Uncertain effects of leader decapitation.

- Short-term: reduce operational capability (demise).

- Long-term: new leadership propels more attacks.

- Demise mechanisms operate simultaneously or sequentially.

- PIRA: unsuccessful repression $\rightarrow$ negotiations.

- LTTE: failed negotiations $\rightarrow$ massive repressive CT campaign.

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Jones and Libicki (2008)

- Two main demise mechanisms.

- **(1) Join political process**.

- Limited political objective: territorial autonomy, representation.

- **(2) Intelligence and policing efforts**.

- The ineffectiveness of military repression.

- Group specific factors:
  1. Ideology - religion.
  2. Size - larger is 'better' (odds of survival).

Strategic Approach

- Rational choice $\rightarrow$ accomplish (any) political objective.
- Join the political process and cease violence.

- **(1) Irgun** (Israel before 1948).

- **(2) ANC** (South Africa): established in 1912 to fight oppression of blacks.
- Use of terror began in 1960s.
- Joined political process in 1990.
- *Goal accomplished*: end of legal apartheid.

Strategic Approach

- Group ends when accomplishing the objective of negotiations.
- States cannot fully concede to demands $\rightarrow$ setting a dangerous precedent (violence works).

- Group may not accomplish main goal, but can bargain for other objectives (rational).
- Bargaining is more likely when goal is territorial autonomy.
- Tensions during negotiations: 'replace' violence.

- Individual abandon terrorism: group does not promote her goals.

Structural Approach

- **Regime type**: terror group cannot last in democracies.
- Systematic evidence is hard to find: measures.

Young and Dugan (2014)

- Overall: average lifespan is about 3 years.
- Over half of the 2223 groups in the data stopped operating after the first year.
- Survival of regimes - correlated with prolonged groups' survival.
- Duration & regions of operations.

Structural Approach

- Evidence for regime type $\rightarrow$ specific case studies.

- ETA in Spain.

- Transition to democracy and granting autonomy rights in Basque region - reduce support for violence.

- Regime change $\rightarrow$ internal group split between radicals and those supporting negotiated solution.

Structural Approach

- **State Capability**: increased economic development reduce the duration of survival (GDP/Cap).

- Why groups demise?
- Strong economy $\rightarrow$ strong CT capabilities.
- Many opportunity costs for engaging in terrorism.

- **Globalization**: global interdependency and terror groups access to resources, financing and recruits.
- Reduces likelihood of demise (Vittori 2009).

Organizational Approach

- Less dense environment increases survival chances.

- **Young and Dugan (2014)**: modal number of groups to 'co-exist' $\rightarrow$ 11.

- If number of groups rises to 15 - survival rate reduces by 12%.

- Example: Palestinian terror groups, 2nd Intifada (2000-2005).

- Hamas - most supporters and recruits (use of outbidding).

- High survival risk for smaller groups like PFLP.

Organizational Approach

- **Rivalry**: a positive correlation between inter-group rivalry and groups' survival.

- **Innovation**: stiff competition requires groups to adapt and innovate to improve survival odds and attract popular support.

- Example: FARC (Colombia).

- **Age**: most attacks executed by 'one-hit wonders'.

- 'Monopoly' of surviving groups implement transnational terrorism. ▸ GroupsNumber

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Organizational Approach

- **External links**: resources, financing and recruits $\rightarrow$ improves survival probabilities. How?

  1. State sponsor (Iran - Hezballah).
  2. Alliances: resources, coordinate attacks.

- **Structure & Leadership**: internal group structure and survival rates.

- Factional leadership harms survival.

- Decentralize versus hierarchical groups.

Ideological Approach

- **Religion**: offers a 'ready-made' support and recruits.
- Shared religious ideology → strong bond that does not need to be replenished.

- **Nationalist**: also links to territory that makes survival more likely.

- **Left wing**: less durable, difficult to recruit and deliver message across generations.
- **Right wing**: must persuade individuals to join and demonstrate appeal of ideology.

Ideologies and Groups' Survival

Vittori (2009): TKB Database
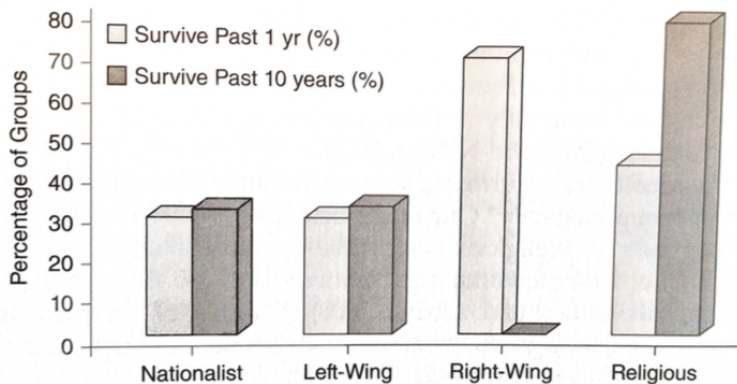
Ideological Approach

- **Religion**: survive, yet no goals accomplished.

- Group may shift its goals (AQ 1980-2000s).

- Religion has a 'staying power' based on sacred and spiritual motivations.

- Why individuals leave?

- ETA (Spain): time in prison.

- Utility view: violence is less useful as political, social and political conditions change.

Psychological Approach

- Multiple motivations to join → multiple motivations to leave?

- Many leave groups **after** causing personal harm. Why?
    1. Ideological doubts.
    2. Group and leadership efficacy doubts.
    3. Personal doubts.

- Clusters are inter-connected: is 'us' vs. 'the world' justified?

- Doubts amplify as connections with 'outside' world increases.

The End of Terrorism

POLICY OPTIONS

- No single factor explains the decline of terrorism.

- Structural (measures), ideology (join other factors).

- Organizational: size, connections (resources), and religious or ethno-national ideology improve survival of groups.

- Potential policy tools: police and intelligence work, political negotiations and economy (sanctions).

- The main challenge?

- Design an effective CT policy: accounts for the relevant attributes of each group and the context.

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POLICY OPTIONS

- Data $\rightarrow$ most groups decline during the first year.
- Emphasize local policing and intelligence operations. Why?
- Local security forces are more effective: more familiar with groups and conditions.
- Extended military forces $\rightarrow$ more likely to backfire, also raises normative and ethical concerns.

The End of Terrorism

POLICY OPTIONS

- Globalization $\rightarrow$ benefits to terror groups.
- Growing global interdependency: enhance cooperation to share intelligence and defense practices.
- Example: Commercial airlines passengers' lists.
- **Negotiations**: based on identifying groups objectives.
- **Individuals**: CVE programs and de-radicalization.

The End of Terrorism?

"Terrorism, like war, never ends" (Cronin 2006).

- It can be reduced and managed.
- Design nuanced, proportional strategies to contain violent groups and motivate them towards a path of conciliation.

Recommended readings

More studies on the demise of Terrorism:

1. Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Al Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 7-48.

2. Phillips, Brian J. "Do 90 percent of terrorist groups last less than a year? Updating the conventional wisdom." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 31, No. 6 (2017).

3. Becker, Michael. "Why violence abates: Imposed and elective declines in terrorist attacks." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 29, no. 2 (2017): 215-235.

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Terror Groups Demise: Examples

Mechanism	Notable Examples
Decapitation (capture/killing of leader)	Shining Path (Peru) Aum Shinrikyo (Japan) Real IRA (Northern Ireland)
Negotiation	Provisional IRA (Northern Ireland) PLO (Palestinian Territories) Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Philippines) FARC (Colombia)
Success	Irgun (Israel) African National Congress (South Africa)
Failure	Real IRA (Northern Ireland) ETA (Spain) Shining Path (Peru)
Cross-Generational Failure	Weather Underground (US) Red Brigades (Italy) Second of June Movement (Germany)
Repression	Shining Path (Peru) People's Will (Russia) LTTE (Sri Lanka)
Reorientation	*Towards criminality:* Abu Sayyaf (Philippines) *Towards full insurgency:* Khmer Rouge (Cambodia) Communist Party of Nepal—Maoists Armed Islamic Group (GIA) (Algeria)

Terror Groups Survival Data
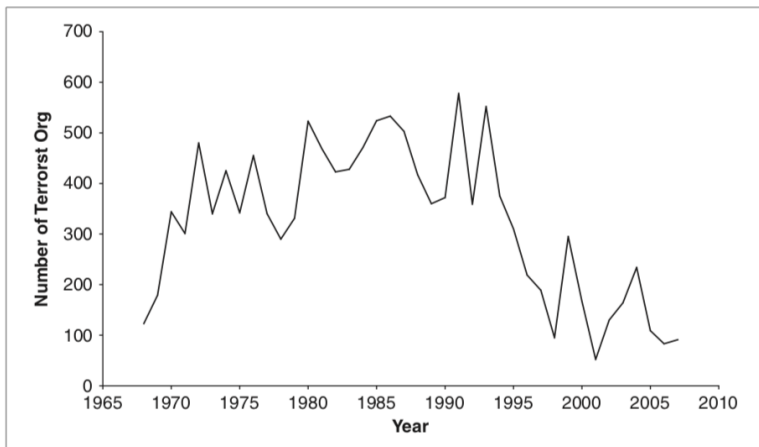
Figure 2. Number of terrorist organizations, 1968-2007