

Public Abstract

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Examples abound of movements once entirely fixated on violence who choose to enter the political arena, exchanging politics by force for politics of a gentler sort. These groups exhibit janus-faced personalities, simultaneously including militancy and non-violent mobilization in their toolbox of behavioral options. In order to be seen as legitimate actors in the political arena, these groups eventually must forswear violence. However, environmental incentives for violent behaviors can make the total disavowal of violence untenable. In this environment, distant threats of political exclusion would be overshadowed by short-term fears of demise. The research proposed in this work seeks to explain how social, political and historical context influence changing methods of politics by sub-state actors. I explain how context shapes shifts in the choice between politics carried out by sword or by ballot, looking at the behavior of organizations that have one time or another included militancy and non-violent mobilization in their toolbox of behavioral options. This work examines transitions in organizational tactics from violence to non-violence in two ways. First, a cross-national time-series study using Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior (MAROB) evaluates how macro and meso-level forces shape political evolution over time. Second, I augment these findings with a brief comparison of the experience of political tactic-choices in Hezbollah, HAMAS, IRA and ETA, refining the theory of the original model, culminating with a test of the reconfigured theory.