Sparks on Kindling: Terrorism's Role in Civil War Onset, Recurrence, and Escalation

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

At the University of Missouri

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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DECEMBER, 2011

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people made this work possible. First is the political science faculty at the University of Missouri, especially my advisor Cooper Drury. Cooper's advice and support helped me grow as a researcher, teacher, and member of a larger academic department. Cooper went out of his way to provide me with opportunities as a student and a scholar that I could ask for. Stephen Quackenbush for helping me throughout my graduate career as a mentor and as a friend. John Petrocik, who taught me the value of telling a story and the importance of a good idea. The biggest acknowledgment, however, goes to my wife Sarah. Sarah was the one who encouraged me to pursue my goal to go back to school. Sarah was the one who was there for me through the highs and lows of graduate school, and without her, none of this would be possible.

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SPARKS ON KINDLING: TERRORISM'S ROLE IN CIVIL WAR ONSET, RECURRENCE, AND ESCALATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between terrorism and three major aspects of civil wars. By examining the rate of attacks and the targets of terrorism, this study explains how terrorism can serve as a macro-level indicator of instability and as a predictor of the different stages of civil wars. The rate of terrorism predicts the onset of civil wars, but this relationship is moderated by the target of terrorist violence. Terrorism also predicts an increased likelihood of civil war recurrence, but attacks against civilians decrease the likelihood of civil war recurrence. Finally, the rate of terrorism also predicts the likelihood of civil conflict escalation. Groups that have begun their struggle against the government can use attacks against civilians to provoke a larger conflict. These findings provide valuable evidence for both the study of terrorism and civil war. By providing an active indicator of the level of violent political dissent, measures of terrorism give agency to political violence that has been missing from previous civil war studies.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

From March 1969 through December of 1972, members of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) engaged in a series of hijackings and bombings of Ethiopian Airlines planes in protest of the use of the airline to transport Ethiopian troops into Eritrea. Eritrea was joined in federation with Ethiopia after the 1951 United Nations mandate. In 1962, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie dissolved the mandate and forcibly annexed Eritrea in direct violation of the UN mandate (Cousin 1997). The resulting Ethiopian dominance of Eritrean politics and life produced growing resentment throughout the Eritrean people. As grievances against the Ethiopian government grew, rebels used the hijackings and bombings to draw attention to their cause. By 1974, the ELF had diversified its tactics and began kidnapping a number of Western oil workers and missionaries in Ethiopia (Parry 1976). From these simple acts grew a decades long civil war that resulted in Eritrea's independence in 1993.

In May of 1991, a peace accord was reached between the government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) after 16 years of fighting. The peace agreement established an 18 month transition period in order to demobilize armed forces and establish procedures for elections. As the elections grew nearer, worries began to circulate that both sides would not accept defeat in upcoming elections making renewed fighting more likely. UNITA's leaders began backing away from their commitment to the elections and reports of their soldiers caching weapons throughout the country began to circulate (Stedman 1997). Many began to suspect

UNITA of seeking to spoil the peace process (Hoddie and Hartzell 2010). As the election grew nearer, neither side seemed willing to accept electoral defeat as a possibility. A series of attacks by both UNITA and government forces caused the peace process to break down and the fighting to continue for another decade.

The Peruvian group the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) formed in the 1960s as a communist challenge to the government. In the 1980s, the movement turned violent and began to recruit supporters in rural areas where the government was unable to deploy its forces. Although the Shining Path was relatively weak, it carried out a series of small attacks against perceived supporters of the government in Lima, and was known for its use of brutality in order to ensure its control over the rural highlands of Peru. Initially, the attacks were relatively low scale, but as the movement consolidated its control over the region, the government was forced to send troops in to stop the violence. The resulting fighting killed more than 70000 individuals on both sides of the conflict (Lucero 2008).

Each of these examples highlights one of the key areas of civil war studies: onset, recurrence, and escalation respectively. Each is a distinct phase of civil wars, but the examples all share a common experience of low levels of terrorism violence setting all three of the phases on motion. Despite the large amounts of literature on civil war, no one has systemically addressed the connections between terrorism and the different stages of conflict. Terrorism is used by insurgents in almost every civil war, and early in conflicts it is the primary form of violence groups are capable of carrying out. Terrorist attacks are capable of producing massive casualties on their own, but their real danger

lies in the ability to spark wider conflicts. This work seeks to explain the connections between the use of terrorism and wider forms of civil violence.

The Problems of an Accurate Definition

One of the major problems facing scholars of political violence is what should be considered "terrorism." One study has found over 100 definitions of terrorism in use (Schmid and Jongman 1988). This diversity of definitions results in disputes over the very nature of "terrorism." Despite the differences, there are themes common to most of the definitions that create some common ground. Schmid and Jongman(1988) argue most definitions of terrorism include: acts of violence, political intentions of those acts, threats, fear and aspects of psychological terror, and that the action is planned or intentional. Scholars disagree on defining terrorism based on the targets of attacks and how to distinguish terrorism from other forms of violence. Although it may not be possible to resolve all the definitional debates about terrorism, I argue the areas of confusion over the definition can be better solved through the study of similar acts, rather than reliance on *a priori* definitions of what constitutes terrorism.

Throughout the course of this study, I rely on the Global Terrorism Database's (GTD) definition of terrorism. The GTD defines an act of terrorism as the intentional use or threatened use of violence by a non-state actor. The act has to meet two of three following criteria in order to distinguish terrorism from crime and other forms of violence. First, the act must be aimed at achieving a attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal. Second, the act must be have the intention of sending a

message to a broader audience. This can be threats, coercion, intimidation, or other messages that go beyond the immediate victims of violence. The important element is that the attack is designed as part of a larger strategy and not simply a single act of violence aimed at the target (i.e. killing a police officer who was abusive to your family). Finally, the violent act should be outside of the precepts of international humanitarian law (START 2010).

The advantage of this definition is that it allows researchers to focus on the action of terrorism (violence by non-state actors in order to send a larger message), without predetermining other aspects of the nature of the organization carrying out the attack or the target of attacks. Some scholars argue that terrorism should only include attacks against civilians. For example, Ganor (2002) argues the critical distinction between terrorism and other forms of guerrilla activity is target selection: Terrorism is attacks against civilians, whereas guerilla activity is attacks against government and military targets. For Ganor, this distinction is important because it allows a clear distinction in tactics between terrorism and other forms of guerilla warfare based on target. This distinction is based on the differences rooted in international law "between soldiers who attack a military adversary, and war criminals who deliberately attack civilians" (Ganor 2002, 288). Defining terrorism based on target selection may provide a clear distinction between what is and is not terrorism, but distinctions based on target selection artificially divide similar acts aimed at achieving the same goal.

Delineating terrorist actions based on target selection ignores that terrorism is a common tactic used by individuals and organizations. Dividing civilian attacks from other

forms of terrorism is undesirable for several reasons. First, terrorism is a tactic commonly used by rebel groups. It allows groups to gain the benefits of signaling their opposition while avoiding direct confrontation with government forces. Since many insurgent groups are relatively weak compared to the government at the start of the operations, direct confrontation would often lead to the destruction of the rebel organization (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 79-80). Terrorism is used as a recruitment tool by organizations (Regan and Norton 2005) and as a means to control populations (Kalyvas 2006). The target of attacks does not change the nature of the strategy or the end goals.

Second, inherent in the argument about civilian targets being different from government and military targets ignores the role civilians play in support of governments and counterterrorism. Civilian populations are not divorced from the government. For example, Israeli settlers in the occupied territories are used by the Israeli government to occupy the land (and thus deny its use to Palestinians) as well as a means of legitimating Israeli claims to the land. Civilian populations have been viewed as legitimate bombing targets in military campaigns because they worked for industries that supported a state's war making abilities (Downes 2008). The assumption that civilian targets are somehow unique or different than government targets creates an artificial divide between legitimate and illegitimate tactics that can be used as a propaganda tool. Attacks against elites who are essential to keeping the government in power become depoliticized and becomes a tool for the government to ignore the grievances of the "terrorists" (Fortin 1989). From a researcher's perspective, it is better to include all targets to see the effect targeting decisions makes.

A tactic based approach to terrorism provides a better distinction from other forms of warfare than a target based distinction. First, the target based distinction is easily manipulated. For example, the United States Department of State defines terrorism as "politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets," where "noncombatant" is "interpreted to include, in addition to civilians, military personnel who at the time of the incident are unarmed or not on duty" (United States Department of State 2002). In such a definition, attacks on army barracks are somehow different from attacks against a guard post on the same base where a soldier is armed and on duty. The clandestine placing of a bomb in either is the same act, but definitions like the State Department's causes an artificial division between the two events. A tactic based approach, like the one used in the GTD, allows for objective interpretation of the events as opposed to arbitrary distinctions determining what is and is not part of the tactic.

The target based distinctions also spill over into a second major problem with defining terrorism comes from how to distinguish acts of terrorism from other military actions during a time of war. As this dissertation argues, terrorism is connected to civil war in a number of ways. These connections can make for some overlap in acts of war and acts of terror. Some scholars argue that terrorism and other forms of warfare are distinct from each other. Merari (1993) argues terrorism represents actions taken by violent groups that want to "grow up" into guerilla organizations. Much of the literature on civil war divorces civil wars from other political phenomena (Jones and Smith 2009). Some scholars have sought to explain varying forms of severity in civil wars (e.g. Lacina

2006, Sambanis 2004, Kalyvas and Balcels 2010), but these studies ask what factors make one civil war worse than another.

Rather than treat terrorism as a distinct form of political violence, we should investigate it as a distinct tactic used by groups. If we assume that terrorism is a form of violence with its own set of causes and solutions, we risk divorcing it from the larger context of political violence and civil wars. Terrorism does not exist outside the context of other forms of political violence, rather it is a strategic tactic used by groups (Neumann and Smith 2005). The use of roadside bombs to inflict fear in the population is the same if they are used to destroy military convoys or if they are used to destroy civilian vehicles. There might be a different effect, but the tactic remains the same. If political violence is instrumental, then understanding the connections between the forms of political violence can give us a more robust understanding of the connections between different forms and levels of civil violence. Sambanis (2004) argues it is important to investigate the connections between different forms of political violence because events like civil wars only represent one phase of political violence. We need to find connections between the phases of conflict in order to better explain why conflicts differ across states.

Ideological Problems With Definitions of Terrorism

Approaching terrorism from the perspective that it is a tactic used by groups avoids a third problem with the definition of terrorism: the normative implications of the terrorism label. Definitions of terrorism become complicated because the terms

"terrorism" and "terrorist" carry with them political implications. This section will identify the major arguments against using the term terrorism generally and explain how definitions based on tactics avoid this problem. I argue it is preferable to label acts of terrorism as such in order to distinguish them from other forms of political violence.

Critics of the use of the terrorism label have argued that terrorism is a label used by governments to undermine the legitimacy of the claims made by rebel groups. For some, the debate boils down to one person's terrorist being another person's freedom fighter (Laqueur 1987). Critics argue labeling acts as terrorism delegitimize the actions of dissidents by invoking fears in the general population of shadowy, inhuman figures, capable of the most inhuman of actions (Collins and Glover 2002, Dobkin 1992). The inhumanity of those deemed as terrorists is also inscribed onto their supporters (actual or potential) in order to justify repression of dissent (Puar and Rai 2002). This process is made possible by the construction of an external terrorist threat outside of the general population, usually by framing the perpetrators as fringe elements without legitimate political cause. Violence and repression by the government and its supporters becomes justified in order to protect the population from the terrorist threat. The terrorism label thus becomes a way to exclude the claims of those fighting the state. The terrorism label delegitimizes the actions of the "terrorist" also making their grievances seem illegitimate.

Following from this argument, the second element of criticisms of the terrorism label is that it legitimates state based violence. Not only does government violence become justified under the guise of protection, but representations of terrorism also

mask the violence of states. By labeling the violence of insurgents as terrorism, the violent acts of the state are ignored. Researchers record incidents of terrorism, but do not keep track of the violent acts of the state in the name of fighting terrorism (Herman and Chomsky 1988). Researchers can also become blinded to the ideological categorizations. For example, terrorist violence in Nicaragua by American supported Contra fighters does not show up in the RAND terrorist incident database except for a few hijackings of planes despite the numerous attacks carried out in the 1980's (Dobkin 1992). These attacks do appear in other databases included the GTD.

Although there is some merit to these claims, they should not serve as reasons for not studying terrorism. Before we reject the terrorism label because of possible abuses associated with it, there are several aspects of terrorism we should investigate. Although we may not be able to come to a single definition of terrorism that everyone agrees on, explicit definitions of terrorist violence can help eliminate the problems associated with government abuses of terrorist discourses. Terrorism is a unique tactic of political violence. Scholars have long distinguished it from other forms of criminal violence because inherent in terrorism is an attempt at achieving a political end (Tillema 2002). Ignoring these differences prevents an understanding of the effects of political violence and the connections between types of political violence.

It is important to distinguish terrorism from other forms of violence. What distinguishes terrorism from forms of homicide is the political nature of the act. It is distinguished from guerilla violence by its reliance on clandestine methods, lack of uniforms, and avoidance of confrontation with government forces. If we do not have a

distinction between terrorism and other forms of violence, governments will be able to expand the terrorist label at will in order to exclude all forms of political dissent. Keeping the terrorist label, based on objective criteria for what constitutes terrorism, prevents the misuse of the term better than rejecting the term altogether.

The primary criticism leveled against the use of the term terrorism come from the ability of governments to use the term to separate the perpetrators of violence from the rest of the population through a form of binary opposition against the terrorist other (Kellner 2007). This criticism implies that the use of identity construction in labeling enemies empowers governments to justify violence against populations. There are several important aspects of this process that do not apply to scholars and policy makers investigating the effects of violence. First, studying the effects of political violence does not require the construction of identities. Labeling an act as a terrorist act puts it in a category of political action, rather than ascribing an identity to the actor. The only part of the definition of terrorism that ascribes any form of identity is the aspect of a "non-state" actor. Distinguishing between government and nongovernment forms of violence is important to understand the different effects of violence by different actors. This does little to create the conditions described by critics of the term for violence against an inhuman other.

Examining the effects of terrorism also avoids the problem of identity construction because it focuses on the act of political violence rather than the individual actor carrying out the violence. This study, for example, looks at aggregate levels of terrorism in a state as well the number of attacks carried out by individual groups. In

doing so, I am able to focus on the acts of violence themselves rather than those who carry them out. The distinction between labeling an act as "terrorism" as opposed to labeling the actors carrying them out as "terrorists" gains a better understanding of the political dynamics involved in violent opposition to the state. Using the term terrorism to describe certain actions and means used by opposition groups allows scholars to describe a category of violent resistance while avoiding problem of labeling the actors as terrorists. Such an approach allows the term to be used and for researchers to critically engage the label of "terrorist" when applied to individuals (Toros 2008).

Keeping the terrorism label is also important because it allows us to understand the effects of the different types of political violence. When a non-state actor sets off a bomb in the middle of a crowded market, this is a markedly different act than state backed security forces attacking civilians for their support of alleged terrorists. The risk of abandoning the terrorism label for distinct forms of violence, to say all violence is the same and labels like terrorism obfuscate violent activity, risk eliminating any understanding between the types of violence and motivations for violence (Elshtain 2003). As researchers, we have an obligation to differentiate between types of violence and their effects in order to develop positive research agendas. If we cannot make differentiations between the types of violence committed by states and individuals, then we will be unable to address the underlying grievances that give rise to political violence in the first place.

The final problem confronting research on terrorism is that if it is not existentially different from other forms of political violence, then how can we

distinguish it from guerilla warfare and other forms of insurgency? Terrorism as a tactic and strategy of insurgency creates a problem for researchers because there are many "blurry areas" in which it is difficult to distinguish between acts of terrorism and other acts of insurgency. In many cases, it is difficult to distinguish between acts of terrorism and guerilla attacks. Many guerilla groups use terrorism as a tactic making the line between the two types of violence even more difficult to distinguish. The difficulty of the distinction should not deter us from attempting to make it. As long as the criteria are explained by those collecting the data, then we can ensure the distinction remains valid and consistent over time.

Studying tactics solves part of the problem. Although there will always be confusion over whether a particular incident is a guerilla or a terrorist attack, this confusion is only compounded by attempting to label groups as terrorist organizations. Applying the terrorist label to an organization magnifies the problems associated with the label. We should not define groups as terrorist; rather we should focus on the actions carried out by groups. Labeling groups as solely terrorist organizations ignores the other political activities they may engage in. Just as Hezbollah has engaged in terrorist violence, it has also engaged in a number of other political activities over time. The labeling of the group as a terrorist organization prevents researchers from seeing these changes and assumes that terrorism is the only activity the organization engages in. We should not label groups as terrorists, but instead identify actions as terrorism. This allows us to avoid the problem that groups can change their strategies over time,

and avoids labels that can be used to exclude them from the political process (de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2011).

We need to continue to study terrorism as a separate form of violence and understand its connections to different aspects of civil war. Terrorist violence is inevitable no matter what we call it. The tactic has been used for centuries and will continue to be used in the future no matter what label is applied to it. Even if our definition is not perfect, beginning with an objective interpretation of what is considered terrorism makes clear the assumptions about why some acts are considered terrorism while others are not. Without a label for acts of terrorism, low levels of political violence can be indistinguishable from other forms of violence (i.e. murder) and we will miss a valuable connection between low levels of violence and larger civil wars. Further, we will fail to understand the types of grievances and policies that lead to higher levels of violence. Without a means to identify systemic grievances that give rise to political violence, the ability to develop effective policies to reduce incidents of violence becomes impossible.

Finally, studying acts of terrorism rather than terrorists as a distinct form of political dissent allows a better understanding of political dissent. Violence is only one form of political participation, but it is available to any political group. The conditions that not only lead to the turn to violence, but allow violence to escalate, need to be examined in order to understand why the turn to violence may be successful or lead to more violence. Most dissident organizations have common backgrounds and structures, but the tactics they turn to are determined by structural conditions. Once we label a

group a “terrorist” organization, we risk ignoring the other actions taken by the organization to produce political change. Focusing on the actions themselves provides a better means of understanding the conditions that make terrorism seem effective to the organization.

Rather than approaching terrorism as an existential phenomenon that is separate from other forms of civil violence, each of the following chapters uses incidents of terrorism as indicators of state instability and opposition strength. The findings show the higher the level of attacks in a state, the greater the risk of civil war (both onset and recurrence). For groups, the ability to carry out a high number of terrorist attacks can be an indicator of group strength. By using the GTD definition of terrorism to focus on events, this study avoids the problem of naming “terrorists” and provides valuable insights to the connections between terrorist violence and civil wars. This study does not look into state based violence, not out of deference to the state but out of a lack of data. There are many different and valuable terrorism datasets, but comparative data on counter-terrorism and police actions is missing. Previous research has established the connection between state violence and terrorism (Ross and Gurr 1989, Francisco 1995, Crenshaw 1981), therefore we can view acts of terrorism as a larger symptom of state instability, rather than a singular phenomenon.

Trends in Terrorist Violence

It is argued throughout this work that terrorism is an instrumental form of violence used by insurgents in order to achieve political goals. Since many states view

the goals of terrorist organizations as existential threats, the only way for the rebel group to achieve its goals is to remove the government from power or force some form of political compromise. This section looks at global trends in terrorism and the relationship between terrorism and civil war. In doing so, the statistics and figures present why terrorism represents a good state level indicator of instability. The global trends of terrorism also show the number of attacks is growing globally, despite a relative decline in other forms of global violence.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show the total number of terrorist attacks since 1970. Figure 1 shows the raw number of attacks globally per year. The trend of attacks shows a steady increase in the number of incidents until a sharp decline at the end of the Cold War. This decline is generally attributed to the loss of state sponsorship of terrorism at the end of the Cold War (Byman 2005). The numbers remain relatively high in the 1990's due to widespread violence in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The numbers also experience an upward trend in the early 2000's as a response to the United States' invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Figure Two shows the linear relationship between the number of attacks and time. Despite the declines following the end of the Cold War, there is still a relatively positive trend in the number of terrorist attacks as time passes.

Figure 1.1: Terror Attacks Per Year Globally

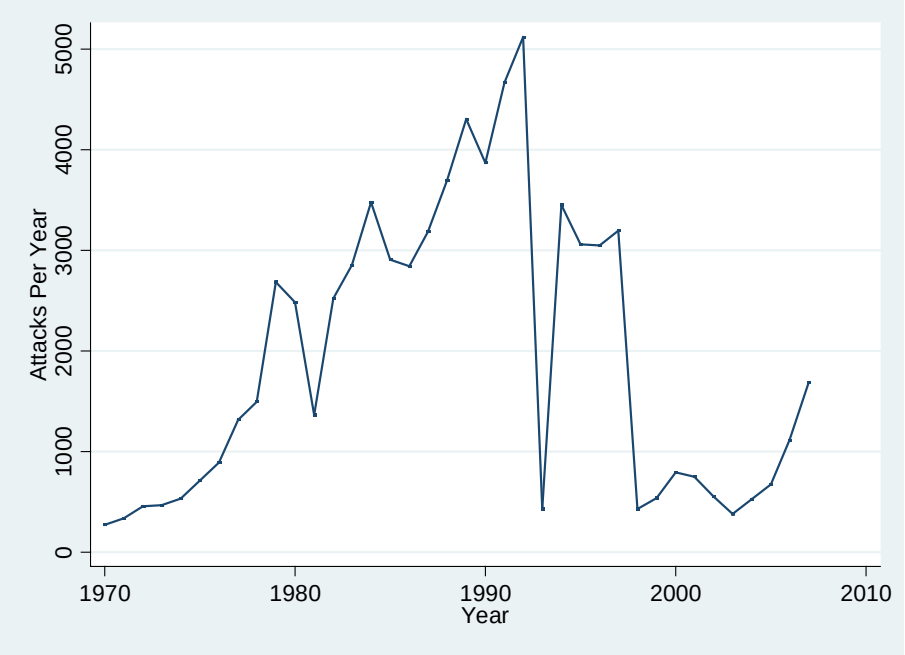
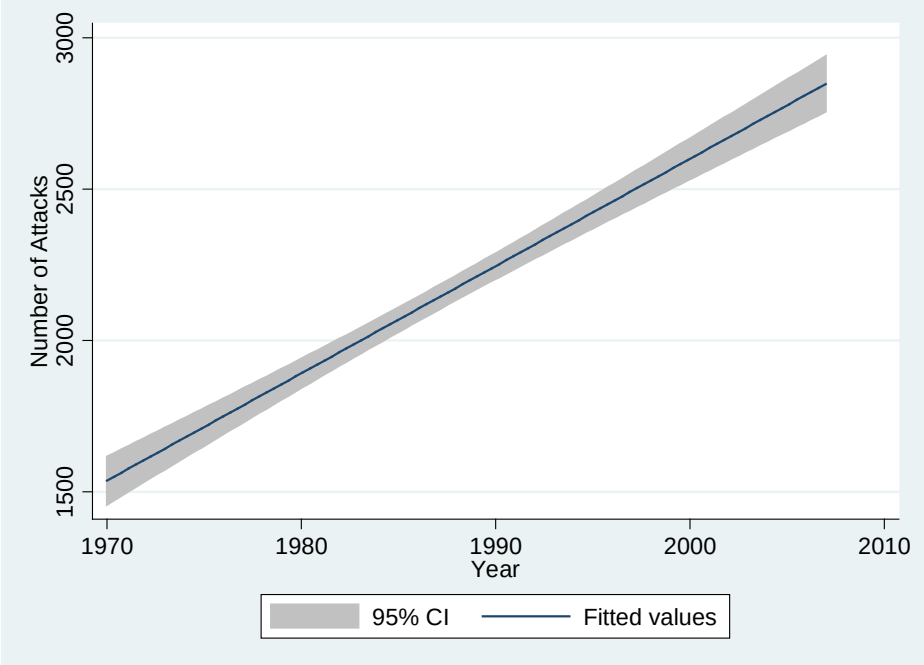


Figure 1.2: Trend in Number of Terror Attacks Globally



This upward trend can be explained by an increase in civil wars and the growing ease of access to the tools necessary to carry out terrorist attacks.

The general trend in terrorism follows the same general trend in the number of intrastate conflicts over the past forty years. Despite occasional decreases in the number of conflicts (usually from simmering conflicts coming to an end), there has been an upward trend in the number of civil conflicts since the 1970s (Themnér and Wallerstein 2011). Using data from Fearon and Laitin (2003) on civil wars and the GTD on the number of attacks in a state in a given year, it is not surprising to find that states experiencing civil wars also experience more terrorist attacks on average. On average, a state not involved in a civil war will experience about six terrorist incidents in a given year. During civil wars, states will experience about 58 attacks a year. This difference is statistically significant (t=24.79***) and confirms the findings of earlier studies that civil wars will also be accompanied with an increase in terrorism. Despite a growing number of civil wars and incidents of terrorism, the world is generally becoming more peaceful. Generally, the odds of being killed as the result of violence have decreased dramatically since the end of World War II (Pinker 2011).

Higher levels of terrorism during civil wars are not surprising. Given that many rebel groups are relatively weaker to the states they are fighting. It is also not a surprise given the earlier discussion of the blurred lines between terrorism and fighting in conflicts. Conflict should result in an increased number of violent actions, so the question becomes can terrorism be an indicator of increased likelihood of civil war onset, recurrence, and escalation? Can terrorism be an indicator of an increased

likelihood for higher forms of conflict? The remainder of this work will seek to identify the connections between terrorism and these different aspects of civil war.

Understanding Terrorism's Effectiveness

Scholars have begun to examine if terrorism is effective at achieving political goals. For example, Pape's (2003) study argues suicide terrorism is effective, but only focuses on few groups and one specific type of terrorist attack. Other studies of effectiveness have focused on individual groups (Cronin 2006), individual countries (Ross and Gurr 1989) or have examined short term effects of terrorist attacks on elections (Berrebbi and Klor 2006; Gassebner, Jong-A-Pin, and Mierau 2008), but this effectiveness is questioned by others. Abrahms (2006, 2008) argues terrorism is generally ineffective as a strategy. Abrahms (2006) points out that terrorism enjoys a seven percent success rate, which rates far worse than the success of economic sanctions. The problem with Abrahms' approach to terrorism effectiveness is that it assumes that all terrorism is meant to achieve the same goal.

Looking at terrorism outside of specific contexts makes defining effectiveness more problematic than defining terrorism. Without contextualizing terrorism into specific situations, we risk a situation where the definition of effectiveness is in the eye of the beholder (Nacos 2003, 2). For example, Arce et al. (2009) argue that carrying out a single attack should constitute success because such events effectively alter the political landscape and expose the failure of government counter-terrorism efforts, but such a measure ignores what the long term effects of the attack. Pape's (2003) study on

suicide terrorism argues terrorism is effective at achieving short-term concessions, but such concessions are easily revocable and rarely achieve long-term or ambitious goals. Rather than focus on general questions of effectiveness, this study looks at contextualized situations where terrorism becomes a predictor of larger forms of social conduct.

Using terrorism as a group and state level indicator of civil war onset, recurrence, and escalation solves the subjective problem of trying to measure terrorism's general effectiveness for several reasons. First, effectiveness cannot be divorced from other actions carried out by an insurgent organization. Terrorism is but one tactic used by violent groups in order to achieve their goals. Many groups engage in nonviolent activities to increase their support among the population. Hezbollah, for example, carries out many charitable activities throughout southern Lebanon in order to gain supporters (Tavernise 2006). Since many of the groups are underground, the ability to claim that terrorism is responsible for the success of the organization in the abstract is difficult.

Second, moving away from the effectiveness question to the connections between terrorism and other forms of conflict better explains the effect of terrorism. Counting terrorist attacks and looking at correlations to other variables does little to explain what causes terrorism. For example, many studies find that democracies experience more terrorism than autocracies because open societies are more prone to its effects and civil liberties make it easier for underground organizations to operate (Eubank and Wienberg 1994, Li 2005). Although we may find correlations between

democracy and the level of terrorism, this does not mean democracy causes terrorism. By looking at the level of terrorism and controlling for the variables we commonly attribute to as "causes," we can see if the these same causes are also capable of containing violence. Without an understanding of the effects of terrorism in a society we miss confusing alleged "causes" with the incorrect solutions. Just because higher levels of terrorism are related to democracy does not mean the solution to terrorism is less democracy.

Understanding the linkages between terrorism civil war onset, recurrence, and escalation helps bridge the divide between the two literatures and offers a way to provide better policy solutions to violent rebellion. We should understand the conditions that are required for terrorism to make deadlier forms of conflict more likely. From a policy maker perspective, it does not matter if terrorism is capable of achieving some goal, the real question becomes how to limit the effects of terrorism throughout society.

Terrorism as a Macro-Level Indicator

The main argument presented in this work is terrorism can serve as a macro-level indicator of state stability and the general strength of the opposition. By looking at the level of terrorism in a state, we can gauge the relative balance of capabilities between states and opposition groups. Furthermore, the level of attacks carried out by a group can indicate its relative capabilities vis-à-vis the state. Strong states should be capable of controlling violent movements, either through repression or accommodation.

The strength of the opposition explains when civil wars are feasible, when groups have the capacity to spoil peace arrangements, and when conflicts are more likely to escalate.

The first theory of state capabilities comes out of the literature surrounding civil war onset. Fearon and Laitin's (2003) seminal work argues state strength deters latent insurgencies from emerging since the likelihood of winning becomes too small. A problem with state strength approaches is that they rely on static measures of state characteristics that do not change very much over time. As a result, many onset models have found that a high GDP decreases probability of conflict, while large populations increase the likelihood of conflict (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). What is missing is some measure of violent activity on the part of opposition groups that can explain the difference in conflict probabilities across states.

McCormick (2003) provides an overview for why the level of terrorism should provide a good indication of the relative strength of rebel opposition. McCormick argues the strategic space for an insurgent group to operate is shaped by the ability of a group to have influence among the population, while at the same time, maintaining the security of the organization. The ability of an insurgent group to maintain its security depends on the capabilities of the state. High levels of state capabilities should decrease the number of terrorist attacks because the state is able to defeat insurgent organizations through policing and military actions. Terrorism can serve as an active indicator of state capabilities by capturing the ability of a state to translate latent capabilities into effective counter-terrorism measures. As oppositional groups are capable of finding ways around counter-terrorism policies of the government, the

inability of a state to translate capabilities into effective policies are exposed. Thus, macro-levels of terrorism become a better indicator of the ability of the state to contain violent conflict.

The second theory of state strength is explained by Tilley (1978) and Mason et al. (2011) as multiple sovereignty. Multiple sovereignty is a condition where one or more armed challengers to government exist and enjoy a level of popular support. Conditions of multiple sovereignty undermine the control of the government by eliminating the government's monopoly on violence. Following civil wars, multiple sovereignty emerges in power sharing settlements when neither party is capable of defeating the other. In post-war situations, the emergence of terrorist violence in an attempt to "spoil" the peace becomes an indication of the strength of rebel organizations. Spoiler violence becomes a way restart the fighting and attempt to changes the conditions of peace. The capability of states to contain violence in a post-war environment becomes an important predictor of peace.

Finally, just as the number of attacks can indicate the relative strength of the government, it also shows the relative strength of rebel groups. Following McCormick's(2003) description of the influence of rebel groups, rising number of claimed attacks by a rebel group can indicate its relative strength vis-à-vis the government. As attacks continue, the group is able to gain more influence and support which will allow it to escalate its conflict against the state. Governments will feel increasingly pressured to fight back against the rising strength of a group. The result is the larger the number of attacks, the greater the likelihood a conflict will reach higher

levels of violence. These three aspects of civil war dynamics (onset, recurrence, and escalation are tested in following pages.

Plan of the Dissertation

The following chapters outline three aspects of the relationship between terrorism and civil war: onset, recurrence, and escalation. These three areas represent major areas of the civil war literature. Chapter Two explores the relationship between terrorism and civil war onset. Using the theory of state strength, this chapter agues terrorism represents a macro-level indicator of state stability. As the number of attacks increases, the likelihood a state will experience a civil war onset increases dramatically. This relationship is moderated by the target of terrorist attacks. Attacks against civilians (as compared to government targets) represent relatively weaker rebel organizations within a state or the likelihood of infighting amongst potential rebel groups. The more attacks focus on civilians, the less likely the number of attacks becomes a predictor of civil war onset.

Chapter Three examines terrorism and civil war recurrence. Civil war recurrence represents a unique problem for researchers because states that experience civil wars are more likely to experience future civil wars. Looking at the literature on spoiling behavior, this chapter argues terrorism can be an effective means for dissatisfied groups to restart conflicts. Terrorism is an effective spoiling tool because it allows groups to sow distrust between the government and other parties. This chapter also investigates the relationship between target selection and civil war recurrence. In the case of civil

war recurrence, attacks against civilians can increase the probability of civil war recurrence through sowing seeds of doubt in the population.

Chapter Four changes the focus from terrorism as a state level indicator and looks at terrorism and targeting decisions at the insurgent group level. By looking at a sample of insurgent organizations involved in low-level intrastate conflicts against the state, this chapter looks at the number of credited attacks as an indicator of group strength. The more attacks a group is able to carry out, the more likely the conflict will escalate. Large numbers of attacks against the government are likely to provoke government retaliation. Looking at the targeting choices, I find a similar relationship between targeting civilians as found in chapter one. Attacking civilians can be useful for rebel organizations, but it is not as an effective of a means of escalating a conflict compared to direct attacks against the government. Combined, the three chapters provide evidence that terrorism is an effective means for dissatisfied groups to start wider conflicts against the government. Chapter Five concludes with a discussion of the implication of the findings for the study of civil conflict and terrorism.

CHAPTER 2: RAISING THE FLAG OF REBELLION: TERRORISM AS AN INDICATOR OF CIVIL WAR ONSET

The research on civil war onset has focused extensively on the structural conditions within states that give rise to rebellion. Most civil war onset models view civil wars as distinct phenomenon, ignoring the other forms of violence and rebellion occurring within the state. Terrorism research has also taken a structural approach by modeling the number of attacks in a state as the result of the attributes of the state. What is lost in these studies is the connection between the use of terrorism as a form of political violence and how it can be a predictor of larger forms of civil violence. Terrorism has long been used by emerging insurgent groups as a means to rally the population against the government in power (Heymann 2001, Crenshaw 1981, Kydd and Walter 2006). Starting with 19th-century European anarchist groups, terrorism has been characterized as "propaganda by the deed" and thought to be a far more effective way of rallying public support for a cause than speeches and pamphlets (Merriman 2009). A single act of violence can create more publicity for the movement's cause than other forms of political activity (Lacquer 2001, 49-52). The use of violence announces the existence of opposition to the government and is used by insurgents to advance their cause in a number of ways.

The dynamic process of rebellion is missing when studies of civil war onset only focus on attributes of the state. The focus on the structural conditions that make civil war more probable creates an agentless environment where civil wars are merely the

result of the creation of an opportunity for conflict. What is missing in this picture is the activity of opposition forces. Opposition groups can engage in a number of activities within a state, but violent means of dissent are necessary for civil wars to break out. By including measures for violent activities within a state, this study helps capture the process by which civil wars occur rather than simply the features of states that make the event more likely. The level of terrorism in a state can be an indicator of the state's ability to contain violence, and the use of terrorist targeting decisions helps explain how rebel strategy can make civil wars more likely.

Rebel organizations face the problem that terrorist acts are rarely capable of overthrowing a government or extracting meaningful concessions. By themselves, individual terrorist attacks cannot create enough coercive pressure on the government. Insurgent groups turn to terrorism as part of a larger strategy of resistance. Nearly every country experiences terrorism and violent political resistance in one form or another and the puzzle becomes: Under what conditions does the existence of terrorism in a state predict the onset of larger civil wars? I argue that terrorism, and the target of terrorist attacks, can be used as state level indicators of civil war onset. By looking at the number of attacks that occur in a state, we can predict the probability of civil war onset because the level of terrorism indicates the relative strength of potential opposition forces to the government, the inability of the government to deter violence, and can serve to rally support for rebel groups against the government. The relationship between the level of terrorism and civil war onset is moderated by the targeting choice of rebels. The more terrorism targets civilians, the less likely it is to predict civil war

onset. States that experience high levels of civilian attacks are less likely to have civil wars because attacks against civilian targets pose less of a threat to the government in power.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. First, I explain the relationship between terrorism and civil war. I argue levels of terrorism are necessary indicators for researchers of civil war onset because they capture the dynamic interaction between the government and opposition. Second, I discuss why targeting matters. Third, I present data and results of logit models predicting the likelihood of civil war onset in a state year. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for civil war and terrorism research. By combining data on terrorist events and civil war onset, this chapter argues and shows that widespread terrorism in a state conditionally increases the probability of civil war onset. As a state-level predictor of civil war onset, terrorism's effect is moderated by whether the focus of terrorist attacks are civilian targets or government targets. The more terrorism focuses on civilians, the less likely terrorism will predict civil war onset.

Relationship Between Terrorism and Civil War

Groups from across the political spectrum have used terrorism in pursuit of political goals. Kydd and Walter (2006) argue terrorist campaigns are used as part of attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling, and outbidding strategies. Most organizations turn to terrorism do so because other opportunities for political participation or redress of grievances have been blocked (Krueger 2007). Violence

becomes a viable option in authoritarian states when groups are systemically excluded from the political process. Violence becomes a means to coerce the government into redressing grievances. In more open societies, violence is often used in order to outbid other groups or provoke the government. Outbidding occurs when groups try to show that they better represent the aggrieved population through their actions. Violence often becomes a popular option when political processes are perceived as being too slow. Provocation works by forcing government overreaction to attacks that decreases public support for government. Governments that respond to terrorism using coercive measures and limiting freedoms can increase grievances and cause more people to join the opposition.

Terrorism provides a good state level indicator of the existence of dissatisfaction with the status quo.[1] Not only are there aggrieved populations, but these populations are also willing to use violence. High levels of dissatisfaction foster an "us against them" mentality between the aggrieved group and those outside of the group. Thus, the government and its supporters become dehumanized in the collective psyche of the group. This process of dehumanization leads to violence being rationalized as a symbolic strategy enabling members of the aggrieved population to take action against the purported source of their grievance (Diamond 2002).

[1] Some groups have been described as using terrorism in order to maintain the status quo. Even in these cases, the existence of violence is still an indicator of underlying dissatisfaction with the current regime. Groups that use terrorism to support the status quo are usually doing so in order to return to a order of affairs in a state or prevent rising groups from gaining power.

The symbolic acts of violence become the building blocks of wider conflicts by shaping the strategic space in which a violent opposition group can operate. This space is determined by the ability of a group to have influence in society, while at the same time being secure enough to prevent its elimination by the government (McCormick 2003). The strategic operating space is shaped primarily by the ability of the government to contain violent groups and the ability of groups to gain influence and support within the society. These factors are shaped by a number of variables that have been examined at length in the literature on terrorism and civil war. To date, there has been little investigation that links the two processes together. Merari (1993) suggests terrorist organizations regularly want to "grow up" into guerilla groups and engage in wider rebellions, but does very little to explain the process by which terrorist activity allows groups to grow up. Kydd and Walter (2006) argue terrorism is used to provoke government repression that will turn the public against the government. Sambanis (2008) argues terrorism is a common strategy for rebel groups in civil wars, and what differentiates a "terrorist" campaign from a civil war is the rebel organization's level of public support, its organizational structure, and the capabilities gap between the organization and the government. How rebel groups are able to expand their influence is shaped by state capabilities and rebel strategy.

State strength has been considered the key link that keeps latent insurgencies from emerging into wider violent conflicts. Terrorist organizations emerge in the strategic space that exists between their ability to maintain the security of their organization (primarily through secrecy) and the group's ability to spread its influence

(McCormick 2003). The factors that shape this space are those variables that scholars associate with strong states. High levels of development and personal income make the cost of participating in violent rebellion high (Lichbach 1995). Strong militaries deter violent conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003, Lai 2007). Strong democratic institutions make it difficult for violent resistance groups to recruit support, whereas strong autocracies are able to prevent the rise of violent opposition through repression (e.g. Hegre et al. 2001). Although strong states are able to deter widespread rebellion, terrorism can be used to weaken state capacity and create the conditions favoring a wider civil war.

Focusing on state characteristics alone divorces the civil war event from the process of violence that led to it (Sambanis 2008). Examination of the connections between the types of political violence is necessary to avoid the formation of separate research agendas that can undermine our understanding of political violence (Jones and Smith 2009). Terrorism is more than simply the outgrowth of grievances, it represents a form of military strategy used by groups in an attempt to advance their agenda (Neumann and Smith 2005). Terrorism is widespread during civil wars (Lai 2007, Sambanis 2008) and is used by some groups in order to keep conflicts going rather than allowing the government to achieve total victory (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). The connection between civil war and terrorism is usually framed as civil wars providing greater opportunity for terrorist acts, but this framing has the logic of the connection between civil war and terrorism backwards.

Framing the connection between civil war and terrorism as the result of greater opportunities to carry out attacks ignores how violence is used by rebel groups to make

larger forms of violence possible. There is generally more terrorism in states experiencing civil wars, not because there is greater opportunity, but because terrorism is an effective oppositional strategy against a stronger government. Since civil wars represent a different phase of conflict, the causal direction of violence should be lower levels of violence make higher forms of conflict possible. Kalyvas and Balcels (2010) argue civil wars vary in intensity based on the types of fighting between the rebels and government. To date, there has been a lack of studies that have systemically tested the connection between terrorism and higher forms of political violence.

If terrorism is to be seen as part of the spectrum of political violence, then we should expect widespread levels of terrorism to be an indicator of civil war onset for a number of reasons. First, the emergence of widespread terrorism is an indicator of discontent and the willingness of the opposition to use violence. Crenshaw (1981, 388) argues terrorism emerges out of the impatience of opposition groups who see the need to challenge the state now rather than leave the challenge to the future. Groups use terrorism in order to make up for limited means and to ensure an open form of opposition to the state.

Terrorism becomes the advertisement of the existence of opposition. Rebel groups use terrorism to demonstrate to the public the existence of opposition and as evidence that the opposition is growing in strength (Laqueur 2001, 31-32). Groups use terrorist attacks as spectacles to capture the attention of the public and the media magnifying the political impact of the event (McCormick 2003, 479-480). If a state only faces a small number of attacks, it becomes difficult for resistance groups to garner

political attention and demonstrate to the general public that they represent a viable alternative to the government in power. As the number of attacks grows, the political impact is magnified as dissident groups carry out a sustained campaign of coercion against the government.

Higher levels of terrorism will help rebel organizations for a number of reasons. First, just as attacks serve to advertise the existence of rebellion, the continuation of these attacks and can make potential supporters perceive the rebellion as having a chance for success. As potential supporters of rebellion see rebel groups having increasing success, they may be more willing to actively support the rebellion (Lichbach 1995). Successful attacks become important symbols for resistance groups that they can use to recruit new members. Furthermore, the planning and execution of terrorist attacks can help rebel organizations develop command structures and other organizational elements necessary to engage in a sustained military campaign against government forces. (Crenshaw 1981, 387). The planning and carrying out of attacks also creates solidarity benefits for the organization that will increase the social cohesion of the rebel organization which becomes attractive to potential supporters (Abrahms 2008). Continued success helps recruiting by lowering the perceived risk of defeat and punishment in the minds of potential supporters.

In the process of advertising and strengthening rebel groups, terrorist attacks also serve to undermine the legitimacy of the government. Groups can use small numbers of attacks to make a grievance known, but this will not generate the publicity and reputation the needed to gain enough support to challenge the government

directly. Continued attacks will spread insecurity throughout the state and make the population believe the government is incapable of controlling the violence (Crenshaw 1988).

As the population feels more insecure, the ability of the government to control the violence declines for several reasons. First, as people begin to see the government as incapable of stopping the violence, they will become less supportive of government counter-terrorism policies. This lack of trust makes it more difficult for the government to control the territory and win the trust of the population (Hultman 2007). Furthermore, if the terrorists are capable of provoking the government into harsh counter-terrorism measures, many times these policies will target populations indiscriminately turning the population against the government (Simon 2001). The result is that people who were previously pro-government or neutral in the conflict are more likely to support the rebel cause, or at the very least less likely to assist the government.

Finally, the level of terrorism in a state can be seen as a reliable indicator of the government's ability to police its own borders. Previous research on civil wars and terrorism have argued that higher levels of state capability should decrease the level violent opposition (e.g. Lai 2007, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Lichbach 1995). Widespread terrorism becomes a macro-level indicator of the government's inability to defeat potential insurgents. Terrorism is a problem that every state deals with, but states differ greatly in their ability to contain the actions of violent groups. The low cost of most terrorist acts makes it possible for individuals to carry out attacks, but the ability to carry out numerous and sustained attacks requires organizational structures. Strong states

will be capable of developing the police and military structures necessary to combat organized rebellion (Jones and Libicki 2008). Despite state strength, a large number of attacks will indicate the failure of the state to translate its strength into effective counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency strategies.

Terrorism also serves as a better indicator of researcher to the level of opposition to the government. Civil war onset is often framed as the result of activities of violent entrepreneurs, but the connection between these entrepreneurs and onset is difficult to test. Many of the actions of rebel groups are too secretive for researchers to capture and measure. Looking at the number of attacks throughout the state, regardless of the perpetrator, becomes a better proxy for the strength and determination of opposition groups. Thus:

Hypothesis 1: States with higher levels of terrorism face a greater probability of civil war.

Why Target Selection Matters

A high level of terrorism may be an important macro-level indicator of regime instability, but the relationship becomes more complicated when the targets of terrorism are considered. The targets of terrorist attacks matter for a number of reasons. Who is targeted by terrorists shapes the strategic environment between dissidents, governments, and the populace and can shape the escalation of a conflict. Targeting civilians can undermine the ability of rebel groups to win support for their cause, justify harsh government crackdowns, undermine internal group dynamics, and fail to generate a costly enough signal to spark a wider revolt. At the state level, high

levels of attacks against civilians may serve as a macro-level indicator of the lack of organization among rebel groups, relative weakness of opposition, and a disinterest on the part of violent organizations to fight the government.

A common strategy used by terrorist organizations is to carry out attacks in order to provoke a government response that will turn the citizens of the state against the government (Kydd and Walter 2006). The provocation strategy works when government repression makes the life of ordinary citizens worse because of curtailments of individual rights, brutal crackdowns, and fear of the government. When governments crackdown against potential enemies of the state, how the public perceives the dissidents is important to determine what types of counter-terrorism measures will be supported. When groups attack civilians, the civilians must decide which poses a bigger threat: the rebels or the government. If citizens feel increasingly threatened by terrorist activity they will support government repression rather than turn away from it. The more the public fears being the target of terrorist attacks, the more they will demand protection from the government. For example, Americans who were concerned about future terrorist attacks following 9/11 were more supportive of the government's counterterrorism efforts at home and abroad than other Americans (Huddy et al. 2005). Attacking civilians will fail to garner support for the group because it risks miscommunicating the groups' objectives. Attacking civilians signal maximalist goals, that the group is bent on destroying the countries' values and society (Abrahms 2006, 56). The rebels become an existential threat to not only the government, but also the society as a whole.

Attacks against civilians also fail to generate the organizational benefits that come out of attacks against government targets. Civilian targets are soft compared to most government targets (e.g. Goodwin 2006, Hoffman and McCormick 2004, Asal et al. 2009). Government targets tend to have better security than most civilian targets. The increased level of security requires better planning and organization compared to the skills needed to attack relatively unprotected civilian targets. The strength of the organization shapes and is shaped by these tactical decisions (Crenshaw 1983). Attacks against military targets and battles against government forces provide for rallying points within rebel organizations as they give the group a common enemy and shared sense of struggle (Crenshaw 1988). Attacking civilians lacks this dimension and may not be seen as being instrumental toward the end goals of the group. The use of terrorist tactics can create momentum within the group to continue to use such tactics, even at the expense of long term goals. As the group organizes itself around a particular set of tactics it creates organizational momentum for the use of those tactics (Crenshaw 1981).

Target selection also signals the intentions of a group (Hoffman and McCormick 2004). Scholars who have used signaling theory to explain terrorist organization behavior have argued that terrorism represents a costly signal of group determination and resolve. Since attacks against civilians are perceived as being easier than attacks against government targets, the signal will not be costly enough for others to take seriously. Evidence can also be seen in government reactions to attacks against civilians. Governments will use the opportunity to portray dissidents as weak and cowardly. Two

recent examples provide evidence of how governments will frame such attacks in order to shape public opinion.

After a series of attacks in Pakistan in 2009, the Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani condemned the attacks as acts of cowardice and frustration. He framed the attacks as proof that the terrorists were incapable of confronting the military (PakTribune 2009). The government of Sri Lanka referred to the LTTE's use of terrorism and suicide killers as "cowardly" and "deserving contempt and condemnation" (Department of Government Information 2006). Both of the examples demonstrate how the government will frame attacks against civilians as evidence that rebels are weak and enemies of the people. By framing the terrorist act as a sign of weakness and a threat to the people governments are able to undermine the symbolic message of the attack.

If attacks signal the intentions of the organization, then attacks against the government send a clear message of the group being in opposition. Attacks against civilians send ambiguous messages that may not be easily interpreted by the mass public. Terrorist organizations may be signaling that the organization does not seek a wider civil war, but they are attempting to garner political change through fear and coercion. For example, anti-abortion protestors and environmental groups have committed acts of terrorism in the United States without any intention of fighting the government for control of the state. In these incidents, attacks were carried out against civilians and not government targets.

Attacks against civilians can also signify divisions among opposition groups. Rebel organizations often engage in fratricide of other rebel groups in order to solidify their

power within a society (Abrahms 2008). When rebel groups are fighting each other, there is little incentive for government forces to involve themselves in the conflict. Although fighting other groups may translate into long term gains for the rebel organization, it is not likely to lead to translate to immediate conflict with the government. The government is likely to be willing to let rebel forces fight among themselves and weaken each other, than try to fight multiple rebel groups at once. Thus:

Hypothesis 2: Target selection conditions the effect the level of terrorism has on predicting civil wars. Higher percentage of attacks against civilians in a state will decrease the probability that high levels of terrorism will result in civil war onset.

Research design

In order to test connection between levels of terrorism and civil war onset, I use data provided by Fearon and Laitin (2003) on civil war onset from 1945-2000. Fearon and Laitin define civil war onset as the year fighting between agents of a state and organized, nonstate groups seeking control of the government or territory begins. The conflict must result in 1000 battle deaths over its course with a yearly average of 100 battle deaths and at least 100 battle deaths (including civilians attacked by rebels) occur on both sides of the conflict (76). In order to ensure the results used in this paper can be compared to previous studies, this study uses the same variables from Fearon and Laitin's (2003) study as controls. The following section will describe their controls and findings and introduce the new variables used in this study.

The first control variable is a dummy variable for *Prior War* which marks whether the country had a distinct civil war ongoing in the previous year. The second control is *Per Capita Income* (as thousands of 1985 U.S. dollars and lagged on year to control for simultaneity bias). *Per Capita income* is negatively related to civil war onset as rising income decreases the pool of people willing to revolt and also serves as a proxy for state and military strength. The log of *Population* is also included (and lagged one year) and is positively related to the onset of civil war. There is also a control for the log percent of *Mountainous Terrain* in a state based on previous studies done by the World Bank data. The percent of mountainous terrain serves as a proxy for the ability of rebel groups to hide from government forces as well as the inability of the central government to police all areas. Rough terrain should increase the likelihood of civil war onset as it helps rebel groups overcome the discrepancies in capabilities between themselves and the government. A similar variable is used for *Noncontiguous States* which indicates states whose territories are divided by more than 100 kilometers. Noncontiguous states are theorized to have a higher risk of civil war because it is more difficult for the central government to project power to the noncontiguous parts of the state.

A dummy variable is also included for *Oil Exporters* which are states whose fuel exports account for greater than one-third of the total exports for that year according to World Bank data. Oil exporters are predicted to have a greater risk of civil war onset as they tend to have weaker state institutions. A dummy variable is also used to mark *New States* (states in their first two years of independence) as the untested state may become an inviting target for rebels. Instability in the government will also decrease the

government's capacity, therefore the *Instability* variable marks states that have had a 3 point or greater change in the Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2009) index in any of the prior three years. Regime type is controlled for using data from Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2009). The *Democracy* variable is the difference between the 11 point democracy and autocracy scales available in the data with the assumption that greater levels of democracy should reduce the risk of civil war onset. The data also includes controls for levels of *Ethnic Fractionalization* and *Religious Fractionalization* compiled from a number of sources and fully explained in Fearon and Laitin (2003).

In order to test the arguments set forth above, this paper relies on two measures of terrorism. Data on terrorist attacks comes from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).[2] The GTD records terrorist incidents starting in 1970 and represents the best available data for quantitative analysis of terrorism. First, the GTD includes religious, economic, political, and social acts of terrorism. Second, the GTD data has been collected primarily by a private business and academic interests rather than government collection limiting the potential for political biases to include or exclude certain acts. Third, the data includes both transnational as well as domestic attacks which is important in this study that seeks to show how the instability created by all forms of terrorism can destabilize a state[3] (Dugan et al. 2006). Currently the GTD represents the

[2] Global Terrorism Database, START, accessed on <1/15/2011>.

[3] Some might argue that inclusion of transnational attacks may be problematic, but many of these attacks are carried out in an attempt to destabilize the target government. Since there is no current baseline estimate of the relationship between terrorism and civil war onset, the distinction between transnational and domestic terrorism provides a springboard for future research on the question. Since transnational attacks are evidence that a state may not be able to adequately police its own borders, their relationship to civil war onset should be similar to that of many domestic attacks.

largest and most extensive dataset available for the study of terrorism (LaFree and Dugan 2007).

The GTD records terrorist incidents individually. In order to be included in the dataset, an incident "had to be an intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor." The action must also meet two of the following three criteria:

1. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;

2. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims; and

3. The violent act was outside the precepts of International Humanitarian Law. (START 2010)

Although there are many competing definitions of terrorism (Schmid and Jongman 1988), this definition captures the major common elements of most definitions.

Despite the numerous competing definitions of terrorism, the definition used by the GTD is the most appropriate for the research question presented in this paper. First, it includes the most common element of terrorism definitions: the use or threatened use of violence by a non- state actor in order to achieve a political goal. Most definitions of terrorism vary based on target choice and specific tactics. A common point of disagreement in many definitions of terrorism is a question of target. Some definitions of terrorism only include attacks against civilian targets (Ganor 2002). Other definitions include military targets, but only if they are not overtly engaged in war fighting

activities. For example, the United States Department of State defines terrorism as "politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets," where "noncombatant" is "interpreted to include, in addition to civilians, military personnel who at the time of the incident are unarmed or not on duty" (United States Department of State 2002). Basing the definition of terrorism on the targets of the act risks excluding acts that have the same purpose and intent. For example, a group fighting for national independence may carry out a suicide bombing against armed soldiers at a checkpoint or against a nightclub frequented by foreigners. Neither act is designed to engage in a battle with enemy forces, but they are both used to send a message to a larger audience. The acts are similar in intent and execution, but differ only in terms of the nature of the target. To exclude the attack against the checkpoint would ignore many actions by groups simply because the target is different. The ability to control for the target type is the second advantage of the GTD data. Rather than limiting the use of terrorism as a tactic to particular targets, the GTD includes all attacks regardless of target allowing researchers to examine terrorism as a broader tactic. Given the importance of target selection, controlling for it provides scholars with a better explanation of the effects of political violence than the categorical exclusion of such actions.

The first variable constructed from the GTD data is the *Number of Terrorist Attacks*. This variable is the natural log of the number of terrorist attacks per year in a state according to the GTD. The variable is also lagged one year in order to avoid attacks that occur during a civil war from being determinants of civil war onset and to avoid

simultaneity bias. This variable tests Hypothesis One, that more terrorist acts increase the probability of civil war onset. The average number of attacks per country year is slightly above 14. Many country years have no recorded terrorist attacks (about 46% of the observations). Over 80% of all observations experience less than 10 terrorist attacks.

In order to test Hypothesis 2, the models include the variable *Percent Attacks Against Civilians*. The variable uses the target type data from the GTD to determine what the primary target of each attack. Attacks against businesses, airports, airplanes, educational institutions, food supplies, water supplies, journalists, media outlets, ports, maritime facilities, nongovernmental organizations, private citizens, private property, religious figures, religious institutions, telecommunication, tourists, transportation, and utilities are considered attacks against civilian targets for this study. The average rate of attacks against civilians is about 30%. Although it is also possible to include variables for the number of attacks per target type, high levels of collinearity between these variables make the results suspect.[4] The argument laid out above indicates that the relationship between the number of attacks and civil war onset is moderated by target choice, therefore the *Number of Terrorist Attacks* variable is interacted the *Percent Attacks Against Civilians*.

Table 2.1 presents the results of three logit models using the binary variable civil war onset as the dependent variable. The logit models are the same methodology used by Fearon and Laitin (2003) and have become a common way to model civil war onset

[4] For example, the correlation between the number of attacks against civilians and the number of attacks against government targets is .80.

Table 2.1: Logit Models of Civil War Onset

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Number of Terrorist Attacks (ln)	0.287***	0.263***	0.567***
	(0.0890)	(0.0890)	(0.178)
Percent Attacks Against Civilians		0.226	0.573
		(0.353)	(0.376)
Number of Terrorist Attacks*Percent Attacks Against civilians			-0.596**
			(0.286)
Prior War	-1.518***	-1.529***	-1.563***
	(0.433)	(0.433)	(0.445)
Per Capita Income	-0.424***	-0.428***	-0.431***
	(0.103)	(0.102)	(0.103)
Population (ln)	0.246***	0.245***	0.248***
	(0.0715)	(0.0718)	(0.0721)
Mountainous (ln)	0.208**	0.205**	0.212**
	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.104)
Noncontiguous State	0.496	0.517	0.518
	(0.383)	(0.386)	(0.380)
Oil Exporter	0.396	0.389	0.374
	(0.377)	(0.377)	(0.381)
New State	3.013***	3.024***	3.040***
	(0.595)	(0.596)	(0.591)
Instability	0.590**	0.581**	0.564**
	(0.272)	(0.272)	(0.271)
Democracy	0.0106	0.0103	0.00843
	(0.0267)	(0.0268)	(0.0271)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.460	0.443	0.457
	(0.521)	(0.517)	(0.519)
Religious Fractionalization	0.131	0.130	0.221
	(0.752)	(0.752)	(0.753)
Constant	-6.421***	-6.422***	-6.566***
	(0.888)	(0.892)	(0.889)
Wald Chi^2	120.1***	121.32***	118.05***
Pseudo R^2	0.136	0.136	0.140
Observations	3928	3928	3928

(e.g. Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Regan and Norton 2005, Fearon, Kasara, and Laitin 2007).[5] Model 1 shows the likelihood of civil war onset using Fearon and Laitin's (2003) data including the *Number of Terrorist Attacks* variable. Model 2 includes both the *Number of Terrorist Attacks* variable and the *Percent Attacks Against Civilians*. Finally, Model 3 includes both variables as well as the interaction term. In order to account for heteroskedasticity in the error term, the models are estimated using robust standard errors clustered on the country.[6]

All three of the models provide evidence for Hypothesis 1. The coefficient for the *Number of Terrorist Attacks* variable is positive and significant in each of the models. As potential rebels are able to operate more freely and carry out more attacks, the likelihood of civil war increases precipitously across the range off the variable. The marginal effect of a one percent increase in the *Number of Terrorist Attacks* is .0018. The probability of civil war onset if all variables are at their mean is .0062. An increase of one standard deviation of *Number of Terrorist Attacks* increases the probability of civil war to .0096 which is a 54% increase in the probability of civil war onset. Given that civil war onset is rare compared to peaceful state years, this represents a major increase

[5] Others argue that since civil wars are "rare events" requiring rare-events logit estimations to solve for the bias in the logistic regression analysis (King and Zeng 2001). The models were also run using the rare-events logit estimator (Tomz et al. 1999) with similar results presented here

[6] Models were also run using Carter and Signorino's (2010) cubic polynomials to correct for temporal dependence in the data with similar results. Additional models were also run dropping ongoing war years with similar results (the coefficients for the variables introduced here were larger). In order to make the results most comparable to the original Fearon and Laitin (2003) results, I follow their practice of including all years. Excluding ongoing civil war years creates two problems in studying civil war onset. First, it ignores for the potential of new civil war onsets during the civil war (i.e. the emergence of a second rebel group challenging the state). Second, dropping ongoing war years causes the experience of states with multiple civil war onsets to be overweighted in the logit analysis by artificially inflating the mean of the onset variable in these states (Fearon 2005). The results are robust across multiple different model specifications.

Figure 2.1: Marginal Effects of Interaction Term (Kam and Franzese)

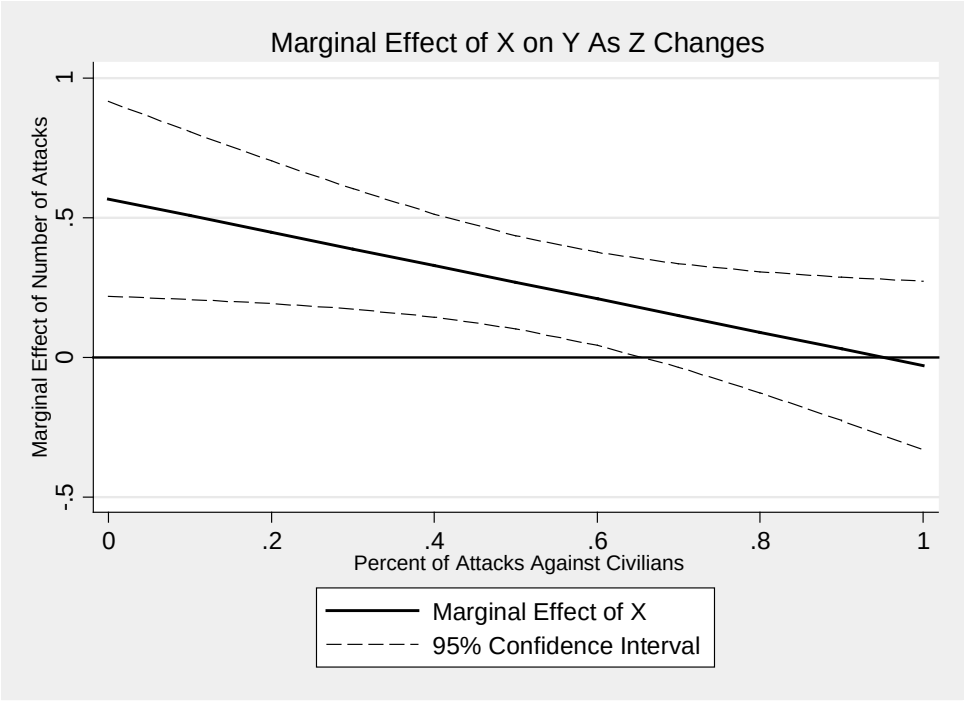
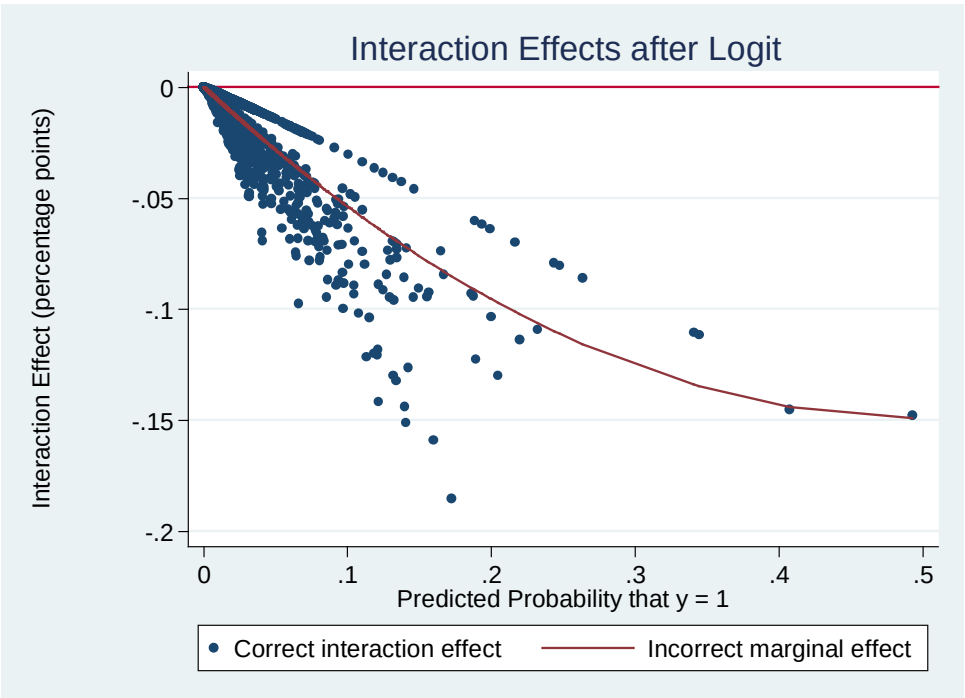


Figure 2.2: Marginal Effects of Interaction Term (Norton et al.)



in the probability of a civil war. This is strong evidence that increases in terrorism can destabilize a country and terrorism can be used to help create the conditions for larger civil wars. High levels of terrorism become evidence of better organized rebel groups who are capable of carrying out sustained violent opposition to the government.

The coefficient for *Percent Attacks Against Civilians* is not significant in Models 2 and 3, but the interaction term is significant in Model 3. This is evidence supporting Hypothesis 2, that as terrorist attacks focus more and more on civilians, terrorism becomes a weaker predictor of civil war onset. Figure 2.1 shows the marginal effects of the interaction using Kam and Franzese's (2007) estimation technique. Large numbers of attacks may increase the probability of civil war onset, but as those attacks increasingly focus on civilians, the marginal effect of terrorist attacks on civil war onset declines. Although higher levels of terrorism are capable of destabilizing a state, if attacks occur only against civilians the probability of civil war is indistinguishable from zero. Figure 2.2 shows the predicted probabilities of conflict based on the interaction using the estimation technique outlined by Noton et al. (2004). This estimation corrects for the non-linear nature of logit models and provides additional support for *Hypothesis 2*. This method suggests that the mean effect of the interaction is that each one percent increase in *Attacks Against Civilians* results in a .8% decrease in the probability of civil war onset. When the rate of attacks against civilians reaches around 65 percent, the rate of attacks is no longer a significant predictor of onset (as indicated by the overlapping of the confidence intervals with zero).

The control variables used in this study have the same results and significance as the original Fearon and Laitin (2003) study. States are less likely to have civil war onsets the year after the end of a prior war. Higher levels of per capita income decrease the probability of civil war. States with large populations, states that are highly mountainous, and new states are also more likely to have civil wars. The remaining variables are not significant at the $p<.05$ level. The similarity of the findings here to other civil war onset models is evidence of the importance of terrorism as a predictor of civil wars. State capacity and population have always been robust predictors of civil war onset, but states can do very little in the short term to control these variables. The implementation and execution of counterterrorism programs, on the other hand, is something that states do have active control over.

Discussion and Conclusion

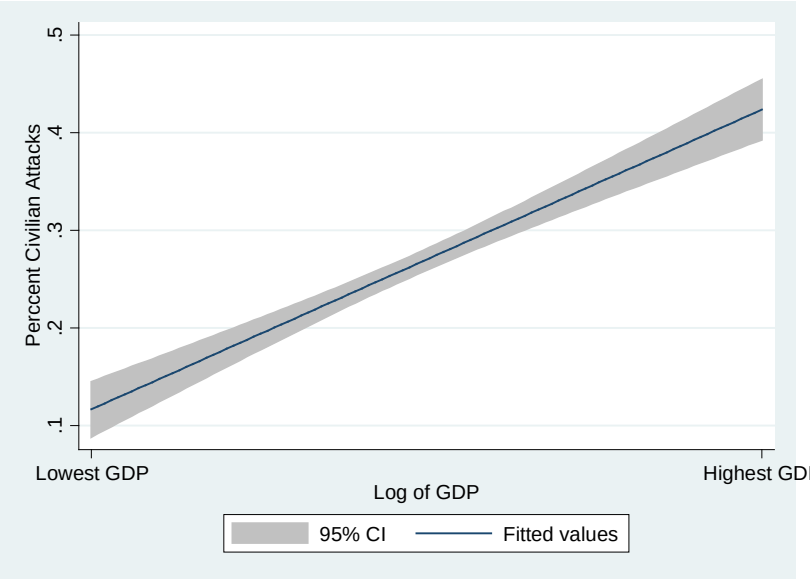
The evidence presented in the models provides valuable insight to the linkages between terrorism and civil war onset. There are several implications that can be drawn from the models that help explain the dynamics between the two types of phenomenon. The following section investigates the connections between terrorism and civil war onset. The findings provide valuable contributions to the literatures on civil war onset and terrorism by providing an example of disaggregating terrorism for the purpose of seeing its effects in certain contexts (Clauset et al. 2010). This study breaks terrorism down into a specific context (starting a civil war) and by the targets selected (civilian targets). By finding that terrorism can increase risk of civil war onset, so long as

the terrorism is not directed at civilian targets, this study represents a way to bridge the gap between two major literatures in political science.

The results uphold earlier models of civil war onset by showing that states with high levels of income can decrease the probability of civil conflict. Even when controlling for the number of terrorist attacks, wealthier states are able to shape the conditions that prevent widespread rebellion from happening. Although richer states still experience terrorism, it is less frequent and is less likely to escalate into a larger conflict. The wealth of a state may also play a role in target selection by terrorist organizations. Figure 2.3 shows the correlation between the variables for GDP and Percent Attacks Against Civilians. It demonstrates how the capabilities of a state can also shape the strategic options available to terrorist organizations. Richer states are not only more likely to have the resources to contain civil conflict, but these resources translate into targeting decisions by insurgents that are less likely to result in conflict escalation. Given the results from Model 3, the relationship here provides evidence for one of the ways state capabilities can restrict the strategic environment of dissident organizations.[7] As the wealth and capabilities of a state grow, rebel groups are more likely to attack civilian targets because the ability to directly confront the government will be limited. Insurgent groups will be forced to rely on tactics that can keep the struggle alive, but are unable attract new supporters to the cause. Groups can hope that a provocation strategy may create enough dissatisfaction against the government that others may join the

[7] Despite the correlation between the two variables, they are not correlated enough to make collinearity a problem in the models. Diagnostic tests indicate the relationship is not strong enough to bias the results presented in the models here.

Figure 2.3: Correlation Plot of Attacks Against Civilians And GDP



movement, but this strategy is greatly limited by the choices made by the rebel organizations. If groups continue to focus their attacks against civilian targets, the public is less likely to join the rebel cause making wider conflicts less likely. Attacks against civilians send mixed messages about a group's intent and can foster an environment in which government repression is supported in order to protect the population from further attacks. It may be that early on in a rebel group's movement attacks against civilian targets can announce the presence of opposition, but such opposition has to channel itself against the government if it wishes to start a wider conflict.

High levels of state capability can limit the strategic space available to rebel groups. McCormick (2003) argues strong states are capable of forcing emerging terrorist organizations underground which limits their ability to garner more influence. While underground, groups are prone to miscalculation and becoming increasingly

disconnected from the strategic reality around them. Other studies have confirmed the connection between state strength and the shaping of terrorist targeting behavior. Barter (2011) finds insurgent groups in Thailand are forced underground by the institutional strength of the Thai state. Since the insurgents are forced to operate as underground organizations, they are also more likely to cut their ties with civilians and attack them in order to coerce the state. Although relatively weak rebel groups may not be capable of challenging government forces directly, they are capable of carrying out horrifying and indiscriminate attacks against civilians. State strength alone does not mitigate the problem of terrorism, only its ability to become a larger conflict. What is needed is the development of effective counterterrorism policies designed to deter and prevent attacks, without creating new sets of grievances for rebels to recruit support.

The development and implementation of counterterrorism policies can have important implications for the ability of states to contain and deter terrorism. First, it is important for leaders to recognize the threat potential posed by rebel groups. A growing number of terrorist incidents in a state does represent growing dissatisfaction that may lead to wider conflicts, but states should take careful note the types of targets attacked. Although there is a desire to increase security through repression and reducing civil liberties after terrorist attacks, such measures can backfire on the state. Repressive measures decrease the willingness of individuals to cooperate with the state and make them more willing to support opposition groups. States need to develop counterterrorism policies that are appropriate to the nature of the terrorist organizations operating within their borders. If states adopt aggressive counterterrorism

policies that make conditions worse for everyday citizens, they may end up increasing support for the dissident factions operating in the state.

This paper provides evidence that terrorism should be viewed as part of a spectrum of political violence rather than a distinct phenomenon. Although some terrorist groups may never want to "grow up" into guerilla or larger rebel organizations, we can look at the number of terrorist incidents in a state as an indicator of political stability and the strength of political opposition to the government in power. Since finding causes of terrorism that are consistent across all actors and motivations will continue to be difficult given that terrorism has both macro and micro motivational foundations, finding the connections between terrorism and other forms of political violence and political activity may provide for a better scholarly understanding of how political violence shapes the world around us.

One of the major contributions of this paper is to provide a better picture of the processes surrounding civil wars. The focus on state characteristics has provided useful insights to the study of civil war, but it provides a very incomplete picture. Only by including the violent activities of rebel groups can scholars begin to develop a better picture of how the actions of states and dissidents can lead to widespread violence. More research and data is needed on the actions taken by states to counter dissident activity. Recent events in the Middle East and North Africa show how state reactions to public discontent can mean the difference between low-levels of violence and widespread fighting. Terrorism is one of many types of actions taken by dissident groups. Because of its inherent violence it is more likely to provoke a violent reaction

from the state and lead to larger and deadlier confrontations. Such an approach will provide researchers and policy-makers better tools to understand political violence and the types of policies that are successful at containing violence.

CHAPTER 3: SPOILING FOR A FIGHT: TERRORISM AND CIVIL WAR RECURRENCE

The end of a civil war is rarely the end of organized political violence in a state. Many states experience some level of insurgent activity after the fighting has "officially" ended. "Spoiler" violence often emerges in post-conflict societies as those dissatisfied with the conditions of peace try to restart the fighting to force a new balance of power or new conditions for peace. Groups may be upset with any aspect of the post-conflict society. Terrorism becomes a low cost way to force the government to meet their demands or provoke a new round of combat. Although scholars in the past have made the connection between spoiler violence and recurrent civil war, there is a lack of systemic evidence of the effectiveness of terrorism as a form of spoiling behavior.

This study examines the role terrorist acts can play in spoiling the peace in a post-conflict state. Past studies have argued the vast majority of peace accords are ruined by spoiler violence (Pearlman 2009), which leads to deadlier conflicts (Stedman 1997, 5). One author has even suggested that spoiler violence may play a greater role in peace duration than the deployment of third-party peace keepers (Stepanova 2006, 88). Despite these claims, there is a lack of scholarly attention to the question of how effective is terrorism as a strategy of spoiler violence. This study seeks to provide evidence of how the level of terrorist violence and the target of such violence shapes the likelihood of recurrent conflict.

Since spoiling is potentially a part of every post-conflict environment, understanding its effect on recurrent conflict can enhance our theoretical understanding of recurrent conflict as well as provide insights to possible solutions to recurrent violence. In order to better our understanding of the effect of spoiler violence this study proceeds in four parts. First, I examine what spoiler violence is and the importance of a capabilities approach to spoiling. Second, I explain the strategy of using terrorism as a form of spoiling violence. I develop a theoretical connection between the level of terrorism, the target selection of insurgents, and the likelihood of recurrent civil conflict. I argue terrorism is an effective form of spoiling behavior because it creates a commitment problem for governments, creates conditions for multiple sovereignties, and provides a good indicator of group capabilities that can explain enduring internal rivalries. Third, I then test these connections using a Cox proportional hazards model. I find that the greater the level of terrorism in state the more likely that the state will have a recurrent civil war. The targets of spoiler violence also shape the duration of peace. The more attacks focus on civilians, recurrent conflict becomes less likely. Finally, I conclude with an explanation of how the findings should shape future research on civil war recurrence and terrorism.

A Capabilities Approach to Spoiling

Before discussing about the causal connections between terrorism and recurrent civil wars, it is also important to understand how the "spoiler" label carries with it some normative assumptions that can hamper our understanding of post-conflict dynamics..

This section outlines definitions for spoiling behavior and terrorism and explains why terrorism is a preferred method for spoiler violence.

Violence has long been used as a method to spoil peace agreements between two sides. Spoiler violence can be carried out by any party that is dissatisfied with the conditions following a civil war (Richmond 2006). The most common portrayal of spoiler violence is the behavior of extremist factions within the rebel group not wanting to compromise with the government. The extremists will use violence to make the moderate members of the group seem not credible and provoke the government into a new round of fighting. Spoiling violence can come from any number of parties following a conflict. The conditions that ended the previous conflict shape the types of grievances that will lead to renewed violence.

A problem with the "spoiler" label is that it implies that those outside of the peace agreement are responsible for the failure of peace. This assumption comes from two sources. First, spoiling violence is almost always carried out by non-state actors (Newman and Richmond 2006). Although governments will have incentives to spoil the peace, government spoiling strategies tend to involve failure to implement agreements which will spark violence on the part of dissatisfied groups (Derouen, Lea, and Wallensteen 2009). Just as governments will label opposition groups as "terrorists" in order to undermine their legitimacy, labeling actors as spoilers seeks to delegitimize the grievances of those opposed to the post-conflict political reality.

Labeling groups as "spoilers" implies that the post-war peace situation is somehow just (Newman and Richardson 2006). Stedman's (1997) seminal work on

spoiler violence defines spoilers as "leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it" (5). The emphasis on "leaders" ignores the diverse nature of interests with the opposition. For example, spoiler violence can be carried out by dissatisfied individuals throughout the population who feel that the leaders involved in the negotiations do not represent their interests. The "spoiler" label carries the risk of a normative assumption that the peace is inherently just. Rather than labeling the individual groups as "spoilers", and thus implying they are the ones responsible for undermining the peace, we should view "spoiling" as a strategic action. Such an approach of labeling the action of spoiling rather than labeling actors as "spoilers" has similar parallels to descriptions of "terrorism." Both terrorism and spoiling are strategic acts to achieve a political goal. When we label individuals or groups we risk delegitimizing the grievances and motivations that lead to violence.

Previous work has focused on types of spoilers, but I argue a capabilities approach to spoiling better explains the outcome of spoiling behavior. The types of spoilers approach, first outlined by Stedman (1997), can only explain half of the necessary conditions for violence. Using Most and Starr's (1989) "willingness and opportunity" for conflict framework, focusing on the types of spoilers only looks at the willingness of parties to fight. Previous studies of spoiler violence have established the opportunity aspect of spoiler violence. For example, spoiler violence is most common around peace negotiations and elections that may shape future conflicts (Stedman 1997, Braithwaite et al. 2010). Yet these situations are only part of the opportunity

framework. Opportunity must also include the capability of actors to change the status quo.

A common theme in the study of spoiler violence is the identification of those most likely to use violence. In conflicts that involve multiple rebel groups, groups excluded from the peace process are likely to continue to use violence even after larger rebel groups come to peace with the government (Nilsson 2008). In these situations of "partial peace" (Nilsson 2008), groups excluded from the peace process use violence in order to achieve their goals regardless of the conditions for peace between the government and other groups. Such situations are unlikely to erode the commitment to peace on the part of those who have reached agreements. A second, more prevalent, condition that contributes to increased spoiling activities is when one of the parties involved in the peace process lacks an institutionalized system of legitimate representation (Pearlman 2008). This is especially common in rebel organizations that are loose coalitions of differing opposition groups.

The conflict between Palestinian groups and Israel demonstrates how ideology shapes the willingness to disrupt the peace. At the heart of the struggle between different Palestinian groups is a willingness to recognize the legitimacy of Israel and a willingness to reach agreements with the Israeli government. Hamas has historically refused to accept the legitimacy of the Israeli government. Thus, Hamas has regularly used violence to disrupt peace deals between Israel and other Palestinian groups as a way to increase its profile and legitimacy (Abrahms 2008, Long 2010). The Palestinian Authority leadership tries to increase its power and influence through making

agreements with the Israeli government (Gupta and Mundra 2005). For Hamas, compromise is unacceptable and violence is necessary to rally supporters for its cause.

A third source of violence emerges from groups involved in the peace talks. Many factions will use cease fires as an attempt to regroup their forces and enter into negotiations with no intention of committing to peace. Groups will agree to temporary cease fires under the guise of engaging in peace talks, only to use the time to rearm and reorganize their forces in order to restart fighting as soon as they feel the strategic situation is again in their favor.

Although these sources of violence focus on opportunities during and soon after peace settlements, maintaining the peace long term also requires the containment of violence. Any group has the potential to spoil the peace, it is only when violence cannot be contained by the government, third-parties, or the institutions built into the peace agreement is spoiling possible (Greenhill and Major 2007). Thus rather than focusing on the types of spoilers (Stedman 1997), I choose to examine the capacity for violence within the conflict system. Understanding the capacity for violence within a post conflict environment offers several unique perspectives to a focus on the motivations for actors.

Different types of grievances may create differing motivations for spoiler violence, but the types of motivation cannot explain if those dissatisfied are capable of carrying out violence in order to restart fighting. Numerous structural conditions shape the opportunity for violence to take place. Functionally, every group within a state has the potential to try to spoil the peace, but it is a question of whether or not a group is capable of actually shaping the environment in such a way that makes renewed fighting

more probable (Greenhill and Major 2007). It is better to understand violent attempts to spoil the peace through looking at the capability of groups to carry out violence in their strategic environment for two reasons. First, there will always be groups dissatisfied, so we should look at when dissatisfied groups are capable of levels of violence capable of undermining the peace. Second, a capabilities approach better captures the dynamic process of rebellion.

The ability of a group to effectively spoil the peace depends on its relative capabilities and influence within the society as a whole. An extremist faction of a rebel group may wish to spoil the peace, but will be unable to do so unless they possess adequate capabilities to become influential. Previous research on recurrent civil conflict has found peace agreements that best reflect the balance of capabilities that exist within a society tend to be the most stable (Werner and Yeun 2005). Thus, the stronger the rebel group, the more likely it will be able to gain power sharing provisions in any peace agreement (Gent 2011). When relatively powerful factions are left out of a peace agreement or feel that the peace does not best reflect their interests, they are more likely to be capable of spoiling the peace. By understanding spoiling through the capabilities of the groups carrying out the violence, we are able to measure the effectiveness of such tactics. Such an approach also helps explain that although spoiling violence may occur following many peace agreements, the difference in capabilities between groups explains why some peace spans last longer than others.

Terrorism as Spoiling

The most common form of spoiling violence is terrorism. Kydd and Walter (2002) describe terrorism as a spoiler strategy not as signaling behavior (the group's opposition to the peace agreement is likely already known) or as an attempt to achieve military victory (such tactics rarely are capable of doing such), but as an attempt to sow distrust on the part of the targeted side that the leadership of the opposition will not uphold its end of the bargain. Terrorism is a preferred spoiling method because it provides groups with a number of advantages compared to outright renewed fighting. First, many groups who wish to engage in spoiling tend to be relatively weaker than the government. If there is a peace agreement in place, the groups wishing to spoil the peace also tend to be weaker than the rebel factions involved in the negotiations. Terrorism becomes a low cost option to the group that allows it to avoid direct engagement with stronger military forces. Attacks will be strategic in terms of targets, but two aspects of terrorist violence provide a good indication of the opposition's capabilities.

The rate of attacks provides a good indication of the strength of those opposed to peace. First, in terms of spoiling violence, capability should be viewed as the ability of the opposition to carry out violent attacks (Stepanova 2006). The level of attacks indicates the opposition's relative capabilities in two distinct ways. First, it provides a proxy measure for strength since we usually do not have an idea of how many members an underground organization may have. The level of attacks provides a snapshot of the opposition's organizational capabilities, resources, and how it is able to translate its

available resources into violent political activity. Second, the level of violence provides a good indicator of relative capabilities of the opposition vis-à-vis the state. The level of terrorism not only indicates the strength of opposition groups, but also the ability of the government to police its own borders and contain violent political movements (e.g. Lai 2007, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Lichbach 1995). Thus the level of attacks gives a good indicator of the relative strength of the groups seeking to spoil the peace.

The level of attacks is not the only indicator of the opposition's capabilities. Target selection can also indicate the relative strength of the opposition. The stronger the opposition is, the more sophisticated of attacks it is able to carry out. Thus, group strength shapes the targeting decisions and tactics used by rebel groups (Crenshaw 1983). Attacks against government forces and targets require increased sophistication and capabilities than attacks against civilians. First, civilian targets are relatively soft compared to government targets (e.g. Goodwin 2006, Hoffman and McCormick 2004, Asal et al. 2009). Military forces will have regular security protocols in place and take active measures to secure their facilities against attacks. Police and military forces will also take active steps to protect government officials and buildings from attack. Even the simplest security measures can serve to bolster the protection of an individual or installation, whereas many civilian targets are relatively unguarded.

The ability of terror attacks to spoil the peace is also shaped by targeting decisions. Groups choose targets for spoiler attacks in order to convince their targeted group that the members of the rebel group will not uphold their end of the bargain (Kydd and Walter 2006). In terms of renewed conflict, attacks against government

targets can signal the intention of the group to renew fighting. Attacks against civilians, however, may indicate that the group is incapable of fighting the government directly and is thus trying to provoke government retaliation that will increase their support (Kydd and Walter 2002). Stronger groups will seek to target government forces in order to restart the fighting, whereas relatively weaker groups will base their strategy on civilian targets in the hope of being able to expand their political support for a future conflict with the government.

Finally, violence after peace is not always related to organized attempts to undermine the peace. Unlike interstate wars, the combatants of civil wars still live in the same society following conflict. As former adversaries on the battlefield bump into each other on a daily basis, clashes among civilians become inevitable (Fortna 2003a, 2003b). In many cases former soldiers will seek revenge on one another for perceived crimes committed during the conflict, but the attacks are limited to private citizens. In these cases, a post-war environment may be violent, but the focus of violence will be on individuals rather than state institutions. As many of the former soldiers and revenge victims will no longer be in the armed forces, the violence appears as attacks against civilians. The violence is not about political change, but personal revenge against individuals. In these incidents, we should not expect violence against civilians to contribute to civil war onset. It is possible for these conflicts to spiral out of control, but such escalation is much more likely when the attacks are directly against current government targets.

Spoiling in the Context of Recurrent Civil War

The scholarly literature on civil war recurrence has focused primarily on the conditions within a state following a civil war. Scholars have found that peacekeepers (Doyle and Sambanis 2000, Fortna 2004), the implementation of peace agreements (Hoddie and Hartzell 2003), the outcome of the previous conflict (e.g. Mason et al. 2011, Mason and Fett 1996, Mason, Weingarten, and Fett 1999, Brandt et al. 2008, Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007), quality of life (Walter 2004), and the costs of the previous conflict (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003) all shape the duration of peace following conflicts. Within this literature, there have been several schools of thought to explain peace duration. A capabilities approach to spoiler violence can provide valuable insights to three of the major bodies of civil war recurrence literature: enduring internal rivalries, bargaining models of civil war recurrence, and proponents of the dual sovereignty approach to civil wars.

The enduring internal rivalries approach was first introduced by Derouen and Bercovitch (2008) in an attempt to explain why many states experience recurrent civil wars. They argue that many civil conflicts have the potential to last for decades, but these conflicts are marked by differing levels of conflict between insurgents and the government. Enduring internal rivalries mark a distinct subclass of civil wars, but represent a majority of civil conflicts. A marked feature of enduring internal rivalries is the asymmetry between insurgent groups and the state. The level of violence is shaped by the capabilities of the state and the ability of insurgents to mobilize domestic support

(Derouen and Bercovitch 2008, 58). The use of terrorism as spoiling behavior can help explain why and when recurrent conflict occurs within this framework.

One problem Derouen and Bercovitch (2008) identify with the enduring internal rivalry approach is the inability to observe how rebel groups sustain themselves. Although we have decent data for states, we lack comparable data for insurgent groups around the world. Since many operate in secret, researchers must find different proxies for insurgent capabilities. Scholars have looked to external sources of support for insurgents (e.g. Byman et al. 2001), the availability of lootable resources to fund an insurgency (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 2004, Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009), and rough terrain as a means for insurgents to hide themselves from the government (e.g. Fearon and Laitin 2003). These measures are not without their problems. Many forms of external support are secret, making reliable and consistent data is not available for them. The existence of resources and terrain are constant features of a state and cannot capture the varying levels of violence within a state. Using the levels of terrorism within a state and the targeting decisions of insurgent groups can provide a better observable source of information on insurgent capabilities.

Derouen and Bercovitch (2008) argue it is "difficult to observe the military/diplomatic decisions of insurgents…Insurgents are often undermanned and outgunned and often rely on hiding in the mountains or the bush when they cannot meet the government head-on" (61). As argued earlier, the level of terrorism in a state and the targeting decisions of insurgents can fill this void. As the relative strength of insurgents grows we should expect that they will engage in attacks at higher levels and

attack government forces head on. Second, rather than relying on passive measures of state characteristics, using the levels and targets of terrorism captures the ebb and flow of insurgent strength. The level of terrorism provides a better explanation of the events between wars than the assumption that there is a dormant opposition simply buying time by hiding in the hills. Groups need to stay active to maintain influence (McCormick 2006). Thus, measuring the levels and targets of terrorism helps capture the dynamics of the rivalry within the state.

A second approach to understanding recurrent civil war comes from information explanations of civil war. The information approach developed by Fearon (1995) in the context of interstate conflict, and it has since been applied to the study of civil war (e.g. Fearon 1998, Walter 2004, 2006, Kirschner 2010). The argument states war happens when one side of a conflict believes that it can achieve a preferred outcome through fighting. Within this framework terrorism can provide information about the preference of rebel groups to commit to peace, accept defeat, and represent a form of information about the capabilities of the group. Since both sides have private information and an incentive to misrepresent in a bargaining framework (Fearon 1995), the ability to prevent violent insurgency from escalating can be very difficult.

Following a civil war, the bargaining environment is defined by the distribution of power between the government and the insurgents. Following a government victory, the position of the rebels is likely to be the same or worse than before the conflict began. Following a rebel victory, we should expect to see a new government in place. Following work on settlements in international conflicts, we should assume that neither

side's preferences are fully achieved if the conflict ended in some sort of ceasefire or settlement (Senese and Quackenbush 2003). Within all three of these environments, insurgents are able to represent their preferences and capabilities through terrorism. In most studies involving spoiling violence, it is assumed that it is only a tactic involved during the negotiation of peace agreements and cease fires. A better way to understand spoiling violence is part of the iterated bargaining process that follows a conflict.

Following victory by either side in a conflict, peace is maintained through the strength of the victorious side. By using the previous victory as a deterrent to challengers, it is assumed that the peace following victory by either side will be more stable (Mason and Fett 1996; Mason, Weingarten, and Fett 1999; Brandt et al. 2008; Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007). Defeated groups may use terrorism to extend the conflict, or at the very least signal that the opposition has not given up (Cunnighm, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). Traditional studies of civil war would consider this time to be "peace" since the level of violence is not above a level of violence necessary to be considered a civil war. Peace duration is an iterated bargaining process no matter the outcome of the previous conflict (Mason 2009, 342).The decision to continue fighting is a subjective decision based on an expected utility calculation that continued violence can achieve a settlement in the future closer to the group's preference (Brandt et al. 2009). Terrorism allows for groups to engage in low cost forms of violence in order to rally support for their cause over a long time frame.

Following a settlement, the governments and rebels face commitment problems associated with implementing the peace agreement. Post war terrorism represents a

commitment problem for the state. The inability of the rebel groups to control splinter factions as well as reduce the level of terrorism can make states reluctant to uphold their end of the peace process. Previous scholars have noted that the credible commitment problem makes many peace agreements very fragile (Fearon 2004, Walter 1997, 2002, Derouen et al. 2010). Terrorism exemplifies the perception of a lack of commitment by rebels even if the attacks are not carried out by the primary rebel groups. The initial implementation of an agreement is the most volatile (Werner 1999), but commitment problems can continue to plague peace agreements over time.

Peace agreements represent a dangerous situation for many rebel groups. Since settlements often involve rebel factions disarming, there is always a risk the government will defect once the rebel group has disarmed. Terrorism provides rebels an easy way to solve the commitment problem of disarmament. Rather than giving up all of their military capabilities, terrorism provides a low cost and easily deployable form of violence that forces the government to uphold its end of the bargain. Violence emerges when the rebels perceive the government as reneging on its agreement. Thus, terrorism spoiling is not just the work of extremists, it can also be a tactic used by rebel groups to check government cheating.

The rate of attacks may provide the government some information, but since the group relies on secrecy for its security, the ability of the government to have credible information is highly limited. Fearon (1995) argues combatants have an incentive to misrepresent their military capabilities and resolve. Small spoiler groups can use terrorism as an example of misrepresentation by carrying out large numbers of attacks

to make their capabilities appear greater. This can be especially relevant for minor factions of rebel groups seeking to undermine peace deals between the government and other members of the rebel group. Although leaders who are engaged in the negotiations may be legitimately committed to the peace process, they lack the ability to assuage the government in the face of ongoing violence. It also makes those negotiating peace with the government seem like they are in the minority of the rebel group, hurting their legitimacy in the negotiations. Thus spoiler violence can serve to misrepresent the incentives of the group and exploit information asymmetries to provoke the government back into fighting. Spoiler violence enhances the government's lack of information about the cohesiveness of rebel organizations making it difficult for it to uphold its end of the peace agreement.

A third explanation of civil war recurrence is the notion of dual sovereignty outlined by Mason et al (2011) and Quinn, Mason, and Gurses (2007). Borrowing from Tilley (1978), the dual sovereignty argument implies that there are multiple groups that have a claim to sovereignty or control over the government. Dual sovereignty emerges when contention for control of the government is possible. Following a civil war, dual sovereignty is made possible by settlements that fail to disarm one of the fighting sides. Rather than focus on competition for control of the government, using the level of terrorism as an indicator of the capability of dissident forces explains the ability of the post war government to maintain a monopoly on violence. Again, even in cases of military victory and a general disarmament of the losing side, the ability to keep future potential challengers from emerging is a prime test of the post-war government's

control of sovereignty. Although dual sovereignty may be a condition in which civil wars are more likely, the level of terrorism within the state can help explain the level to which sovereignty has been challenged. Again, it is important to take into account the capabilities of potential rebels and their ability to challenge the government's monopoly of violence.

Kalyvas (2006) argues that rebels emerge when they are able to establish their own monopoly of violence in a particular area of the country, but violence in this case undermines the ability of the government to effectively exert its sovereignty. The emergence of terrorism violence undermines the government's monopoly of violence. If a state loses its perceived monopoly of violence, it loses its ability to retain sovereignty over its territory and people. A small number of attacks would not be enough to challenge the sovereignty of the state. If attacks are not directed at the state directly, then the attacks may not be about challenging the state, but the power of other groups in society. Terrorism emerges as an easier method to challenge the sovereignty of the state because unlike other forms of violent rebellion, it requires the support of the surrounding population for security and not of physical territorial control (Merari 1993).

Given the arguments outlined above, we should expect two relationships between terrorism and recurrent civil war. First, in order to spoil the peace, groups engaging in spoiling violence must demonstrate adequate levels of capabilities. Thus: *Hypothesis 1: The higher the level of terrorism in a state following a civil war, the greater the likelihood of peace failure.*

The level of terrorism is not the only indicator of rebel capabilities and intentions. If a group is seeking to challenge the government directly then it must attack government targets. If groups focus their attacks against civilians and other groups within the state, their grievance may not be with the government itself. The measures of terrorist violence used in this study are aggregate indicators of violence throughout the state. Increasing attacks against nongovernment targets can also represent the level of cohesion among insurgent factions. Groups will use violence in order to consolidate their influence and support among the population. This includes violence against one another. Many groups will seek to eliminate the competition for support by attacking other insurgent factions prior to carrying out a campaign against the government (Abrahms 2006). The more groups are fighting among themselves, the less likely they will engage in conflict with government forces. Only when the resistance in a state is targeted against the government should we expect an increased likelihood of civil war. Groups that engage in mostly civilian attacks are distinct from rebel groups that seek to engage the government in a guerilla or convention civil war (Abrahms 2006). Furthermore, since attacks against government targets require increased levels of planning and sophistication to carry out, groups that focus their attacks against civilians may appear weak. Thus:

Hypothesis 2: The more terrorist attacks in a state target civilians, the greater the likelihood of continued peace.

Data and Methodology

I test the hypotheses outlined above using data provided by Mason et al. (2011). The data uses Sambanis's (2004) definition of civil war onset and termination. Data on terrorism incidents comes from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (START 2010). The GTD begins its coverage of terrorism incidents in 1970, thus only peace spells that begin after 1970 are used in this study. The unit of analysis is individual years following civil wars. The data contains 68 peace spells, of which 27 fail resulting in a new civil war.

The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the duration of peace a state experiences following a civil war. This follows the methodology of Mason et al. (2011). Although other studies have examined the duration of peace between the parties that originally fought the civil war,[8] this study examines whether or not the state as a whole remains stable following the end of a civil war. This measure is more appropriate because this study examines whether or not terrorism is effective at spoiling the peace. Spoiling is often carried out by those excluded from the peace or factions within the opposition. Thus, we should look at peace in the state as a whole rather than focus exclusively on the parties involved in the original conflict. Many groups that have an incentive to spoil may not be included in the peace agreement or may not have been part of the original fighting parties. By looking at the state as a whole we can better capture the fractionalization of

[8] Mason et al. (2011, 180) provides an overview of the various studies using the two contrasting measures of peace duration.

rebel groups and the emergence of multiple rebel groups in conflicts (Mason et al. 2011).[9] On average, states experience 7.8 years of peace until civil war recurrence.

The Independent Variables

The primary argument of this paper is that increasing number of terrorist incidents within a state should increase the likelihood of civil war recurrence. In order to test this hypothesis I use data from the GTD to count the *number of terrorist attacks* within a state in a given year. The GTD defines a terrorist incident as "an intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor". The action must also meet two of the following three criteria:

1. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;

2. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims; and

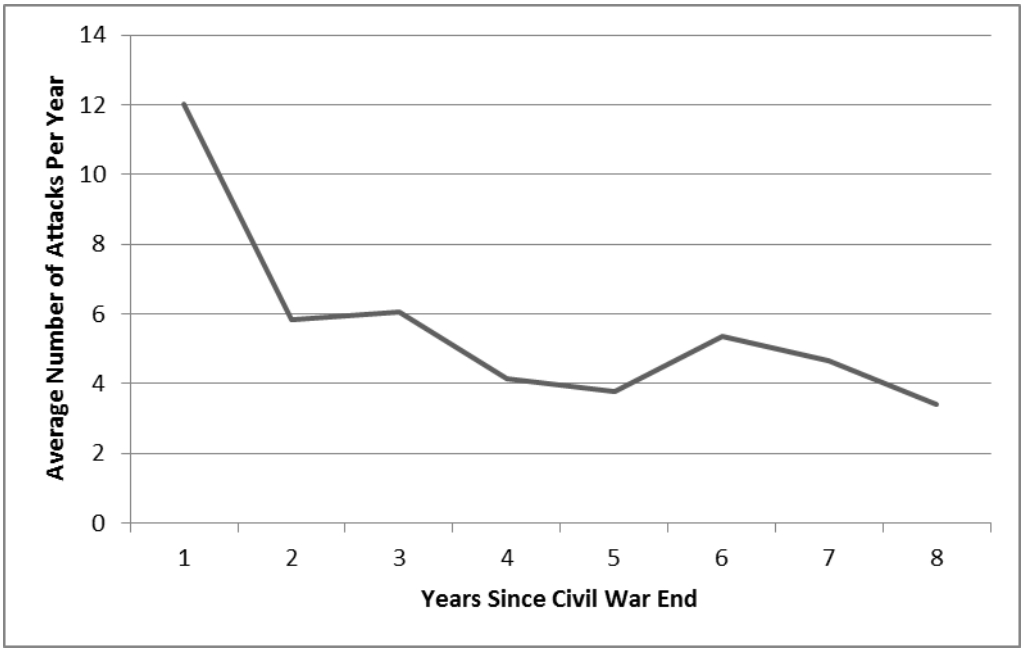
3. The violent act was outside the precepts of International Humanitarian Law. (START 2010)

Following civil wars, states face wide variation in the number of terrorist incidents. In the cases used in this study, the average number of attacks in a state in the years following a civil war is 6.8. In 46.5% of the observations there are no terrorist attacks.

[9] Mason et al. (2011) provide further justifications for this measure. Defining peace spells dyadically rather than through the state as a whole can lead to overly optimistic conclusions about sustaining post-conflict peace by conflating states that have multiple different dyadic conflicts to states that have recurring conflicts with the same groups.

Figure 3.1 shows the relationship between the number of terrorist attacks and the time since civil war conclusion. Attacks are greatest immediately following the end of the civil war, but then start to level off. This is indicative that the opportunity for terrorism to spoil the peace is greatest immediately following the conflict. Since the magnitude of the violence matters more than the individual attacks themselves, the natural log of the number of attacks is used in the models.

Figure 3.1: Average Number of Attacks Following a Civil War



A second independent variable is used to test the effect of target selection on civil war recurrence. The variable *percent civilian* represents what percent of terrorist attacks are carried out against civilian targets. The variable use the target type data from the GTD to determine what the primary target of each attack. Attacks against businesses, airports, airplanes, educational institutions, food supplies, water supplies, journalists, media outlets, ports, maritime facilities, nongovernmental organizations, private citizens, private property, religious figures, religious institutions, telecommunication, tourists, transportation, and utilities are considered attacks against civilian targets for this study.[10] The average *percent civilian* in the data is 28.6. Since this variable likely plays a mediating effect on the total number of attacks, models are also run using the interaction term *Number of Attacks*percent civilian*.

Control Variables

Multiple other factors have been found to shape the duration of peace following a civil war. Following Mason et al. (2011), I use the following variables as controls. First is the outcome of the previous civil war. Each civil war has one of three potential outcomes: *rebel victory, government victory,* or *negotiated settlement*. Data on civil war outcomes comes from Doyle and Sambanis (2000) and Sambanis (2004). In the models presented here, I use a dummy for *rebel victory* and *settlement* using government victory as the reference category.[11]

[10] This data comes from the *targtype1* variable in the GTD.
[11] Models were run using other specifications of these variables including just the settlement variable using any form of victory as the reference category with no significant changes in the results.

Peacekeeping operations have also been found to stabilize the peace following a civil war. Following Mason et al. (2011) I use the dichotomous variable *peace keepers* if peace-keeping forces were present at all following a civil war.[12] This variable captures the fact that peace keeping forces are associated with longer peace durations. Peace keeping operations provide a means to enforce agreements and deter renewed fighting. I use Mason et al.'s (2011) coding for this variable which is drawn from the UN DPKO Web site, Doyle and Sambanis (2000), Fortna (2004), and Sambanis (2004).

Fearon and Laitin's (2003) measure of *ethnic fractionalization* and the square of this measure are included to control for the inverted-U relationship and civil war recurrence. Measures for the *duration of the previous conflict* and the natural log of *battle deaths* from the previous civil war are included to control for the costs of the previous conflict. These data come from Doyle and Sambanis (2000), *Correlates of War*, Sambanis (2004), and Lacina and Gleditsch (2005). The natural log of the state's *military personnel* is used to control for the military, and thus coercive, capacity of the state. This data comes from the Correlates of War National Capabilities Data.

The models also include controls for regime type. The models include the POLITY IV democracy-autocracy scale (*regime)* and the square of that scale (*regime*^{2}) to control for the ability of strong democracies and autocracies to reduce the risk of civil war through accommodation and repression. The models also control for levels of economic

[12] A time-variant version of the variable was also used, but the results become suspect because the absence of peace keepers perfectly predicts renewed conflict. There is not a case in the data in which war resumes when peacekeepers are present. Thus the time invariant version of the variable is the best way to capture the effects of peacekeepers without biasing the final results. Models using the time variant model produce similar results to the models presented here.

development using *Infant Mortality Rate* from the UN's *World Population Prospect: The 1998 Revision*.[13]

Model Estimation

Duration models are the standard practice for estimating the effects of variables on peace duration following civil war. Although there are multiple types of survival models, the Cox proportional hazard is the most appropriate model for this study. Unlike other survival specifications, the Cox model does not impose any assumptions on the base line hazard rate as opposed to other specifications that require additional assumptions on the relationship between the variables and the hazard rate (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004).[14] Following Mason et al. (2011) the models are estimated using robust standard errors clustered on the country. Since the baseline hazard rate for states with multiple previous peace failures should be higher than those without previous peace failures, the models are stratified by a count variable of previous peace failures to allow each strata to have its own baseline hazard model.

[13] Robustness checks were also run using a variety of different variables. Fearon and Laitin's (2003) GDP per capita was used to replace infant mortality with no significant difference in results. Several models also included dichotomous variables for ethnic conflicts and territorial conflicts using data from Sambanis (2004) and Bahaug (2006). Those variables were not significant in the models and the results for the other variables were also similar.

[14] Diagnostic tests reveal that the variables do not violate the proportional hazards assumptions of the Cox model making interactions with the natural log of time unnecessary in the models.

Table 3.1: Cox Proportional Hazards Models

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)
Number of Attacks	2.215***	4.126***	6.457***
	(0.422)	(1.626)	(3.658)
Percent Civilian		0.0337**	0.0879*
		(0.0498)	(0.130)
Number of Attacks*Percent Civilian			0.342
			(0.243)
Rebel Victory	0.837	0.652	0.635
	(0.615)	(0.537)	(0.514)
Settlement	4.538**	8.892***	8.847***
	(2.746)	(6.911)	(7.112)
Peace Keepers	0.0194***	0.0194***	0.0235***
	(0.0159)	(0.0233)	(0.0278)
Regime	1.080	1.058	1.067
	(0.0724)	(0.0724)	(0.0772)
$Regime^2$	0.975*	0.971*	0.971
	(0.0134)	(0.0173)	(0.0174)
Ethnic Fractionalization	20.90**	167.7**	191.9**
	(29.29)	(391.1)	(455.0)
$Ethnic\ Fractionalization^2$	4.12e-05	1.15e-07	1.51e-07
	(0.000303)	(1.17e-06)	(1.54e-06)
Infant Mortality	1.022***	1.033***	1.035***
	(0.00678)	(0.0101)	(0.0112)
Military Personnel	0.766	0.712	0.724
	(0.130)	(0.170)	(0.165)
War Dead	1.800***	1.810**	1.827**
	(0.364)	(0.498)	(0.500)
War Duration	0.773***	0.735***	0.743***
	(0.0419)	(0.0612)	(0.0612)
$Wald\ Chi^2$	93.90***	57.65***	67.40***
Observations	529	529	529

Hazard Ratios Reported. Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Results

The models in Table 3.1 provide robust support for *Hypothesis 1*, showing evidence that higher levels of terrorism increase the likelihood of peace failure. Using the results from Model 2, for each percent increase in the number of terrorism events, a state will increase the risk of civil war recurrence by 400%. The large increase of risk also indicates why the scale of attacks is important. Since most attacks occur in the initial years following the termination of the previous civil war, there should be an increased emphasis on decreasing the opportunity and desire for attacks to occur. The effect is significant no matter how the targeting choice of the attacks is controlled for.

The models also provide support for *Hypothesis 2*, which means that the more terrorism focuses on civilians, the less likely a civil war will recur. Unlike the model for civil war onset, there is not an interaction effect between the targeting of civilians and the number of attacks. However, the variable for the percent attacks against civilians is significant in Model 2 without the interaction term, and approaches significance in Model 3 when the interaction term is included. Using Model 2, each percent increase in attacks against civilians decreases the probability of peace failure by nearly 97%. This is strong evidence for why target choice matters in shaping the strategic environment.

Conclusion

Based on the results of several Cox proportional hazard models, this paper provides evidence that terrorism has a major impact in shaping the probability of civil war recurrence. The more attacks that occur within a state following a civil war, the

greater the likelihood that state will experience another civil war. The target of attacks also matters. The more attacks focus on civilian targets, there is a decreased likelihood of civil war recurrence. These findings provide important theoretical implications for how scholars approach civil war recurrence and for policy makers.

Future research needs to take into consideration the rate and targets of terrorism in states in order to better capture the dynamic nature of violent opposition. Explanations that rely solely on the structural conditions in a state following a civil war ignore the how violent acts shape that strategic environment. Terrorism becomes a better indicator of renewed violence because it captures the relative strength of the opposition and the ability of the post-conflict society to contain violence. Dynamic measures are needed because they can explain not only if there is an opportunity for conflict, but whether or not opposition groups are taking advantage of those opportunities.

The findings presented here also show the importance of focusing on capabilities as an explanation for the variance in the effectiveness of spoiler violence. All three major approaches to civil war recurrence (enduring internal rivalries, bargaining failures and commitment problems, and dual sovereignty) are enhanced by using measures that capture the relative capabilities of the opponents of the post-conflict arrangements. Understanding the motivations for spoiler violence only represents half of the theoretical picture behind spoiling strategy. Understanding capabilities helps better explain the opportunity for large scale violence. In the past, scholars have assumed the opportunity for spoiling as being timed around other events, but the opportunity for

spoiling should also include whether or not the opposition is capable of spoiling. This better captures the variance in spoiler success and failure across conflicts and opens up the opportunity for future research on the nature of post-conflict stability.

States that have already experienced a civil war are at a higher risk of conflict than other states. States unable to contain violent opposition risk falling into a "conflict trap" of perpetual violence which they cannot escape (Collier and Sambanis 2002). The rate and targets of terrorism point to an important aspect of why some states are able to escape the trap and others are not. If violence continues despite the "peace," then the bargaining is incomplete. Rivalries continue although the fighting has stopped, and the more violence that is carried out by the opposition, the less legitimate the government's claim to sovereignty. Given these connections, we cannot ignore those who are spoiling for a fight to have the capabilities to get their wish.

CHAPTER 4: STEPPING UP THE FIGHT: TERRORISM AND CIVIL WAR ESCALATION

The previous two chapters have focused on terrorism as a macro-level indicator of the probability of civil war. The findings provide evidence that levels of terrorism can provide insight to the likelihood of civil war onset and recurrence at the state level, but state level data can only compare the government versus all possible insurgent groups in the state. Others have noted the importance of viewing civil wars as a process of dyadic interaction (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). This study follows the dyadic approach to civil war by examining the use of terrorism as a form of interaction between a rebel group and a state.

Previous research on civil war onset has relied on definitions of civil war contingent upon casualty thresholds. Although the definition changes from study to study, most definitions of civil war rely on a conflict between two parties that produces approximately 1000 battle deaths. Onset studies relying on these definitions risk overlooking the early fighting and activities of rebel groups. The initial low levels of violence can shape the nature of opposition against the state and can determine the shape of the conflict to come. Civil wars rarely emerge out of nowhere. Many are the result of long simmering conflicts within a state. These conflicts can remain relatively low scale for many years, but, for any number of reasons, escalate in a given year. Understanding the actions taken by rebels that makes this escalation possible is important. Understanding civil wars from state characteristics ignores the dyadic nature

of the conflict. Once violent opposition to the government emerges, many of the factors the explain why civil wars break out cannot explain why small conflicts may escalate into larger conflicts. In order to understand why civil wars emerge from low level conflicts, we need to look at the interaction between the rebel group and the state.

Terrorism represents a primary form of interaction between rebel groups and the state at the early stages of violent rebellion. Many groups are too small and weak at the beginning of the conflict to directly engage government forces in combat. Instead, they rely on terrorism as a means to announce their opposition to the government, and rally support for their cause. Before conflicts can escalate to civil war, terrorism lays the foundation for rebel groups to establish their control over the population, recruit new members, and weaken the government's grip on power. Groups can do this by attacking the government directly, but can also attack civilians as a means of garnering support for their cause. Using a Cox proportional hazard model, I find that groups that are capable of carrying out more terrorist attacks are more likely to be involved in escalating conflicts. This relationship is moderated by target selection. The more that groups focus their attacks on government targets, escalation becomes more likely. Attacks against civilians are also likely to result in conflict escalation, but those attacks are not as effective as directly attacking the government.

This chapter will proceed in five parts. First, I explore the distinction between examinations of civil war onset and civil war escalation. Second, I discuss how the level of attacks carried out by a particular group can result in civil war escalation. Third, I discuss the strategy of target selection for terrorist attacks. Fourth, I test a model of

conflict escalation. Fifth, the conclusion discusses the implications of the findings for understanding civil wars and escalation. I find that terrorism is an effective strategy at the group level for escalating conflicts. The target of terrorist attacks matters in terms of effectiveness. Attacks against government targets are an effective means for a rebel group to cause an escalation in violence. Attacks against civilians are less effective at causing the level of violence to escalate, but are related to an increase in the likelihood of higher levels of violence because they allow rebel groups to consolidate their control over the population.

The Difference Between Onset and Escalation

The assumption of many civil war onset studies is that prior to the onset of civil war, the country was at peace. What is ignored is the low levels of insurgency prevalent in many countries that never cross a level of fighting intensity. Gurr (1993) outlines six stages of rebellion. At the lowest levels of rebellion, rebel groups will engage in political banditry, sporadic acts of terrorism, and perhaps attempts at coups. For example, in response to NATO actions in the former Yugoslavia, a group known as "Cell for Internationalism" emerged in Austria and carried out several attacks against the American International School in protest of NATO actions (TOPS 2011). The group was seeking broader forms of regime change, but only carried out a few attacks. Gurr's second stage of rebellion involves more sustain terrorism campaigns. This involves a more sustained level of terrorism similar to that used by Algerian nationalists against French colonialism. For Gurr, these lower levels of fighting are distinguished from higher

levels of fighting by their sole reliance on terrorism and avoidance of more organized combat operations. Merari (1993) also uses the distinction between guerilla tactics and terrorist tactics, arguing the latter rely on secrecy and indirect forms of confrontation.

Groups that engage in guerilla warfare compromise a higher form of combat in Gurr's (1993) typography. Groups like the FARC in Columbia have engaged in large guerilla struggles against the state. Gurr distinguishes between two levels of guerilla fighting based on the number of fighters in the organization. The final levels of fighting are different forms of conventional civil wars. These wars are characterized as conventional wars fought between rebel armies and government armies are similar to interstate wars (Kalyvas and Balcels 2010). Although there are differences between the different levels of conflicts, we should examine what actions taken by insurgent groups allow them to gain the strength needed to move from low levels of terrorism to higher levels of combat against the government.

Previous research has examined predictions of different levels of violence. Regan and Norton (2005) found factors that predict the rise of protest movements do not necessarily predict violence against the state. The results of their findings provide evidence that grievances are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for violence. When grievances lead to collective action against the state, the decision to use violence is shaped by the viability of alternative options. Groups turn to violence when other means of political participation are not available. Once a group turns to violence, it often creates momentum within the organization to continue to use violence (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). State level data can be a predictor of why

dissidents turn to violence, but by itself, state-level data cannot explain why some violent conflicts escalate, while others remain relatively contained.

The literature on civil war and terrorism also differs greatly in seeking to explain the causes of either form of violence. Most studies of civil war onset use a predetermined level of violence as the indicator of when the civil war begins. In the meantime, since the state is not experiencing a high enough level of violence it is assumed to be at "peace." This interpretation of studying peace and war has been criticized by some as ignoring the systemic nature of violence that pervades societies and creating a false image of stability when really that stability is an illusory concept (e.g. Rummel 1981). Studies on terrorism, on the other hand, have taken the approach of simply counting the number of attacks in a state and looking for relationships between the level of terrorism and different variables that are descriptive of the state (e.g. Piazza 2006, 2008, 2011, Eubank and Weinberg 1994, Li 2005, Koch and Cranmer 2007, Drakos and Gofas 2006).

Rather than focus on explaining the "causes" of terrorism or "causes" of civil war, we should look at the factors that shape conflict escalation. Such an approach will give us a better understanding of the differences in civil violence for a number of reasons. First, violence against the state and government is inevitable. Second, although previous work on onset has focused on the importance of state strength and the governability of a state (Fearon and Laitin 2003), a better connection needs to be made between the onset of political violence and the escalation of violence to other phases of conflict. Finally, attempts to explain causes of violence ignore the different conditions

that shape the utility of violence. Previous works on the causes of civil war have adhered to a "greed vs. grievance" framework that explains when conflicts arise (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler 2004). What is missing is an understanding of when rebellion is feasible for a rebel group (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009).

The first criticism of causes studies is that they ignore that political violence is inevitable. Nearly every state in the modern world has experienced some form of terrorism or political banditry. Data from the Global Terrorism Database shows that most states have some experience with terrorism, even if there are just one or two attacks over a decade. This has less to do with the causes of violence and more to do with the inevitability of grievances against the government. Previous criticisms of grievance based approaches to civil conflicts have pointed out that grievance based approaches fail because ubiquitous nature of grievances (e.g. Berdal and Malone 2000, Collier and Hoeffler 2004). It is not enough to identify that people will be upset with conditions of the state, but it is a question of when these grievances turn to violence.

The ability of even small grievances to become violent is made possible by the relatively low cost of terrorism. Phillips (2011) argues individuals carry out terrorist attacks because their low cost and perceived high utility. Terrorism does not require large organizations to carry out relatively high profile attacks. Phillips argues "lone wolf" terrorism can also be of greater scale because the lack of organizational constraints on the perpetrator. The attacks carried out by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway in July of 2011, provide evidence of the capacity for even a single actor carrying out a large scale attack. Breivik's motivations for the attacks came from opposition to the liberalization of

Norway's immigration laws and were rooted in a growing anti-multiculturalism sentiment in the country. Breivik was capable of carrying out a series of attacks resulting in more than 70 deaths, without the support of a larger organization (The Telegraph 2011). Even a few individuals working together can carry out relatively high number of attacks and cause a large number of casualties. The low cost of terrorism makes terrorist violence inevitable; the question then becomes what causes small scale attacks to grow into larger conflicts?

Part of the answer to this question comes from the theory of conflict feasibility (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009). Terrorism presents a solution to the high cost of armed conflict for relatively weak organizations. By carrying out a few attacks, a group can gauge the reaction of the state and the general population to its position. If a group is capable of gaining public support and weakening the legitimacy of the government, it can gain enough strength to make higher forms of conflict possible. From the perspective of measuring civil wars based on a predetermined casualty count, rebel groups have to gain enough strength and supporters for conflicts to have the potential to reach a particular casualty level.

By looking at conflict escalation rather than conflict onset, this study differs from previous studies in two distinct ways. First, it focuses on the tactics used by groups to increase their influence in a society enabling them to have greater resources for their fight against the state. Second, by focusing on the violent groups that have already emerged in a state, it moves the debate away from discussions of "greed and grievance" and towards a question of whether or not state features and rebel tactics make

rebellion feasible (Collier, Hofner, and Rohner 2009). The following section outlines how terrorism can be used by a group to escalate their conflict against the state.

The Connection Between Terrorism and Onset

The previous chapters have both shown how state levels of terrorism are a reliable macro-level indicator of civil war onset and recurrence. That high levels of terrorism are associated with civil wars is not unheard of since many rebel groups will continue to use terrorism as a tactic in their struggle against the state. This section explains how groups are able to use terrorism as a strategy to expand their influence throughout society and escalate conflicts. Terrorism is able to accomplish this in several ways. First, by carrying out attacks, a group is able to establish itself as a credible form of opposition to the state. In order to do so, the group must claim credit for the attacks in a way that distinguishes themselves from other opposition groups. Second, this advertisement of the opposition serves to draw in more members of the group and solve some of the collective action problems associated with violent conflict. Third, as the group is able to escalate against the state, the state is provoked into retaliation resulting in increased support for the group. Eventually the state is forced to engage in combat operations against the organization resulting in a civil war.

In previous chapters, I examined the connection between the level of terrorism of the state as a whole and the onset and recurrence of civil war. In these examples, terrorism serves as an indicator of the relative capabilities of opposition forces compared to the state. As the strength of the opposition grows, there are greater risks

of conflict. At the macro-level, this measure captures a limited picture of the amount of opposition to the state, but cannot capture the effect of terrorist activity for individual groups. The number of attacks carried out by an individual group is an important predictor for the likelihood of civil war between the group and the government.

Previous research on the escalation of political conflict has identified predictable patterns of escalation (Regan and Norton 2005, Moore 1998). These studies argue that rising grievances lead to the mobilization of opposition supporters by political entrepreneurs. This mobilization leads to state coercion or concessions. If the opposition is violent, concession encourage more violence on the part of the group (Bueno de Mesquita 2005) or on the part of future rebellions (Walter 2006). Coercion increases the support for the rebel organization because it can increase the grievances against the government (e.g. Lichbach 1987, Gupta, Singh, and Sprague 1993, Gartner and Regan 1996). This provocation strategy has been used by a number of rebel groups that will initially use terrorism and low level attacks to provoke the government into a disproportionate response (Kydd and Walter 2006). Although it may seem that either strategy is doomed to failure, the capability of the state to deter violence and channel dissent into political (nonviolent) channels also shapes the probability of conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003, Lai 2007, Lichback 1995, McCormick 2003).

The escalation patterns provide a good general model of conflict escalation, but only explains violence as a result of the behavior of the state. Other authors have identified how the use of violence on the part of the rebel group can rally support for the opposition regardless of the government's strategy. First, terrorism serves as

advertising for the existence of the opposition (Laqueur 2001). Advertising provides a demonstration effect for supporters that the group not only exists, but is capable of challenging the government. As the number of attacks grows, the government appears to be relatively weaker, and the likelihood of victory increases. As the likelihood of rebel victory increases, more members are likely to side with the group (Lichbach 1995, Bohorquez et al. 2009).

Terrorism's low cost makes it an inevitable component of any insurgency (Merrari 1993, 247). The use of terrorism is just one of many strategies that groups can and will use, but early in the conflict it is the best available strategy for relatively weak groups. Terrorist attacks, especially those against critical infrastructure, provide groups with relatively cheap means of coercion against the government that can inflict steep costs (Robb 2007). The ability to inflict costs on the government is necessary to pressure the government into action, but it also serves a number of other purposes. As seen in the previous chapters, terrorist violence can undermine the relative strength of the government by decreasing its legitimacy, challenging sovereignty, and undermining the government's control of the population.

Terrorism as a strategy relies on the use of secrecy and underground operations in order to avoid direct confrontation with government forces. In the early stages of conflict secrecy is the best means for a group to protect itself, but the security provided by being underground prevents the group from expanding its influence and gaining new members (McCormick 2003). It is important for the rebel group to gain the support of the local population. Support can be active or passive. Passive support comes in the

form of lack of interference and the lack of betrayal by members of the population to the government. Such support is necessary because it gives the group freedom of movement and the ability to take the initiative against the government (O'Neill 1990). Active support is necessary for long term success. It comes in the form of gaining new members, the provision of resources necessary to fight against the government, and active resistance against the government that allows the rebel group to come out of the shadows and engage in direct fights against the government.

Although anonymous attacks can serve a number of important functions for a rebel group both internally and strategically (Chenowith, Miller, and McClellan 2009), groups need to take credit for attacks in order for the attacks to generate meaningful support for the organization. First, claiming credit for attacks helps groups establish their identity as an opposition group to the state. As groups increasingly take credit, they are able to garner the reputation benefit of carrying out the attacks and establish themselves as rebel opposition to the state. Balcels (2010) argues political identities are crucial for the identification of enemies on both sides of the conflict, and attacks against one perceived side of the conflict (be it either the government forces themselves or the supporters of the government) inevitably invites escalatory violence from the other side.

Second, credit claiming is necessary in environments where multiple rebel groups have to compete for political support with other rebel groups. In many states, the opposition to the government is not limited to one rebel group or one grievance. Multiple groups represent Palestinian grievances against Israel, but have to compete

with each other for popular support. Credit claiming is important in these contexts to ensure attacks translate into support. Thus:

Hypothesis 1: The greater the number of claimed terrorist attacks by a rebel group, the greater the likelihood of conflict escalation.

Why Attack Civilians?

A major puzzle that emerges in the previous chapters and in previous research (i.e. Abrahms 2006, 2008) is why are terrorist attacks carried out against civilian targets? Although the previous chapters have shown that when the percent of attacks against civilians in a state is high, the risk of civil war is lower than if attacks are against the government. When we consider all attacks regardless of perpetrator this pattern is to be expected given the role that attacks against civilians play in a violent opposition group. First, it does not account for the diverse goals violent groups have. Second, at the group level, attacks against civilians play an important control function that serves as an investment towards future capabilities. This section outlines the benefits that attacks against civilians provide for the individual rebel groups that may not be apparent at the aggregate state level.

The first difference between looking at terrorism as an aggregate indicator of state stability and as a group capability indicator is that at the group level we are able to take into account the differing goals of opposition groups. Groups use political violence for a number of goals. For example, anarchist groups have long used terrorism as a means to incite wider popular revolutions against the government through “propaganda

of the deed" (Laqueur 2001, Merriam 2009). Other groups have used terrorism to achieve relatively limited goals. For example, "the Extradictables" were a group of Columbian drug lords who used terrorism to coerce the government into not upholding its extradition treaty with the United States. Different goals require different tactics. If a group's grievance grounded in opposition to the government, then we should expect that group to use tactics to coerce the government. Thus when looking at relationship between civil war and terrorism, it is also important to consider the individual group goals.

Two goals are unique in oppositional struggles that explain violence against the state as opposed to the general population: territorial control and regime change. Jones and Libicki (2008) argue there are multiple goals pursued by terrorist organizations. Of the different end goals, we should not expect that all groups will seek confrontation with the government. Not all groups seek the destruction of the government they are fighting, and ignoring those with limited goals from those seeking unlimited conflict undermines our ability to understand and counter terrorism (Sederberg 1995). Territorial control and regime change require higher levels of conflict with the government because governments are unwilling to make concessions on these issues for a number of reasons.

States are unwilling to make territorial concessions to rebel groups out of fear of encouraging conflicts with other potential rebels (Walters 2006). Governments are also reluctant to recognize self-determination movements abroad in fear of concessions may encourage groups across the globe to use violence to reclaim their home territories

(Moore 1998). Thus, not only do states not want to make territorial concessions out of fear of loss of territory and resources, but also out of fear of future violence. Even in conflict settlements, alternatives to the formation of new states are often shunned in favor of federalism style regional autonomy arrangements. Regime change is also a goal that requires direct confrontation with the state. Elites in power within the state will be reluctant to step down on their own, and many will oppose regime change in fear of losing their power. Since groups seeking regime change often represent existential threats to those in power, only conflict has a chance of forcing adequate change. Since violent movements for regime change and territorial control can represent existential threats to the governing regime, violence may be the only option available to groups to change the status quo.

Within groups seeking regime change and territorial control, attacks against civilians serve several strategic functions. First, attacks against civilians allow a group to control civilian populations without having to rely on military occupation. Groups use terrorism in order to eliminate those who would be willing to provide information to the government and deter others from doing the same (Kalyvas 1999, 2004, 2006). Since many groups rely on secrecy in order to maintain their security (McCormick 2003), the punishment of potential defectors allows groups to protect themselves from government forces. Control of information is more important at the early stages of the conflict Early on groups are more likely to be reliant on terrorism as a tactic because this is when the groups are at their weakest and the most at risk to government counter-

insurgency efforts. As the probability of civilian defection to the government declines, there is also an increase in the probability that the civilians will support the rebel cause.

Second, attacks against civilians can undermine the control of the government. Attacks against civilians spread insecurity throughout the population which makes civilians feel as if the government is unable to control the violence (Crenshaw 1988). The insecurity among the population that results raises the cost of fighting against the rebels because it is more difficult for the government to control the territory and win the trust of the population (Hultman 2007). Even though the attacks may not directly lead to the defeat of the government, the ability of the government to carry out counterinsurgency becomes more difficult raising the cost of the conflict.

Declining support for the government also increases the ability of rebel groups to attract supporters. As defection to government forces becomes less common, it becomes easier for groups to recruit without the fear of new members becoming a security risk. As the government appears to be less capable of defeating the rebel group, individuals are more likely to join the rebels as their success appears more likely (Lichbach 1995). Civilians who feel the government is incapable of defeating the rebel group will have a higher expected utility of joining the rebellion in order to gain the benefits of supporting the winning side (Wood 2010). Rebel groups have also used violence as a means to force civilians into taking action against the government (Kalyvas 2006), but this strategy can only gain short term support and is likely to backfire in the long run (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006).

Third, attacks against civilians can also serve as an indicator of rebel groups with large resource endowments. As groups with large resource endowments tend to be less dependent on local populations, they are also more likely to attack and abuse civilians as a result (Humphreys and Weinstein 2006, Weinstein 2007). Rebels are not the only groups who attack civilians. Governments attack civilians in order to undermine support for rebel organizations (Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004). Attacking civilians will make them less likely to provide rebels with the ability to hide among the population and displace potential supporters of rebellion (Azam and Hoeffler 2002).

Fourth, attacks can be strategic when they are attacks against perceived sympathizers of the state or perceived enemies of the rebel group. In many states, ethnic and religious discrimination creates a source of grievances for minority groups. Iraq saw sectarian fighting and attacks based on Sunni and Shia differences and struggles for power. In societies with latent ethnic or religious conflicts, attacking the dominant group may function the same as directly attacking the government.

The most prominent argument for why attacking civilians is not strategic comes from Abrahms (2008). Abrahms criticizes strategic models of terrorism arguing that they cannot account for the relative failure of terrorism against civilian targets to achieve goals. Abrahms argues that terror attacks against civilians do not serve strategic functions, but are used to create solidarity benefits for group members. This is an important function for the group since solidarity benefits are necessary to create strong affective bonds among members which increases group cohesion.

Attacks against civilians make escalation more probable for a number of reasons. First, the internal group cohesion gained from carrying out attacks makes the group more capable for direct confrontation with government forces. Second, attacks against civilians will make calls for government retaliation stronger which may give the government greater leeway to carry out their own atrocities (Abrahms 2008). Thus: *Hypothesis 2: The higher the rate of attacks against civilians, the greater the likelihood of conflict escalation.*

Data and Methods

In order to model the process of conflict escalation, I rely on a Cox proportional hazards model that predicts the likelihood of a conflict escalating in a given year. I operationalize escalation as the first year a conflict between a particular rebel group and the state reaches 1000 battle deaths using data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/International Peace Research Institute (UCDP/PRIO) Armed Conflict Dataset (Gledietsch et al. 2002, Harbom and Wallensteen, 2010). This measure differs from other measures of civil war onset by looking at the overall level of fighting in a given year rather than the backward looking coding used in civil war onset models. For example, Fearon and Laitin (2003) define onset as the year fighting begins that results in 1000 battle deaths. This measure may include casualties that result from terrorism attacks early in the conflict, but does not explain why some conflicts never escalate. This measure of onset is backwards looking, in that it defines a total battle death threshold and then looks for the first year of significant violence as onset. Thus, for an insurgency

that starts in 1980 and results in a total of 1000 battle deaths in 1990, 1980 would be coded as the onset year. For escalation, the variable is not coded as a one unless there are a 1000 battle deaths in a given year. Although this is probably an accurate portrayal of the civil war process, it does not capture weather or not early terrorist activity is effective at escalating the conflict.

The Cox models use rebel group-state dyad years as the unit of analysis. The Cox models include all rebel group state interactions between 1970 and 2000. In order to be included in the analysis, the rebel group using terrorism must meet several criteria. First, the group must be seeking regime change or territorial control within the state. Second, data on the group must be available from both the GTD, the RAND terrorism database (as reported in Jones and Libicki 2008), and the Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPS) data from START. Finally, the group must be identified as carrying out attacks in the GTD. The justification for these coding rules follows below. In order to prevent left censoring of the data from biasing the results, only conflicts that start after 1970 are used.

The first criteria that only groups seeking territorial control and regime change is necessary to control for the heterogeneity inherent in terrorist organizations. Although many different types of groups from across the political spectrum, many do not use terrorism as a means of starting a larger conflict. For example, the Baader-Meinhoff Group sought a broader social revolution, but their philosophy and motivation of anti-capitalism and anarchism made their desire to start a wider war themselves rather low. Groups seeking policy changes, like the Animal Liberation Front, anti-abortion groups

that bomb clinics, and The Extraditables in Columbia, only seek limited change and used terrorism as a form of coercion. None of these groups sought a wider conflict, but instead used violence as a means to call attention to their causes, deter clinics from practicing abortions, or to stop the extradition of drug suspects from Columbia to the United States. There is simply a lack of willingness among these groups to engage in a wider civil war, therefore including them in the individual group study would bias the results of the outcome. Groups seeking territorial control and regime require development of the organizational capacity to control territory and inevitable fight the government directly in order to achieve their goals.

The second criteria, inclusion in the GTD, RAND, and TOPS data, is important for several reasons. First, this helps prevent bias in reporting of the groups by any single dataset. Since the definition of terrorism varies greatly, groups may be excluded from one data set for political reasons and included in others. Furthermore, due to the secretive nature of man of the groups, the use of multiple data sources is necessary to find common descriptions of the groups. For example, the RAND and TOPS data may report a group as forming in 1975, but there might not be any recorded terrorist attacks by the group until 1978. In such cases, it is appropriate to start the data from the group's formation in 1975 in order to compare years of no terrorist attacks to those where attacks do take place. In other cases, the opposite may happen. There are several cases where the RAND and TOPS data do not report a group forming until after the group has already been credited for attacks in the GTD. In any case where there is a

discrepancy of the start of the organization among the three data sources, the earliest recorded date is used.

The final criterion is important to understand the individual group strategy of terrorism. Groups must take credit or be attributed credit for terrorist attacks in the GTD in order to be included in the independent variables of the Cox models. If a group does not take credit or cannot be attributed credit, then there is little chance of the attack of achieving the goals of the organization. Although anonymous attacks may be capable of garnering internal benefits for the group, they will not be effective at rallying members to the group or creating a target for government retaliation. In order to control for the attacks by other groups and those attacks that go unclaimed, I include a variable that counts all other terrorist incidents in the state in a given year. This not only controls for the potential of other groups to shape the interaction between the state and the rebel group in question, but it also helps control for unknown attacks that may not be randomly distributed across the data (Lai 2007). By including the claimed attacks by the group and the total number of attacks in the state, the Cox models are able to capture the effects of known attacks as well as the general instability caused by terrorism in general.

The independent variables are similar to the previous chapters. The first independent variable is the logged number of claimed *Terrorist Attacks* by the rebel group. Data on terrorist attacks comes from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). When possible, the GTD attributes responsibility for an attack to the appropriate group. The second variable *Percent Attacks Against Civilians*, measures the total number of attacks

carried out by the group carried out against civilian targets, divided by the number of total attacks carried out against the group in a year. Since *Hypothesis Two* argues this variable should have a moderating effect on the total number of attacks, the interaction term *Number of Attacks*Percent Attacks Against Civilians* is included in the model.

The control variables used are the same controls used in the onset models featured in Chapter Two. The variables come from Fearon and Laitin's (2003) dataset. *Prior War* is a dummy variable that marks if there was a civil war in the state during the previous year. The war can be between any groups and the government. *Per Capita Income* is used to control for state strength. *Per Capita Income* should decrease the likelihood of escalation by dissuading potential supporters from joining rebel movements and stronger states should be able to defeat small insurgencies. The log of *Population* controls for the higher probability that conflicts in larger states are more likely to involve more people. Population size is positively related to civil war onset and incidents of terrorism simply because more people increase the potential pool of insurgents. *Mountainous Terrain* serves as a proxy for the ability of rebel groups to avoid confrontations with the government. Rough terrain should decrease the ability of governments to patrol their territory and defeat insurgent organizations. *Noncontiguous State* is a dichotomous variable for states that are divided by more than 100 kilometers (for example, Pakistan before Bangladesh became independent). Since it is more difficult for the government to project power to these regions, the likelihood of escalation should be less.

A dichotomous variable for *Oil Exporters* marks states whose exports of fuel account for more than one-third of the state's total exports in a year. *Oil Exporters* are more likely to have civil wars because of weak state institutions. This is also likely to make escalation more likely since it also likely increases the ability of rebel groups to recruit as the result of dissatisfaction with the government. *New State* is a dichotomous variable that marks states in their first two years of independence. These states are more at risk of civil war onset, and the lack of stability in the state may make escalation more probable as well. *Instability* is a dichotomous variable for states that have experienced major changes in the type of government in the prior three years.

Instability is defined as a three point or greater change in the Polity IV index (Marshall and Jaggers 2009). *Regime Type* is controlled for using the Polity IV index. We should expect conflicts in autocracies to be more likely to escalate since the government is less likely to be constrained in its use of force. Finally, controls for *Ethnic Fractionalization* and *Religious Fractionalization* are included as more diverse societies are more likely to create fault lines for conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003).

Table 4.1: Cox Proportional Hazard Results

VARIABLES	UCDP Onset Variable
Number of Terrorist Attacks By Group (ln)	1.506***
	(0.507)
Percent of Attacks Against Civilians	3.946***
	(1.396)
Number of Attacks*Percent of Attacks Against Civilians	-1.407**
	(0.646)
Other Attacks Against State	0.0582
	(0.116)
Prior War	1.652
	(1.164)
Per Capita Income	-0.190
	(0.154)
Population (ln)	0.353
	(0.298)
Mountainous (ln)	-0.348
	(0.255)
Noncontiguous State	-2.894***
	(0.808)
Oil Exporter	0.852
	(0.716)
Instability	1.231**
	(0.496)
Democracy	-0.0309
	(0.0569)
Ethnic Fractionalization	1.131
	(1.670)
Religious Fractionalization	0.729
	(1.685)
Wald Chi^2	263.74***
Observations	1982

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Results

Table 4.1 shows the results of the Cox model predicting civil war escalation. The positive results for all three of the key independent variables indicates initial support for both hypotheses. Because the interaction terms can be difficult to interpret on their own, I use cumulative hazard plots to show how changes in these variables influence the likelihood of civil war escalation.

Figure 4.1 Effect of Number of Attacks

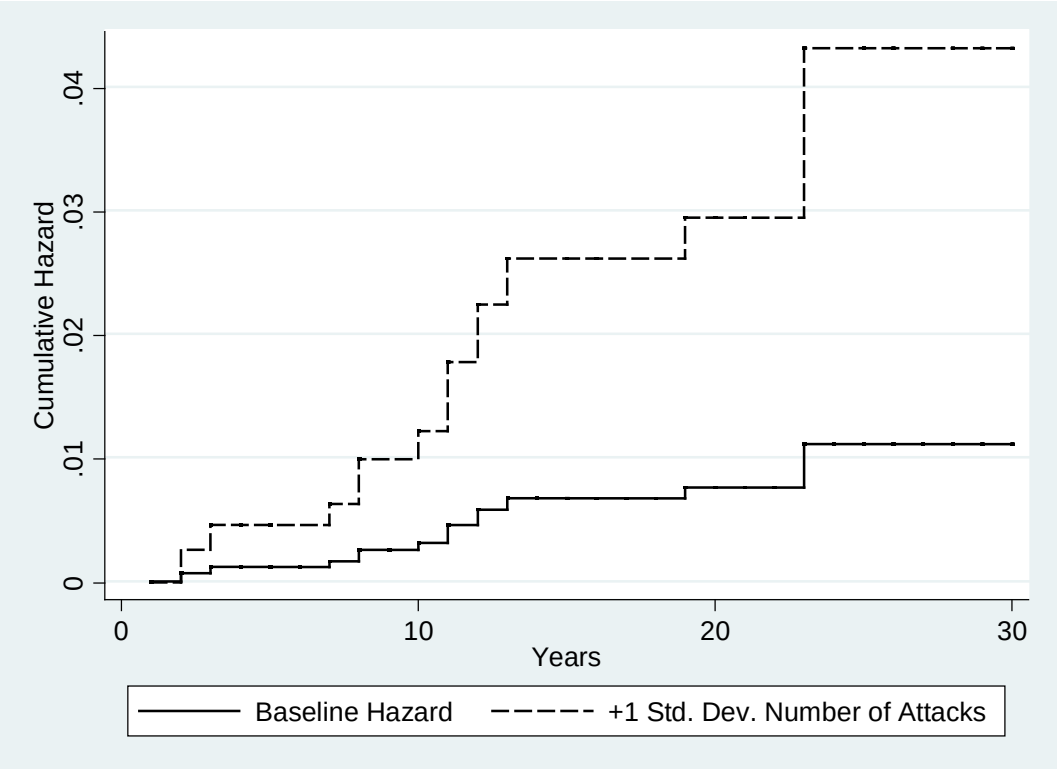


Figure 4.1 shows the results of increasing the *Number of Attacks* variable by one standard deviation while holding all other variables at their mean. Since an increase in the number of attacks would also change the value of the interaction term, the cumulative hazard plot also includes the change in the value of the interaction term. The line for the increased number of attacks shows a higher probability of escalation throughout the analysis time. As time passes, the change in probability becomes greater, indicating that conflicts involving sustained higher levels of terrorism are more likely to experience escalation.

Figure 4.2 Effect of Target Selection

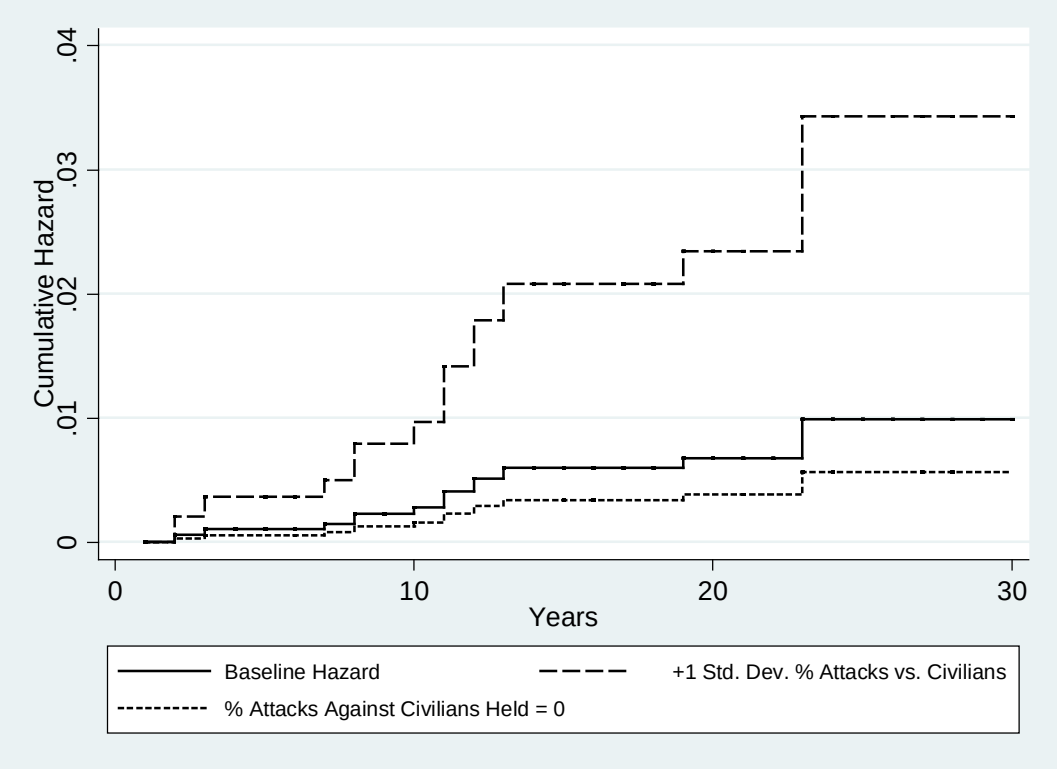


Figure Two shows the interaction effect of the two main independent variables. The variable for *Percent Attacks Against Civilians* is positive and significant, indicating that civilian attacks can increase the probability of civil war. This effect is not as great as if the number of attacks increases on its own. Figure two shows the result of increasing the value *Percent Attacks Against Civilians* by one standard deviation. Despite the negative effect of the interaction, the cumulative hazard of escalation continues to increase over the baseline hazard rate. The cumulative hazard of escalation occurring is less likely in a world where none of the attacks are against civilians. An increase of one standard deviation in the *Percent Attacks Against Civilians* variable (and the corresponding change to the interaction effect) produces a dramatic increase in the probability of escalation. Even though the coefficient for the interaction term is negative, the powerful effect of target choice is able to overcome the weaker moderation effect. Figure Two provides evidence for *Hypothesis Two* which states that attacking civilians is an effective strategy for escalating conflicts.

Results for the control variables show some key differences between the predictors of onset and escalation. First, the variable for other attacks against the state is not significant. This is not surprising given the dyadic nature of the data. It is unlikely that unclaimed or attacks by other actors against the government will lead to the conflict between a rebel group and the state. It does provide limited evidence that unattributed violence and the existence of other violent groups do not necessarily create the opportunity for a group to escalate their conflict against the state.

Second, few of the remaining controls are significant despite their robust relationship with civil war onset. *Per Capita Income*, which Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue is a good proxy for state capacity, is not significant predictor of escalation despite its common negative relationship to civil war onset. This is likely a result of the population of cases where a violent political movement has to emerge first. Since many see state capability as being a deterrent to violence from breaking out, once deterrence fails, strong states are not more capable of preventing escalation than weak states. This is also evidence that we have to take seriously the capabilities and tactics of rebels. Since attack rates and targets are good indicators of relative capabilities between the rebel group and the state, dynamic measures of state-rebel interactions provide better predictors of aspects of conflict.

Conclusion

The findings presented here provide evidence that terrorism is an effective strategy for rebel groups seeking to escalate their conflicts against the state. The more attacks a group carries out, the more likely a conflict will escalate. Attacking civilians may not directly translate into conflict escalation, but do provide many benefits for the rebel organization that makes conflict escalation more likely over the long term. The importance of the findings here provide implications for future civil war and terrorism research as well as insights for policy makers seeking to reduce the risks associated with terrorism.

Future research on civil wars needs to take into account the dynamic interactions between rebels and states. Relying solely on the characteristics of states and rebel groups provides an incomplete picture the dynamics that shape the risk of civil war and civil war escalation. Civil conflict is a dynamic process that requires actions on both sides. Work in international conflict has stressed the "steps to war" taken by states that increase the probability of conflict (Senese and Vasquez 2008). The findings here provide a picture of the steps taken by rebel groups that lead to conflict escalation, but it is missing a similar picture of actions taken by states. Other scholars have argued that government crackdowns as a response to violent uprisings only increases the likelihood of escalation (Crenshaw 1981, Francisco 1995, Ross and Gurr 1989), but we lack the comparative data on government responses to violence and terrorism to test the relationship.

This research also provides a first look at what causes civil wars to escalate. Previous work on civil war severity (Lacina 2006) has focused on total battle deaths across the entirety of a conflict, but not at differences during the conflict. The findings presented here suggest that the actions taken by rebels are better predictors of the changes within a conflict than the characteristics of the state. Future research should investigate the other actions taken by rebels and the comparative rebel characteristics that influence conflict escalation and onset. Although we have some comparative data sources on rebel organizations, they tend to be static pictures of the organizations that do not provide for variance over time. Research investigating the different types of international support provided to rebels can provide a starting point to dynamic models

of conflict that wish to look at changes in capability over time (e.g. Kinsella 2002, Salehyan 2010, Byman et al. 2001).

Finally, future research should investigate the relationship between state characteristics, rebel characteristics, and the rate of terrorist attacks. Previous comparative research on the rate of terrorist attacks in states have focused on state characteristics, but have failed to look at the characteristics of rebels. The findings here are evidence that the rate of attacks in a state is only part of the picture. We need to also investigate the relationships that shape group targeting decisions and credit claiming patterns. Understanding the patterns of rebel attacks can give new insights to counter-terrorism policies that can limit the risk terrorism poses to states and populations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In the previous pages I have laid out the theoretical and empirical connections between the level of terrorism and major phases of civil war. High levels of terrorism are important predictors of civil war onset, recurrence, and escalation. The relationship between the targets of terror attacks and civil war is contingent upon the phase of conflict. For civil war onset, attacks against civilians condition the effect of the level of terrorism on predicting civil wars. If the vast majority of terrorist attacks against a state are against civilians, the level of terrorism no longer predicts the onset of civil wars. In terms of civil war recurrence, the more attacks focus on civilian targets, the lower the probability that peace will fail. Finally, attacks against civilians increase the probability of conflict escalation. These findings provide valuable insights for future research on civil war and terrorism. The remainder of this chapter outlines the implications for civil war and terrorism research.

One of the largest implications of this study is that we have to contextualize terrorism to particular situations. Although high levels of terrorism can have similar effects on the different phases of civil war, the targeting decisions made in those phases have different implications. Disaggregating the effect of terrorism into different contexts better explains the implications terrorist violence has for society at large (Clauset et al. 2010). Here we find that no matter the phase of civil war, the higher the rate of terror attacks, the increased likelihood of war or conflict escalation. This is not surprising given the nature of terrorism and its place on the spectrum of political

violence. If Merari (1993) is correct that terrorists want to become guerrilla fighters, then the findings present here suggest it is the rate of activity is key to groups growing up. Given the robustness of this finding, if states seek to limit the ability of insurgency to spread, limiting the operating space of rebel groups operate in is key to limiting their influence (McCormick 2003).

The evidence presented here about the rate of attacks also provides evidence that the greater risk from terrorism comes not from single large attacks against a state, but from sustained campaigns carried out on the part of rebel organizations. Although large scale attacks can have tragic consequences and spur larger political consequences, alone they do not represent existential threats to society. Even if a group is capable of pulling off a large scale attack (which are rare to begin with), it is the group's ability to follow up on the attack that is key. The al Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, had far reaching political implications, but they represented only a single incident incapable of challenging the United States government's control. Although al Qaeda was able to follow up with large scale attacks in Madrid and London, these attacks never became major threats of the targeted governments. The public reaction to the attacks gave governments the ability to engage in a global "war on terrorism" that has effectively limited the ability of the organization to carry out future attacks. By focusing our energy and concern on large scale attacks, we ignore that it is the groups that are capable of sustaining terrorism campaigns over time that pose the greatest threat to security.

The focus on the systemic nature of attacks makes clear the connection between terrorism and civil war. The criticism used by most scholars of coercion is that it does

not change behavior because it does not provide an adequate threat to the power of the ruling government (e.g. Pape 1996, Byman and Wayman 2002, George 1991). The more constant terrorism becomes the greater chance it has for creating the conditions necessary for civil war. There is little risk that a single attack can destabilize a developed and stable government or rally enough supporters to threaten stability. Despite the bloodshed caused by the September 11th attacks and the Oklahoma City bombing, there was little risk these attacks would be capable of sparking a wider rebellion against the government. Although there were political implications to the attacks, their ability to threaten the stability of the government is limited by the inability of the perpetrators to follow up the attacks and sustain pressure on the government. In some advanced democracies, large scale attacks can influence electoral outcomes, but they are generally incapable of threatening the institutions of government.

Implications for Civil War Research

Using terrorism as a state-level indicator provides valuable insight for researchers of civil war. Violent forms of political protest, like terrorism, can provide researchers with important indicators about the nature of the opposition to the state and how that opposition is expressed. In this section, I outline how terrorism as a state-level indicator solves the passivity problem with many civil war onset models, provides a good indicator of relative capabilities of the opposition, and provides an example of commitment problems associated with civil war settlements. If researchers are going to

take the study of civil war seriously, they should include state levels of terrorist activity as predictors of civil war.

The passivity problem of civil wars emerges from the common practice of predicting civil war onset and recurrence by using state characteristics. Grievances are modeled through proxies like GDP per capita, ethnic and religious fractionalization, and other variables meant to capture the potential for grievances. Despite the different theoretical connections between these indicators and grievances, GDP remains one of the only robust predictors of civil war onset (Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Part of the blame falls on the methods used by researchers to determine the predictors of civil war onset.

Most studies of civil war onset use country year data similar to Fearon and Laitin's (2003) data. Civil war is predicted by looking at the macro characteristics of the state and using them to predict if a civil war occurs. For example, many studies have proposed a relationship between regime type and civil war onset (e.g. Mueller and Weede 1990, Vreeland 2008, Opp 1994, Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007). Democracy is assumed to quell domestic dissent by channeling opposition into the political process rather than violence (e.g. Fearon and Laitin 2003). This relationship, however, is at odds with the terrorism literature that shows democracies tend to have higher levels of terrorism (Eubank and Weinberg 1994). By ignoring the level of terrorism in a state, onset studies render dissent as an agentless and passive phenomenon. Violence breaks out when the opportunity presents itself (Collier and Hoefler 2003), but how opposition forces shape that opportunity is ignored.

The findings presented here provide a powerful criticism to the passive approach to predicting civil wars. First, the level of violence within a state is a powerful predictor of civil war onset, recurrence, and escalation. By looking at the actions of rebels and dissidents in a state, the models used account for their agency and decision making in shaping the opportunity and feasibility of larger forms of conflict. States do not simply go from peace to civil war, rather they face a spectrum of low level forms of violence that are either contained by state military and police forces, or lose momentum due to a lack of support from the general population. Models using only characteristics of the state assume that it was some inherent function of these state characteristics that explain why small rebellions did not escalate. I argue that although these indicators can play a part in the process, they cannot explain why similar states may experience different levels of civil violence. Not every state with low levels of GDP collapse into armed combat.

Grievances have been used as an explanation of why conflict happens, but few empirical models have been able to demonstrate what forms of dissatisfaction result in armed conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2003). The problem with modeling grievances is state level data generally cannot capture how potential grievances may emerge among groups who might rebel. Economic indicators tend to be descriptive of the state as a whole, rather than how individuals within the state may react. The level of political violence in a state better captures the existence of significant and unaddressed grievances. If a minority within a population is discriminated against and there is no political redress available, they are likely to turn to violence in order to call attention to

their plight. If a state only experiences a small level of political violence, then it is likely these unattended grievances are relatively small within the population and cannot gain enough traction among the population to threaten higher phases of civil conflict. As the level of violence grows, the probability of civil war also increases.

The agency of dissent also includes modeling the decisions made by dissidents in their efforts to seek change within a state. It is not enough to simply count the number of attacks, but we should also include the targeting decisions of rebels in order to understand the different forms of violent interaction. Targeting decisions are partially shaped by their environment, as well as by the strategy the rebel groups are pursuing. At the macro-level, attacks against civilians can be an indicator of disorganization and competition among rebel factions, relative weakness of groups, and a desire to not want to engage the government in a fight. Attacking civilians decreases the effect terrorism has on predicting civil wars and decreases the likelihood of civil war recurrence. Individual groups, however, can use attacks against civilians as a way to gain strength and escalate their conflict with the government.

By modeling both the rates and the targeting decisions of dissidents we are able to get a better picture of the dynamic process of civil conflict. Future research should include the actions taken by governments in response to dissident violence. The terrorism databases provide detailed information about the nature and perpetrators of each attack, but we have little comparative information about how governments respond to such attacks. The link between government crackdown and conflict escalation has been theorized by a number of scholars (Crenshaw 1981, Francisco 1995,

Ross and Gurr 1989), but the lack of comparative data on government policies makes explain the other side of the conflict dyad difficult.

Reliance on state level indicators recreates the same passivity problem for the state as it does for rebels. In order to move forward, researchers need to start identifying how government policies shape the likelihood of civil war. Connections have been made to the type of government, whether or not the government cracks down on dissent, and whether or not policing methods succeed better than military responses to terrorism (Jones and Libicki 2007). Despite the theoretical connections made in these works, we lack systemic comparative evidence of how states respond to violence. Events data similar to the terrorism events data will help researchers identify how government policies shape the dynamics of civil war onset, recurrence, and escalation. Since civil war is the result of interaction between governments and rebels, understanding the behavior of both actors, rather than simply their characteristics, is needed to take the next step in civil conflict research.

The rate and targets of terrorism also provide a better measure for the relative capabilities of state and opposition forces. At the macro-level, looking at the level of attacks provides a good indicator of the strategic space available for groups to operate. A high level of attacks is a good indicator that opposition forces are strong or gaining strength and government policies are incapable of containing the fighting. Stronger opposition forces also have greater targeting freedom which allows them to challenge government forces directly, as opposed to only relying on attacks against softer civilian targets.

Finally, for scholars of civil war recurrence, terrorism provides a measurable level of spoiler capabilities that has been missing in previous studies. Terrorism provides those dissatisfied with the post war power sharing setups a means of ensuring the government upholds its end of the bargain. Not only does terrorism represent a means to undermine government attempts to disarm rebel groups, it also gives relatively weak players the opportunity to assert themselves. The strength of the post war government is tested in the face of terrorist attacks. If there are only a few and the government is able to contain attacks there is little risk of civil war recurrence.

Implications for the Study of Terrorism

The research presented here also provides valuable insight for future studies on terrorism. First it moves the focus away from trying to explain what causes different levels of terrorism and moves the discussion to the broader implications of terrorism for civil violence. For too long terrorism research has been stuck trying to explain the differences in the number of events in states, while missing that terrorism is simply a symptom of larger forms of political instability. Rather than focusing on the number of terrorism incidents as an outcome, we need to explain the effects of terrorism on the society at large. Simply explaining the number of events or what causes terrorism events does not provide much information if we do not understand the overall effect of terrorist attacks.

Second, this work provides evidence that the act of terrorism is more important than focusing on whether or not a group is a “terrorist” organization. Many rebel groups

seek to undermine the existing government. Terrorism is one tool available to insurgents. Although some groups may never move beyond terrorism, treating these groups as a unique class of rebel organization may hinder our understanding of dissent generally. One of the criticisms of the terrorist label is that it is easily expanded to include all threats against sovereign power (Gregory 2003), but this criticism ignores how terrorism is connected to other forms of dissent against sovereign power. We should not divide groups based on tactics; rather we should examine how effective different strategies are at achieving contextualized goals. Terrorism is an effective means of escalating conflicts and spoiling peace agreements, but that does not mean that groups that use terrorism are limited to using just terrorism. It is just a single part of a broader violent strategy against the government.

Future research should begin to look at all of the different strategies used by organizations in order to fight the government. Terrorism is one form of violent protest, but research should become more inclusive and include features such as riots, gatherings, community works, and other political activities in order to contextualize violence as one aspect of political strategy. Just as we need better comparative information on the behavior of governments, we also need better comparative information on the behavior of individual rebel groups. By understanding when groups engage in violence as opposed to more peaceful means of political change, we can begin to establish what makes for effective strategies of dissent.

Part of understanding effective strategies of dissent is to keep strategies as distinct categories. Terrorism represents a unique class of dissent because of its reliance

on clandestine means, the use of signaling, and its use of violence to reach a larger audience than the immediate victims. Terrorism is distinct from criminal forms of violence due to its political aims. It differs from guerilla warfare because the attacks are designed to send a larger political message as opposed to inflict direct damage against enemy forces (although it can do both). Understanding terrorism as a unique form of political violence enables us to differentiate between strategies of rebellion. This understanding is not only important for governments seeking to contain domestic violence, but also to potential dissident groups around the world. Groups around the world are seeking self-determination and the overthrow of hostile governments. Terrorism is one strategy available to them, but it is unclear if such forms of violence are capable of achieving social change. Refusing to use the "terrorism" label because its normative implications results in arbitrarily lumping all forms of political violence into the same category. Such an approach will undermine our ability to find effective forms of resistance capable of challenging oppressive regimes.

The strategy of terrorism also includes an important element of targeting decisions. The results presented here show that the effect of attacking civilians depends on the situation. Generally, attacks against civilians are ineffective at causing civil war onset and recurrence, but can be used as part of an escalation strategy by rebel groups. Rather than defining terrorism based on the target of the attacks, using targeting decisions can better explain the dynamics of civil conflict its effects. Future research should investigate what shapes rebel targeting decisions. Evidence presented here suggests that is related to state strength, but other factors are likely to play a major role.

As groups attempt to control populations, the location and demographics of targets may also shape the decision to attack civilians. Target selection represents a key strategic decision that can help explain the different effects of terrorism across settings and situations.

The examples used in the introduction all involved rebel groups turning to terrorism as a strategy at different stages of conflict. The ELF was able to use terrorism to rally supporters for its cause and start a war of independence with the Ethiopian government. UNITA increasingly felt the terms of peace with the government in Angola were unacceptable and turned to terrorist violence to restart the conflict. Finally, the Shining Path's use of terrorism to establish control over the Peruvian highlands made conflict escalation possible. In all three cases, terrorism was used by a relatively weaker rebel group to overcome the capabilities difference between themselves and the government forces. Single acts of terrorism may be capable of producing large amounts of casualties, but only when they are sustained and part of a larger organization are they capable of challenging the power of the state.

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