

November 1986

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### Recommended Citation

Weinberg, Leonard and Eubank, William (1986) "Change and Continuity in the Recruitment of Italian Political Terrorists," *Journal of Political Science*: Vol. 14 : No. 1 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/jops/vol14/iss1/6>

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## **Change and Continuity in the Recruitment of Italian Political Terrorists: 1970-1984**

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(This is a revision of a paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans, August 29-September 1, 1985)

### I

Understanding the growth of political terrorism has become a central concern expressed in the professional literature. Various techniques have been used to measure the spread of terrorist events both within and between nations.<sup>1</sup> As part of this endeavor analysts have drawn parallels between the spread of contagious diseases and outbreaks of terrorist activities. And naturally enough, given the way in which the situation has been defined, these analysts have sought to prescribe the most appropriate therapies with which to reduce or eliminate the infection.

In view of the way in which the problem has been approached, it is somewhat surprising that more attention has not been focused on the bearers of the contagion: the terrorists themselves. This is not to say that observers of political terrorism have ignored the perpetrators: far from it. The literature abounds with excellent studies of the social and psychological characteristics of these individuals.<sup>2</sup> But these investigations, intended to produce a 'terrorist profile,' seem not to take into account the possibility that different sorts of people might be attracted to terrorism at different stages in the spread of the phenomenon. Do people from the same or similar backgrounds become involved in terrorist operations over the entire life-span of a terrorist organization? Or, does the susceptibility vary among individuals the longer the outbreak is sustained?

Given the enormous attention terrorist activities receive in the mass media, it seems reasonable to believe that individuals who join or form terrorist groups after a terrorist episode has begun would confront a different situation than those who were responsible for its initiation. At a minimum, the circumstances would be altered by virtue of the fact that the latecomers would be aware of the various costs, risks and opportunities surrounding the decision to become the member of a terrorist band. But do changes in circumstances mean changes in the kinds of people who become terrorists? Of course, in any number of countries this question is rendered moot because the authorities succeed in isolating and repressing the terrorist organizations before they can recruit new members from outside the ranks of their founders.

This has not been the case in Italy however. Among the industrialized democracies, Italy has experienced one of the most protracted national episodes of political terrorism. The episode is widely regarded as having

begun with the bombing of the National Agricultural Bank of Piazza Fontana in Milan in December 1969 and not to have ended, or even subsided, until the wave of arrests that followed the release of American General James Dozier from his Red Brigades' kidnappers in 1982. At a reduced level of intensity, the terrorism continues to the present.

In addition to its duration there are several other features of the Italian terrorist experience that are important to call to the reader's attention.<sup>3</sup> First, as distinguished from the long-lived experiences of Northern Ireland and the Basque country of Spain, causes of a nationalist-separatist nature were not significant stimuli for the outbreak of terrorism. Instead, the sources in the Italian case appear to have been predominantly ideological, sources not rooted in the long-standing grievances of a particular ethnic or religious community; that is, groups whose members often may serve as constant pools from which terrorist bands may recruit new adherents. Second, the ideologies that motivated Italian terrorists were not exclusively of leftist origin. In addition to groups animated by revolutionary communist objectives, variously defined, a substantial amount of the violence was the work of formations that derived their inspiration from Fascist or neo-Fascist doctrines.

Another characteristic of the Italian experience concerns the timing of the violence. There was an initial wave of terrorism beginning in 1969 and extending to 1976. By the middle of that year most members of the Red Brigades' 'historic nucleus' as well as most members of the Armed Proletarian Nuclei and Partisan Action Groups, the other major leftist groups, had been arrested. Furthermore, the initial wave of violent neo-Fascist organizations, the New Order, National Vanguard, the National Front and others, had been dissolved by the authorities and many of their leaders, militants and sponsors had met the same fate as their leftist counterparts. In fact, it appeared as if the terrorist episode had come to an end. But this was not to be. Nineteen seventy-seven witnessed the reignition of terrorist violence. New groups on both the Left and Right arose to take the place of the old; in turn, these bands succeeded in recruiting large numbers of new adherents. Further, old groups, notably the Red Brigades, managed to attract a largely new generation(s) of members. What then followed in the next several years was a dramatic escalation in the numbers of terrorist events throughout the country. The style of the violence was also somewhat different. Previously the leftist groups had carried out "exemplary actions" intended to bring their cause to the attention of the working class. In the new phase they began to wage revolutionary "campaigns" against the bourgeois system and to direct their efforts against "the heart of the state." The neo-Fascist groups also changed tactics and exhibited a willingness to attack selected representatives of government authority. Finally, the second spasm of terrorism differed from the initial one by virtue of the political coloration of those groups responsible for committing the bulk of it.<sup>4</sup>

Measured in terms of direction, the first wave of violence was dominated by the neo-Fascists. It was they who were responsible for the majority of violent events, including the massacres at Piazza Fontana as well as

those in Brescia and on the express train Italicus both in 1974. The Red Brigades, on the other hand, did not kill their first victim until 1974. Despite the formation of new neo-Fascist groups (e.g., Third Position, Nuclei of Armed Revolutionaries) after the mid 1970's, it was the revolutionary communist ones that dominated terrorist activities from 1977. There was, in short, a shift from Black to Red.

## II

Bearing in mind the above account, the question we intend to address is this: In what ways, if any, did individuals who became involved in terrorist activities before 1977 differ from those whose careers in terrorism began in or followed that year? To answer this question biographical information was obtained concerning 2,512 individuals who were either arrested or for whom warrants were issued for having committed, planned or supported acts of political terrorism between 1970 and the first half of 1984. This information was derived from two national circulation newspapers, *La Stampa* of Turin and *La Repubblica* of Rome, as well as court records (*requisitorie, ordinanze/sentenze* and *sentenze*) from many though not all of the major terrorist trials.<sup>5</sup> The data file taken from these sources does not represent a sample, it is instead a reasonably extensive collection of the Italian terrorist population. The information collected about the terrorists included their gender, communities and regions of birth as well as those of adult residence. Aside from these characteristics, information was also recorded concerning their occupational backgrounds, family relationships and pre-terrorist political involvements. Finally, we noted in what year they were arrested/identified as terrorists, their ages at that time (and for reasons to be made clear later, their ages in 1969), the particular terrorist organization with which they were affiliated and the roles they played inside the groups.

However, the investigators cannot be certain but that either they or their sources failed to locate other individuals whose behavior would warrant inclusion. Further, the possibility exists that a number of individuals whose records appear in the file were, in fact, innocent of the crimes they were alleged to have committed. Last on our list of qualifications is the fact that the careers of some terrorists overlapped the two periods into which we have divided the episode. Some individuals may have begun their involvements before 1977 but only came to the attention of the authorities during or after that year. In most cases, it was possible to correct for this problem based on the person's terrorist group affiliation. That is, if the person was identified as a member of a group like the New Order of the Nuclei of Armed Proletarians, organizations whose operations were largely confined to the first period, the individual was presumed to have begun his/her involvement at that time and assigned a position accordingly. Inevitably though some individuals escaped this procedure. But given the size of the data file, their impact on the overall analysis is not likely to be a very large one.

### III

For some observers, Italian terrorism is best understood as a by-product of the "culture of 1968."<sup>6</sup> In 1968 and the "hot autumn" of 1969, Italy experienced a massive explosion of student protest and worker militancy. The events of these years have been defined as an institutional crisis, with existing political, educational and trade union organizations proving unable to contain or channel the rapid mobilization of so many angry citizens. Radical extraparliamentary movements were organized by and for those students, workers and alienated individuals from various walks of life who found existing institutions to have fallen victim to something approaching the iron law of oligarchy. The events of 1968-69 have also been interpreted as a generational rebellion. The young, of neo-Fascist as well as leftist disposition, withdrew their support from or de-authorized a whole array of institutions they perceived as having become dominated by gerontocratic leaderships.

This institutional crisis or generational rebellion had profound consequences on the development of political terrorism. One interpretation has it that some individuals, those who organized the Red Brigades' for example, initiated terrorist activities after brief transitional exposures to the extraparliamentary movements. For other future leftist terrorists the impact of 1968-69 was delayed. After years of membership in extraparliamentary movements like Worker Power and Continuous Struggle, these individuals turned to terrorism after the collapse of the New Left in the 1976 national elections, elections which also resulted in a failure to remove the hated Christian Democrats from control of the national government. As the radicals saw it, years of struggle by the movements had come to nothing. The only way to unblock the Italian political system and achieve their revolutionary objectives was through use of political violence. The Communist party, a likely alternative, was unable to integrate the revolutionaries; in 1976 it was pursuing an historic compromise with the Christian Democrats, a policy of reformism and working class betrayal from their perspective.

This commentary suggests an understanding of the terrorist phenomenon through what amounts to a "big bang" theory. The events of 1968-69 were a formative experience for a generation of young Italians. The effects, immediate for some long-term for others, were to provide an impetus for involvement in terrorism. To become a terrorist one had to be touched directly by the events of 1968-69.

Although this was no doubt true for some, in general the data do not support this interpretation (see Table 1). Of the 2,512 individuals in our terrorist population, 46 per cent were under the age of 16 in 1969, and 18 per cent were less than 11 years old when the upheaval occurred. In other words, these were people too young to have taken a direct part in the turbulent events of these years.

TABLE 1  
Age Distribution of Italian Terrorists in 1969

Age	Number of Terrorists	(Per Cent)
1 to 5	17	( 1)
6 to 10	417	(17)
11 to 15	732	(29)
16 to 20	556	(22)
21 to 25	295	(12)
26 to 30	131	( 5)
31 to 35	56	( 2)
36 to 40	42	( 2)
41 to 45	31	( 1)
46 to 50	16	( 1)
51 and above	219	( 9)
	N = 2,512	(100)

Even if we confine the analysis to left-wing terrorists, the segment of the population really intended to be covered by this interpretation, the outcome is not altered. In fact, the left-wing terrorists were actually younger in 1969 than were the neo-Fascists. Of the 1,763 leftists in the study, 853 (or 64 per cent) were under 16. Furthermore, if 1968-69 was crucial in the making of terrorists, we would expect that over time their ages would increase as they were apprehended or identified by the authorities. Yet this is not true either. The terrorists identified in 1977 and after were significantly younger than those whose involvements were reported during the first period.

If participation in the events of 1968-69 was not an indispensable ingredient in the decision to embark on a career as a terrorist, it would seem likely that some process of cultural or ideological transmission was at work. If it was not the same individuals sharing the same experiences, then perhaps the post 1976 terrorists became susceptible to the contagion as the result of exposure to the same social climate and institutional setting as gave rise to the first wave.

We sought to deal with this issue by dividing our population into those individuals who were identified as terrorists before 1977 and those who received the designation in 1977 and after. The differences between the two groups are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
Differences Between Early (1970-1976) and  
Late (1977-1984) Italian Terrorists

Characteristic	2A: Sex		
	Male	Female	
Early	449 (23.8)*	50 (11.2)	499
Late	1441 (76.2)	395 (88.8)	1836
	1890	445	
X <sup>2</sup> = 32.86    prob. ≤ .001    phi = .12			

\* Percentages in parenthesis are column percents.

2B: Birthplace  
(region)

	North	Center	Rome	South	Foreign Born	
Early	156 (31.0)	50 (34.0)	37 (16.7)	58 (18.7)	5 (11.9)	306
Late	348 (69.0)	97 (66.0)	184 (83.3)	252 (81.3)	37 (88.1)	918
	504	147	221	310	42	1224

$X^2 = 34.31$  prob.  $\leq .001$  tau b = .13

2C: Birthplace  
(size of community)

	Small	Medium	Big City	Foreign Born	
Early	86 (19.5)	109 (28.2)	119 (24.0)	5 (11.9)	319
Late	354 (80.5)	277 (71.8)	377 (76.0)	37 (88.1)	1054
	440	386	496	42	1364

$X^2 = 11.88$  prob.  $\leq .001$  tau b = -.02

2D: Place of Residence  
(region)

	North	Center	Rome	South	Foreign Born	
Early	273 (22.6)*	60 (26.1)	80 (14.0)	57 (22.5)	1 (33.3)	471
Late	935 (77.4)	170 (73.9)	492 (86.0)	196 (77.5)	2 (66.7)	1795
	1208	230	572	253	3	2266

$X^2 = 23.15$  prob.  $\leq .001$  tau b = .047

2E: Place of Residence  
(size of community)

	Small	Medium	Big City	Foreign Born	
Early	52 (21.7)	136 (26.1)	285 (18.9)	1 (33.3)	474
Late	188 (78.3)	386 (73.9)	1226 (81.1)	2 (66.7)	1802
	240	522	1226	3	2276

$X^2 = 12.57$  prob.  $\leq .006$  tau b = .058

2F: Family Relationship to Other Terrorists

	Yes	No	
Early	51 (16.7)	443 (21.9)	494
Late	254 (83.3)	1582 (78.1)	1836
	305	2025	2330

$X^2 = 3.91$  prob.  $\leq .04$  phi = .043

2G: Type of Family Relationship

	Marital	Sibling	Parental	Other	
Early	16 (11.8)*	26 (18.7)	5 (41.7)	4 (22.2)	51
Late	120 (88.2)	113 (81.3)	7 (58.3)	14 (77.8)	254
	136	139	12	18	305

$X^2 = 8.54$  prob.  $\leq .036$  tau b = -.132

\* Percentages in parenthesis are column percents.

2H: Prior Political Party Affiliation

	Left	Center	Right	
Early	30 (30.2)	3 (75.0)	63 (73.3)	85
Late	44 (69.8)	1 (25.0)	23 (26.7)	68
	63	4	86	153

$\chi^2 = 27.98$  prob.  $\leq .001$

2I: Extraparliamentary Movement Affiliation

	Left	Right	
Early	39 (11.4)	149 (85.6)	188
Late	302 (88.6)	25 (14.4)	327
	341	174	

$\chi^2 = 270.43$  prob.  $\leq .001$  phi = .723

2J: Age at Time of Identification

	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49	50 and above	
Early	27 (17.6)*	150 (19.7)	117 (18.5)	62 (18.7)	31 (24.8)	24 (41.4)	22 (68.8)	34 (72.3)	467
Late	126 (82.4)	611 (80.3)	514 (81.5)	269 (81.3)	94 (75.2)	34 (58.6)	10 (31.3)	13 (27.7)	1671
	153	761	631	331	125	58	32	47	2138

$\chi^2 = 134.56$  prob.  $\leq .00$  tau b = -.102

2K: Occupation

	Subproletarian	Student	Worker	Police Military	White Collar Clerk	Shop-keeper Salesman Artisan	Teacher	Free Professional	Industrial Business Manager	Housewife	
Early	11 (17.5)	74 (21.1)	45 (12.7)	27 (52.9)	25 (11.5)	27 (46.6)	14 (11.3)	38 (39.6)	23 (65.7)	1 (9.1)	285
Late	52 (82.5)	277 (78.9)	310 (87.3)	24 (47.1)	193 (88.5)	31 (53.4)	110 (88.7)	58 (60.4)	12 (34.3)	10 (90.9)	1077
	63	351	355	51	218	58	124	96	35	11	1362

$\chi^2 = 151.97$  prob.  $\leq .00$  tau b = -.085

2L: Role in Terrorist Group

	Supporter	Regular	Leader	
Early	22 (4.7)	379 (23.5)	94 (37.3)	495
Late	443 (95.3)	1235 (76.5)	158 (62.7)	1836
	465	1614	252	2331

$\chi^2 = 119.48$  prob.  $\leq .00$  tau b = -.218

\* Percentages in parenthesis are column percents.



The principal understanding to be derived from these results is that there occurred an expansion of terrorism to wider segments of Italian society as the episode progressed. Instead of a repetitive process with the new generation(s) of terrorists simply recapitulating the institutional and social backgrounds of the early ones, in general, the evidence suggests that terrorist groups were able to broaden, not merely deepen, their appeal the longer the episode continued.

Let us be more specific. While the early terrorists were overwhelmingly male, the second wave contained a significant contingent of women. If we examine the question of where the terrorists came from by looking at their places of birth, compared to the first one, the second generation over-represents people who were born in smaller communities (under 100,000) as well as in Rome, southern Italy and abroad. Geographically it appears as if the terrorists' roots descend from the northern and central parts of the country to the south and out from the big cities (over 1 million) to smaller towns the longer the violence persists. However, when we compare the two groups not by their places of birth but by their places of adult residence, some interesting changes occur. Here the second generation appears somewhat less geographically dispersed than the first. This is true especially of the size of the communities in which the terrorists had become resident prior to beginning their careers in political violence. The latecomers were more likely to have lived in the big cities of Rome, Turin, Genoa, Milan and Naples than their predecessors. It may very well be the case then that as a group the later terrorists were more geographically mobile, more likely to have been newcomers to the big cities than members of the initial wave. Whatever terrorist infection got transmitted from one generation to the next seems to have involved a passage from longer to shorter term residents of Italy's major metropolitan areas.

Correlatively, the occupational backgrounds of the terrorists seem to exhibit a process of expansion. In general, though not without qualification, the pattern is one of a spread from the upper strata of Italian society to the lower. Higher proportions of the early terrorists than the later came from upper status positions as business managers, industrialists and the free professions (law, medicine, architecture, journalism). The first group was also composed disproportionately of individuals with lower middle class occupational experiences as shopkeepers, salesmen and artisans as well as police and military officers. On the other hand, the latecomers were over-represented among manual workers and white collar clerks, and to a lesser extent of subproletarians (e.g., criminals, ex-convicts, prostitutes). Students from universities and secondary schools make a relatively constant and large contribution to the terrorists' ranks. Although the level of student involvement remains roughly the same in the two periods, the same cannot be said for their teachers. The representation of university and secondary school instructors increases substantially from 1977 forward.

If we treat these data somewhat differently and regard as "intellectuals" (that is people who spend a fair amount of their working time dealing with abstract ideas) students, teachers and free professionals, the conse-

quence is that their contribution to terrorist activities appears both high and constant. What becomes variable between the two periods is the representation of individuals with backgrounds in business and labor. In the first period business is over-represented while in the second labor is.

For some of the individuals in the population, the decision to become a terrorist seems to have been a matter of family choice. Slightly over 13 per cent of the terrorists were related to one another. This phenomenon was more prevalent among the second wave than the first, however. In this connection, it is the incidence of the marital relationship that really changes from the first to the second periods. Although we cannot be sure, the greater prevalence of married couples to be found among the later adherents to terrorist groups may have been the consequence of husbands encouraging their wives to join, a particularly intimate form of contagion.

The two segments of our population also appear to have had somewhat different kinds of pre-terrorist political experiences. Prior membership in a conventional political party was more common among early than later terrorists. Conversely, the latter were more likely to have been members of the extraparliamentary movements. The biographical records are incomplete but we may at least speculate that over time terrorism spread from individuals who were more likely to have had experiences in conventional party political life to those whose involvements were more likely confined to the violence supportive extraparliamentary movements or to individuals with no reported preterrorist political experiences.

Finally, the early and late terrorists are distinguishable on the basis of the roles they played once inside terrorist organizations. Here the prevalence of individuals identified as "supporters," those who furnished logistical and other forms of assistance, increased dramatically among the late adherents. This finding may be the result of the development of a more complex organizational structure articulated by terrorist groups after 1976 as well as an increase in their recruitment of and appeal to part-timers, individuals holding regular jobs whose commitments to the terrorist enterprise were likely less intense than persons identified as "regulars" or "leaders" in the newspaper accounts and court records.

At this stage of the analysis the evidence points to an understanding of Italian terrorism that emphasizes its diffusion to progressively broader segments of the population. There appear to have been changes of various kinds in the geographic, institutional and social settings from which the terrorists emerged. But to what extent were these changes simply an artifact of the differential representation of leftist and neo-Fascist terrorists in the two periods with which we are concerned? As may be seen by looking at Table 3, a majority of pre-1977 terrorists were neo-Fascists while the great preponderance of the later adherents were leftists. It may very well be that the early/late distinctions we have observed were more a product of the different political composition of the two groups than they were the time periods during which these individuals engaged in terrorist activities.

TABLE 3  
 Distribution of Terrorists by  
 Period and Political Orientation

	Early	Late	
Right	293	279	572
Left	206	1557	1763
	499	1836	2335

N = 2335

In order to determine whether or not this is the case we partitioned our population into the following four categories: early right, late right, early left and late left. The relevant questions then became: Were the early neo-Fascists different from the late ones? And, were there any ways in which the early leftists differed from their political successors?

In attempting to answer the first question let us begin with the negative findings. First, there was no significant difference among the neo-Fascists concerning their occupational backgrounds. In both periods they tended to come from the same lower middle and upper middle class sectors of Italian society. In addition, they tended to be drawn from the same right-wing political milieu. There were few neo-Fascists in either period who drifted into terrorism after previous experiences with political parties at the center or left or in the extraparliamentary left movements. On the other hand, there were considerably fewer late neo-Fascists who were reported to have had either right-wing or extraparliamentary involvements before their ties to the terrorist groups developed. Lastly, the late neo-Fascists were no more or less likely to have been related to one another than the first collection.

If we focus on those variables (see Table 4) that exhibit differences between early and late neo-Fascists, the case for a process of expansion becomes far more ambiguous than it does for the general terrorist population. It is true that the later neo-Fascists were substantially younger than the earlier group. The representation of women increases, although it is never very high among the neo-Fascists. Also, the proportion of "supporters" relative to "regulars" and "leaders" grows in the second wave. Yet when we look at their places of birth and adult residence, the case for the diffusion of neo-Fascist terrorism by expansion weakens. Measured both in terms of where they were born and resided the early neo-Fascists were a more geographically dispersed collection of people than the later ones.

TABLE 4  
Differences Between Early (1970-1976) and  
Late (1977-1984) Neo-Fascist Terrorists

Characteristics		Early to Late Change
Sex	$\chi^2 = 9.82, 1 \text{ df}, p \leq .002, \phi = .138$	late more female
Age	$\chi^2 = 91.92, 7 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta_b = -.363$	late younger
Place of Birth (region)	$\chi^2 = 108.19, 4 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta = .471$	late more Rome less North and Center
Place of Birth (size of community)	$\chi^2 = 30.83, 3 \text{ df}, p \leq .01, \eta_b = .251$	late more big city less small town and medium-sized cities
Place of Residence (region)	$\chi^2 = 218.76, 4 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta = .618$	late more Rome less North and Center
Place of Residence (size of community)	$\chi^2 = 81.53, 3 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta = .344$	late more big city less small town and medium-sized city
Role in Organization	$\chi^2 = 132.20, 2 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta_b = -.438$	late more supporters less regulars and leaders

After the mid-1970's the neo-Fascists were a waning force. Their leaders' plans to stimulate a coup d'etat against the Italian regime, with the collaboration of well-wishers in the police and military establishments, had been uncovered and defeated.<sup>7</sup> The number of terrorist events for which they were responsible declined. In a sense our findings reflect this decline. Geographically we witness a contraction or concentration rather than a diffusion of neo-Fascist terrorism between the two time periods. As a group the late neo-Fascists are more urbanized and Rome-centered than the early ones. However, when we consider the matter from a social or inter-personal perspective, there is some evidence of spread, if not in terms of occupational background then at least as reflected by their ages, gender and level of involvement in their respective terrorist organizations.

While neo-Fascist terrorism may have been waning in the second period, left-wing terrorism was expanding. As measured by the number of violent events and in the number of adherents included in our population, terrorism from the left experienced considerable growth. Logically then we might expect this growth to be reflected in a wider diffusion process than was true for the neo-Fascists.

In some respects (see Table 5) the ways in which the growth of left-wing terrorism manifested itself in the changing characteristics of the terrorists was not very different than the early to late changes in the makeup of the declining neo-Fascist formations. As with the latter, the second generation(s) of leftists was younger than the first. It was also more heavily composed of "supporters." In addition, the proportion of adherents identified as playing leadership roles in the groups declined compared to the "regulars" and "supporters." Also, a smaller percentage of the late than the early leftists were reported to have had prior memberships in political parties.

TABLE 5  
Differences Between Early (1970-76) and  
Late (1977-84) Left-Wing Terrorists

Characteristic		Early to Late Change
Age	$\chi^2 = 218.15, 10 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta^2_b = .218$	late younger
Place of Residence (region)	$\chi^2 = 15.61, 4 \text{ df}, p \leq .004, \eta^2_b = 0.0$	late more Center and Rome less South
Nature of Family Relationship	$\chi^2 = 8.94, 3 \text{ df}, p \leq .03, \eta^2_b = .058$	late more marital
Occupation	$\chi^2 = 25.04, 8 \text{ df}, p \leq .003, \eta^2_b = .023$	late more workers, clerks, teachers less students, free professionals and subproletarians
Previous Political Experience	$\chi^2 = 14.23, 1 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta^2_b = -.251$	late more extraparliamentary movement less political party membership
Role in Organization	$\chi^2 = 30.57, 2 \text{ df}, p \leq .001, \eta^2_b = -.127$	late more supporters

There were some ways in which the changes among leftists were unlike those exhibited by the neo-Fascists. The occupational backgrounds of the leftists are significantly different. Here there are noticeable declines in the proportions of terrorists identified as free professionals and subproletarians as well as a more modest decline in the representation of students. The proportions of manual workers, white collar clerks and teachers increases. The effect of these changes though is hardly like that of the overall terrorist population shown earlier. While it is true that the second period leftist organizations were more successful in recruiting manual workers than the first, the relatively clear pattern of terrorism spreading from high to low status in the Italian occupational structure now becomes unclear. This pattern now seems to have been more a product of the different mixes of neo-Fascists and leftists found in the two periods. The neo-Fascists, early and late, tended to come from higher status backgrounds than the leftists taken as a whole.

When we consider the issue from a geographic perspective, we are unable to discern any significant changes in the locations in which the leftists were born. Late leftists were no more or less likely to have been born in the South or smaller communities, for example, than their predecessors. There is, however, a noticeable early-to-late shift in their places of residence, with the second generation more likely to be found in the central regions and Rome. The representation of terrorists from the heavily industrialized northern regions remains very high over both periods. The case for a diffusion of terrorism by expansion is attenuated by the fact that there are proportionately fewer residents of the South among the late leftists and there are no significant differences between the two groups related to the size of the communities in which they were resident.

So far as the terrorists' gender is concerned, somewhat surprisingly the late leftists did not show a statistically significant increase in female

representation as against the early contingent. There is a shift, however, in the kinds of women who appear during the second period. The data suggest an increase in the proportion of married women who participated in the left-wing groups. Furthermore, second generation women were more likely to play leadership roles in these groups than were women who joined the earlier formations.<sup>8</sup>

#### IV

It is apparent now that some of the diffusion effects we reported earlier in the analysis were the result of the differing mixes of neo-Fascists and left-wing revolutionaries present in the two periods of Italy's terrorist episode. The ideologies seem to attract rather different kinds of people to terrorism. Yet there were some differences that were sustained despite the political distinction. If we are willing to conceive the diffusion of terrorism as the result of (1) expansion, its spread to progressively wider segments of the population, and (2) contagion, the spread of the infection more deeply within the same population segments, our findings may be summarized in the following Table 6.

TABLE 6  
The Diffusion of Terrorism

<i>Expansion for Left and Right</i> age, prior political experience, place of residence (Rome) and role in organization	<i>Expansion for Left Only</i> Occupation, place of residence (central regions) family relationship
<i>Expansion for Right Only</i> sex (more female, place of birth (region and size of community), place of residence (size of community)	<i>Contagion for Left and Right ±</i> none
<i>Contagion for Left Only</i> sex, place of birth (region and size of community)	<i>Contagion for Right Only</i> occupation

The existence of substantively significant differences is the basis for the classification displayed in Table 6. If such differences were found between the characteristics of early and late terrorists, then these characteristics were noted as having spread by expansion. Some of the differences were common to both neo-Fascists and leftists, others were specific to one or the other. They were classified accordingly. If, on the other hand, no meaningful differences were found between the characteristics of neo-Fascist and leftist terrorists active in the two periods, the diffusion was conceived to be the product of a contagion effect, with the early terrorists infecting the late. The classification reflects this concept as well.

There were several characteristics of the terrorist population which spread through expansion between the two periods and were common to rightists and leftists alike. Over time the terrorists tended to become younger, less politically experienced and more marginally committed to the groups with which they were affiliated. They were also more likely to be

residents of Rome the longer the episode continued. All the other characteristics classified as either expansion or contagion related were ones distinct to the neo-Fascists or the leftist revolutionaries. And since those differences were discussed earlier, we will not repeat them here.

The findings lead us to conclude that terrorism in Italy spread as the result of both expansion and contagion. In the absence of interviews with a sample of individuals included in the terrorist population, we cannot specify precisely how these components worked in the process of terrorist recruitment. We can, of course, engage in speculation.

One thought that comes to mind is that Italy went through a new crisis in 1976-77, one separable from that of 1968-69. While the latter was of an institutional or generational nature, the former involved problems that had to do with high rates of unemployment and inflation. And as in the first crisis so too in the second, there was a substantial amount of mass street agitation accompanied by accusations of governmental and party political ineptitude. It is conceivable that younger and less politically involved segments of the population largely unaffected by the first crisis were engaged by the second. Aware of terrorism as part of the repertoire of techniques available for the expression of political grievances, an awareness derived from the 1969-76 period, they became susceptible to its use.

We might also speculate that terrorism spread by contagion was the result of exposure to the same social and institutional stimuli, the same living and working environments from which the early terrorists had already been recruited. The FIAT Mirafiori automobile plant in Turin and the universities of Padua and Rome are obvious examples. Concomitantly, it may be the result of exposure to the same sorts of life experiences as already gave rise to terrorist involvements that heighten the susceptibility. This element is probably not missing in the spread of terrorism by expansion either. Yet in this context our suspicion is that the role of the mass media in making people aware of and attracting them to terrorist activities is likely to play a greater role in its cultivation.

Finally, it would be interesting to know if the characteristics we have detected concerning Italy's protracted terrorist experience were unique to that country, or if similar findings might result from investigations conducted elsewhere.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, E. Heyman and E. Mickolus, "Imitation by Terrorists: Quantitative Approaches to the Study of Diffusion Patterns in Transnational Terrorism," in Yonah Alexander and J. Gleason, eds., *Behavioral and Quantitative Perspectives on Terrorism* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), pp. 175-225. and

L. Hamilton and J. Hamilton, "Dynamics of Terrorism," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol 27 (1983), 39-54.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, C. Russell and B. Miller, "Profile of a Terrorist," in L. Freedman and Y. Alexander, eds., *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1983), pp. 45-60.

<sup>3</sup>G. Pasquino, "Differenze e Somiglianze: per Una Ricerca sul Terrorismo Italiano," in D. della Porta and G. Pasquino, eds., *Terrorismo e Violenza Politica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983), pp. 237-263.

<sup>4</sup>D. della Porta and M. Rossi, *I Terrorismi in Italia tra il 1969 e il 1982* (Bologna: Istituto Cattaneo, 1983), pp. 5-14.

<sup>5</sup>In addition to the newspapers biographical information was obtained from the following court records: For the Red Brigades, Front Line, Autonomia and related left-wing groups, Giudice Istruttore, Francesco Amato, *Ordinanza/Sentenza* N/1067/79, Tribunale di Roma; Giudice Istruttore, *Sentenza/Ordinanza* 231/83, Tribunale Civile E. Penale di Milano; Giudice Istruttore *Ordinanza* N228/81, Tribunale Civile E. Penale di Milano; *Publicco Ministero, Requisitoria* N. 921/80F, Procura Della Repubblica in Milano; Giudice Istruttore, Ferdinando Imposimato, *Ordinanza/Sentenza* N54/80A, Tribunale di Roma; Giudice Istruttore, *Ordinanza/Sentenza* 490/81F, Tribunale Civile E. Penale di Milano; Corete D'Assise Di Apo ello Di Torino, *Sentenza* of January 24, 1983, N 2/83; Corte D'Assise D'Apello Di Milano, *Sentenza* of April 9, 1981 N 7/80; Corte D'Assise di Firenze, *Sentenza* of April 24, 1983. For the neo-Fascist groups, Third Position, National Revolutionary Front and We Build the Action, the following court records were obtained: Giudice Istruttore, Luigi gennaio, *Ordinanza/Sentenza* N 2736/80A, Tribunale di Roma; Corte D'Assise di Appello di Firenze, *Sentenza* of December 12, 1978; Corte D'Assise di Appello di Firenze, *Sentenza* of April 9, 1976 and *Sentenza* of November 11, 1977.

<sup>6</sup>A Ventura, "Il Problema delle Origini del Terrorismo di Sinistra," in D. della Porta, ed., *Terrorismi in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), pp. 75-152.

<sup>7</sup>F. Ferraresi, "La Destra Eversiva," in F. Ferraresi, ed., *La Destra Radicale* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1984), pp. 54-118.

<sup>8</sup>L. Weinberg and W. Eubank, "Italian Women Terrorists," presented to the Annual Meeting of the Western Social Science Association, Fort Worth, March, 1985.