

Modeling the Dynamics of Terrorist Movements: A Macro Interactive Perspective

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Executive Summary

The level of violence from terrorism and insurgency is the outcome of a dynamic interaction between a dissident group -- which strategically use violence -- and the target government, which offers to engage it with force. The past quarter of a century saw an ever-increasing cascade of empirical studies showing the link between macro economic and social structural variables to the level of conflict in a society. Despite popular belief that poverty, income inequality, and lack political freedom cause terrorism, the econometric studies have come up largely empty handed. The reason for this apparent lack of correlation rests with the fact that the while the structural variables offer the necessary condition for political violence, the sufficient cause rests with the ability of a political entrepreneur to take the aspects of frustration and frame the grievances in terms of a matter of collective identity, complete with a plan of action. The introduction of an external catalytic agent robs empirical models of predictive capabilities. However, while prediction may be problematic, a careful evaluation of the factors that contributes to the terrorism increasing forces (TIF) and terrorism attenuating forces (TAF) opens up new avenues for its management.

Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.”
 -President George W. Bush (2002)¹

“... (W)e are in strong and brutal battle, between us and the Jews, with Israel being the spearhead, and it backers among the Zionists and the Crusaders. So we have not hesitated to kill the Jews who conquered the sanctuary of the Prophet (Jerusalem, the third holiest shrine of Islam). And those who kill our children, women, and brothers day after day, and whoever stands in the aggressor’s ranks, has only himself to blame.”
 -Osama bin Laden²

I. The Puzzle of the “Root Causes”

The search for the root causes of terrorism has been both controversial and confusing. It is controversial because some argue that given the reprehensible nature of the acts, where terrorists target non-combatants including innocent men, women and children, there is no need to understand the causes that led them to commit these heinous crimes. In fact, an understanding of the reasons that propelled them to it, may lead to sympathy for the perpetrators. For instance, in June 2005, the Presidential advisor Karl Rove criticized the liberals for trying to “understand” the reasons for the September 11, 2001 attacks.³ In fact, Rove’s argument is typical of regime supporters facing threats of terrorism all over the world. This view, however, does not have much credence in the academic community since the steps separating understanding, sympathizing, and advocating are well marked.

The confusion over the search for the root causes arises because none of the usual suspects, such as poverty, or religious devotion seem to explain fully the outbursts of terrorism. When such hypotheses are tested empirically, they almost always produce weak correlations. On March 11 of 2004 a series of bombs exploded in and around the central train station, Atocha in the heart of Madrid, which took the lives of nearly 200 commuters during a busy rush hour. On the first anniversary of this 3/11 attacks, sixty-five best-known scholars and terrorism experts in the world were assembled in Madrid. Their combined effort was published in a book. Reflecting the collective frustration of this august gathering Louise Richardson was frank in her assessment: “... the search for

¹ Quoted in Tilly (2004: 5)

² Lawrence (2005: 126)

³ Richardson, 2006: 1.

the underlying causes of terrorism is a complicated endeavor. The difficulty of the task must serve as an inducement to sustained and rigorous research on the subject – not as invitation to throw in the towel and deal simply with the symptoms that present themselves.”⁴ Let us examine some of the most commonly suspect causes of terrorism.

Poverty

To most of us, the link between poverty and terrorism (or more broadly, sociopolitical violence) seems almost self-evident. Krueger and Maleckova, however, in a thoughtful study examined the issue with a great deal of precision and found little correlation between poverty and terrorism.⁵ The problem of establishing a correlation between poverty and political violence, however, is that it is not very clear how we should define poverty. Does poverty mean individual poverty, where the poor being tired of not having its fair share of the national wealth starts a violent rebellion? In that case, information on those who take part in violent movements – gleaned from police reports or face-to-face interviews – would show that the ranks of the revolutionaries are filled by frustrated men and women mired in poverty. In psychological terms this is known as “egotistical deprivation.” Much of the information for these studies is gathered from direct interviews of the participants in terrorist activities⁶ or from other secondary sources, such as arrest reports.⁷ None of these studies show that those who take part in terrorism are from the poorest segments of the community. In 2002 the Pew Research (2002) center conducted a survey of public opinion in the Muslim world.⁸ From this survey, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita correlated the following question:

Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of

⁴ Louise Richardson (2006: 1).

⁵ Krueger and Maleckova (2003)

⁶ Russell and Miller, 1978; Hudson, 1999; Horgan, 2003; Post, Sprinzak, and Denny, 2003.

⁷ Sageman, 2004.

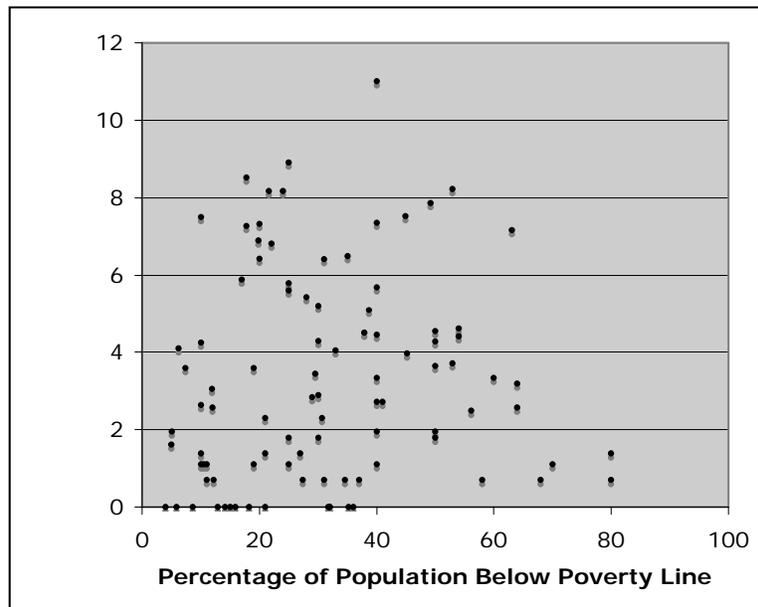
⁸ The survey was conducted in Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, and Uzbekistan. Although part of the larger survey, Egypt did not allow this question to be asked. This survey was not conducted in Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

*violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?*⁹

By using the answer to this question to the various economic, demographic, and political indicators, Bueno de Mesquita found that a person's perception of the economy (either from personal standpoint or in the aggregate) "is essentially uncorrelated with his or her support for terrorism."¹⁰

The accumulated information from this and other empirical works is fairly clear. Most of the studies of individual (or egotistical) deprivation find the counter-intuitive result: The ranks of the violent revolutionaries are not typically filled by those from the poorest segments of the population. Rather it is the scions of the middle and upper-middle class families, which get disproportionately involved in political motivated violence. The profiles of the most recent attackers, the participants of the 9/11 attacks, the London underground train bombing (the "7/7 attacks"), along with the involvement of the doctors in the failed plot to bomb various targets in the UK are strong anecdotal examples of the involvement of the middle class as opposed to the poor in acts of terrorism.

Figure 1: Plot of Death and Injuries from Terrorism and Poverty (2002-2007)



Source: MIPT Database and CIA World Fact Book

⁹ Bueno de Mesquita (2007b)

¹⁰ Bueno de Mesquita (2007b: 12).

We can also attempt to establish a correlation between poverty and terrorism by measuring poverty with aggregate data within nations. Thus, we can hypothesize that the nations with the highest percentage of income under the official poverty line would produce the most deaths and injuries from terrorism. I have plotted the log of fatalities and injuries from terrorism in the vertical axis and the percentage of people under poverty from 110 countries (Figure 1). As can be seen from this diagram, the plot does not show a strong pattern. A simple statistical test also corroborates this observation.¹¹

We may also define poverty as a national phenomenon, where poorer countries with low per capita GDP are expected to produce more terrorism. A large number of empirical studies have examined this hypothesis and have generally found a weak correlation between the two.¹² Figure 2 plots the casualties of terrorism against per capita GDP, and once again, as can be clearly seen, the correlation between the two is weak.¹³

¹¹ A simple regression model demonstrates the lack of statistical significance between the two.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Ln (fatalities and injuries)} = 2.84 + .014 \text{ Percent below Poverty} & \\ \text{t-ratio} & (5.1) ** (0.88) \\ \text{R-squared} & .008 \\ \text{F-statistic} & .77 (1,98) \end{array}$$

** Significant at 99 percentile level

¹² Hibbs, 1973; Venieris and Gupta, 1983; Gupta, 1990;; Sandler and Enders, 2004

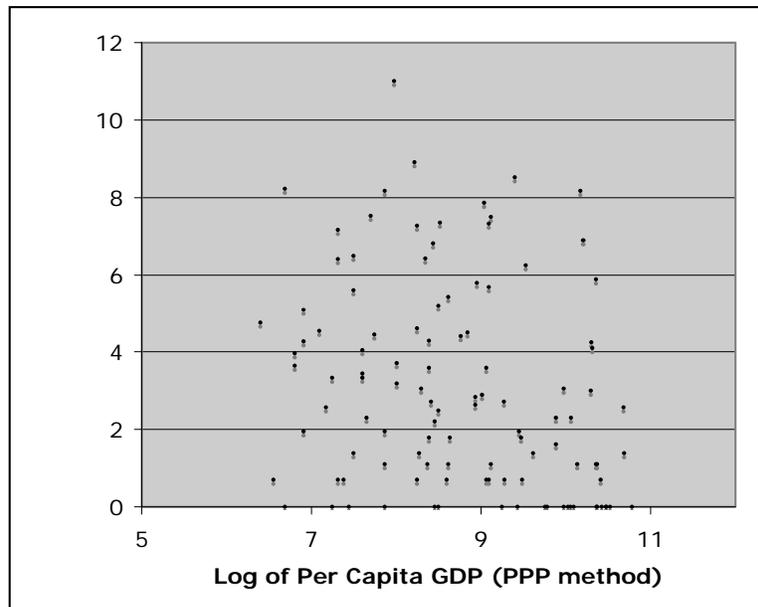
¹³ A simple regression results show that while the coefficient for Ln (GDP per capita) is statistically significant, it explains less than 1% of the variance in fatality among nations.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Ln (fatalities and injuries)} = 2.84 + .014 \text{ Ln (GDP per capita)} & \\ \text{t-ratio} & (4.44) ** (2.84) \\ \text{R-squared} & .07 \\ \text{F-statistic} & 8.07 (1,108) \end{array}$$

** Significant at 99 percentile level

The figures for per capita GNP were log transformed to reduce their variability.

Figure 2: Plot of GDP Per Capita and Deaths and Injuries from Terrorism (2002-2007)



Source: MIPT database and CIA World Fact Book

Another group of studies focuses on “fraternal deprivation” or deprivation felt by individuals as members of a group.¹⁴ This is a situation where individual actors might feel that while they may not have personally experienced discrimination, poverty, or humiliation, their intense sense of deprivation is the product of a shared concept felt by an entire community. For instance, the plight of the Palestinians in Israel has spawned frustration and anger in the Muslim communities throughout the world and has prompted many to take up their cause even when they themselves have not faced poverty or other forms of economic deprivation.¹⁵ A number of studies have found close link between this aspect of deprivation to be closely linked to terrorism and political violence.¹⁶

Many prominent scholars, journalists and academics have conducted highly influential studies examining the importance of scarce natural resources in generating

¹⁴ The distinction between egotistical and fraternal deprivation was originally made by sociologist Ralph Dahrendorf (1958).

¹⁵ In contrast to the others, Saaraj, a noted Palestinian psychologist has emphasized a feeling of humiliation and shame, more than economic deprivation as the root cause of terrorism in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

¹⁶ Farber 1968; Shneidman 1985, 1999, Merari, 1990; Sarraj 2002; Berrebi, 2003; Sageman 2004

civil wars among the poorest nations on earth.¹⁷ When started, particularly in the poorer parts of the world, these civil wars continue to spawn all forms of violence for decades to come.¹⁸

In sum, despite the fact that poverty has long been a strong suspect in fomenting political violence and terrorism, empirical evidence draw a much more of a complex picture.

Lack of Democratic Freedom

Immediately after the devastating attacks of September 11, 2001 the question was on everybody's mind: why do these people hate us more than they love their own lives? The quick response that came from President Bush, which resonated well with the grieving US public was that "*they* hate us for our freedom." These terrorists are from freedom-deprived nations and our ability to choose our own destiny has somehow evoked a deep sense of envy among these people. Unfortunately, that line of reasoning caused the Bush administration to embrace the cause of spreading democracy around the world with the zeal of a religious crusader.¹⁹ Democracy was seen as the ideal antidote for the citizens of the despotic nations. The result of this unquestioned understanding of the root causes of terrorism saw the invasion of Iraq. The transplanted seeds of democracy in the deserts of Iraq were going to sprout and eventually cover the entire Arab/Muslim world, making us safe from terrorism for ever.

Alas, like all other supposed causes of terrorism, this too failed us. The democracies of Great Britain and Spain not only suffered devastating effects of terrorism, but what shocked many the most was that the perpetrators, unlike the ones who took part in the 9/11 attacks were not foreigners; they were homegrown. Even a number of US citizens were found to have strong links with the al-Qaeda abroad. Although it is a matter of folk wisdom that democracies don't go to war against each other, no such

¹⁷ Kaplan, 1994; Homer-Dixon 1991, 1994; Collier, 2001. Although Collier and others bring important issues to the fore, it is important to note that the notion of scarcity of resources is a relative concept and is a socially constructed condition. For instance, in Saudi Arabia water is much more of a scarce commodity than oil. When a society attributes value to a particular scarce resource and fails to find a way of its fair distribution, the chances of violence escalate.

¹⁸ See, Fearon and Leitin, 2003.

¹⁹ It is important to note that President Bush embraced the idea of spreading democracy as a justification for invading Iraq after a failed search for the weapons of mass destruction.

assertions can be made about terrorism. Even if we forget the anarchists, the new left groups in the 1970s, the recent experiences of India, Israel, and Sri Lanka, and the partially democratic nations of Russia, Pakistan and many others around the world should dispel any myth about democracy as an antidote to terrorism. In fact, based on Pew Research Center's survey data Bueno de Mesquita found that "attitudes toward democracy as a system of governance for the respondent's home country, and support for terrorism are close to uncorrelated."²⁰ For a clear demonstration of this overall lack of correlation, I have plotted terrorism data against index of democracy and, once again, as we can clearly see, there is no discernable pattern between the two (Figure 3). A statistical test also lends credibility to the apparent lack of correlation.²¹

What about the hypothesis that democratic nations are the primary targets of the terrorists? Pape,²² has generated controversy by claiming that the democracies are the primary targets of suicide bombing.²³ Although democracy is not a binary concept and nations fall on a continuum of democratic values, many countries with questionable democratic roots are the biggest targets of suicide attacks. These countries would include, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco, and Russia. Despite having very low democratic values and institutions, these countries have suffered enormously from suicide terror.

²⁰ Bueno de Mesquita (2007).

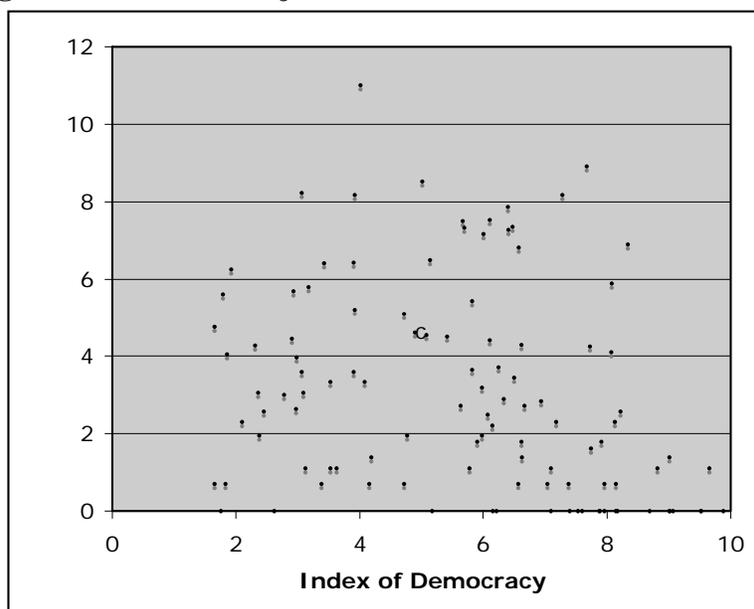
²¹ A quick fitting of a linear relationship corroborates this lack of statistically significant correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Ln (fatalities and injuries)} = 3.38 + .049 \text{ Democracy index} & \\ \text{t-ratio} & (10.85) ** (1.76) \\ \text{R-squared} & .028 \\ \text{F-statistic} & 3.11 (1,107) \end{array}$$

** Significant at 99 percentile level

²² Pape (2005),.

²³ See Crenshaw (2007).

Figure 3: Death and Injuries from Terrorism and Democracy

Source: MIPT database and *The Economist*, Democracy Index (2007).

Geography

Does geography influence the course of an insurgency? Fearon and Laitin argue that civil wars are not explained very well by the levels of grievances, such as income inequality, poverty, or discrimination in the society.²⁴ Nor is the lack of democratic freedom or the extent of ethnic or religious differences or any other form of “clash of civilizations” excellent predictor of civil wars, insurgencies or protracted low intensity warfare. Rather, they demonstrated that these events are best explained by a number of physical attributes such as, bad roads and rough terrains. Civil wars are also prevalent in weak nations, without a strong military or bureaucratic infrastructure.

The findings of Fearon and Laitin suggest that the armies of the poor nations with crumbling or non-existent infrastructure pose weak presence.²⁵ Furthermore, since the population is not dependent on the government for livelihood it has low opportunity costs for joining the forces of violent opposition, who might provide them with not only security, but also with all the rudimentary public goods that all of us grown accustomed to expect from our governments. From their research we can deduce an interesting

²⁴ Fearon and Laitin (2003).

²⁵ Ibid.

conclusion: while insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and civil war, where, at least some form of an assembled rebel force collectively challenge the government, are the products of rural, mountainous, nations with poor infrastructure, terrorism, whereby a small group of non-state actors carry out attacks against non-combatants, are the more prevalent in the relatively wealthy urbanized nations.

State Failure

One of the most dreaded events in a nation's history takes place when the power of the central government weakens or becomes close to non-existent. The hallmark of an organized society is that the state carries the monopoly of the right to use power.²⁶ In the face of a prolonged armed conflict, many countries around the world become "a mere geographic expression, a black hole into which a failed polity has landed".²⁷ Countries like Lebanon during its civil war, and Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq are prime examples of failed states at the time of writing this book.²⁸

Although the term "state failure" may imply that an entire country has descended into anarchy, it also may happen that an otherwise functioning state with ample central control will contain parts that are lawless. For instance, the "wild west" of the Western Frontier Provinces has only nominally been part of the political structure of Pakistan since her independence. Even the much-vaunted Pakistani army, much less the police and civilian bureaucrats dare to venture into these areas. O'Donnell calls these the "brown areas" of state control.²⁹

Napoleoni aptly describes the failed states and the "brown areas" as follows: "They are ravaged by internal flights, torn apart by savage conflicts between communities (as has happened in Kosovo); their borders are uncontrolled and undefined; the ruling power (either warlords or dictators, such as Mobutu, or the ruling political elite, such as the Taliban) prey on their own citizens; corruption is endemic; per capita as

²⁶ Rotberg, 2004; Debiel and Klein, 2002.

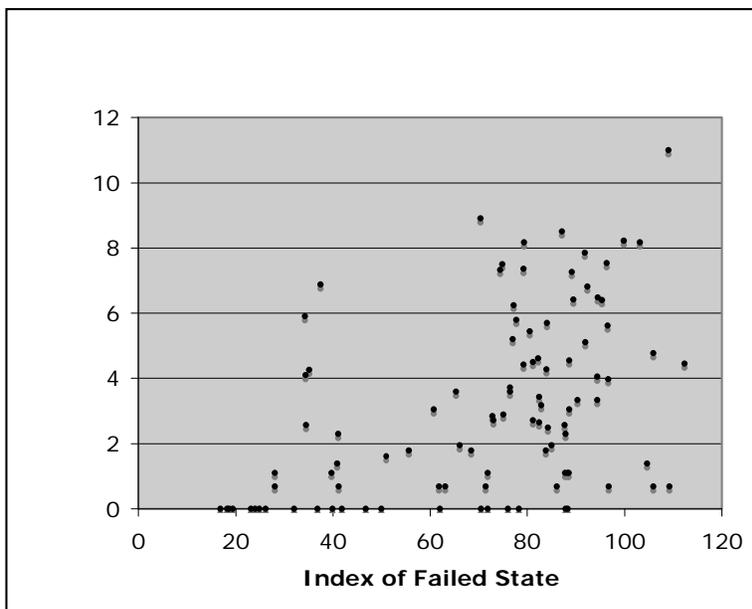
²⁷ Rotberg, (2002: 90).

²⁸ For one of the best sources of state failure, see the State Failure Taskforce, <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/>

²⁹ O'Donnell (1998).

well as regional GDP is falling rapidly; violence and crime are rife and uncontrollable. Anarchy is the norm.”³⁰

Figure 4: Plot of State Failure and Terrorism



Source: MIPT Database (2002-2007) and State Failure Index, *Foreign Policy* (2006). Note that the higher the index, the greater is the extent of state failure.

In a failed state or in a “brown area,” the calculation of costs and benefits of terrorist organizations go through a radical shift, since the government is unable to enforce the law, terrorists and all other organizations that operate outside the legal structure carry on their activities with impunity; the costs of participating in illegal activities plummet and all kinds of nefarious activities, including terrorism flourish. In 2006, the journal *Foreign Policy* developed a cross-national index of state failure, based on 12 factors of governmental control.³¹ As we can clearly see, the Figure 4 shows a

³⁰ Napoleoni (2003: 140).

³¹ http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3098&src2=PJA05. These 12 factors include:

- 1) Mounting Demographic Pressures
- 2) Massive Movement of Refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons)
- 3) Legacy of Vengeance - Seeking Group Grievance
- 4) Chronic and Sustained Human Flight
- 5) Uneven Economic Development along Group Lines
- 6) Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline
- 7) Criminalization or Delegitimation of the State
- 8) Progressive Deterioration of Public Services
- 9) Widespread Violation of Human Rights
- 10) Security Apparatus as "State within a State"
- 11) Rise of Factionalized Elites
- 12) Intervention of Other States or External Actors

clear positive relationship between the extent of state failure and terrorism. The regression results also corroborate this strong relationship.³²

II. Solving the Puzzle

So, now we are back to square one in our quest for the root causes of terrorism. If it is not poverty, lack of democracy, then what are the causes of terrorism? Surely, the physical geography is a facilitating factor for insurgency, but they cannot be seen as their root causes. Moreover, rough terrain and broken down infrastructure may promote civil wars, they are not causally linked with terrorism.

The reason the measures of economic deprivation -- relative or absolute, egotistical or aggregate national -- do not show a strong correlation with the occurrence of political violence is because of the presence of the so-called “collective action” problem.³³ That is, just because an individual feels deprived does not mean that a rational actor will automatically join a dissident movement. In fact, I argue that the factors of deprivation only provide the *necessary condition* for mass violence. For *sufficient condition*, we need to look at the role that political entrepreneurs play in framing the issues to produce a strong enough collective identity. The strength of collective identity, which clearly identifies the “in” and the “out” groups -- the “community” and its “enemies” -- prompt people to take part in violent actions in the name of their group. In other words, it is not enough for an individual to feel frustrated about his own condition for him to turn to terrorism until he is certain that his misery is caused by the machinations of a well-defined group whom he identifies as his enemies. Unlike an individual’s self-identity, collective identity is not stable. It is contextual and multiple. The political entrepreneurs bring about violent collective actions by

³² The variable State failure Index alone explains a highly significant 22% of the variance.

Ln (fatalities and injuries) =	.73 + .051 State Failure Index
t-ratio	(.73) (5.3)**
R-squared	.22
F-statistic	27.7 (1,98)

** Significant at 99 percentile level

³³ (Gupta, 1990, 2001, 2005).

“connecting the dots” for their followers by creating a consistent story by borrowing from religion, history, and mythologies. When this story resonates with a large number of people, they adopt such a collective identity and a mass movement is born.

There are numerous examples of abject poverty and deprivation did not bring out a violent political movements. For instance, Gupta argues³⁴ that the achievement gap between the Euro-Americans and the African-Americans remains as wide as in the days when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was marching, the major metropolitan cities were ablaze with widespread race riots, and black radicalism was rampant among groups, such as the Black Panther³⁵ and the Symbionese Liberation Army³⁶. Yet, after the assassination of Dr. King, Malcolm X, and other radical leaders and dismemberment of the SLA and Black Panther movement, black political movements, both peaceful and violent came to an end. The Los Angeles riot of 1992 was more a disorganized, free-for-all expression of anomic frustration than a cohesive action against a racist society.³⁷ Even the Nation of Islam, under the firebrand leadership of Louis Farrakhan eschewed all kinds of collective actions. In October of 1995, when a large number of African American men assembled for the Million Man March in Washington D. C., Farrakhan urged them to take personal responsibilities in the face of a long litany of economic grievances. The need for a collective action, radical or otherwise was simply forgotten. To be sure, there have been small regional issue-oriented protests against racism, often led by Rev. Al Sharpton or Jesse Jackson, they have been episodic and did not produce any nation-wide movement.

I argue that the absence of radical political movements is the result of not having a strong enough collective identity within the African-American community after the passage of the Civil Rights Legislation and the abolition of signs of overt discrimination. In the absence of the water cannons, police dogs, and club wielding white county sheriffs, the community saw a slow dilution of the notion of both “us” and “them” factors of collective identity.

³⁴ (Gupta, 1999, 2001).

³⁵ Cleaver and Katsifacas, 2001.

³⁶ McLlelan and Avery, 1977.

³⁷ Lee 2002.

There is no doubt that the African American community has a distinct identity or a separate world view. The nature of the chasm in perception was made bare during the trial of O. J. Simpson.³⁸ Similar to the divergent world views that came out in the Simpson trial, there is also a gap in the black voting pattern. By all measures, the vast majority of the community (often over 90%) vote in favor of Democratic Party.

Yet, there are a number of factors that have contributed to a weak collective identity for the African American community. Throughout history the most potent generator of conflict has been claims over territory. Few images produce a strong bond of collective identity than the idea of a motherland or a fatherland. Even when a group, such as the Jews in their Diaspora, did not have a territory, they shared the notion of entitlement based on the Biblical promise to the land of Israel. In contrast, being brought in as slaves in an immigrant nation, the African-Americans did not have a specific territory they could claim as their homeland. Second, during the Jim Crow era, particularly in the South, the African-Americans were compelled to live in segregated communities regardless of income or social status. After the passage of the Civil Rights legislation, the middle and upper middle class left the poor in the urban ghettos or in abject rural poverty for the suburbs. Furthermore, an examination of income distribution of the community show a u-shaped distribution, where most of the African Americans are either in the bottom quintile or in the top.³⁹ These factors have contributed to a physical as well as psychological separation between the leaders and the followers in the community.

A similar picture emerges when we consider the image of the “enemy” or the “out-group” for the African-Americans. In the pre-Civil Rights legislation days, the binary world was painted with broad strokes of black and white. The mid 1960s also saw a huge increase in non-European migration. Today, the African-Americans are another minority group within a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-hued society. In the center-cities of urban America, even those who claim African heritage are divided along myriad national, ethnic, and tribal lines. The Somalis, the Ethiopians, the Haitians, the

³⁸ In a very interesting research design, Enomoto (1999) showed that even after controlling for age, gender, income, and education, race provides by far the strongest explanation of sympathy for O. J. Simpson.

³⁹ See, Hacker (1995: 104).

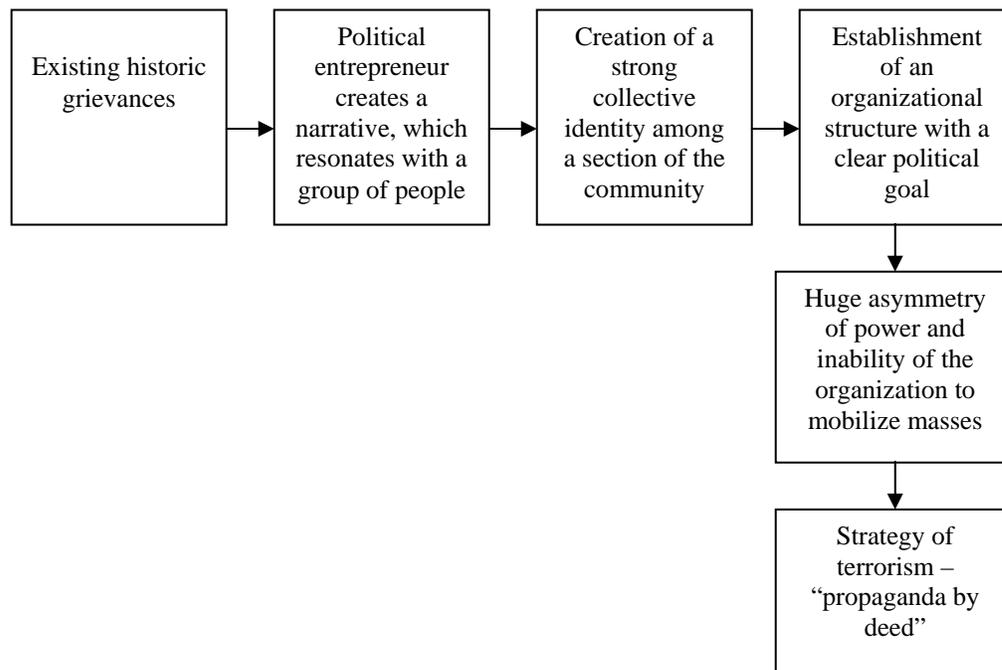
Jamaicans, compete with the descendants of those who came mostly from West Africa on slave boats. The national debate over the “blackness” of the Presidential candidate Barak Obama is symptomatic of this complex maze of identity in the African-American community. Furthermore, with the disappearance of overt signs of racism, as many surveys have revealed the gradual disappearance of “racial discrimination” from the list of complaints of the black community, especially the younger ones.⁴⁰ Furthermore, in a society, which is firmly established on the bedrock notion of extreme individualism, the perception of a strong collective identity finds a very difficult footing. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., never promoted the image of a racial enemy. By framing his struggle against injustice, Dr. King took away the sharp edge of a dissident movement that is prevalent among most other parts of the world out of the racial politics in America.

On the other side of the world, there is another important puzzle. Very few groups, if any, have suffered as much in the hands of a larger society as the so-called “untouchable” castes in India. The humiliation and a total degradation that the society imposed on the hapless people remain unparalleled in human history. Yet, until the Maoists gave the leadership and fomented a violent insurgency, in the long history of the Indian subcontinent such movements are conspicuous by their near total absence.

The answer to the puzzle appears to be simple. All of the factors of actual grievances provide the *necessary* condition for collective actions of all sorts, including terrorism. For *sufficient* condition, we must look for the formation of a strong enough *collective identity, which is formed through framing of grievance by political entrepreneurs by expressing them in the context of religion, nationalism or economic class*. The rise of political entrepreneurs remains largely a matter of historical chances; the random occurrence of charismatic leaders with organizational capabilities who can channel the frustration and anger felt by an entire community into sustained collective actions (see Figure 5).

⁴⁰ See, Farley (1997).

Figure 5: Root Causes of Collective Action



Although nobody can predict the rise of a charismatic leader, it is clear that when there is an intense feeling of grievances, the chances of someone utilizing the widespread feeling and frustration increases.⁴¹ Furthermore, once these leaders emerge, their basis for constructing collective identity – religious, nationalistic, or economic class – depends on the existing sociopolitical environment. Thus, in an Islamic society, the strong sense of *ummah* or community, defined by religion provides a ready launching pad. In contrast, where there has been a strong tradition of political activism based on the language of economic class struggle, communist movements will flourish. And, where the historic grievance is against another ethno-linguistic group, aspirations of nationalism are likely to sprout.

Along with the work of political entrepreneurs, there is another important aspect of the formation of collective identity, which is most often ignored in social sciences. This involves the role played by literature, music, and art in defining the in and the out-

⁴¹ While most leaders rise through the ranks and work for many years to rise to the top, a few others are the products of accidents of history. Thus, Corazon Aquino was thrust in the forefront of the anti-Marcos movement after her husband Benigno Aquino was assassinated. For an excellent discussion of the birth of leaders, see Post (2004).

groups. Every organized government, long before the invention of writing, has engaged in building monuments and sculptures to establish the symbolic identity of a nation. A king's crown is much more than an article of formal wear, it is the embodiment of an entire nation. Every nation today has a national anthem, whose regular singing instantly evokes pride among the audience by promoting the idea of a single community united in its purpose. Similarly, every social movement is shaped by the symbols it uses, the songs that are sung, the poems and the novels that are written, and plays that are staged. It is indeed impossible to quantify the impact of songs such as "we shall overcome someday" on the hearts and minds of those who took part in the acts of civil disobedience against an unfair society. Yet, any examination of peoples' collective choice will reveal the importance of these largely contributions of art and literature in the formation of a dissident movement.

Contagion of Ideas

Since these identities, in the final analysis, are "imagined," the contagion of ideas plays a huge role in creating "waves" of terrorism and violence across to the world. The local grievances are accentuated when they are linked to a larger global movement. This is the effect of contagion. In David Rapoport's (2006) terminology, the global contagion of ideas is called the "waves." The ills of early industrialization produced the anarchists. Through disjointed individual acts, they hoped to change the world. The emerging media covered their acts and provided the much-needed publicity, which the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called the "oxygen of the terrorists." The anarchists did manage to shake up the world, until the end of the WWI, which saw the beginning of nationalistic aspirations in reaction to the exploitative colonial system. When this wave died down with the granting of independence to the colonies, the new wave started where the anarchists left off. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a Super Power and China as a source of ideological stewardship provided the leadership and the resources to begin uprisings led by organized communist parties. The US involvement in the Vietnam War added fuel to the fire by creating a vast cadre of activists and sympathizers for the third wave of global terrorism. The Afghan War and the subsequent Gulf Wars brought to the fore the frustration and humiliation felt by a significant portion of the Islamic world and, through the leadership of the likes of Osama bin Laden started the current wave of

religious terrorism. Thus, the current Jihadi movement, similar to most others around the world, represents a concoction of liberation theology, socioeconomic aspirations, and a search for identity in a rapidly changing world.

Finally, why do we find a strong correlation between state failure and terrorism? Every action is an outcome of motivation and opportunity. The relationship between terrorism and state failure is less of a motivational link and, instead, addresses the issue of opportunity. An organized government's central control and political legitimacy depend on its ability to deliver public goods, such as security, law and order, physical infrastructure, etc. However, when the central government gets weak a power vacuum is created, which is quickly filled by various extra-legal groups. They provide all the public goods that people in these areas need. For instance, a Brookings Institution report (2007) points out that the Hizballah's "power resources stems not only from its demonstrated military capabilities to be able to withstand an all-out attack by the Israeli Defense Force, but also from its ability to generate social capital and political legitimacy through their ability to deliver essential services to the devastated areas. Similarly, the Taliban came forward with its Pakistani supported organizational hierarchy, which was able to provide a modicum of law and order in a war ravaged Afghanistan in the late 1980's, which gave it a good deal of political legitimacy among a large segment of the war-weary population.

Furthermore, an organized government is characterized by its monopoly of imposing sanctions. If that monopoly is compromised, the ranks of the terrorists are going to be filled with those who otherwise might have been fence sitters. Among them, a significant portion may be called captive participants. Popkin (1979), in his much-cited work clearly demonstrated the coercive impact of the Viet Cong on the decision-making process of the South Vietnamese peasants to join the forces of the North. Every group attempts to maintain its monopoly over its own territories. As a result, groups such as the LTTE, al-Qaeda and IRA engage in killing and maiming members of their own community as a systematic process of intimidation. Through such activities, they recruit activists, whose only motivation for joining is the fear of retribution. In sum, any violent movement will be comprised of the true believers, the mercenaries, and the captive participants.

III. Terrorism Increasing and Attenuating Forces: The Dynamics of Terrorism

Terrorism and the strength of a movement follow the dynamic interactions between the state and the dissident group. Facing challenges from a dissident group the state reacts in a predictable way. Since much of what a violent protest group does falls outside the legal system of any organized society, the state portrays these treats as ordinary acts of criminal behavior. However, when the political nature of these acts becomes apparent, the authorities try a number of time-honored techniques of quelling the rebellion.

During the course of the life of a movement it goes through a number peaks and troughs where levels of violence escalate and subside. We can now develop a conceptual picture of this dynamic relationship by bringing together the accumulated knowledge of the vast literature. We can look at the dialectic relationship between a state and a dissident organization through the interaction between two broadly defined forces: terrorism increasing force (TIF) and terrorism attenuating force (TAF). Let us examine what would constitute these two forces.

In our everyday lives we allocate our time to the pursuit of self-interest, as well as our group-interest. The forces that strengthen our collective identity or deepen our conviction that our selfish interests will be better served if we join the forces of the opposition make the dissident movement stronger. On the other hand, if people come to the opposite conclusion, the movement loses ground. Beside the calculations of benefits each rational actor faces a cost factor. If the cost of participation goes up, fewer people join terrorist movement and vice versa. Beside these three factors of rational decision-making, there are a few facilitating factors. These factors help strengthen the TIF or the, in their absence, make the TAF stronger. Let us examine the three factors that determine the escalation and demise of organized dissidence.

Strengthening of Collective Identity

The notion of “us” and “them,” is predicated upon an essentially moral ideological perception, which pitches good against evil, religious against profane, rightful owners against invaders and interlopers. In the process the charismatic leaders frame the issues by defining the in-group and clearly singling out the enemies. The universal

message from the leaders is that their community is under attack; without the active and violent resistance (“the only language that the enemy understands”) its future is doomed.

Rise of charismatic leaders

I have argued that the factors of economic political deprivation do not provide the sufficient causes for the development of systematic opposition to an organized government. For that we need a dissident organization, which can strategically shape the frustration that is widely felt in a community. And, for a successful organization to develop, we need the rise of a charismatic leader(s). This is the biggest un-knowable in history, which ultimately makes any prediction of rise of terrorism and mass movement problematic. Yet, if we examine the causes of the rise fundamentalist movement in Islam, we can see that Muslim grievance against the West has been around at least since the breakdown of the Ottoman Caliphate in Turkey. However, it took a series of political entrepreneurs such as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Abdul Azzam, Osama bin Laden, and Ayman al-Zawahiri to give it a shape through the al-Qaeda by framing the existing grievances in the context of political Islam. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Fair and Shepherd⁴² by using the Pew Research Center survey data would find that the largest correlate of support for terrorism comes from those who perceive a threat to Islam.⁴³

Overreaction by the Government

From the earliest days of the Sicarii, the Jewish zealots, who waged wars against the Roman occupiers⁴⁴ to the current day’s Islamic suicide attackers, terrorists have always laid a trap for the authorities to overreact and engage in such a manner that would clearly demonstrate its “true nature.” Their inhumanity would enrage those who had preferred to sit on the fence and prompt them to take up an active role in the dissident organization. The opponents – often the forces of the target government – reinforce these sentiments through acts that further alienate and provoke the members of the support base. The memories of the atrocities are kept alive through songs, and plays, and literature and the political leadership use these as the tools for mass mobilization; the

⁴² Fair and Shepherd (2006).

⁴³ Pew Research Center (2002).

⁴⁴ Rapoport, 1984; Gupta 2006a, 2006b.

pictures of the tortured and killed serve as the most potent recruiting tool for years to come. In the history of many mass movements by simply visually inspecting the casualty figures, one can pinpoint the junctures of history when a movement came to life as a response to overreaction by the authorities.

Acts of Political/Religious Provocation by the Government

In the final analysis every dissident group lays its claim on moral high ground vis-à-vis the target government. They do it through resorting to religious justification, evoking the images of past glories, and/or demonstrating the immorality of the prevailing economic injustices. Through their strategic moves, the dissident groups attempt to bolster their moral claims. For every movement there are areas of symbolic importance. When the government transgresses these points, public sentiment is instantly inflamed. These arousals of public ire quickly get manifested in terms of higher levels of deaths and injuries.

Strengthening of Self-interest

Self-interest rests at the heart of perceived political legitimacy of a government. Through their actions, political authorities strive to engender belief among the citizens of the benefits of staying with the existing political system. However, when there are cracks in the political legitimacy of a regime, the forces that increase terrorism get a boost.

Demonstration of ability to provide public goods

The hearts and minds are not swayed solely by the prospect of ideological reward. Almost all successful dissident groups want to demonstrate their ability to provide material goods for the welfare of their community. The mythical story of Robin Hood exemplifies how a small group of outlaws could gain political legitimacy not only through the demonstration of moral superiority to the existing social structure, but also by distributing their booty to the non-participant population in and around the Sherwood forest. From the Hamas in the Palestine, Hizballah in Lebanon, and the Naxalites in India dissident groups have gained loyalty within their communities by providing public goods from healthcare to the rule of law.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Berman, 2000.

Costs

There are two aspects of costs of participation to an actor in anti-systemic violent actions. The first is the opportunity costs of time and the second, physical costs imposed by the state in preventing terrorism.

Opportunity costs of participation

Opportunity cost is an economic concept, indicating the amount of forgone income for engaging in an additional period of an activity. To a prospective participant this is a very important consideration. That is why when an economy goes into a deep recession there is a greater propensity for political violence. For that reason, we find more young men and women joining mass movements. Yet to join the work force on a full time basis and still dependent on parents for room and boards, the student population of the world has the lowest opportunity costs of participation⁴⁶. For similar reason, we find that those living in extreme poverty and eking out a meager existence cannot join dissident movements, since any time taken from their subsistence living would mean starvation. The high opportunity also prevents peasants, dependent on strict plant cycles from joining dissident movements.⁴⁷ Although there is little systematic data in this area, a casual perusal of the biographies of the terrorists would reveal that a vast majority of them did not hold jobs in the formal sectors of the economy or were underemployed at the time of their participation.⁴⁸ Since it is generally accepted that the activists in political violence are better educated than the rest of the population, their inability to find, or in some cases unwillingness to hold formal employment commensurate to their educational achievement may signal a low level of opportunity cost for missing work.

Actual Costs of Participation: Government Coercion

⁴⁶ Gupta, 1990.

⁴⁷ Popkin, 1978.

⁴⁸ The importance of holding formal employment is widely recognized in the scholarly literature. Amartya K. Sen has shown that (Dreze and Sen 1989) providing employment during droughts is the best way of preventing mass death. Similarly, Sen (1990) argued that the biggest deterrent for female infanticide is women holding jobs in the formal sector of the economy. Although holding formal employment may be strong deterrent, it is certainly no guarantee against participation in acts of terrorism. The recent plot to bomb various locations in the UK, hatched by a group of doctors is an ample testimony to this precautionary note.

In contrast to the opportunity cost, which is an indirect measure of forgone income, the actual costs of participation is the price one must pay for getting involved in an extralegal activity. These costs are exacted by the government and come in the shape of loss of income (fines), liberty (prison time), pain (torture), and even life itself. It can also spill over to the actor's loved ones. For instance, the friends and family members can be targeted. In many cases they may lose their government jobs and, as is the case in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Israelis may destroy the family homes of those who take part in suicide attacks.

Under the standard economic model,⁴⁹ an increase in cost would lower the level of participation in the extra-legal activities. However, when it comes to ideological goods, such an assumption is sometimes problematic. Thus Gurr argues for a quadratic relationship between government coercion and political violence. In other words, up to a certain threshold, which Gurr calls "high violence, high coercion," an increase in government sanction only solidifies the opposition.⁵⁰ However, after the threshold is crossed and a set of draconian measures has been implemented, protest movements tend to go down. A number of studies have empirically shown the existence of this quadratic relationship and have argued that while the democratic regimes, having to work within the limits of law and a binding constitution, are rarely able to cross the threshold of high coercion, the non-democratic nations can often impose such brutal retribution on the protesting dissidents.⁵¹

Facilitating Factors

The factors of my expanded benefit cost analysis, the ideological or group benefit, individual benefits, and the cost of participation are helped by two important facilitating factors, the presence of a network and the group's ability to raise money. Together they help a group of non-state actors to develop an organizational network and support their activities.

⁴⁹ Becker, 1976.

⁵⁰ Gurr (1970).

⁵¹ Gupta (1990), Gupta, Singh, and Sprague (1993), Venieris and Gupta (1983)

Network and Organizational Structure

Communication is at the heart of all organizations. The terrorist organizations are no exception to this rule. The way an organization communicates within itself⁵² and to its clients through a network has been a subject of intense scrutiny by the theorists for nearly half a century.⁵³ Research into the process by which grass-root organizations in the urban America have developed has shed important light on mobilization of the masses by overcoming the collective action problem.⁵⁴ Specifically, a number of scholars have explored the way terrorist and other dissident organizations develop their networks.⁵⁵

Dissident movements require the spreading of ideas and a means to mobilize a large number of people. Contrary to the traditional approach, where organizations are seen as hierarchical, elitists, and a-historical,⁵⁶ the non-hierarchical organizations show definite cultural and historic patterns.⁵⁷ In their ability to adapt to the local conditions, some movements can tap into their traditional networks. Thus, the Iranian Revolution was greatly aided by the network of Shi'a mosques, which distributed illegally taped sermons of the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini and was able to mobilize the masses against the Shah's regime.⁵⁸ It is not only the Shites, who have been able to take advantage of the existing network through the mosques, Islamists in general have been able to get their radical message across through the mullahs and the mosques. The Islamic tradition of daily prayer at the calls by the local mullah allows the recruiters to spread their messages and to recruit activists.⁵⁹ However, not every city or every country offers the same opportunity. With differing history and socioeconomic, cultural, and historical

⁵² Guetzkow 1965; Perrucci and Pilisuk 1970; Tichy 1981.

⁵³ Farace, Monge, and Russell 1977; Redding 1972.

⁵⁴ Laupmann and Pappi, 1976; Lipnack and Stamp, 1986

⁵⁵ Sageman, 2004; Stohl and Stohl, 2007, Robb 2007.

⁵⁶ Dye and Ziegler 1981.

⁵⁷ Buchanan 2002; Fulk 2001.

⁵⁸ Hiro, 1989; Munson, 1988.

⁵⁹ Napoleoni, 2005: 128-139.

background, mosques in London, Milan, Madrid and Hamburg became hotbed of radical politics, yet not in Sidney, Berlin, Chicago, or Geneva, for example.⁶⁰

In the private and public sector there is a wide variety of organizational structures. Some are strictly hierarchical, while others are franchises, with a much looser matrix of operational duties. Each type of organization has its strength and weaknesses. While a strictly hierarchical organization can be much more coherent and have a single vision, the non-hierarchical organizations have the advantage of flexibility to adapt to regional conditions. The dissident organizations, in a similar fashion, demonstrate a wide range of typology. Sageman provides a picture of al-Qaeda network, where a group of like-minded people across the world is seen as a network with a cluster of nodes.⁶¹ In this framework, a mosque in London, where the volunteers to the global Salafi movement are actively recruited and plots are hatched for future attacks is a node. The entire movement may be seen as a network connecting these nodes. This is analogous to the network of air traffic with each airport is serving as a node. However, not every airport is equal in status. Some, due to their size of population or geographic location, are the hubs, where the traffic volume is much larger than in the regional airports. Thus, Chicago, New York, Boston, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Los Angeles are the national and international hubs, while Albany, San Diego, and Pittsburgh are more regional nodes. Similarly, in a fluid and constantly evolving architecture of terrorist network, we can clearly identify the nodes and the hubs. By plotting these links of communication, Sageman identified the Central Staff, Core Arab, Maghreb Arab, and Southeast Asia as the four clusters built around “hubs” such as Osama bin Laden, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Zein Abu Zubaydah, and Abu Bakar Baasyir. The Western journalists and policy-makers, unaccustomed to this fluid and rapidly changing organizational structure, often make the mistake of assuming a strict pyramidal structure of organization.⁶² Thus, the respected London newspaper *The Observer*, quotes an unnamed security official saying: “If you look at the structure of al Qaeda, what you basically have is a pyramid.... If you see the the two groups of bombers (who carried out the July 7, 2005 London bombings) as two separate teams of foot soldiers on the very bottom, then there is a possibility they are

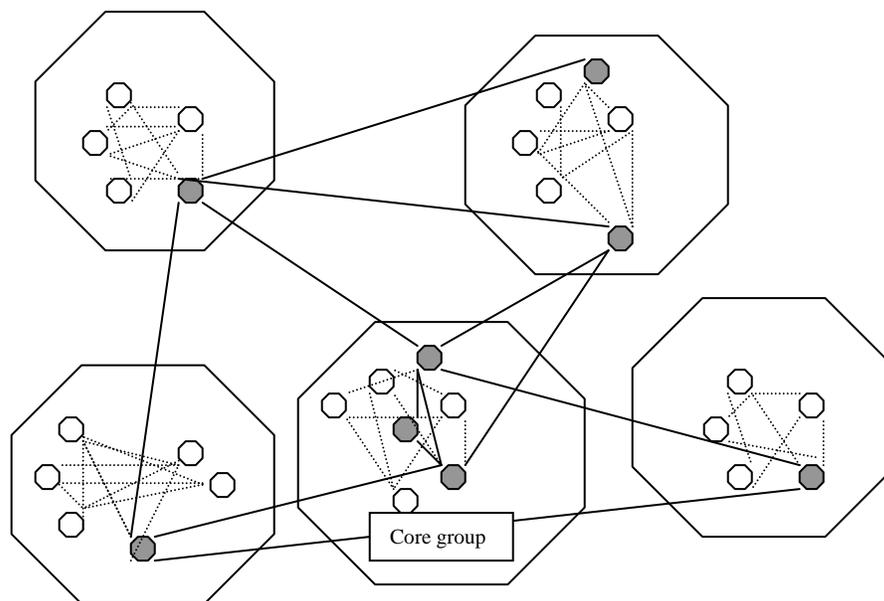
⁶⁰ For an explanation of historical and cultural impact on communication, see Obershall, 2004.

⁶¹ Sageman (2004: 138).

⁶² Stohl and Stohl (2007).

linked by command structure in the level above. This is the level we are trying to identify and track down...”⁶³ Unfortunately, the Salafi movement is not a top-down system with a strict chain of command going down from bin Laden to Mohammed Sidique Khan (the ring leader off the group) to the teenager Hasin Hussain. As Robb points out, today’s radical Islamic groups are not like the old-fashioned PLO, with Yassir Arafat as the undisputed head of the organization. Instead, modern jihadi terror groups are linear, open-source, decentralized conglomerations of small, quasi-independent groups drawn more by inspiration from bin Laden than a direct instruction from him.⁶⁴

Figure 6: Hypothetical Representation of Terrorist Network



Along the lines of Sageman’s⁶⁵ understanding of the network, I have presented the structure of a hypothetical terrorist organization (Figure 6). In this diagram, a group of nodes make a cluster. I have represented “hubs” as dark nodes. In this hypothetical case, the core group is characterized by the presence of more hubs than the peripheral clusters.

⁶³ Thomson, Townsend, Bright, and McMahon, 2005.

⁶⁴ Robb (2007).

⁶⁵ Sageman, 2004.

These nodes and hubs should not be viewed simply as points of information exchange, such as “how to make a bomb.” Rather together, they represent what is known as a “small-world” of virtual community on the web.⁶⁶ Through their interactions, they develop social capital, provide ideological and emotional support, raise money, keep the fire of hatred burning, and plan for future actions. For instance, Robb points out that there are between 70 and 100 groups that make up the Iraqi insurgency, which are organized like a “bazaar,” where ideas are traded, and they all learn from each other’s experience.⁶⁷ Through their communications the insurgents perfect their weapons, improve surveillance system and, some times, coordinate attacks. This is what Stern calls “inspirational terrorism.”⁶⁸ Stern contends that their malleability of mission and the ability to create a “virtual family” gives groups like al-Qaeda its strength. As a result of this non-hierarchical organizational structure, they become the true multi-headed Hydra.

In the summer of 2004, the police in London discovered what was quickly dubbed by the media a “sleeper cell.” In a diabolical plan, Dhiren Barot, a converted Muslim from India, led a group of men to bomb, among others, the London Underground. The group planned to stage a huge explosion in the tube tunnel under the river Thames. If they had succeeded, thousands of commuters would have drowned in the subterranean labyrinth of the underground network. What surprised the investigating detectives was the apparent professionalism that these men exhibited; they submitted a business plan to the al-Qaeda operatives minutely detailing every aspect of the diabolical project along with a cost estimate for carrying it out.⁶⁹ In contrast to this London group, which sought financial help in carrying out these proposed attacks, the Moroccan group that bombed the Atocha train station in downtown Madrid around the time Barot was arrested, were even more independent of bin Laden’s operation. Unlike the British group, they did not have any direct contact with al-Qaeda nor did they seek funding from any outside sources.⁷⁰ The Madrid cell’s only contact with al-Qaeda was through the Internet.⁷¹ They raised their own money from selling drugs and other illicit methods.

⁶⁶ Coll and Glasser 2005.

⁶⁷ Robb (2007).

⁶⁸ Stern (2003b).

⁶⁹ BBC, 2007.

⁷⁰ New York Times, 2007.

While the al-Qaeda is largely decentralized, others are not. The difference between the two types of groups can be seen when its organizational structure is compared to the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party). The PKK was hierarchical under the leadership of Abdullah Ocalan. After he was arrested in 1999, the group went dormant for a while and it changed its name to the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress in 2002, then to the Kurdistan People's Congress in 2003 in order to distance itself both from Ocalan and from his Marxist ideology.

Although there are groups that are strictly hierarchical and those that are not, within the latter, a group may have a cluster that is non-hierarchical, with another one exhibiting more of a Weberian pyramidal structure. The Southeast Asian network, for instance, exhibited much more of a hierarchical structure.⁷² Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Baasyir created Jemaah Islamiyah from top down along a much more Weberian pyramidal organizational pattern.

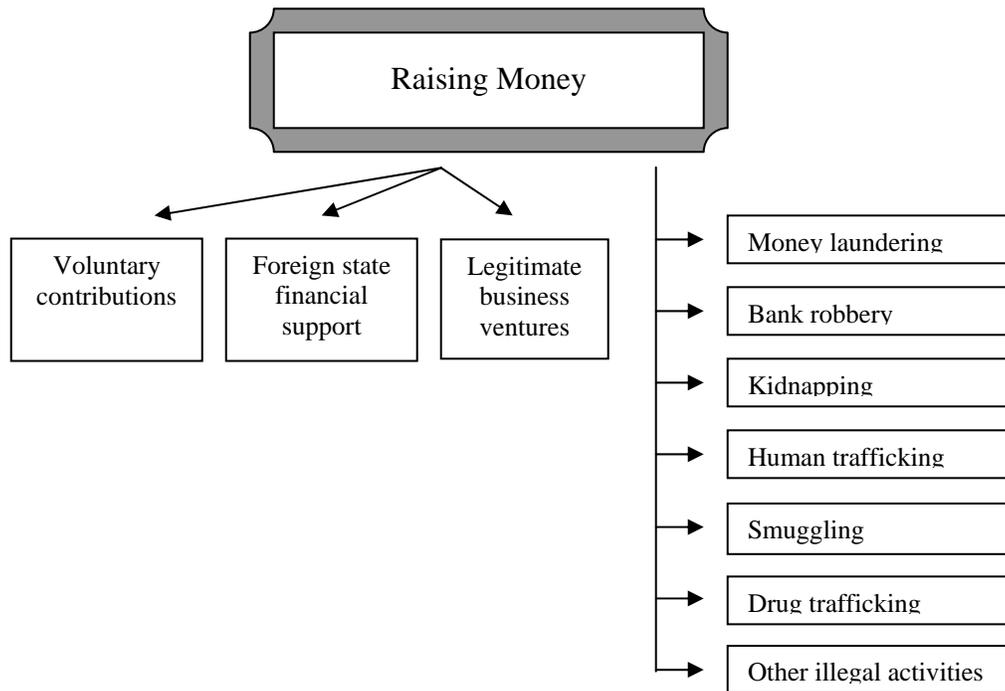
Funding Terror

Waging a violent campaign against an established social and political order is an expensive proposition. Money is the lifeblood of any organization. To run a modern terrorist campaign a group must be economically savvy. While every group must raise money for their operations, the larger groups, such the al-Qaeda and the LTTE have developed incredibly intricate web of illegitimate and legitimate businesses. The very clandestine nature of terrorists makes it doubly difficult to raise enough money to sustain a group's activities. The problem for researching this area is that much of the information on the financing terrorism is shrouded in secrecy. However, a growing number of important books and articles are filling this need.⁷³ Based on these published reports, Figure 7 presents a schema for a terrorist organization's avenues for raising money.

⁷¹ Wright, 2004.

⁷² 2004: 140.

⁷³ Gunaratna, 2001; Napoleoni 2005.

Figure 7: Sources of Terrorist Funding

The first and foremost source of funding, especially for some of the Islamic groups, is charitable contributions by their support bases. The religious duty of *zakat* or alms is one of the five pillars of Islam. Every faithful is obliged to give a certain portion of his wealth to charity. These contributions are often collected at the mosques. In Saudi Arabia, there is no income tax. In stead, the Saudi citizens are obliged fulfill their religious duties on a voluntary basis. Beside these personal contributions, Saudi banks also collect 2 percent of each transaction as *zakat*.⁷⁴ Since this money, paid by Muslims all over the world is part of the religious tradition, there is hardly a strict assessment of its volume. However, journalists Pallister and Bowcott estimate that the 6,000 strong Saudi Royal family alone is worth \$600 billion, making their yearly *zakat* about \$12 billion.⁷⁵ Beside *zakat*, there are many reports of wealthy benefactors supporting terrorist organizations. In fact, bin Laden may have invested most off his fortune in the creation

⁷⁴ Napoleoni, 2005: 120.

⁷⁵ Pallister and Bowcott (2002). We should be quick to note here that there is no reason to believe that the entire fund was devoted to supporting terrorism. The bulk of the money was used for various religious and social service work.

and expansion of al-Qaeda. The role of contributions from the Diaspora has been an essential factor in the sustenance and expansion of many groups. The Irish Catholic Diaspora, particularly in Boston has long supported the IRA; the Canadian Sikhs, the Khalistan movement, and the Tamils in India, Australia, and Europe have sent money to the LTTE.

In the process of the development of a violent dissident movement, the crucial role that a foreign state plays in providing financial support cannot be overestimated. An organized government often supports a terrorist group operating in a different country for ideological or for political reasons. Thus, to the Pakistani governments, the support for the Mujahideens infiltrating the Kashmir valley has been a moral issue from the very beginning.⁷⁶ The problem for Pakistan has been that, without any history of its own, its national identity had to be artificially crafted. Hence, in order to maintain its separate identity, its political imperative required it to lay claims to the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir. Furthermore, from the point of view of military strategy, the geography of the subcontinent obviated the need for Kashmir to be part of Pakistan. The current Jihadi movement did not originate in the late 1980s, as many might presume. Rather the six decade-long-conflict has been a steady low-intensity conflict, which has been amply aided by the active support of the Pakistani military and its intelligence arm, the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI). Similarly, supporting the anti-Castro Cuban's has long been a part of US foreign policy, which led to the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.⁷⁷ Similarly, the US government has covertly or overtly supported many dissident groups in many parts of the world, some of which can be called terrorist organizations.

Beside ideological and foreign policy rationale, governments may also support terrorist groups in order to save their own societies from being their target. This is "protection money" that Palast claims is the reason the Saudis and the Gulf states secretly supplied al-Qaeda with large sums of money.⁷⁸ Since nearly every nation considers supporting dissident movements as a part of its active foreign policy or out of some other domestic political concern, the United Nations has been unable to pass a legislation

⁷⁶ Swami, 2007.

⁷⁷ Schlesinger Jr., 1965.

⁷⁸ Palast (2002).

defining -- and thereby banning its support by the signatories -- "terrorism."

Dissident organizations also become involved in legitimate business ventures from banking in Riyadh to running taxicabs in Belfast. The economic system in the orthodox Islamic world attempts to straddle a delicate divide between what is acceptable in the Islamic tradition and the needs of a modern economy.⁷⁹ Thus, the theocratic Islamic economy must operate within a system that does not allow income taxes or interest on loans and must treat voluntary charitable donations as outside the accounting process. As a result, Islamic banks from the Pakistani Bank of Credit and Commerce (BCCI)⁸⁰ to Saudi Dar al-Maal al-Islami (DMI) and Dallah al-Baraka (DAB) have raised suspicion and accusations of supporting all kinds of violent activities from financing terrorism to supporting the Pakistani nuclear proliferator A. Q. Khan's illicit operations. Even the US State Department has charged that Osama bin Laden had controlling interest in the DMI.⁸¹

Beside these legitimate business ventures, terrorist organizations engage in every kind of illegal activities from kidnapping and hostage taking for ransom, bank robbing, human trafficking, drug trading, gun running, smuggling, and even running prostitution rings. All of these operations carry the risk of alienating the support base, if the group loses its moral message. However, not every society is the same when it comes to the cultural acceptance of the various means of getting involved in these activities. Therefore, they pose a dilemma for the terrorist groups between seeking political legitimacy and raising money for their operations.

As I presented the case of terrorist groups engaging in legitimate and illegitimate business activities, not all of their activities can be classified along this binary classification. In the immigrant communities from the various lesser-developed nations strewn around in the Western world, sending money home is a matter of utmost priority. Since the cumbersome, expensive, and often non-existent corresponding banking system in their own countries make it difficult to transfer money through the formal channel,

⁷⁹ For an excellent discussion, see Kuran (2004), where he describes the dilemma in terms of Islamism and Mammon, the false god of avarice and greed.

⁸⁰ For a detailed history of BCCI, see Beaty and Gwynne (1993).

⁸¹ Napoleoni, 2003: 120. Also see, Daraghai, 2001.

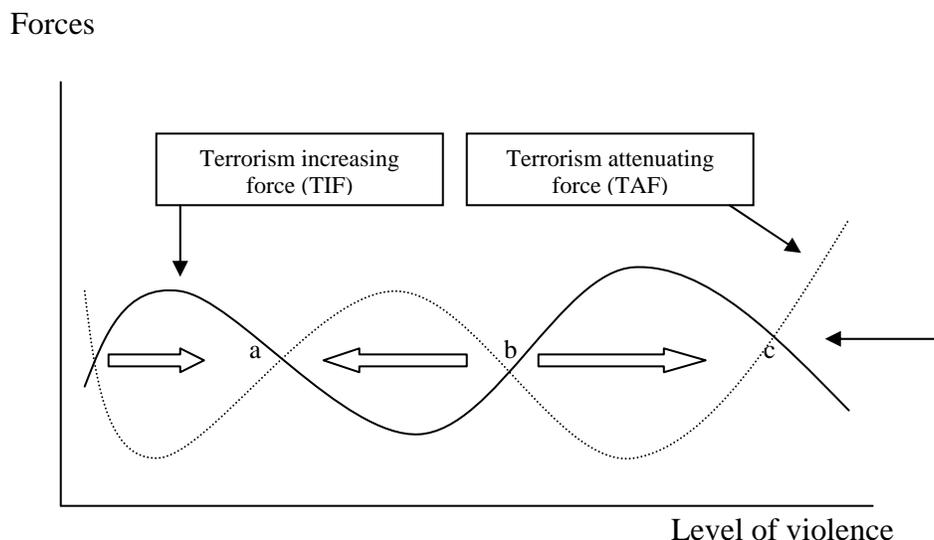
they send money home through a time-honored system called the *Hawala*, which was, perhaps, created sometime in the dim past of early medieval era to meet the similar needs under analogous conditions. Under this system the sender contacts a *Howladar* (the one that operates the system) and gives him a certain amount of money. The *Howladar* in the London, Paris, or New York, in turn, contacts his counterpart, from whom the intended collects the corresponding amount in local currency. The entire system works on trust and through a network of traditional contacts, without keeping much of a paper trail. This system, which is controlled mostly by Indians and Pakistanis help millions of Asians and Africans to transfer funds internationally. This not only ensures safety, but it also evades detection by the authorities. A Joint World Bank and International Monetary Fund study concluded that: “The anonymous transfer of funds through the (*Hawala*) systems has also attracted concerns about their potential use as a conduit for terrorist funds. Because there is no requirement for identification documents or source of funds, a (*Hawla*) (spelling please?) dealer can initiate or facilitate a multiplicity of transfers, which conceal the ultimate origin of the funds through their network in different jurisdictions. The recipient of funds can use the funds to conduct a terrorist act. Once the transaction is completed, all customer identification documents, codes, or references are most likely destroyed, except, perhaps, those required for settlement purposes.”⁸²

III. The Dynamics of Terrorist Movements

The interaction between a dissident group and the state authorities shape the dynamics of their mutual destiny. We can show the process with the help of Figure 4. In this figure, the dynamic interaction is shown with the help of two forces, the terrorism increasing force (TIF) and terrorism attenuating force (TAF). We should note that at each point in the history of a conflict the two forces exist side by side and their relative strength determines the outcome of the violent movement.

⁸² Quorchi, Maimbo, Wilson, 2003: 24.

Figure 8: Dynamic Interactions and Growth and Decline of Violence



The dynamic interactions between the government and a violent dissident group can be depicted with the help of Figure 8. In this diagram, the vertical axis measures the relative strength of the two forces. If at any point, the increasing force is greater than the attenuating force, the level of violence (shown on the horizontal axis) spiral out. [The figure does not seem to convey what you want. It shows increasing level of violence even when the TIF is highest. Perhaps you want the horizontal axis to be time and a third axis for level of violence, which increases when TAF exceeds TIF and decreases in the other case.] However, since it cannot increase indefinitely, a society generates from within the forces that reduces the level of violence. During the course of a violent campaign, the society often settles for a long-standing standoff of low-intensity conflict, where the two forces seem to achieve a point of stable equilibrium. At this point, each side knows its limits and does not want to transgress the threshold. Take for instance, the conflict between Hizballah in Lebanon and Israeli Defense Force. For several years, the Israelis became used to the Hizballah sending short-range missiles across its borders and Hizballah, low-level Israeli retaliation. These tit-for-tat responses can keep the two adversaries on a more or less stable level of violence. In the stylized depiction of this dynamic relationship Figure 10, the point “a” shows a stable equilibrium. Any point less than this, the terrorism increasing forces (TIF) will gain the upper hand. This may

happen due to the inner politics of the dissident groups, wanting to increase pressure on the government, or the government, seeking to satisfy public's demand to punish the members of the opposition group. If by any chance, one of the parties takes a bolder action and the level of violence increases to the right of the point, "a", the desire not to escalate the violence to an unacceptable level makes the reaction muted from the aggrieved party. Similarly, the reduction in violence (a movement to the left of point "a") requires political compromise that might not be forthcoming. As a result, the society becomes bogged down in a steady level of conflict. Situations like these are usually characterized by low-intensity violence, since a high level of violence produces its own dynamics, which takes it up to an even higher level of escalation or, countervailing forces generate conditions to reduce the intensity of fighting. This situation is also one of military stalemate, with neither side having the punch to knock the other out.

This equilibrium of the two forces can be severely shaken for a number of reasons. For instance, if any one party takes a move that is considered to be way outside the realms of a proportionate response, violence escalates to a new height. This sudden move, causing a shift of the curves (not shown in the diagram) can come as a deliberate action by the government or the terrorist organization, often due to a change in leadership, a gross miscalculation by either side or as a result of some historical accident. The combatants may wish to push the level of conflict to a different level with the hope of achieving a total victory over the other or, it may be the outcome of a misunderstanding.

Richard English quotes Tom Maguire, one of the IRA men, as calling the events of Easter Rising, following a brutal crackdown by the British forces in 1916, a "life-transforming event."⁸³ The British policy of using utmost force, only helped forge Irish nationalism. McGuire writes: "The Easter insurrection came to me like a bolt from the blue. That is why the rise of charismatic leaders and abrupt points of escalation and dissipation punctuate the chronicles of all movements, I will never forget my exhilaration, it was a turning point in my life."⁸⁴ Another IRA activist Tom Barry pointed out: "through the blood sacrifices of the men of 1916, had one Irish youth of

⁸³ English (2003 : 3).

⁸⁴ English, *Ibid.*

eighteen been awakened to Irish nationality. Let it be recorded that those sacrifices were equally necessary to awaken the minds of ninety percent of the Irish people.”⁸⁵ Such deliberate policy missteps by the authorities are always (usually?) exploited by rebel leaders and others in the society to keep the flames of hatred glowing for generations to come.

A radical shift in the stable equilibrium point can also be result of a miscalculation by the leadership. The crisis across the Israeli-Lebanese border, which escalated into a full-scale war in the summer of 2006, is widely seen as an outcome of miscalculation on both sides.⁸⁶ Thus, *The Economist* writes “In launching his raid Mr Nasrallah (the leader of Hizballah) was in fact doing nothing new. In recent years, Hizballah has mounted several similar raids into Israel. It got away with them, even when tough prime ministers, such as Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon, led Israel. Their reactions were astonishingly mild.”⁸⁷ However, when the Hizballah fighters sneaked across the border and, in a raid, killed several Israeli soldiers and abducted two others, the response was swift and overwhelming. From all indications, the Economist is right in stating that this time, Mr. Nasrallah had miscalculated. In fact, after the war, which many Israeli saw as a humiliating defeat for Israel, Nasrallah admitted the miscalculation. In terms of our diagram, this brazen act by the Hizballah pushed the dynamic relationship to a point where violence spiraled out of control. [the spiral figure of speech is not useful, as your diagram doesn’t have spirals] At this point the overwhelming forces of TIF would escalate violence to a very high level resulting many deaths and billions of dollars worth of damage to the economies of Israel and Lebanon.⁸⁸

During the course of a conflict, there are moments when the future hangs in the balance. In my stylized rendering, this is the unstable equilibrium “**b**,” where a small push can send the society to the path of a peaceful resolution of hostilities, or can set it up for huge escalation of violence. For instance, in the waning days of the Clinton

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⁸⁶ See *The Economist* (2006) “Madness Reincarnate: The Accidental War.” July 20. <http://www.pierretristam.com/Bobst/library/wf-290.htm>

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ These types of diagrams have been used extensively in development economics to demonstrate the forces that promote and thwart economic growth. See for instance, Swan (1962; Streeten 1967). In psychology, Sidani and Pratto (1999) used the terms increasing and attenuating forces to explain social dominance.

Administration, as a last ditch effort, brought Yassir Arafat together with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to Camp David. As the world waited for a solution to the most intractable problem of all, all hopes were dashed when it ended without any agreement. This officially brought the Oslo peace process to an end. Within days, the entire region experienced the most violent spates of suicide attacks by the Palestinians and the Israeli retaliated with matching ferocity.

Historical accidents, outside the realm of the leaders of the dissident group and its adversary the target government can also throw a society experiencing prolonged low-intensity conflict into the path of radical escalation of violence. In 1994, an American-born Jewish extremist Baruch Goldstein opened fire on a group of Muslims praying at the Cave of the Patriarch's in the city of Hebron, killing 29 Arabs and wounding nearly 150. This act of violence inflamed passion among the Palestinians and the violence escalated to a new high. The history of every mass movement provides examples of events causing huge escalations of violence. The impacts of TIF and TAF over time may be shown with the following depiction (Figure 9), where a continuation of a low intensity conflict is suddenly shaken up by rapid escalation of violence. This quickly takes the society to an extremely high level of violence. Since this level of violence is unsustainable over a long period of time, the terrorism attenuating forces are swelled up to force a return to the old status quo, a negotiated compromise, or a victory of one side over the other.

Figure 10 sums up my arguments for the evolution of a movement. The top part of the Figure shows the factors of individual motivations for joining a dissident group to achieve a set of public goods for the entire community. Rational individuals overcome the free-rider problems through a combination of incentives that appeal to their selfish interest as well as *ascriptive* or *adoptive* group welfare. A dissident group is composed of the ideologues, the mercenaries, and the captive participants.

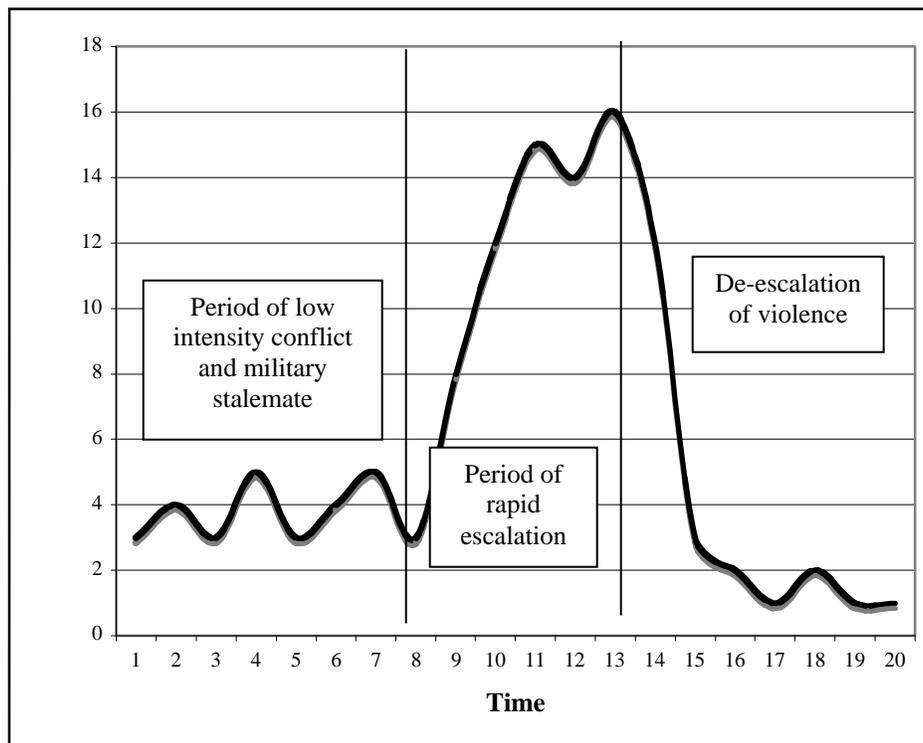
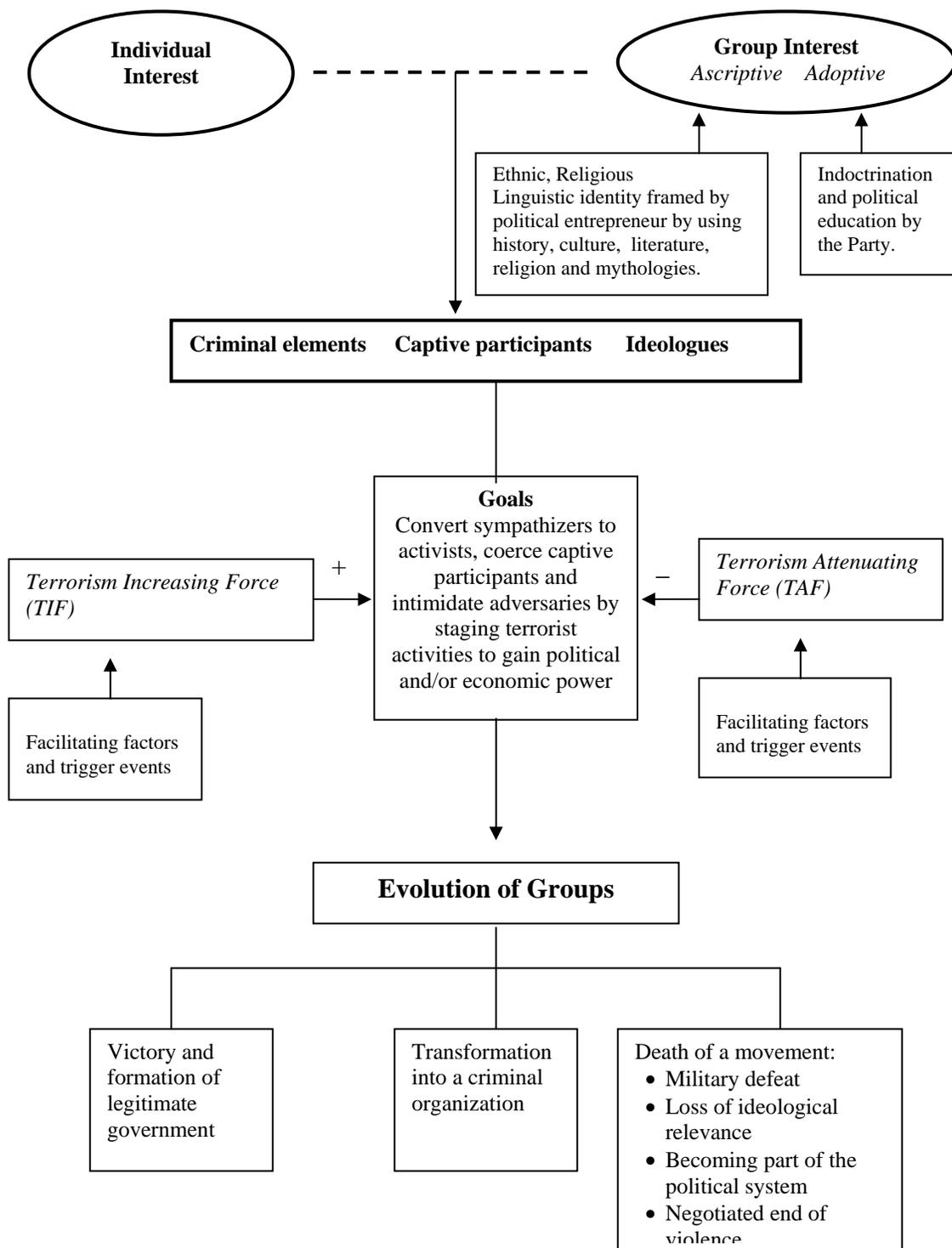
Figure 9: Hypothetical Impact of TIF and TAF Over Time

Figure 10
Individual and Group: A Static View of Evolution of Terrorist Organizations



A group gains or loses strength through its support bases (the easy riders and the sympathizers). The policies of the governments and the strategies adopted by the group leadership create the relative strength of terrorism increasing force (TIF) and terrorism attenuating force (TAF). When the terrorism increasing forces overwhelm the attenuating forces, violence increases. The level of violence gets reduced when the reverse takes place. These two forces are influenced by the trigger events and other external factors.

With time, a group evolves. A few become victorious and become part of the legitimate government in the newly formed government, such as in Israel, Algeria, Kenya, etc. Some groups turn toward the economically lucrative side of the movement, and resemble more of an organized crime syndicate than a political movement. The vast majority of the groups die out within the first few years of their birth. Their death comes when they suffer a military defeat.⁸⁹ Their leaders are captured or killed, most group members scatter, leaving the organization voluntarily, or are imprisoned. The Italian Red Brigade, the Black Panther movement, and the Naxalites in Bengal in the early 1970s provide good examples of military defeat. A violent dissident group may also disappear from the pages of history when their ideology becomes increasingly irrelevant in a changing world. As a result, they begin to lose vital public support among their bases. Perhaps, the Basque separatist group, ETA makes a good example of this. Finally, a terrorist group may become mainstream as a result of a negotiated settlement. If the current peace process takes hold in Northern Ireland, the IRA may indeed join this group of terrorist organizations.

IV. Prediction versus Management

Terrorism does not happen in a vacuum. This article discusses its origin and evolution through the interaction among a dissident group, the target state authorities, and a set of trigger events and other exogenous factors. This dynamic interaction shapes the ebb and flow of sociopolitical violence, including terrorism. In the process, apart from

⁸⁹ Rapoport 1992.

escalation and deceleration, there can also be prolonged periods of low-level tit-for-tat conflict.

While academics attempt to discern the “root causes” of political violence, policymakers are interested in its management. As I have argued above, the inquiry into the structural causes, such as poverty, inequality, lack of political freedom etc., can only provide us with the necessary condition of collective grievances around which a protest movement is developed. However, for the necessary cause, we must look into the historical accidents that produce charismatic leaders, who can take the systemic frustration and tension and channel them into violent actions designed to achieve some definite political goals. By leaving out the sufficient condition, empirical researchers can only find weak correlation between the structural factors of grievance and opportunity on one hand, and terrorism and political violence, on the other.

The problem with accepting an external catalytic agent is that it robs the model of predictive capabilities, since the rise of charismatic leaders is not predictable. Although, the prevalence of widespread frustration and deprivation certainly make it more likely that a leader would emerge to give violent actions its formal shape, history demonstrates no automatic linkage. Thus, despite deep structural imbalances many parts of the world remain relatively calm, while elsewhere a lesser degree of factors of deprivation produces a huge violent reaction. However, I argue that whereas such inclusion robs the academic modelers of predictive capabilities, it provides the policymakers with the best insights for a deeper understanding and managing political violence and terrorism.

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