

How Terrorism Ends: The Impact of Lethality of Terrorist Groups on their
Longevity

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation research examines the effect of organizational lethality on the longevity of terrorist groups. The current scholarship has sought to understand the demise of terrorist groups through means such as group success, government repression, negotiations, internal conflict, reorientation of goals, defeat, leadership decapitation and loss of public support. However, little research is available on the determinants of terrorists' target selection and its implications for the group's longevity. This study evaluates the targeting patterns and preferences of 480 terrorist groups that were operational between 1980 and 2011 and disaggregates the victims of all terrorist attacks into combatant versus non-combatant target-types. It is hypothesized that organizational lethality – defined as the average number of civilian killings generated by each group in its home-base country – is associated with negative group reputation, which results in faster group mortality. Popular support for violence, however, can influence and result from terrorism at the same time and has been found to be inherently endogenous by many previous studies. Therefore, a Seemingly Unrelated Bivariate Probit Model is employed to examine this endogenous relationship, and the results confirm that there is a significant correlation between negative group reputation and group mortality. Moreover, the study differentiates between terrorist group activity – defined as average attacks generated by a group – and group lethality, and employs the Cox Proportional Hazard Model to estimate group duration. The study includes covariates like group size, ideology, positive consistency reputation and other factors affecting group longevity and mortality. The results imply that organizational lethality is associated with higher political risks for terrorist groups and tends to backfire by decreasing their survival probability. However, on the other hand, the study finds that an escalation in terrorist activity (launching more attacks) significantly increase the group longevity over time. The results of this study are tested by conducting group-specific case studies on the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban in Pakistan using information collected from the English language Pakistani newspaper archives, and Harmony Database from Combat Terrorism Center at West Point, NY.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father who always believed in my ability to be successful in the academic arena. You are gone but your belief in me has made this journey possible. I miss you every day.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism scholarship is interested in many factors that affect the violent behavior of a terrorist group. Academics are focused on learning the causes of terrorism and law enforcement agencies are engaged in finding effective counterterrorism strategies. A large amount of money and effort is spent on counterterrorism policies, particularly since the attacks on September 11, 2001, but without much effect (Lum et al., 2006). A systematic examination of the cross-national statistics regarding the average number of victims per terrorist attack illustrates that terrorist attacks have increased over time and become more lethal, especially against civilians. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the number of civilian fatalities has increased from about three killings every five attacks in the pre-9/11 world (1970-2000) to about five killings every five attacks in the post-9/11 world (2001-2014).

Although terroristic violence has increased over time in general and against civilians in particular; an analysis of target selection across groups shows significant variance both in intensity and frequency of indiscriminate violence against civilians. Figure 1.1 presents a distribution of terrorist groups based on the number of civilian attacks they have launched between 1980-2011. The figure indicates that 29% of the groups never attacked civilians whereas 43% of groups launched 1-5 civilian attacks and 28% of groups perpetrated 6 or more attacks against civilians between 1980-2011.

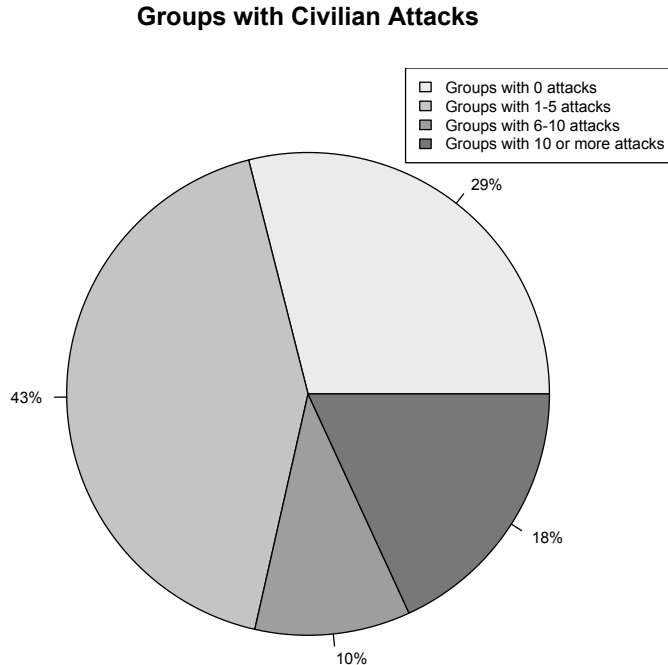


Figure 1.1: *Terrorist groups activity against civilians*

The diversity in terrorist groups' target selection demonstrates that killing civilians is not a valued activity because about 82% of the groups have not been very active against civilians. Moreover, terrorist groups are known to adopt specific strategies to minimize civilian fatalities. For instance, Irgun, a Zionist paramilitary organization, deliberately attacked buildings rather than people to reduce civilian casualties (Cronin, 2009, 84). Similarly, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), a revolutionary terrorist organization, issued advance warnings before bomb attacks to minimize Irish and British civilian fatalities (Sharrock, 2001). But on the other hand, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) are the two most active terrorist groups against civilians. In their comparatively small lifespans of five and eight years,¹ respectively, the TTP and ALQ perpetrated 37% and 30% of their total attacks against civilians.

Terrorism scholars highlight the importance of civilian population in conflicts and ar-

¹Although the TTP is still operational and has been attacking civilians to this day, and AQI also continued its operation until it splintered in April 2013 and became the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). However, the temporal range of this analysis has been restricted to 2011.

gue that non-combatants almost always play a significant role (Condra and Shapiro, 2012; Blair et al., 2013). They assert that indiscriminate violence against civilians is immoral and counterproductive for grassroots popular support. Namely, attacking civilians reduces public sympathy for the terrorist group and it is likely that the general public will punish terrorist organizations in the long run (if not immediately) (Jones and Libicki, 2008; Reich, 1998; Laqueur, 1976; Cordes et al., 1984; Crenshaw, 1987; Schelling, 1991; Cronin, 2009; DeNardo, 2014; Lake, 2002; Getmansky and Sinmazdemir, 2012). Moreover, many terrorist groups are defeated because they lose grassroots popular support due to their indiscriminate violence against civilians. One such example is the aftermath of the *Luxor Massacre* where 62 people were killed by an Egyptian Islamist organization named Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (GAI) on November 17, 1997. Included in the victims of this massacre were tourists, including a British five-year-old and four Japanese couples on their honeymoons. After the attack, Egypt witnessed an uprising against the GAI that led to the total depletion of grassroots public support for GAI and it was effectively disbanded (Cronin, 2009, 110).² Other examples of groups meeting their demise by losing popular support include the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-GC), Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), Sikh Separatists, Chechen Separatists, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the Red Brigades (Cronin, 2009, 111).

If popular support is imperative for a group's survival, then the gradual rise in civilian fatalities in the post-9/11 world is confounding. In other words, if killing civilians engenders a loss of popular support that results in the decline and potential demise of terrorist groups, why do terrorist groups ever attack civilians? It seems that some groups intentionally target civilians while others avoid doing so. The process of target selection of terrorist groups is a puzzle that needs further investigation. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate why terrorist groups are likely to target civilians and the impact of variation in terrorists' target selection on their survival.

²According to some reports, five perpetrators of the Luxor Massacre were lynched by the local villagers. See Cronin (2009, 110) for more details on the incident.

In essence, this dissertation research argues that groups that perpetrate more indiscriminate violence against civilians do so as a result of principal-agent problems (PAP). The PAP appears when operational commanders (the agents) of a terrorist group prefer short-term gains, such as operational success, over long-term strategic goals. When agents choose to attack civilians, they may do so despite the negative consequences of the leadership's (the principal) aspirations. The leadership, on the other hand, faces a dilemma: to exert more control over their agents and risk their own security or allow the indiscriminate killings to continue, which is detrimental to the group's survival. Groups that are better managers of the principal-agent problem should be able to control group violence effectively and will be more likely to endure.³

A significant majority of terrorism scholars, however, attribute the global rise in indiscriminate killings of civilians to the dominance of religiously motivated terrorist groups in the post-9/11 era. They argue that religious terrorist groups are apocalyptic in their objectives and they do not actively seek popular approval and public sympathy (locally or internationally) for their acts because they expect to obtain spiritual rewards (Benjamin and Simon, 2002; Laqueur, 2000; Enders and Sandler, 2011; Stern, 2000b; Hoffman, 2006). However, ideological and religious explanations do not explain the indiscriminate violence of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – a secular and nationalist terrorist group (Eggen et al., 2005) – against civilians in Sri Lanka and a more restrained violence against civilians by Islamic groups like Ahrar-al-Sham and Hizbollah in the Middle East (Pape, 2005, 2003; Joscelyn, 2014). In other words, theories of religious motivation are inconsistent with the variation in civilian casualties one observes.

A growing number of recent studies explain indiscriminate violence against civilians by using an organizational framework that attributes this behavior to the internal dynamics of terrorist groups (Horowitz and Potter, 2014; Abrahms and Potter, 2015; Abrahms et al., 2016;

³Terrorism scholarship has debated numerous advantages and disadvantages of group structure – such as decentralized, centralized, and hierarchical – and its relevance to address the principal-agent problems. But these studies are done either by conducting group-specific qualitative case-studies or devising formal models and employing network analysis (Arquilla et al., 1999; Hoffman, 2006, 1993). Many studies have found that decentralized leadership is more likely to suffer from principal-agent problems and to target civilians than the organizations that are centralized (Abrahms and Potter, 2015; Shapiro and Siegel, 2009).

Shapiro and Siegel, 2009; Shapiro, 2007, 2005; Shapiro et al., 2013; Shapiro, 2013). They see indiscriminate attacks against soft targets as a product of the group's internal organizational constraints, where the leadership and rank and file have different preferences (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2006; Weinstein, 2006; Shapiro et al., 2013; Shapiro, 2013). They contend that terrorists' leadership is more rational because they can foresee the long-term impact of indiscriminate violence. However, operational commanders – given their shortsightedness – are more likely to attack soft targets against the wishes of the leadership. Although these studies explain indiscriminate attacks against civilians by examining the organizational constraints of the terrorist groups, they do not examine the consequences of indiscriminate violence against soft targets for terrorist groups' popularity and survival. In short, an organizational framework may explain why civilian casualties occur, but so far has not been utilized to explain how preference divergence makes a terrorist group more or less likely to endure.

The research on the determinants of terrorist group's endurance and their lifecycle has been rare. But in recent years, there has been a renewed interest in this field. Terrorist organizations emerge and disappear over time and the literature presents different estimates of average group survival. Many scholars claim that a few groups can last decades,⁴ while others survive for less than one year.⁵ The literature also highlights the role of religion, group size, intergroup competition and other factors to explain group survival and many studies have found that the terrorist groups perish due to government repression, the group's success, negotiations, internal conflict, reorientation of goals, defeat, leadership decapitation and loss of public support (Crenshaw, 1991; Ross and Gurr, 1989; Oots, 1989; Cronin, 2009, 2006; Jones and Libicki, 2008).⁶ But the impact of indiscriminate terroristic violence against

⁴Examples include the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Shining Path, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Hezbollah, etc.

⁵According to Rapoport (1992), about 90% of all terrorist groups in late twentieth century survived for less than one year and of those that make it to one year, more than half disappear within a decade. In the same vein, Lafree et al. (2009) found that about three-quarters of terrorist organizations disappeared in less than a year from their sample (N = 1422) and only 24 organizations in their sample lasted more than 20 years. They measured the terrorists' lifecycle from the time between their first and last known strike.

⁶Many of these explanations of group demise have been examined at length in this growing field of terrorism scholarship. For instance, the effectiveness of leadership decapitation has been thoroughly investigated and studies found that its effects are time dependent (Jordan, 2014; Price, 2009; Johnston, 2012). The most

civilians on the groups' own survival remains unexplained. This dissertation research extends the contemporary literature on the terrorist groups' endurance by analyzing how the variation in groups' target selection influences their longevity.

The current understandings of the terrorist groups' survival are generally atheoretical and do not present any extensive models that explain why few groups last longer than others (Miller, 2011, 79). They are also limited in their contribution to the broader and generalizable understanding of group endurance. Studies that investigate organizational lethality, grassroots popular support and group longevity address these factors indirectly (Jones and Libicki, 2008; Abrahms, 2006, 2012; Fortna, 2015; Gaibullov and Sandler, 2013, 2014; Miller, 2011). For instance, Jones and Libicki (2008), Fortna (2015) and Abrahms (2006) demonstrate that violence against civilians is an ineffective instrument of coercion. However, they do not examine the empirical relationships connecting violence against civilians with the decline of popular support and eventual defeat of terrorist groups. Likewise, Gaibullov and Sandler (2013, 2014) use GDP per capita as a proxy to measure popular support for terrorism. They argue that greater GDP per capita increases the citizen's discontent with terrorist activity and vice-versa. GDP per capita is an indirect measure of public opinion about government performance at best and likely contains significant random measurement error as a proxy for public sentiment about terrorist groups. In short, there is a severe lack of systematic empirical studies to test the premise that losing popular support – in the wake of indiscriminate attacks on soft targets – has repercussions for group longevity.

eminent example of the failure of this strategy is the killing of Osama bin Laden on May 1, 2011 by American Navy Seals that did not stop Al-Qaida's attacks. However, the assassination of Velupillai Prabhakaran, – the founding leader of LTTE – by the Sri Lankan government on May 19, 2009, can be hailed as a possible success because no attacks have been associated to the LTTE in Sri Lanka since May 2009 (GTD, 2016). Price (2012) finds that a terrorist group whose leader has been decapitated in the first year of the group's existence is more than eight times as likely to end as a non-decapitated group. But he also argues that this effect diminishes by 50% if the group is 10 years old. Moreover, he contends that leadership decapitation has no effect on the group mortality rate for the groups with 20 or more years of lifespan. Daxecker and Hess (2013) examine the impact of government repression on group longevity and find that government repression backfires in democracies and terrorist groups fair better in democracies. However, authoritarian regimes deter groups' engagement in terrorism by repressing them and their sympathizers with impunity, thus reducing the lifespan of terrorist groups. Similarly, other studies about terrorist groups resistance to violence have discussed the relevance of groups' success, negotiations, internal conflict, reorientation of goals, defeat and loss of public support (Cronin, 2009; Dixon, 2015; Alterman and Simon, 1999; Weinberg, 2013; Gaibullov and Sandler, 2013, 2014).

Many scholars have contextualized terroristic violence as a dynamic process which is embedded in popular sympathy or support from the local community. However, the relationship between terrorism and its support among the potentially sympathetic community is complicated. One of the main reasons for this complexity is that we have evidence regarding public opinion being a cause and an effect of terrorism at the same time. Some scholars claim that the indiscriminate violence is immoral and counterproductive for maintaining public support (Jones and Libicki, 2008; Reich, 1998; Laqueur, 1976; Cordes et al., 1984; Crenshaw, 1987; Schelling, 1991; Cronin, 2009; DeNardo, 2014; Lake, 2002; Getmansky and Sinmazdemir, 2012). While others argue that “even if violence is seen as deplorable, it may be seen as necessary” by the potential sympathizers of a terrorist group (Davis et al., 2012, xviii).

Moreover, many scholars argue that violence in and of itself creates a conducive public atmosphere that encourages sacrifice in the terrorist group’s constituency which, in turn replenishes membership (Kimhi and Even, 2004; Krueger and Malečková, 2009; McCauley; Flanigan, 2006). Pape (2005, 2003) and Bloom (2005) provide evidence that a rise in public support for suicide terrorist attacks allowed the terrorist organizations to use this tactic in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Similarly, Post et al. (2003) assert that family support, or at least acquiescence, is one of the most prevalent factors among incarcerated Israeli and Palestinian terrorists. In the same vein, other studies argue that terrorism can be used to mobilize support in a community which is indifferent toward social injustice. It highlights the problems and signals the group’s commitment to the cause, which mobilizes the people against the aggressor (Tilly, 2004). Also, if the government’s counter-terrorism operation clamps down indiscriminately; it can also indirectly mobilize potential sympathizers (Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson, 2007; Sedgwick, 2004; Siqueira and Sandler, 2006; Parker, 2007; Blake et al., 2012; Henderson, 2002; Baum, 2004).

On the other hand, terrorists’ indiscriminate violence can be counterproductive. For instance, the demise of Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) – that operated in Turkey and mainly launched attacks against Turks – is one of many examples of a terrorist group’s termination due to loss of popular support. Dugan et al. (2008) claim that

when ASALA's target selection no longer focused exclusively on Turks, the group gradually lost support from its sympathizers and was eventually disbanded. Moreover, studies of collateral damage provide striking evidence regarding the morale of the local population in the conflict zones. They argue that the role of the civilian population in conflicts is important and non-combatants always play a significant role (Condra and Shapiro, 2012; Blair et al., 2013). Therefore, attacks that harm non-combatants may undermine civilian support or solidarity depending on the nature of the violence, the intentionality attributed to the attacks, and the precision with which it is applied (Kalyvas, 2006; Downes, 2007; Kocher et al., 2011).

So, in short, popular support for terrorism can be inherently endogenous. The loss of popular support occurs when the group's support is fragile to begin with, or when the terrorists use indiscriminate violence (Siqueira and Sandler, 2006; Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson, 2007). Therefore, terrorist groups have to inflict the right amount of violence to get a sympathetic community to mobilize enough that they will do what terrorists want but not so much that it turns them off (Berman et al., 2011; Shapiro, 2013).

A review of the extant literature reveals that to date no research study is currently available that has examined the interaction of organizational lethality, grassroots popular support and group longevity. The triangular relationship between these three variables dictates the overall behavior of a group. Popular support is essential for membership retention and replenishment of new recruits. It is also vital for the acquisition of other material resources and most importantly to acquire critical information about the enemy. The loss of grassroots popular support in the group's home-base location will be a major factor leading to the demise of a terrorist group. All of the studies mentioned above either have completely ignored the subject of targeting civilians and popular support and their impact on the groups' longevity or have discussed these factors individually. So there is a serious lack of systematic and rigorous empirical studies to test the premise that losing popular support – in the wake of indiscriminate attacks on soft targets – has repercussions for organizational longevity. This dissertation research fills this gap and includes both active and inactive terrorist groups in the analysis. I use logistic regression model and event history analysis

to examine the triangular relationship between organizational lethality, popular support for violence and a terrorist group's mortality. In the next chapter, I will develop an argument that clarifies the theoretical mechanism that connects the indiscriminate violence against civilians to group mortality and the interaction between organizational lethality, grassroots popular support and group longevity.

To analyze the consequences of political violence on group longevity, I disaggregate victims of terrorist attacks into civilian and combatant targets using data from the Global Terrorism Dataset (GTD).⁷ As mentioned previously, popular support for violence may be inherently endogenous because it can be a cause and an effect of terrorism at the same time (Sharvit et al., 2015; Hewitt, 1990; Henderson, 2002). Therefore, I account for potential endogeneity by estimating a Seemingly Unrelated Bivariate Probit Model, which allows estimation of the error correlation between two equations (Greene, 2003, 738). The results suggest there is endogeneity.

Moreover, my argument suggests a relationship between terrorist group tactics and the time until a terrorist organization fails. To examine these relationships, I employ event history analysis to estimate group duration. My hypotheses are evaluated using data on group lethality, popular support, and organizational mortality for a diverse set of 480 terrorist groups that engaged in operations from 1980–2011. The findings suggest that a group's lethality and the length of its survival are negatively related. I find that groups that exhibit indiscriminate violence against civilians are likely to expire sooner than groups that chose selective violence against combatants.

I contend that perpetrating lethal attacks reduces grassroots popular support, and therefore, groups that survive longer are more likely to abstain from launching such attacks. The statistical results of this cross-group study are tested by conducting group-specific case studies on the Taliban to illustrate how causal mechanisms often function. The findings suggest that the Taliban's indiscriminate violence against civilians is the product of organizational constraints because they also suffer from principal agent problems.

⁷The author is thankful to Dr. Victor Asal for his suggestion to disaggregate target-type in an email correspondence.

1.1 Policy and Practice Implications

This dissertation contributes directly to counterterrorism policy. A group's real political motivations are revealed when we examine who or what it chooses to attack (Heger, 2010). So, analyzing target selection processes and patterns will help counterterrorism agencies to understand the intent of terrorist groups. This information is particularly useful when governments consider negotiations with terrorist groups. Also, understanding the relationship between group lethality, grassroots popular support and longevity will help authorities to break the link between communities and violent groups which may go a long way in escalating the decline of an organization (Cronin, 2006).

1.2 Road Map of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of six chapters and the following is a brief overview of the rest of the project:

Chapter 2 presents the organizational process theory and analyzes 'the terrorist's dilemma.' The resulting argument generates conditional hypotheses to be tested. Chapter 3 explains the data and data collection methodology. It describes the different empirical techniques used to examine the variation in the dependent variables. It also explains the operationalization of the independent variables and other known covariates of interest in the terrorism literature, followed by a discussion of model specifications. Chapter 4 presents the results of the analysis. It discusses the survival probabilities based on the variation in independent variables using marginal effects and Kaplan–Meier estimates. Chapter 5 presents case studies of the Afghan Taliban and Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP) in Pakistan. Finally, chapter 6 reexamines the findings and connects them to the broader understanding of how terrorist groups end, followed by a conclusion and future outlook.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

To understand any aggressive and violent social behavior, it is imperative to examine all factors – such as environmental, individual and societal – that have a bearing on such behaviors. Terrorism scholarship accentuates the significance of environmental, individual and societal factors to understand the genesis of political violence, however, these factors are also pertinent to understand terrorists’ target selection and their longevity. For instance, interpersonal differences and rivalries within a terrorist organization can be exploited to break the operational ties among key members of the group, which may lead to total disruption of the group (Cunningham et al., 2016, 26). Similarly, grassroots public support and environmental factors such as intergroup competition and relative political capacity of the incumbent government can significantly constrain group behavior. In the following sections, I will introduce a theoretical framework that explains why terrorist organizations are likely to kill civilians and how terrorists target selection transforms public opinion and impacts group longevity. This framework incorporates environmental, individual and societal factors and is based on the internal dynamics of the terrorist organizations. But before we look into the underlying theoretical channels, it is important to precisely define terrorism and explain what constitutes a terrorist group.

2.1 Preliminary Concepts

2.1.1 What is Terrorism?

How do we distinguish terrorists from activists and freedom fighters? Were terrorists always terrorists and who has the authority to declare someone a terrorist? These questions show the complexities that terrorism scholars face in defining the phenomena of terrorism, which is still evolving both politically and emotionally (Schmid, 2004). Currently, various legal and political definitions of terrorism have been followed by many academics, policymakers and by different data collection agencies, leading to varying incident counts that influence the results of research using different data sources (Chermak et al., 2012). Scholars of terrorism agree that terrorism is a form of political protest or political violence, committed and planned by rational actors to achieve political goals, and the targets of a terrorist episode go beyond the actual victims of the attack.

This dissertation follows Goodwin (2006)'s definition of terrorism. According to Goodwin (2006, 315) *“terrorism refers to acts of violence that are intended to kill indiscriminately ordinary civilians, and to frighten others, for political ends; it is thus quite different from guerrilla warfare, political assassination, and other strategies of insurgency that have military and political targets.”*

2.1.2 What is a Terrorist Group?

The lack of consensus on a universal definition of terrorism generates serious implications for the study of terrorist groups, so it is essential to discuss what constitutes a “terrorist group” at the onset. Phillips (2015) presents a comprehensive analysis of different empirical studies of terrorism that exclusively used the “terrorist group” as a unit of analysis and suggests that an inclusive definition of a terrorist group should be employed to distinguish terrorist groups from other criminal entities (Blomberg et al., 2011; Vittori, 2009; Jones and Libicki, 2008; Blomberg et al., 2009; Cronin, 2009, 2006; Crenshaw, 1991; Rekawek, 2008). He defines a terrorist group as “a subnational political organization that uses terrorism” to

pursue its goals (Phillips, 2015, 7).¹

This definition sets terrorist groups apart from criminal gangs and drug cartels. According to the definition, Mexican Crime Syndicates (an example being Los Zetas) – despite their imitation of the methods of Al Qaeda – cannot be considered terrorist groups.² Moreover, this project does not consider normative or technical distinctions between insurgents, rebels,³ freedom fighters, or terrorists and may refer to terrorist groups as terrorist organizations, insurgents, and dissidents interchangeably.

2.2 Theoretical Argument

“Most, if not all terrorist groups end, yet we do not fully understand why” (Young and Dugan, 2014, 2). Current scholarship has discussed many ways of terrorist groups’ end; however, there is no rigorous theoretical framework that may be used to analyze the life cycle of terrorist groups (Phillips, 2011, 371). In the following subsections, I will establish a theoretical framework that examines the longevity and mortality of terrorist groups by incorporating societal and environmental factors. This framework will evaluate the decline and demise of domestic terrorist organizations as a product of their lethality and is based on two broad perspectives: the organizational process theory and the theory of agency. It will also examine why some organizations are more lethal than others and how organizational theory and agency problems connect lethality and popular support to the longevity of terrorist groups. To examine the triangular relationship of group lethality, popularity, and mortality, it is important to discuss the factors that cause variation in lethality across groups. The following subsections explain the variation in group lethality across groups in detail.

¹A subnational political organization is an entity within a nation, and it does not exclude transnational groups. It just excludes states and groups of states.

²For more details about the technological sophistication, viciousness, and ruthlessness of Los Zetas see Campbell (2010). Also, see Johnson (2010) for more information on Mexican Crime Syndicates’ imitation of Al Qaeda. And for the debate about whether to consider Mexican drug trafficking organizations as terrorist groups despite their mainly criminal motivations see Flanigan (2012) and Longmire and Longmire (2008).

³This dissertation research only accounts for and distinguishes between the terrorist groups that have used guerrilla tactics to launch operations by dichotomizing the dataset in the empirical analysis.

2.2.1 Organizational Theory: Treating Terrorist Groups as Organizations

Building on a rich organizational studies literature, I consider terrorist groups as formal organizations (Barnard, 1968; Mintzberg, 1983; Wilson, 1974; Morgan, 1998; Gareth, 1997; Jaffee, 2001; Cornelissen et al., 2005; James and Jones, 1976; Dalton et al., 1980; Blau and Scott, 1962; Schwartz et al., 1963; Mayntz, 2004). Organizational theory scholarship defines organizations as “formal voluntary associations” where ‘formal’ pertains to groups “with a clearly definable membership” and with “a consciously adopted name” (Wilson, 1974, 31). The selected sample of terrorist groups for this analysis is a set of well-established organizations.⁴ They not only fit the basic framework of organizational theory as formal organizations but also strive to maintain a sizable membership, and have significant terrorist activity associated with their names (Bruscella, 2015).⁵

The organizational literature is focused on analyzing firms’ behavior and examining the business strategies of Multinational Enterprises (MNEs). But like conventional organizations, terrorist groups are known to have built organizational hierarchies and structures because “structure is the setting in which power is exercised, decisions are made, and the organizations activities are carried out” (Hall, 1996, 109; Volders, 2016; Jackson et al., 2005). These structures and hierarchies enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes. One of the most important commonalities between MNEs and terrorist organizations is that they both strive to overcome challenges to their survival and work hard to maximize their efficiency and gains.

The terrorism literature has analyzed terrorist groups behavior as a function of its internal dynamics even in the pre-9/11 era (Crenshaw, 1987, 1985; Oots, 1989, 1986; Lockett, 1994; Rapoport, 1988; Post, 1987). Many scholars believe that terrorism is an expression of an

⁴The sample has been selected from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

⁵Except for attacks perpetrated by lone wolves and unknown groups. The ‘unknown attacks’ are never claimed by any of the terrorist groups listed in the GTD. According to the newest iteration of the GTD (2016), unknown attacks constitute about 46% (71922 attacks out 156772 total) of the total attacks. Also, to be in the sample, a terrorist organization has to have at least five terrorist attacks associated with their names. For further discussion regarding the rationale of restrictive sample see Section C.2.8. To learn more about the importance of formal association of terrorist groups with names see (Bruscella, 2015).

organization's struggle for survival in a competitive environment. They argue that terrorist organizations are not monolithic entities; like any other commercial enterprise, they adapt to circumstances, and their goals evolve over time (Crenshaw, 1987, 1985; Oots, 1989; Lockett, 1994; Rapoport, 1988). They also contend that over time 'the group' itself becomes 'the surrogate family' of the terrorists and primary focus of their loyalties (Hudson and Majeska, 1999; Atron, 2004). Therefore, the goal of group preservation and longevity becomes the end goal of the organization, supplanting all other motivations or goals that were consequential for the formation of group (Crenshaw, 1987; Rapoport, 1988; McCormick, 2003; Post, 1987; Likar, 2011; Stern and Modi, 2010).

Generally, the core managerial challenges of terrorist organizations are actually quite similar to those faced by other, more traditional human organizations (Shapiro, 2013, 2). However, the terrorist organizations by nature of their operations face challenges to manage the otherwise straightforward tasks like communication, distribution of resources, etc. These managerial and agency problems for terrorist organizations are analyzed in detail in the following subsection.

2.2.2 Theory of Agency: The Terrorist's Dilemma

Organizational management theorists highlight four significant challenges that MNEs face for their survival: recruitment, control, governance, and resilience. But terrorist organizations have to face an additional challenge (Weinstein, 2006, 42-45).⁶ They have to recruit and secure funds and other logistical support in a hostile and competitive environment. The terrorist groups also face a formidable counterterrorism resistance from the government to perform their normal day-to-day activities. This counterterrorism resistance varies with the relative political capacity of different governments.⁷ Moreover, intergroup competition makes it harder to recruit and attract popular support.

⁶ Weinstein (2006, 42-45) examined organizational challenges that are highlighted by theorists of the economics of organization and featured these five major challenges that a terrorist organization faces for its survival. For more details about these challenges see Weinstein (2006, 42-45).

⁷Relative political capacity (RPC) is defined as "the capacity of the political system to mobilize the human and material resources at its disposal and devote them to national goals." For more details on RPC see Hendrix and Young (2014), Young (2012) and Kugler and Tammen (2012).

Moreover, since violence is necessary for the group’s maintenance and cannot simply be abandoned, terrorist organizations face what Shapiro (2013, 8) calls “*the terrorist’s organizational dilemma*” to control violence (Crenshaw, 1985). He argues that like any other conventional organizations, terrorist groups want to maintain corporate control over operations; however, they have to do so while staying covert. This dilemma causes additional internal and external constraints on the group. As a result, the standard problems encountered by all organizations – like convening for meetings, communication, checks and balances, etc. – get amplified with terrorist groups forcing the leadership to make a critical trade-off between *operational security*⁸ and *tactical control*.⁹ This trade-off creates operational control problems for the leadership, which lead to counterproductive violence (Shapiro, 2013; Berman et al., 2011). The following subsections further dissect the operational security and tactical control trade-off in more detail and also discusses the implications of these two factors for organizational violence and longevity.

2.2.2.1 Terrorist’s Target Selection and Organizational Lethality

The corporate design of terrorist groups is not only susceptible to environmental constraints – such as intergroup competition and the relative political capacity of government mentioned in the previous section –, but agency problems like conflicts of interest among members. These idiosyncratic agency problems are commonly referred as the *Principal-Agent Problem (PAP)* in the business literature (Miller, 1993; Kreps, 1990). The PAP in agency theory studies refers to an asymmetric relationship between two individuals (principal and agent), in which the former delegates tasks to the latter on his or her behalf (Valencia and Balbinotto, 2017). During this power delegation, the principal cannot directly observe the agent’s behavior and cannot verify if the agent is carrying out the assigned task effectively (Eisenhardt, 1989).

⁸According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), operational security (OPSEC) “is an analytical process used to deny an adversary information - generally unclassified - about our intentions and capabilities by identifying, controlling, and protecting indicators associated with our planning process or operations.” With regard to terrorist groups, OPSEC also pertains to concealment of operational planning, a group’s intentions and capabilities, and potential hideouts from law enforcement agencies. For more detail on DHS’s definition of OPSEC see <http://www.d11s.org/documents/OTO/ocso-whatishopsec-brochure.pdf>

⁹Tactical control refers to commanding authority over the assignment of tasks and resources and control over other operations like target selection, monetary control, etc.

The PAP creates complications that are usually dealt by conducting quarterly reviews, surprise inspections and surveillance. But in terrorist organizations, this lack of oversight can result in indiscriminate attacks on civilians that is particularly detrimental to the group. The leadership finds it immensely difficult to control violence because they have delegated operational control of the group to middle management or field commanders.¹⁰ Terrorist leaders have to choreograph their violence for three different audiences; for their enemy – the government they want to obtain concessions from – and for local and international populations. They want to terrorize these audiences sufficiently enough to elicit concessions but not enough to trigger a backlash, which is detrimental for group survival (Shapiro et al., 2013). Shapiro (2013) contends that terrorist organizations have struggled to strike a balance between the need to inflict pain and the danger of provoking a backlash from authorities and local population. He argues that leaders of a terrorist group want to use calibrated violence that does not cross the *societal tolerance threshold*.¹¹ But given the operational necessity of terrorist organizations to be covert and due to PAP, the task of calibrating violence becomes difficult.¹²

But why does the leadership have to give up operational control in the first place? The operational success of terrorist activity depends clandestine tactical and financial actions because it protects organizational secrets. Therefore, terrorist groups operate in a highly decentralized environment where operatives are divided into small units (Arce and Siqueira, 2014). The agents (local cell commander) usually have better operational awareness; they are familiar with the on-the-ground situation and local conditions. So, they think that they are better equipped to select the targets, timing and location of attacks. On the other hand, leaders (principals), have a better understanding of the long-term political consequences of

¹⁰This problem has been emphasized by many contemporary terrorism studies (Long and Sorger, 2010; Byman and Kreps, 2010; Stern, 2000a; Byman, 2006; Kearns et al., 2014; Giraldo and Trinkunas, 2007; Abrahms and Potter, 2015).

¹¹In an email correspondence I asked Dr. Jacob Shapiro – the author of Shapiro (2013) – how does one know the tipping point in the “societal tolerance” for violence, and if a terrorist group’s violence has crossed this threshold? To which Dr. Shapiro replied, “there’s no *priori way*..., to recognize the [society’s tolerance] threshold [for violence] unless groups cross it, and you get to see the population response.”

¹²Shapiro (2013, 4) argues that leaders need to manage how violence is employed but to do so creates “some measure of operational vulnerabilities and therefore increase the likelihood of operative being caught and a group compromised.”

attacks. They have the ability to detect the agents deviations from the group’s strategic plans and assess the political fallouts of an agent’s actions. As long as, the principal and agents have similar views about organizational aims and objectives, and there is no difference of opinion on the ways to achieve these goals, PAPs never surface.

But unlike business enterprises that have clear aims to maximize profits, terrorist organizations may not have clear objectives and may suffer from a lack of direction. As [Shapiro and Siegel \(2009, 405\)](#) note, “substantial evidence indicates that members of terrorist groups are not uniformly motivated by the cause and are not equally willing to sacrifice for the cause.” Thus, a leader’s vision does not necessarily trickle down to operational commanders. Therefore, it is possible that the latter may select undesirable targets and use means (such as suicide bombings) that increase civilian fatalities. In other words leaders face a dilemma: if they exert more control on the agent and dictate how violence should be used then they have to share more information and more frequently expose both the principal and agent to the risk of being operations being detected. Also, given geographical separation between the principal and the agent, it is harder for the former to efficiently communicate operational instructions to the latter.¹³

Furthermore, even if the specific rules of engagement have been communicated to operational commanders, they may attack civilians to settle scores in local political rivalries ([Petersen, 2002](#)), take personal revenge ([Kalyvas, 2006, 58-61](#)), kill for private greed ([Midlarsky, 2005](#)), and act due to pure sadism ([Mueller, 2007](#)). If an employee does not play by the company’s rules, conventional organizations have clear legal and official procedures to reprimand him or her. But exerting too much pressure on terrorist group members may also encourage defection. Given security concerns and communication gaps induced by decentralized networks,¹⁴ leaders have to relinquish some operational responsibilities like target selection,

¹³ [Hausken et al. \(2015, 57\)](#) presents experimental evidence regarding importance of communication between the leaders and frontline fighters. He argues that disrupting the communication network is more effective in terminating terrorist organizations.

¹⁴By making use of resources and like-minded operatives scattered across borders in a decentralized network, the terrorist groups can successfully evade anti-terror or counter-insurgency operations, and inflict greater damage or more civilian attacks as compared to groups that operate under more or less centralized leadership. So, terrorist leaders prefer group decentralization ([Pearson et al., 2015](#)).

recruitment and other logistical tasks to lower-level operatives with minimal supervision.

In short, I argue that organizations that are better managers of the principal-agent problem should be able to control violence against civilians and preserve grassroots popular support. The following subsection will discuss how the public reacts to increased violence against civilians. It will also explain why violence calibration is necessary and how it is connected to the decline and demise of a terrorist organization.

2.2.2.2 The Terrorist’s Dilemma: Popular Support and Group Longevity

Any theoretical explanation regarding the lifecycle of a terrorist organization must embrace the importance of grassroots popular support for the organization’s survival. Figure 2.1 formalizes a possible interdependence between Group Lethality (GL), Popular Support (PS) and Group Mortality (GM) using a simplified diagram. The figure indicates that GM is a dichotomous outcome and one means that the group has ended. Building upon the preceding discussion, I argue that if a group resorts to indiscriminate violence against civilians – defined as group lethality (GL) –, it loses the popular support (PS) of its constituency which has a direct effect on group mortality (GM) that is shown by a ‘+’ sign above the arrow that leads from PS to GM. The effect of GL on PS is negative – hence, the ‘-’ sign above the arrow that leads from GL to PS. Finally, by extension, GL also has a positive relationship with GM. In short, the relationships shown in the figure indicate that variation in group lethality due to a group’s inability to control violence leads to the group losing grassroots popular support, which hastens the demise of a terrorist group. So, the amount of PS that a group garners will then determine the group’s duration.

Moreover, to elaborate on significance of popular support for a terrorist group’s survival, this dissertation makes two explicit assumptions about the nature of a local population that is living in the conflict zone.

- First, I assume that the constituents of terrorist groups cannot flee from the conflict zone and face three options: opt-out of supporting the regime (repressive or otherwise), support the terrorist organization, or stay neutral (Jardine, 2014, 47).

A Causal Relationship Between Group's Lethality, Popular Support, and Mortality.

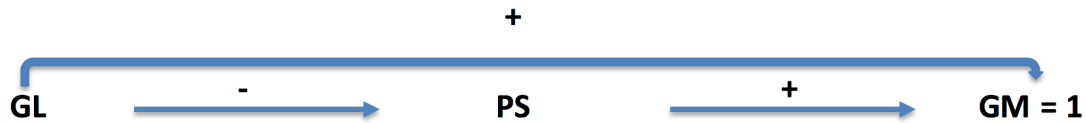


Figure 2.1: Causal interdependence between group lethality (*GL*), popular support (*PS*), group mortality (*GL*).

- Secondly, I assume that there are only three kinds of constituents that are residing in the terrorists' constituencies (Mesquita, 2013, 420-423):
 - The *true believers* believe they are fighting for an indivisible good – such as control of the government – and prefer terrorist actions regardless of how a government or society may respond to violence.
 - The *reluctant terrorists* would prefer to use negotiations and diplomacy. They may be able to accept and prefer to reach a negotiated compromise.
 - The *complacent opponents* would rather be taken advantage by the government than engage in terrorism.

Terrorist groups survive based on their ability to recruit operatives (Faria and Arce, 2012b, 645). To recruit, terrorist organizations have to rely on maintaining and extending popular grassroots support (Phillips, 2011). Popular grassroots support is also required to secure funds, weapons, forged documents, etc. So the terrorist groups need the support and participation of all members of the constituency to function effectively. Therefore, the right target selection is key to successfully maintaining the trust and interest of those who support or sympathize with a terrorist group (Phillips, 2011).

Furthermore, terrorist organizations compete with the government for grassroots support (Phillips, 2011, 370). In this competition, the grassroots supporters always encounter what Phillips (2011, 370) calls *switching costs* – which can be tangible or psychological –

that can push them to change their allegiance from one side to the other. The switching cost for changing allegiance is considerably reduced if either party (government or terrorist group) commits indiscriminate violence against civilians. Since the actions of the terrorist groups are the primary focus of this dissertation study, therefore, I will only concentrate on the impact of terrorist groups indiscriminate violence.¹⁵ I argued that when a terrorist group leadership loses control of its operational commanders, the latter engage in indiscriminate violence against civilians which may not bother the constituents who are the *true believers* in the terrorist group's ideology and its justification for violence. But it may generate uneasy feelings among the *reluctant terrorists* and push the *complacent opponents* to change their allegiance to the government. However, the group's demise may not necessarily occur immediately because the end of a terrorist group "is more likely to be a whimper than a bang" (Weinberg, 2013, 123). But the framework for the organizational disintegration presented here produces a decline in the terrorist activity over time and facilitates a gradual demise of the terrorist group.

So to conclude, calibration of violence is crucial for a terrorist organization to maintain popular grassroots support because it is indispensable to its survivability (Phillips, 2011, 370). But doing so is challenging for the group's leadership because, on the one hand, the leader needs to become more assertive in controlling the direction of violence by maintaining a large-scale administrative presence. But this large-scale leadership presence can backfire and allow the states' counterterrorism agencies to interdict and eliminate leadership, effectively destroying the group. On the other hand, the leadership can delegate operational control to the junior cell-commanders and avoid detection. However, doing so would allow the operational commanders – with a much narrower vision of success – to be reckless in their target selection. This will not only increase the organizational lethality resulting in depletion of popular grassroots support but will also speed up the decline and eventually demise of a terrorist group. Also, based on the discussion mentioned above, I contend that

¹⁵Since the terrorism scholarship explicitly argues that the terrorist groups may recede for reasons that might have little to do with the government's actions – whether conciliatory or coercive –; terrorist groups are the central focus of this dissertation. For more details on how a local population reacts to a government's indiscriminate counterterrorism operations see Lake (2002) and Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson (2007).

an application of calibrated violence against civilians is imperative for the survival of a terrorist group leading to the following conditional hypotheses of this dissertation study:

H-1: The probability of terrorist group survival decreases as the group kills more civilians.

H-2: Terrorist groups that kill more civilians will be associated with lower levels of popular support.

2.3 Religious Terrorist Groups: Do They Suffer from Principal-Agent Problem?

Ideological and religious motivations have often been cited as one of the most important causes of the rise in indiscriminate civilian killings in the post-9/11 World. A common religious ideology can play a unifying role within a terrorist organization; it should be able to minimize the PAP because the foot-soldiers and operational commanders are much more likely to listen to the leaders and have a common purpose and vision with them. So the leaders of religious organizations should be able to control their rank and file; hence, they are in a better position to calibrate violence against civilians. But 2.2 shows an opposite trend; religious groups have generated far more civilian fatalities than ethno-nationalist and leftist terrorist groups in the post-9/11 world and are in fact more lethal. So what explains the different levels of violence between religious and secular terrorists?

It is difficult to understand religious and theologically motivated terrorism in the post 9/11 world without the focusing on Islamic terrorism. While explaining the rise of Islamic terrorism in the post-9/11 world, a significant majority of terrorism scholars provide three fundamental explanations about the lethality of religious terrorist groups (Hoffman, 1998; Laqueur, 2000; Enders and Sandler, 2011; Crenshaw, 2008; Juergensmeyer, 1997; Benjamin and Simon, 2002). First, they argue that religious terrorist groups define ‘the other’ – the enemy – too broadly and sometimes too rigidly; therefore, they have less incentive to be discriminate in their killing (Asal and Rethemeyer, 2008). They contend that religious

terrorist groups consider all members of the society as legitimate targets, including those that are most vulnerable (Berman and Laitin, 2006; Bloom, 2004; Juergensmeyer, 1997).

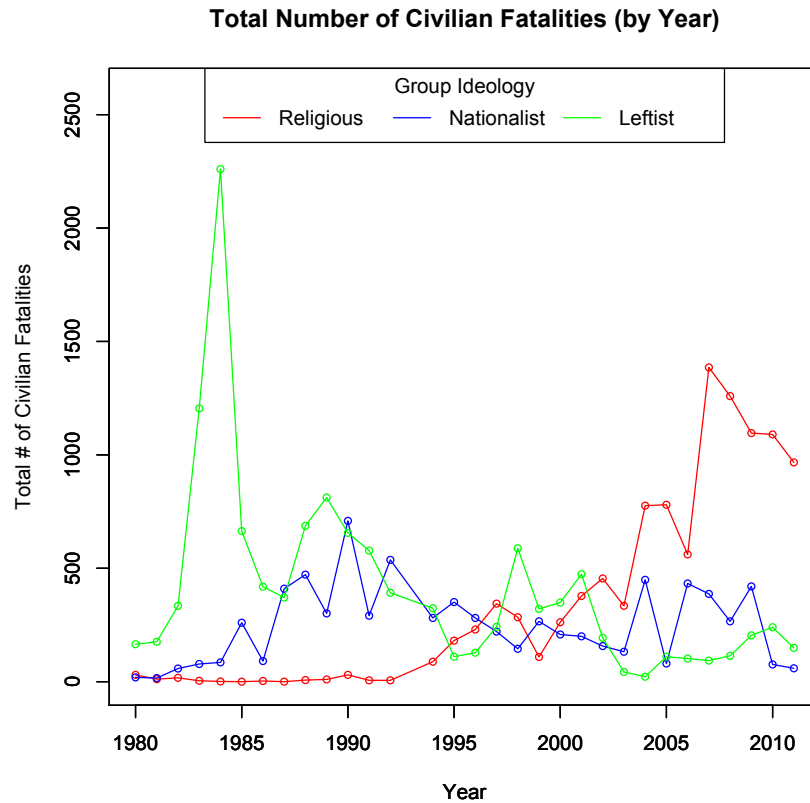


Figure 2.2: Number of yearly civilian fatalities by ideology.

Second, many studies argue that religious terrorists do not actively seek popular approval and public sympathy (locally or internationally) for their acts because they expect to obtain spiritual rewards (Enders and Sandler, 2011; Stern, 2000b; Hoffman, 2006). These studies argue that religious terrorists are often ‘their own constituencies’ and do not have an external audience for their violence.

Finally, they argue that religious terrorists “tend to see violence as an end itself rather than a means to an end” which makes high casualty attacks acceptable and even more desirable (Enders and Sandler, 2011). So, in short, there is a broad consensus in the terrorism scholarship that religiously-motivated Islamic terrorist groups in the post-9/11 world are least

concerned about ‘winning hearts and minds,’ and creating favorable local and international public opinion.

These assertions present a limited view of the rise of religiously motivated terrorism because a predominant majority of terrorism scholars argue that even suicide bombers – who attack their targets indiscriminately – are neither mentally disturbed or primarily motivated by religion (Merari, 2010; Kruglanski, 2006; Hassan, 2001; Rasler et al., 2007). For instance, Merari (2010) recorded testimonies and interviews of failed Palestinian suicide bombers and their families. He argues that none of the family members or the suicide bombers mentioned religion as a motivating factor. In fact, the Tamil Tigers – an atheist group – were the worldwide leaders in suicide bombings in the 1980s. So, religiosity does not explain the rise of indiscriminate civilian killings in the post-9/11 world because it does not explain the indiscriminate violence of LTTE against civilians in Sri Lanka and restrained violence against civilians by Islamic groups like Ahrar-al-Sham and Hizbollah in the Middle East (Pape, 2005, 2003; Joscelyn, 2014). To better understand the role of religion we need to examine the victims of modern Islamic terrorism that are discussed in the following subsection.

2.3.0.3 Who Are the Victims of Islamic Terrorism?

Figure 2.3 shows the top three countries that suffered the most fatalities between 1970 and 2014 according to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The figure shows that about 25% of the total attacks in the world after 9/11 were launched in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan that resulted in about 41% of the total fatalities in the world. Since these three countries are mostly Muslim populated countries, it is safe to assume that Muslims were the majority of victims these attacks.

The US government’s National Counter-Terrorism Center at West Point reported similar victimology in Al Qaeda’s targeting choices between 2004 to 2008 by using Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS) dataset.¹⁶ The study claims that “in cases where the religious affiliation of terrorism casualties could be determined, Muslims suffered between 82% and

¹⁶The WITS dataset can be accessed at <http://wits.nctc.gov/>.

97% of terrorism-related fatalities over the past five years” and only 15% of the fatalities resulting from ALQ attacks between 2004 and 2008 in Iraq were Westerners (Helfstein et al., 2009). This evidence clearly highlights the fundamental contradiction in the ALQ’s claims to represent the global community of Muslims (Helfstein et al., 2009).

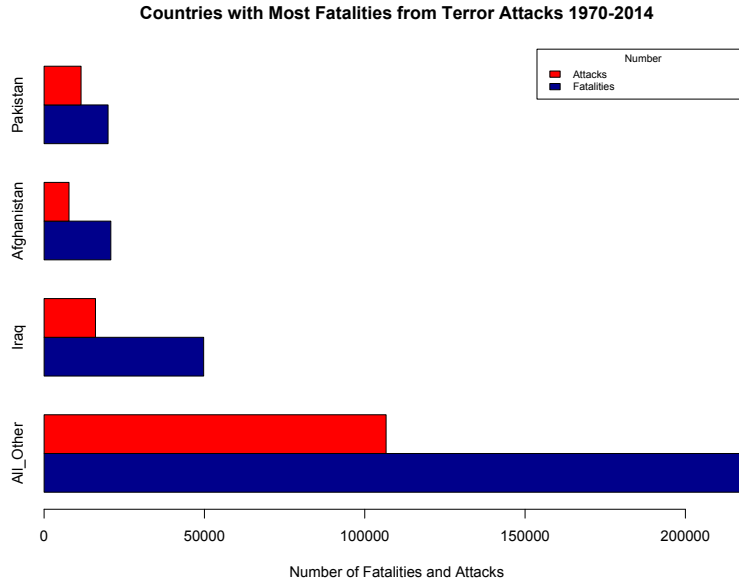


Figure 2.3: *Countries with most attacks and fatalities.*

Based on the empirical evidence mentioned above, it is clear that modern Islamic terrorist groups predominantly target fellow Muslims. ALQ leaders have been openly justifying the killing of Muslims under a logic of ends justifying the means (Moghadam, 2008) and they argue that killed civilians “were essentially the human shields, and if innocent, they died martyrs” (Helfstein et al., 2009, 2).¹⁷ There are about 1.6 billion people that are adherents to the Islamic faith in the world (Pew-Research-Center, 2015, Projections 2010-2050) and despite sectarian tension between Sunnis and Shias, and their grievances against the West and incumbent governments, not everyone agrees with ALQ’s justification of the mass killing of Muslims. ALQ’s justification may be acceptable to the *true believer* in the ALQ’s

¹⁷ALQ’s second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was confronted with questions about the organization’s use of violence, and especially violence against civilians in an online forum in 2007. He defended ALQ’s use of violence, arguing that their operations do not kill Muslims, and on the rare occasions they do, such individuals are apostates or martyrs (Helfstein et al., 2009).

ideology, but it does not seem plausible to *complacent opponents* and may indeed produce misgivings for *reluctant terrorists*. The following subsection reexamines the claims of scholars regarding the imperviousness of Islamic terrorist groups to popular support in the light recently unclassified letters of ALQ senior leadership and other primary documents. It also questions whether these groups are indeed susceptible to public opinion.

2.3.0.4 Target Selection of the Modern Islamic Terrorist Groups

A recently declassified letter that was written by a senior leader of ALQ in Iraq (AQI) to his subordinate in early 2006 shows that AQI was suffering from the principal-agent problem and a common *Salafi* and *Sunni* Islamic ideology did not help to reduce the preference divergence between the leadership and operational commander. In the letter, the senior AQI leader expresses his concerns regarding indiscriminate and gruesome killings carried out by his local operational commander named Abu-Usamah, who was a Ramadi Cell Commander. He not only disciplines Abu-Usamah in the letter but also orders him to see him immediately. In the letter, senior leader of AQI says ([Senior-Leader-ALQ](#), to Abu Usamah – Harmony Letter # IZ-060316-02):

“Stop the killing of people unless they are spying, military, or police officers... if we continue using the same method, people will start fighting us in the streets... You have to come with Dr. ‘Amir the day after tomorrow early in the morning... It is important that you and Dr. ‘Amir have to come to me as soon as possible”

The senior leadership of AQI understands that violence is necessary; however, it reprimands the junior commander for killing civilians in gruesome ways and in the middle of town because the leadership understands that doing so will change the local mood against AQI, and the locals will rise against them. This letter shows that sometimes doing too much violence or doing the violence in the wrong way is also damaging to the political cause ([Shapiro, 2013](#)).

In another declassified letter from 2010, Osama Bin Laden cautions Attiya (a.k.a Jamal Ibrahim Ishtiwi al-Misrati), who was briefly ALQ Second-in-Command, on targeting errors in various places including Yemen ([Bin Laden](#), to Atiyatullah Al-Libi – Harmony Letter # SOCOM-2012-0000015).

“The other aspect involves the impact on the nation’s impression towards the Mujahidin and being sympathetic towards them. The operations that bear extreme negative impact on the partisans of the Jihad, including targeting the apostates in mosques or nearby – such as the assassination attempt of Dustum during the holiday worship location, and the assassination of General Muhammad Yusuf in one of the Pakistan mosques.”

Bin Laden is telling Attiya that he is selecting the wrong targets and does not understand the political impact of his actions. In the same vein, before the August 2009 elections in Afghanistan, Mullah Omar, the leader of the Afghan Taliban, sought to centralize the Taliban movement in a rare issuance of a code of conduct for his fighters in Afghanistan ([Al-Jazeera](#), 2009, New Version issued on July 28, 2009; [Harmony-#-AFGP-2007-K0000029](#)).

The document was issued in the form of a booklet and was named *“Rules of Mujahideen (ROM) with “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”* listed as the issuing authority. Before the issuance of these guidelines, the individual commanders had been operating autonomously in Afghanistan. They were selecting their targets and had operational control over their territory. However, the new ROM sought to curtail their autonomous power. The ROM warned against defection by stating that:

“Creating a new mujahideen group or battalion is forbidden. If unofficial groups or regular battalions refused to join the formal structure they should be disbanded.”

The new ROM also wanted to control the use of suicide bombing operations and issued clear guidelines regarding the circumstances when such operations are permissible. It is also advised to avoid civilian fatalities at all costs. The ROM states:

“Suicide attacks should only be used on high and important targets. A brave son of Islam should not be used for lower and useless targets. The utmost effort should be made to avoid civilian casualties.”

In the past, the Taliban often took hostages, and the new ROM issued clear guidelines regarding how to handle the prisoners. The ROM further described how to treat different types of prisoners and also curtailed the decision-making powers of local commanders regarding killing, releasing, or negotiating hostage release. It also prohibited taking ransoms. The ROM states:

“Whenever any official, soldier, contractor or worker of the slave government [referring to Afghan Government] is captured, these prisoners cannot be attacked or harmed. The decision on whether to seek a prisoner exchange or to release the prisoner with a strong guarantee will be made by the provincial leader. Releasing prisoners in exchange for money is strictly prohibited. If a military infidel is captured [a reference to the US and NATO forces], the decision on whether to kill, release or exchange the hostage is only to be made by the Imam [a reference to Mullah Omar] or the deputy Imam.”

Finally, the ROM instructs all Taliban fighters to do their best to win the hearts and minds of the local population. The ROM states:

“The mujahideen have to behave well and show proper treatment to the nation, in order to bring the hearts of the civilian Muslims closer to them. The mujahideen must avoid discrimination based on tribal roots, language or geographic background.”

These ROMs show the Taliban’s top leadership recognized the divergent preferences of the local commanders and understood the importance of favorable public opinion. However, the options for the Taliban leadership to enforce these ROMs were limited because of the

terrorist's dilemma described in Section 2.2.2.

Moreover, the following two examples show the importance of local support for initiating and sustaining any terror campaign. In the aftermath of an attack on Yemen's Defense Ministry hospital in Sana'a on December 5, 2013 that killed 52 people, Qasim al-Raymi, the current *emir* (local chief) of ALQ in the Arabian Peninsula (AQIP), issued a rare apology. He said, "we confess to this mistake and fault. We offer our apologies and condolences to the families of the victims." He further explained that "we did not want your lost ones; we did not target them on purpose. This is not of our religion or our morals." He explained that one of the attackers made a mistake and attacked the hospital, whereas the hospital was not the target. Peter Bergen, a renowned terrorist scholar, expressed his views on this incident and said: "Al Qaeda leaders seem to be waking up to the fact that if they position themselves as the defenders of Muslims, their large-scale killing of Muslim civilians needs to stop" (Basil and Shoichet, 2013).

Last but not least, is the case of May 16, 2003, and November 9, 2005, suicide bombings in Casablanca (Morocco) and Amman (Jordan) for which ALQ took the credit. While these coordinated simultaneous suicide attacks were an operational and tactical success, it infuriated the local public and the next day angry natives crowded the streets in protest and chanted "Burn in Hell, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi" – then leader of AQI – and media called the events the Jordanian 9/11. This incident completely depleted the local support of ALQ in Jordan and Morocco (Kalpakian, 2005; Finer and Mehdawi, 2005). The examples illustrated here show that tactical successes may not translate into strategic success.

The examples, declassified letters and documents from ALQ and Taliban high command presented above show that even modern Islamic terrorist groups are acutely aware of the significance of grassroots popular support. They also indicate that common Salafi and Sunni Islamic ideologies of ALQ and Taliban respectively do not prevent the principal-agent problem in these terrorist organizations and fail to restrain indiscriminate violence against civilians. If religious terrorist groups are also vulnerable to the principal-agent problem despite a common unifying ideology, then what organizational attributes do make them different? In the following subsection, I will discuss the organizational attributes of religious terrorism

that makes them effective.

2.3.0.5 Why Are Religious Terrorist Organizations More Effective?

As discussed in the previous section even ruthless religious organizations like ALQ, AQIP and Taliban are also subject to the PAP and are constrained by unfavorable public opinion in their constituencies. But it is surprising that despite facing the *terrorist's dilemma*, and losing operational control of their terror campaigns – which led to the killings of hundreds of thousands fellow Muslims due to principal-agent problems – these organizations managed to remain operational. Is there something unique about how religiously motivated groups are organized that makes them unusually effective to overcome the organizational dilemma (Berman, 2011)?

First, many longtime scholars of religion and terrorism – such as Mark Juergensmeyer, David Rapoport, Walter Laqueur and Bruce Hoffman – argue that religiously motivated terrorist groups use religious tradition in conjunction with their specific interpretation of both religious texts and current world events to support their attacks. They benefit from their idiosyncratic understanding of authoritative sacred texts because it allows followers to take actions without fear of doing something contrary to their perceived religious morality. Their religious worldview allows them to violate acts like suicide bombing that are considered socially taboo.¹⁸ So religious groups get a sense of absolute and unifying cohesion from their religious devotion and their shared understanding of something they believe is ordained by God (Rapoport, 1983; Laqueur, 1977; Juergensmeyer, 1997; Hoffman, 2006).

Second, religious groups “have greater opportunities to screen their operatives, thereby reducing preference divergence and increasing control” (Shapiro, 2013, 206). For instance, Hamas, a religious terrorist organization as opposed to the secular Fatah,¹⁹ recruited its militants from a much more homogeneous population that had been pre-screened through

¹⁸Islamic teachings strictly prohibit individual suicide because it is regarded as a major sin. According to Islamic teachings, those who commit suicide will live their eternity in the fire of Hell. Suicide bombing, however, has been a controversial subject and one can find interpretations for and against this act. For more details on individual suicide see <https://quran.com/4/29>.

¹⁹Both organizations faced similar external constraints and the same enemy – Israel.

religious institutions. Therefore, Hamas faced easier managerial challenges because of a common pool of indoctrinated people for recruitment and resource provision (Shapiro, 2013, 248).

In short, religious organizations do care about favorable public opinion and want to maintain operational and managerial control over their rank and file. They also face similar organizational and agency problems like mainstream conventional organizations. But they have a slight edge over secular terrorist groups because of the availability of highly motivated religious followers and their ability to manipulate theological understanding of religious scriptures. So it is safe to assume that they will have a longer lifespan based on the ability to screen their operatives, availability of *true believers* and spiritually based motivations (Rapoport, 1983; Cronin, 2006). These insights suggest another important hypothesis for this study:

H-3: A terrorist group with religious motivation is less likely to end than a group with another type of motivation.

2.3.0.6 Liability of Newness

The organizational scholarship argues that younger organizations have a higher rate of failure than older organizations. They contend that in a competitive environment, a young organization is more likely to fail (Arthur Stinchcombe, 2000; Freeman et al., 1983; Ranger-Moore, 1997; Hannan and Freeman, 1984; Aldrich and Auster, 1986; Stark, 1998; Stern and Modi, 2010; Saunders, 2009). The literature refers to this trend as a “*liability of newness*.” Organizational theory research argues that newer organizations depend on new, costly roles and tasks that have yet to be learned, and therefore are more vulnerable. In relatively younger organizations, social interaction – which is required for effective collaboration – takes time to develop. They also lack a common normative base, and stable linkages between the members in the beginning (Arthur Stinchcombe, 2000; Bruderl and Schussler, 1990).

In the terrorism literature, however, it is often found that newly formed or splintered

terrorist groups from the old groups are likely to be more popular; popular groups are more likely to enlist new operatives, and groups that have a large number of operatives are likely to be more active (Arquilla et al., 1999, 100). On the other hand, young terrorist groups with weaker capabilities by necessity are more likely to kill civilians because they cannot attack more fortified and difficult military targets. Therefore, young groups are more inclined to go after softer targets. Also, to establish their brand name in the market, these young groups tend to launch more spectacular attacks against soft targets. However, killing civilians is counterproductive for grassroots popular support which is a prerequisite for survival.

Moreover, Young and Dugan (2014, 4) and Blomberg et al. (2009) argue that young terrorist organizations cannot compete for resources and recruits and old organizations outbid them. But the success of a terrorist group, nevertheless, depends on how the violence is used. The ‘Liability of Newness’ thesis requires a closer examination; therefore, I predict that young organizations should be less likely to survive.

H-4: A young terrorist group is more likely to end than an old terrorist group.

2.3.0.7 Targeting Logic: Suicide Bombing as a Weapon of Choice

Finally, the weapon of choice and targeting logic of the terrorists show their resolve to inflict mass casualties indiscriminately or to calibrate the violence to a tolerable level for society. The terrorist organizations identify the target and then seek to attain the capability to attack these targets at the desired scale. The groups with discriminate targeting logic will depend on weaponry that will allow them to attack specific targets. On the other hand, the groups that have highly indiscriminate targeting logic will rely on mass bombings or suicide bombing to cause maximum fatalities (Dolnik, 2007, 16). Since suicide bombings are inherently indiscriminate in nature and can result in collateral damage, groups that use this tactic will lose popular support in the long run if not immediately.

Suicide terrorism has evolved as an effective strategy in the post-9/11 world. Many recent scholars of terrorism posit that the probability of relative success of suicide attacks vis-a-

vis conventional attacks makes them an effective and a likely choice for modern terrorist organizations (Pape and Feldman, 2010; Hoffman, 2003). Moreover, suicide bombings are inexpensive and less complicated than other kinds of terrorist operations; they also guarantee media coverage (Hoffman, 2003). Kydd and Walter (2006) argue that terrorist violence is a form of costly signaling by which terrorists attempt to influence the beliefs of their enemy. Therefore, the indiscriminate acts of violence committed by terrorists are instances of armed propaganda used to achieve specific goals.

Figure 2.4 shows a scatter plot of total suicide attacks (left) and total non-suicide attacks (right) by year from 1980 to 2011. Although suicide attacks occur less frequently than other attacks, a clear trend of an increasing number of suicide attacks can be seen, whereas the number of non-suicide attacks dropped from 1990 to about 2004 when it started to rise again. It seems that suicide terrorism has become a favorite weapon of choice for the modern terrorist group. The current study will determine whether suicide bombing, as an extreme form of terrorism, has any statistically significant impact on a group’s mortality. This reasoning leads to my final hypothesis:

H-5: The groups that use suicide terrorism as opposed to conventional terrorism are more likely to end.

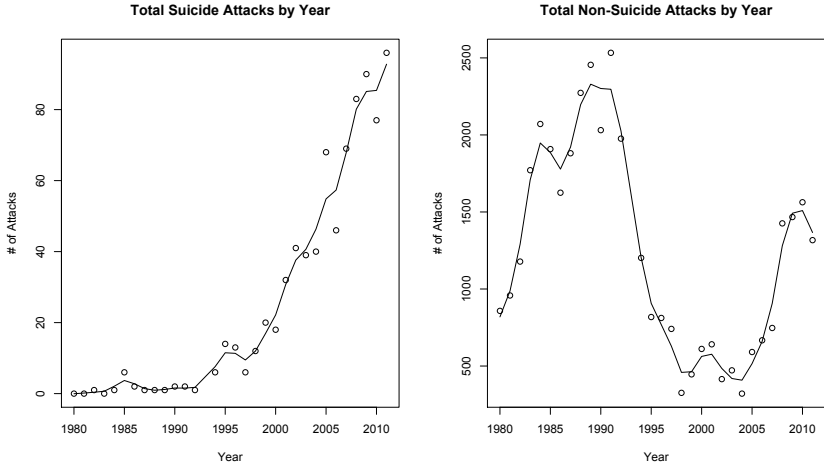


Figure 2.4: Increase in the number of suicide and conventional attacks over time.

Chapter 3

DATA AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The previous chapter introduced a theoretical framework of terrorist group survival and presented some related hypotheses. This chapter presents and defends the method and statistical models that are employed to test the hypotheses. First, I introduce the research design and methodology employed to examine the endogenous association between group lethality, popularity, and mortality followed by descriptive statistics and operational definitions of the variables and a description of the concept these variables are capturing. Then I present the event history model specification with illustration of group duration data, variables, and methodology to examine the expected survival time of groups.

3.1 Group Lethality and Mortality versus Endogenous Popular Support

3.1.1 Research Design

3.1.1.1 Unit of Analysis

This dissertation research takes ‘the terrorist organization’ as the unit of analysis instead of the state itself and asks questions about terrorist groups, not terrorist attacks¹ or terrorism in general. This allows consideration of organizational attributes – such as targeting preferences, organizational competition, and longevity – of terrorist groups that are not traditionally the center of attention in terrorism scholarship. Existing terrorism studies overlook these group characteristics and make claims based on using the state (or state-year) as a unit of analysis. Since terrorist groups, the target and the audience, can by definition be from different states, using the state as a unit of analysis may lead to spurious and unreliable inferences about terrorist group behavior (Young and Findley, 2011).² Although using the state as the unit of analysis does have its merits, it seems to ignore the context in which most of the terrorist activity occurs (Phillips, 2012). Moreover, Asal and Rethemeyer (2008) demonstrate the efficacy of using terrorist groups as a unit of analysis by demonstrating that organizational attributes influence group lethality. Also, using larger units of analysis, such as the state or state-year, obscures the valuable heterogeneity of these organizational attributes (Nemeth, 2013, 356).

¹However, I did account for the frequency of terrorist attacks normalized over the years in which the terrorist organizations were operational in the empirical analyses.

²For more information on how selecting the wrong unit of analysis can sway empirical findings see (Young and Findley, 2011).

3.1.2 Operational Definitions of the Variables

3.1.2.1 Independent Variable

Group Lethality: Unlike many current studies, I disaggregated the victims of terrorist attacks by target-type. Disaggregation of the victims of terrorist attacks by target-type is consistent with the definition of terrorism in this study – which only considers violence against civilian targets as terrorism (Abrahms, 2006; Ross, 2006; Goodwin, 2006). Group lethality is measured as the average civilian fatalities that a terrorist group has generated in a year from its attacks in its home-based country. In other words, to get a normalized extent of the group’s civilian casualty ratio,³ the group’s total number of civilian fatalities from 1980-2011 is divided by the number of years the group was operational in the same time frame.

Total fatalities as an indicator of group lethality can be deceptive because the groups that have survived longer may have caused higher civilian fatalities as compared to those who are relatively new, so it is important to take into account the duration in which the total fatalities have been caused. To make it clear, assume two groups have caused the same number of civilian fatalities but the first group has been around for twice the time of the second group. These two groups must not be equally lethal. In this case, the second group will be twice as lethal as the first group. So operationalizing group lethality by taking only the total fatalities would not be indicative of the true destructiveness of the group. Also, the measurement of a group’s lethality conditional on incidents (the average number of fatalities per attack) can be problematic too, because it is possible that a group with a high fatality count may be a very active group as it may have perpetrated more attacks. To understand this, let’s assume two groups A and B. Suppose that Group A has caused 10 fatalities in 10 attacks, whereas group B has caused 1 fatality in 1 attack in same time interval; hence, both have caused 1 fatality per attack, however, Group A is more active than B and has caused more damage in the same time. So it is important to treat lethality and

³The ratio of civilian casualties to combatant or overall casualties is often calculated in conventional wars to measure the impact of the collateral damage. For more detail on the civilian casualty ratios see Eckhardt (1989); Leep and Coen (2016).

total attacks (activity) as separate covariates (Mierau, 2015).⁴ Moreover, this dissertation research disaggregates the combatant from non-combatant targets, which allows a careful examination of groups' targeting patterns. This has direct implications regarding group lethality and is not accounted for in previous studies.⁵

The data for the civilian and total number of confirmed fatalities for each incident comes from the GTD. The GTD defines civilians as all non-combatants and provides information on the type of targets attacked along with the name of the entity targeted and nationality of the target/victim. The GTD Codebook also notes that when different sources report different numbers of casualties, the number reported by the most recent source has been recorded (GTD, 2016).

Currently, GTD classifies the target type into 22 categories and gives the number of fatalities for each category as shown in Table 3.1. I included the civilian fatalities that occurred as a direct result⁶ of an attack that is only recorded in the "Private Citizens & Property" category, which is category 14 of target-types listed in the GTD 2016 Codebook (GTD, 2016, 30).

Figure 3.1 shows the general trends of group activity and lethality (the attacks launched and the corresponding fatalities by the groups), where the groups are sorted into different bins by their characteristics during the analysis period from 1980 to 2011: (A) the number of attacks they launched, (B) the number of fatalities, (C) the number of government, police or military fatalities, and (D) the number of civilian fatalities. The two bars for each bin represent the total number of attacks (left bar) and the total number of fatalities (right bar)

⁴To see the operationalization of group activity, see Sections 3.1.2.4.

⁵Lethality indicators – a total number of fatalities or the average number of fatalities per attack – in the current literature include all victims (combatants, non-combatants & the attackers) who died as a direct result of the incident. Since the perpetrators are not the actual victims of the attack, the inclusion of the perpetrator's death in the total number of fatalities seems unfair because their deaths will inflate the casualty rates. However, Alakoc (2014, 61) argues that since casualties refer to the total number of humans killed as a direct result of terrorist attacks, the inevitable death by the design of a suicide bomber in an attack should also be included in the casualty information. The death of the perpetrator may also indicate that the attack was successful and effective (Alakoc, 2014, 61).

⁶GTD advised researchers to consider the intentionality of terrorist targeting carefully because all target categories in GTD contain information on both intended targets and incidental bystanders, so there is no way of knowing whether a civilian target was attacked deliberately. As a result, civilian fatalities may have been inflated, which is a shortcoming of the dataset (GTD, 2016, 30).

Table 3.1: *GTD targeting categories by target type.*

No	Victim Categories	No	Victim Categories
1	Business	12	NGO
2	Government (General)	13	Other
3	Police	14	Private Citizens & Property
4	Military	15	Religious Figures/Institutions
5	Abortion Related	16	Telecommunication
6	Airports & Aircraft	17	Terrorists/Non-State Militias
7	Government (Diplomatic)	18	Tourists
8	Educational Institution	19	Transportation (Other Than Aviation)
9	Food or Water Supply	20	Unknown
10	Journalists & Media	21	Utilities
11	Maritime (Includes Ports & Maritime Facilities)	22	Violent Political Parties

by all the groups in that bin. Bin labels also show the number of groups that contribute to that particular bin. The figure 3.1 (A & B) shows that only eleven groups perpetrated about a thousand attacks that resulted in more than five thousand fatalities, whereas only twenty groups have killed more than thousand people. About 47% of terrorist organizations have killed no civilians between 1980 to 2011, whereas only ten groups are responsible for killing a thousand or more civilians in their lifespan. Among these ten the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) have been found to be the top two most lethal terrorist organizations in the world.⁷ In general, figure 3.1 shows significant variation in target diversity, activity and lethality of the terrorist groups.

⁷TTP perpetrated about 1022 civilian killings in 5 years and received an average lethality score of 204, and AQI secured a lethality score of 108 by killing 1436 civilians over the course of 8 years.

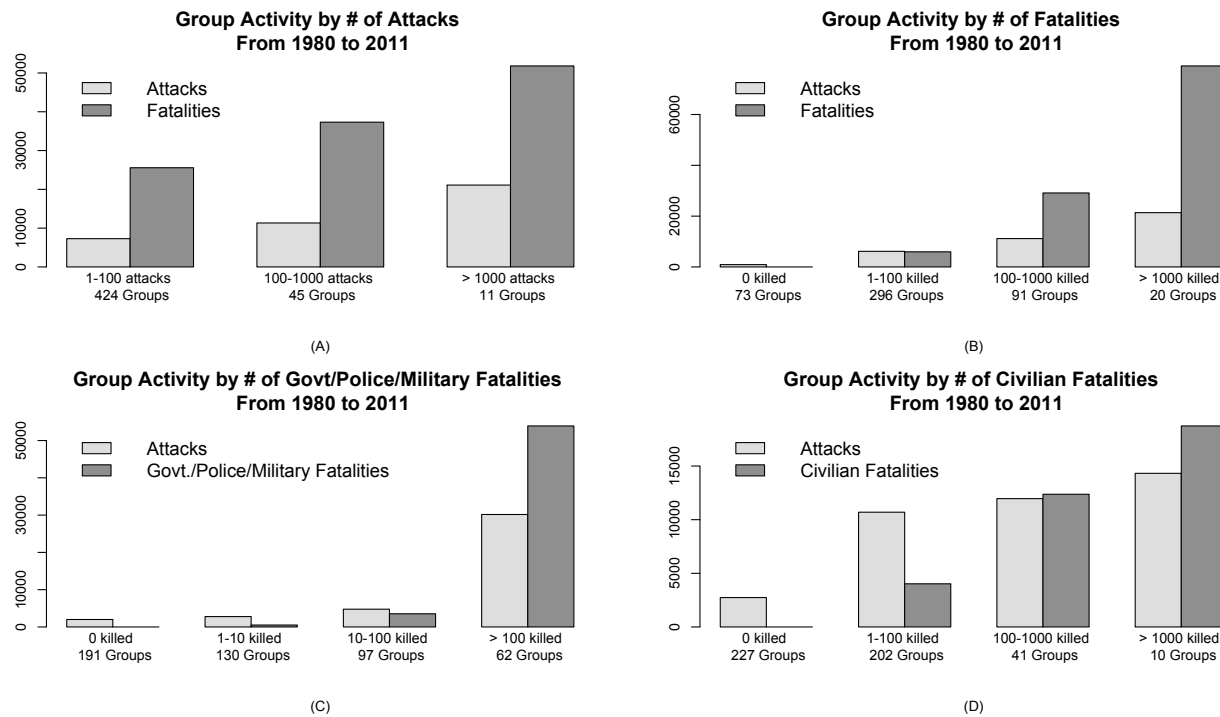


Figure 3.1: *Terrorist groups' lethality versus activity.*

3.1.2.2 Dependent Variable – I

To account for the endogeneity of popular support, this research design incorporates two dependent variables: Group End and Popular Support.

Group End: The first dependent variable, Group End, is coded one if the group is reported to have expired in the TOPS, RTG, EOT and BAAD-1 datasets, and 0 if the group remained operational at the end of the temporal range of this analysis (1980-2011). The end of a group is determined when it ceased to exist as an organization due to law enforcement interdiction,⁸ implosion, or has given up violence to join politics Cronin (2009, 210). About 51% (246 out of 480) of terrorist groups are still operational in 2011. If information regarding the groups' demise was missing and/or contradictory in the datasets mentioned above⁹ then

⁸An example of the first scenario is the Shining Path and Japanese Red Army in 2001.

⁹If there was conflicting information, I preferred RTG over the rest given that it has been published in 2016.

following Cronin (2009, 210) and Phillips (2014) methodology, I used the year of the last reported attack by a group in the GTD as its end date. However, if the last reported attack by a group is within the last three years of the temporal range (1980-2011), the analysis assumes the group survives.¹⁰ Group revival and recidivism are explained in the following in more detail.

Group Revival and Recidivism: A systemic examination of the data reveals that groups stop their terrorist activity and become dormant. One such example was the revival of the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), which was the largest loyalist paramilitary organization in Northern Ireland with a membership of 40,000 during its peak (Cusack and Taylor, 1993). The UDA declined and halted its activity in the late 1980s, but it re-established itself and renewed its deadly capacity for terrorism in the early 1990s. In a more recent example, Hoffman (2013, 647) argues that the formation of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in early 2009 was the result of an “old made new” phenomenon, in which former leaders or senior level fighters emerge from prison or exile and assume key positions of command in new or existing terrorist organizations, which results in revitalization and reinvigoration of dormant terrorist groups. In the same vein, the second Palestinian intifadah (2000-2005) rejuvenated the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine that was once dormant (Alexander and Kraft, 2007, 696). The presidential pardon of leading jihadi prisoners from two Egyptian terrorist groups, the al Gama’a Islamiyya and al-Jihad by the former Egyptian President Morsi has the potential to infuse other dormant organizations in the Middle East (Rahim, 2012).

For the reasons explained above, I considered an organization dormant if it doesn’t have a reported attack in any three consecutive years in the GTD, and if there is a history of revival or recidivism in the group’s lifetime. The dataset shows that about 18% of terrorist organizations have ceased their operations once for three years in their lifetime, about 19% of the organizations have shown this behavior twice in their lifetime, and seven terrorist organizations renounced violence and chose to restart it three times in their lifetime. This

¹⁰These are the groups that stop their terrorist activity and became dormant for the reasons specific to the group’s internal or external conditions.

recidivistic behavior may have direct implications for the *group end* variable because we cannot code a group as ‘expired’ that has chosen to be violent again after three years of hiatus. About 29% of the organizations have shown the recidivistic trend in their entire lifetime.

3.1.2.3 Dependent Variable – II

Popular Support for Terrorism: Popular support is the second dependent variable. I operationalized popular support by using *Negative Constituency Reputation (NCR)*, which proxies the level of public dissatisfaction with terrorist activity. The NCR¹¹ is a four-category ordinal variable expressing the extent to which a terrorist group garners a negative reputation by employing forced recruitment, child recruitment, and forced funding in its reference community (the in-group) in its home base country. This additive NCR index is measured on a scale of zero to three, with zero recorded if the group has committed none of the three acts in a given year, and one recorded if one of the acts is committed by the group, etc. All three measures are dichotomous, and the data are drawn from RTG.¹² To make this variable dichotomous, NCR is coded as zero when the NCR was zero or one – measuring low negative reputation –, and one when NCR was two or three, indicating higher negative reputation garnered by the group. In the following, I list three categories that were used to code the original categorical variable of NCR.

Forced Recruitment: records whether a terrorist group resorts to abduction, threat or use of force against adults for conscription in its constituency. Coercive recruitment is unpopular

¹¹Before operationalizing NCR, we need to specify how the ‘Constituency’ of each group has been determined. I adopted the Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016, Appendix: C, 5) methodology to measure this variable and the data also come from the RTG dataset. They make several assumptions to identify the constituency of each group. First, they assume that all domestic and international terror groups have a constituency they claim to represent in each country. This means that the groups have an aggrieved population they claim to fight for against one that is economically, politically or culturally dominant. Second, Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016) assume that there is a clear ethnic/religious or ideological divide between the in-group (terrorist groups own reference community) and out-group (the dominant community) in the constituency that pits one against the other. For more details, see (Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016, Appendix: C, 5).

¹²For more details about the additive index and factor analysis of the three factors see Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016, 5).

with the masses and it alienates people and reduces the legitimacy of the group (Eck, 2014; Weinstein, 2006; Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016).

Child Recruitment: measures the coercive recruitment of underage children as soldiers or as suicide bombers by terrorist organization (Eck, 2014; Weinstein, 2006; Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016).

Forced Funding: pertains to coercive methods – extortion, revolutionary taxation, or any other activity forcing constituents to donate money against their will – to generate finances for group. Such behavior has a negative impact on group reputation by reducing the group’s image and contributes to tensions between the group and its constituency (Freeman, 2011; Weinstein, 2006; Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016).

3.1.2.4 Organizational Capacity Variables

For any plausible estimation of the organizational strength and duration of a terrorist group, it is imperative that we account for the magnitude of the group’s capacity and the constraints that a group experiences in the environment in which it operates (Mierau, 2015, 5). The ability of a terrorist organization to pursue and sustain a prolonged terrorist campaign depends on their organizational power and capacities. Terrorist groups possess many unobserved capacity-related factors that need to be taken into consideration and this research design accounts for the following organizational capacity variables:

Group Age: Horowitz (2010) argues that a group’s age and innovative capacity are inversely related. However, Miller (2008) suggests a positive relationship between the group’s age and its effectiveness. Age is the number of years since the organization began, which is determined by taking the start and end date of the groups from TOPS, EOT, BAAD-1 and RTG datasets.¹³ If the information about the start date of an organization was missing, I

¹³The reader should not confuse the group’s age with ‘Analysis Duration’ variable (31 years – from 1980 to 2011) that is to be discussed in Section 3.2 in detail.

took the date of first perpetrated attack by the group as its beginning date using the attack information from GTD (Cronin, 2009; Phillips, 2014).

Figure 3.3 (right) shows the distribution of groups' age. The oldest operational terrorist organizations are the Ku Klux Klan in the United States and Young Communist League in Nepal with 139 and 88 years of age respectively. The average age of a terrorist organization is 15 years whereas the median age is 14 years, and about 42% (200 out of 480) of terrorist organizations lasted up to 8 years.¹⁴ Figure 3.2 shows a general trend of average age in the data for groups that are below or above the mean value of lethality. The vertical axis gives the average age of the groups in years. There are 415 groups with lethality at or below the mean value of lethality in the data and 65 groups that have lethality above the mean value. The bars show that the groups with lethality equal to or less than the average value, have about 15 years of average age, whereas the groups with above mean value of lethality have about 14 years of average age. Hence, the groups with higher lethality have smaller average age in the data.

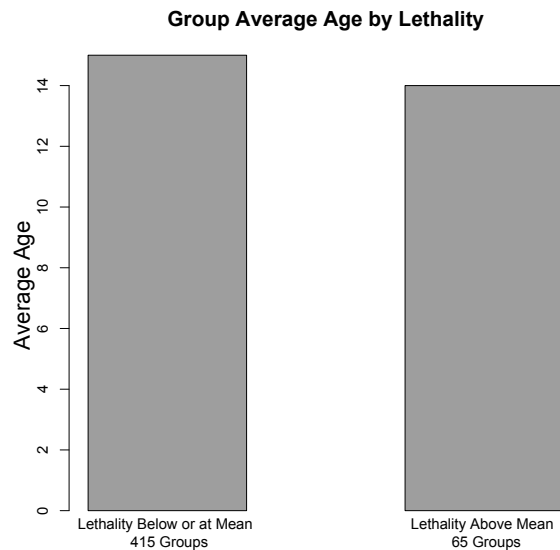


Figure 3.2: *Terrorist groups' life span by lethality.*

¹⁴This measure of organizational age is only a proxy, and it is very much possible that organizations might have attacked outside of our documented temporal range without being attributed to the attack (Dugan, 2012), which is of course a limitation in the available attack counts in GTD.

Moreover, Rapoport (1983, 13) and Cronin (2006, 13) argue that religious groups have a longer lifespan because of the power of sacred or spiritually based motivations. Also, Cronin (2006, 23) suggests that left-wing and right-wing groups tend to have the shortest duration because they frequently have trouble identifying concrete goals and retaining popular support. However, my dataset shows the opposite trend. Figure 3.3 (left) shows the average lifespan of the groups by ideology divided into two sub-groups, alive by 2011 and dead by 2011 (left). The number of operational groups with leftist ideology has persisted for over 20 years while ethnonationalist and religious groups persisted for about 18 and 15 years, respectively. Religious groups have the lowest average age (as shown in figure E.1.)

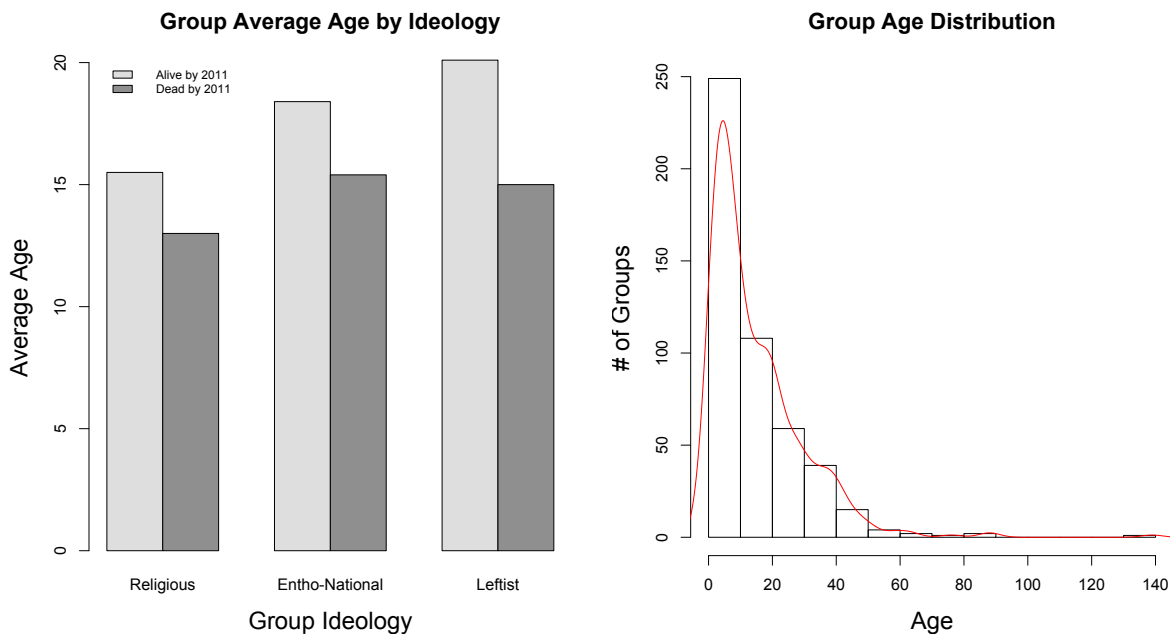


Figure 3.3: *Terrorist groups' age distribution and average age by ideology.*

Group Activity: Group activity refers to the number of incidents that a militant group was involved in between 1980 and 2011. Figure 3.1 (A) shows the distribution of terrorist organizations by attacks. A group's total number of attacks from 1980-2011 is divided by the number of years the group was operational in the same time frame to get a normalized extent of the group's activity across time. The top three most active groups based on the

number of attacks they launch between 1980-2011 are the Shining Path, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) with 4503, 3329, 1920 attacks, respectively.

Government, Police and Military Personnel Fatalities (GPM): Because this study seeks to explore the impact of terrorist groups' attacks on civilians, I disaggregate the target-type into combatant and noncombatants. To understand the impact of organizational violence against noncombatants, this study accounts for terroristic violence against combatants – GPM targets. Also, if a group chooses to predominantly attack GPM targets then it is likely to prompt a severe counterterrorism response from the government that can be detrimental for group survival. The combatant target-type variable is created by summing the total killings of Government (category-2), Police (category-3) and Military (category-4) personnel by each terrorist group from 1980 to 2011 – categories are listed in Table 3.1 – and making a composite indicator of all government, police and military killing. After calculating the total number of GPM fatalities, this variable is later divided by the number of years a group was operational in the 1980-2011 timeframe to obtain the normalized impact of the extent of the group's GPM casualty ratio.

Figure 3.1 (C) displays the absolute values (not normalized to the time duration of activity) of GPM casualties. About 40% of terrorist organization have killed no GPM personnel from 1980 to 2011. The top three organizations that generated the most GPM fatalities are the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Al-Shabaab. ISI killed a total of 408 GPM personnel in 5 years and received the highest GPM score (81.6). Similarly, TTP and Al-Shabaab killed 335 and 311 GPM personnel in 5 years, so they have average GPM killing scores of 67 and 62.2, respectively. Furthermore, figure 3.4 shows average civilian fatalities per attack (left), average government, police or military fatalities per attack (middle) and average lethality of groups (right), as a function of time. One can see a clear general trend of an increasing number of civilian and government, police or military fatalities after 1995 and 2002, respectively. The average lethality of groups is generally increasing after 1995.

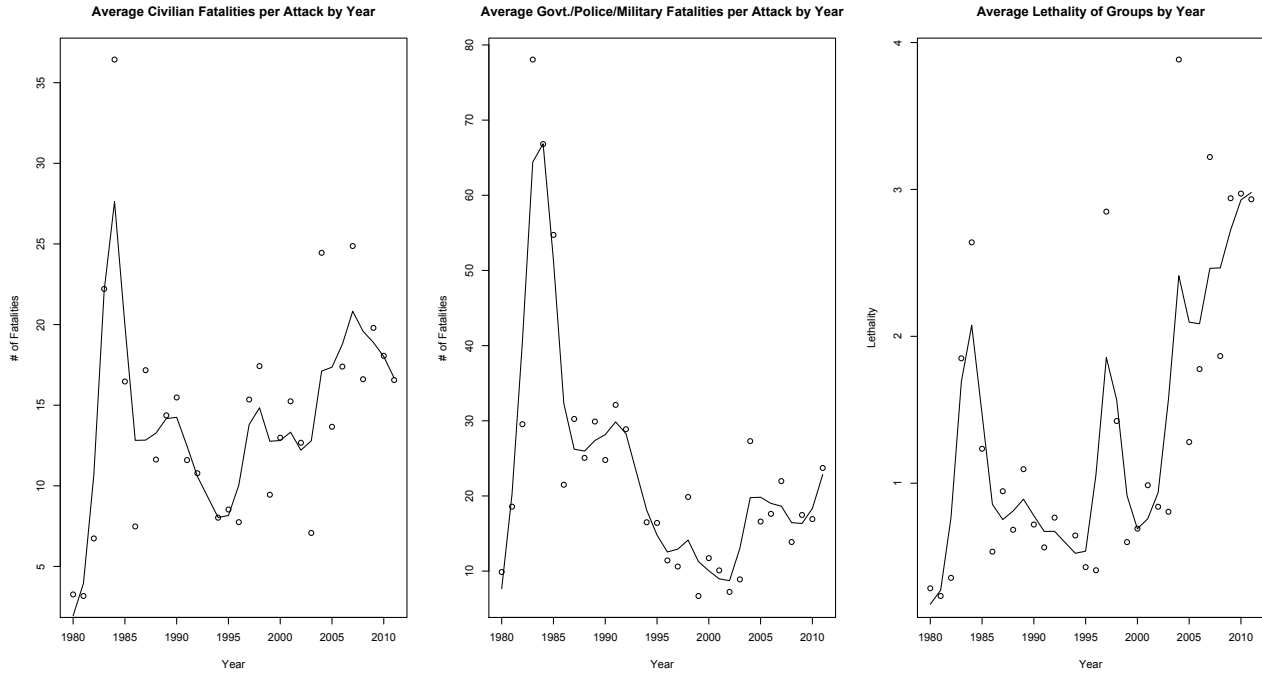


Figure 3.4: Average lethality and total number of civilian and GPM fatalities.

Positive Constituency Reputation (PCR): A Group’s positive reputation matters. Many terrorist groups are known to have maintained human aid and social service projects that allows the group to maintain a cordial relationship with the community. Like NCR, PCR¹⁵ is also a four-category ordinal variable expressing the extent to which a terrorist group garners a positive reputation by employing strategies like public goods provision; maintaining a viable media outlet to communicate with their audiences and by maintaining political aspirations. All three strategies are dichotomous, and the data are drawn from RTG.¹⁶ Like NCR, PCR is also computed using three dummy variables to get a four points additive index, measured on the scale of zero to three where zero represents if the group has committed none of the three PCR acts in a given year, and 1 corresponds to one of the acts committed by the group and so forth. By adding the scores of each group on these three indicators, we arrive

¹⁵Please see footnote 23 for assumptions regarding constituency specification for all terrorist groups in the dataset.

¹⁶For more details about the additive index and factor analysis of three factors see [Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu \(2016, 5\)](#).

at a 0-3 scale that represents the positive constituency reputation of each group. PCR has been used as one of the control variables to gauge its diminishing impact on NCR. To be consistent, PCR has also been used as a dichotomous variable. The PCR is coded as zero when the PCR was zero or one – which means low positive reputation –, and one when PCR was two or three indicating higher negative reputation garnered by the group. In the following, I list three categories that were used to code the original categorical variable of PCR.

Public Goods Provision: includes the provision of free education, food, security, or health services by terrorist groups in their constituency, which promote feelings of appreciation and allegiance towards the in-group (Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016, 5).

Media Outlet: In the age of mass media terrorist organizations are known to maintain an online presence or printed newspapers or journals. Many organizations have established small band radio stations. Terrorist groups use media to elevate their victories and spread their propaganda, all of which shape the way their constituency views them (Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016, 5).

Political Party: Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016, 5) also coded whether or not terror groups possess any political aspirations, and have an established political branch or are affiliated with a legal political party. The groups with a political branch or affiliation can gain and maintain stronger public support at the grassroots level because they have a more direct connection to the rank-and-file.

Popular Support for Terrorism by Ideology: Ideological and theological motivations play an important role to make sense of the world as they determine values and moral frameworks for day-to-day activities. But different individuals consume these motivations differently. A few individuals manifest these motivations through vociferous vocal support for violent actions while others actually engage in violent actions. In other words, ideological and theological motivations are vital to differentiate between *true believers*, *reluctant terrorists*

and *complacent opponents* of terrorism as described in Section 2.2.2.2.

So, it is important to examine the group reputation of different ideological groups in our dataset. Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of the negative (top) and positive (bottom) reputation of a group by its ideology. The bar heights for each reputation bin show the percentage of religious, nationalist, or leftist groups out of the total groups in that ideology. About 50% of nationalist and leftist groups have zero negative reputation. However, only 35% of religious groups fall into the category of having zero negative reputation. It is interesting to note that about the same percentage of religious groups have zero positive reputation as well.

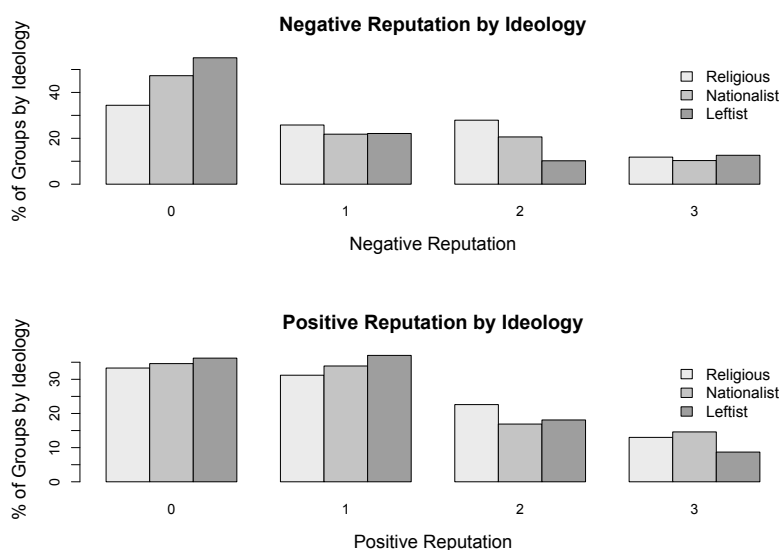


Figure 3.5: *Terrorist groups' reputation by ideology.*

Group Ideologies: Ideological and theological motivation is also a vital component of the organizational capacity of a group. Ideology has an effect on targeting patterns as well as a group's propensity to outbid when faced with competition (Drake, 1998; Drake et al., 1998; Nemeth, 2013). Group ideologies are coded using the BAAD-I and RTG datasets (Forest, 2012; Levy; Boyd, 2014). Each terrorist group is classified as having one of three potential ideologies – religious, leftist and ethno-nationalist.¹⁷ All three ideologies are dichotomous

¹⁷The EOT dataset from Jones and Libicki (2008) classified ideologies in four potential categories, such as

variables. Drake et al. (1998) and Drake (1998) argue that terrorist attacks are rarely indiscriminate and ideology is central to the process of target selection because it sets the moral framework within which they operate.

Figure 3.6 shows group activity by ideology. The data contains 93 religious groups, 165 ethno-nationalist groups, and 127 leftist groups. Religious groups caused the maximum number of civilian fatalities in the minimum number of attacks. On the other hand, the leftist groups launched the maximum number of attacks. The data can be interpreted as the religious groups caused 10 civilian fatalities per 5 attacks, whereas both ethno-nationalist and leftist groups caused only 3 civilian fatalities every 5 attacks on average. The religious groups caused 8 GPM fatalities in every 5 attacks, whereas the ethno-nationalist and leftist groups each caused only 6 such fatalities in every 5 attacks. These statistics show that religious groups are indeed more lethal than leftist and ethno-nationalist groups.

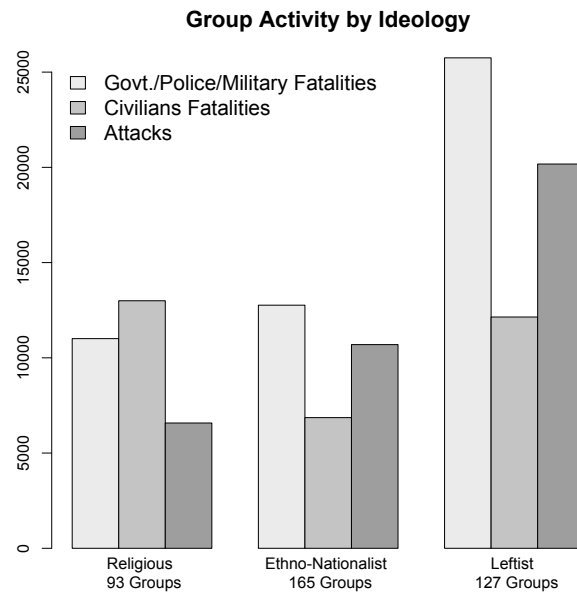


Figure 3.6: *Terrorist groups' activity by ideology.*

nationalist, religious, left-wing, or right-wing which no doubt is a better way to measure ideological patterns. But BAAD-I is preferred over the EOT due to completeness of the data on the group's ideology variable. BAAD-I incorporated ethnic and nationalist motivations of the groups and call them ethno-nationalists. But unfortunately, it does not code right-wing terrorist groups.

Global Versus Local Agendas: The stated goals of a terrorist organization reveal a great deal of information about their intended targets. This is a dichotomous variable that takes the value one if the group has globalized agendas and zero for the groups with localized orientation. Jones and Libicki (2008, 21) argue that groups fighting to achieve globalized goals like social revolution or implementation of ‘Sharia law’ in a non-Muslim country are less likely to reach a negotiated settlement than groups with limited aims, such as preserving the status quo or forcing a policy or territorial change. Kilberg (2011, 55) argues since broader goals are more likely to be unachievable a group with little hope of achieving its goal will be more likely to simply express its grievance through violence than take the organized steps necessary toward achieving its goal. In addition to broad goals, states are unlikely to offer concessions to religious terrorist groups because they are fighting for altruistic goals like salvation; therefore, these groups are unlikely to settle for less than their full demands. As a result, concessions, amnesties, and similar counterterrorism strategies that have worked with other terrorist groups may not be successful for religious terrorist groups (Hoffman, 2006, 127-128). Miller (2011, 341) makes a similar assessment, suggesting that religious groups are “the most problematic for states because many are unlikely to compromise, which means betraying their faith...” So, this variable is expected to be positively related with group mortality.

Group Size: Oots (1989, 1986) argues that the size of a group may play an important role in the activities and effectiveness of a terrorist organization. Jones and Libicki (2008) also finds that the group’s size is the most predominant predictor of group longevity. But the issue of how large any group has to grow to be inefficient has been discussed at length in the current scholarship. Historically, terrorist groups have never been large. For instance, according to TOPS, the Red Army Faction (also known as Bader Meinhof Gang) never had more than three dozen “actual trigger pullers” but they had a larger support network.¹⁸ Similarly, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) had the capacity to employ and arm thousands of members, but they never had more than 400 or 500 operatives which

¹⁸According to Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC), the RAF membership at any given time was estimated at only 10 to 20 people. See <http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/red-army-faction-raf-bader-meinhof-gang> for more details.

seems to be a conscious decision on the part of PIRA's leadership because they could not control or discipline a group bigger than 500 members.¹⁹ In the same vein, ALQ in Iraq and Afghanistan has faced problems due to its enormous size because it became difficult to manage command, control, and communication. Oots (1989, 1986) notes that terrorist groups may be likely to suffer from a free rider problem as they grow larger. Terrorist goals are typically public goods that are both non-rival and non-excludable (McAllister and Schmid, 2008). As the group's membership increases, each individual's contribution to the final product (attack) is lessened. Furthermore, larger groups are likely to suffer organizational problems and ideological heterogeneity leading to dissension amongst the membership and less operational security (Oots, 1989, 1986). A small organization, on the other hand, may be less likely to be plagued by the collective action problem but it is likely to be highly vulnerable to operational failure. To operationalize the size of the group, I used data from the EOT dataset.²⁰ Groups are divided into different membership sizes based on the number of core members and are scaled as follows: fewer than 100; 100-999; 1000-9999; and 10000 or more (Jones and Libicki, 2008, 6).

Rebels: The concepts of terrorism and guerrilla warfare are used interchangeably in current scholarship (Schwartz, 2006; Fortna, 2015; Gleditsch et al., 2002; Cunningham et al., 2009; Clutterbuck, 2011). But terrorism and guerrilla warfare are distinct strategies of warfare and distinguishing between them is essential for conceptual clarity. The tendency of confusing terrorism and guerrilla warfare in the current scholarship emanates from the lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism itself, but there are other reasons as well. First, there is a general perception that the employment of guerrilla warfare tactics by insurgent groups is terrorism – at least the targeted state perceives it that way because its writ is being challenged. Second, many terrorist organizations employ both strategies of terrorism and guerrilla warfare interchangeably for the achievement of their objectives, and are listed both in terrorism datasets like the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and in rebel group datasets like “The Non-State Actor Dataset” from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).

¹⁹See PIRA's TRAC profile at <http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/provisional-irish-republican-army-pira> for more details.

²⁰Whenever possible the size of terrorist groups is updated using TOPS, RTG and BAAD datasets.

As a result, I divided terrorist groups into categories for those that used only terrorism and those that have used both terrorism and guerrilla warfare. The data for this variable comes from RTG, and they differentiate between a rebel and terrorist by using a binary variable called ‘Rebel’ coded as one if the terror group is also listed as a rebel group in UCDP dataset, zero otherwise (Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016). Figure 3.7 shows the activity of terrorist groups that use guerrilla tactics and those which do not use it. The plot shows that the 332 groups that do not use guerrilla tactics have launched fewer attacks overall. They caused fewer fatalities as compared to a rather smaller number of groups (148 groups) that used guerrilla tactics. A more substantive interpretation is that the groups that use guerrilla tactics caused 5 civilians and 8 GPM fatalities per 5 attacks, whereas the groups that do not use guerrilla tactics caused only 4 civilians and 6 GPM fatalities per 5 attacks.

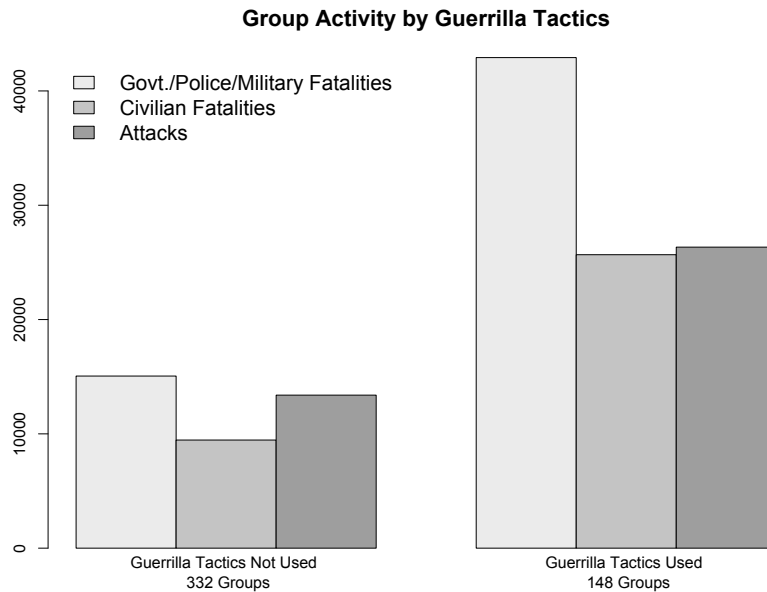


Figure 3.7: *Terrorist groups’ activity by guerrilla tactics.*

Group Status: Enders et al. (2011) argue that it is essential to differentiate between domestic and transnational terrorist attacks for a better understanding of the terrorism phenomena

because both types of terrorism theoretically have different impacts. To control for the environmental attributes that impact group longevity and reputation, I used the COW datasets to characterize the nature of the country in which the organization is based (Singer and Small, 1994) – which in most cases is also the country that is most often attacked. Using Nemeth (2013, 2010)’s methodology, each terrorist organization is linked with its associated attacks and the location of the target using the attack information from GTD. Then the target location is compared with the known area of operations for the organization as listed in TOPS, BAAD-1, RTG and EOT.²¹ In essence, the data show that frequently attacked countries are also the group’s known area of operations and these groups are called domestic.²² However, if the target’s location and the group’s known areas of operation do not match then these groups are classified as transnational terrorist organizations.

The variable *international* is a dummy variable that equals one for all transnational terrorist groups, and zero otherwise. Figure 3.8 shows the activity of domestic and international groups. The current dataset includes 329 domestic terrorist organizations and 151 transnational groups that engaged in cross-border operations. The domestic groups launched fewer attacks and caused a small number of fatalities as compared to that of a smaller number of international groups. Domestic groups caused 4 civilian fatalities and 6 GMP fatalities in every 5 attacks, as compared to 5 and 8 respectively for international groups.

²¹If there was a mismatch of information among the datasets regarding a group’s known area of operations, then I applied the majority rule, that is, same home based location for a group listed in majority of the group-level datasets.

²²According to Enders et al. (2011), domestic terrorism is defined as homegrown terror in which the venue, target, and perpetrators are all from the same country. Moreover, domestic terrorism has direct consequences for only the venue country, its institutions, citizens, property, and policies.

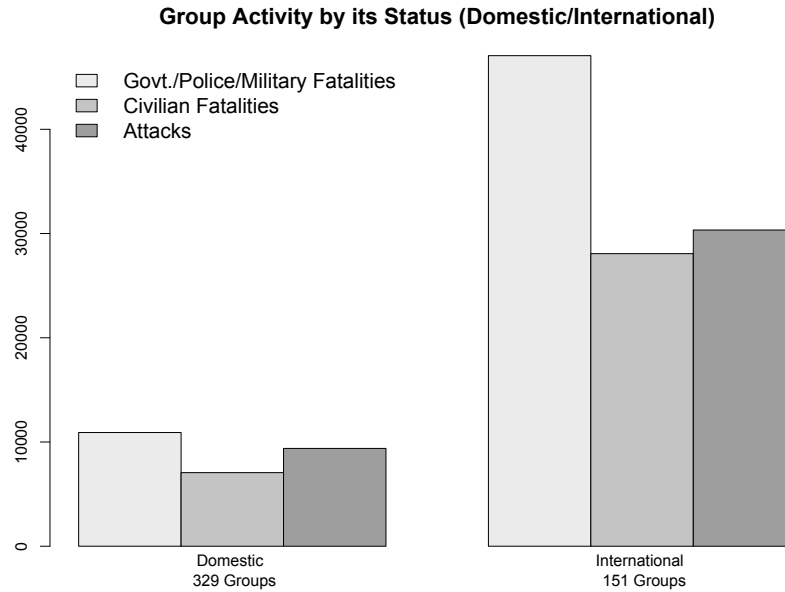


Figure 3.8: *Terrorist groups’ activity by its status (domestic vs. international).*

3.1.2.5 Group Environment Variables

The following are variables that pose environmental constraints on group duration:

Intergroup Competition: O’Leary and Silke (2007, 397) argue that many terrorist organizations encounter intense violence from rival terrorist organizations within their own constituencies. But if the terrorist groups are mainly motivated to achieve similar political goals – broadcasting a grievance, producing government concessions, damaging an economy or society, etc. – then engaging in intergroup rivalry does not help groups to come any closer to achieving their political objectives (Abrahms, 2008, 90). Yet, even terrorist organizations, even with “identical political platforms routinely attack each other more than their mutually professed enemy” (Abrahms, 2008, 90).

The outbidding theorists²³ explain intergroup competition as groups competing for the support in their own reference community. Bloom (2004, 2005) argues that the groups launch

²³Examples being Bloom (2004, 2005); Findley and Young (2012); Kydd and Walter (2006); Pearlman (2009).

more and more spectacular attacks (sometimes on the rival terrorist groups) and essentially try to out-carnage each other to gain attention. The outbidding theorists also argue that in a competitive environment this attention seeking behavior compels groups to use spectacular and gruesome violence as a tool to gain political prestige and to boost the organizational profile. Resultantly, we see multiple groups often taking responsibility for a single attack (Bloom, 2005, 29). The intergroup competition amongst terrorist organizations results in some negative outcomes, such as suicide terrorism²⁴ and deliberate civilian targeting (Crenshaw, 1981, 1985; Oots, 1989; Bloom, 2005; Chenoweth, 2010; Nemeth, 2013). It also acts to legitimize the use of extreme violence and can have a significant impact on the group's survival by generating negative constituency reputation in the group's own reference community.

Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016, 8) argue that since intergroup competition reduces the amount of resources that can be allocated to each terror group, some organizations may want to adopt strategies that can build positive constituency reputation for encouraging voluntary recruitment and funding. They assert that if the organizations fail to employ such strategies, they will resort to coercion to survive and may resort to forced conscription and extortion that may result in generating negative constituency building for the groups. Therefore, it is expected that intergroup rivalry will lead to distinct reputation building strategies, that is, positive or negative.

I used Nemeth (2013)'s methodology to code intergroup competition. He argues that ideology plays a significant role in determining the scope of intergroup competition because terrorist organizations have a certain number of ideological "markets" in which recruits and resources are sought. For instance, Nemeth (2013) argues that a communist terrorist organization would only face competition from groups with communist ideological goals, not from the groups with religious ideology. Similarly, groups with religious ideologies would not be looking for recruits with secular, leftist, or communist ideologies but for individuals with high religiosity.²⁵ To capture the intergroup competition among the terrorist organizations

²⁴ Bloom (2004) observed that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) began to use suicide attacks once it noted the rise in popularity Hamas obtained when it engaged in suicide terrorism. A similar phenomenon was noted by Kramer (1991) in the context of rivalry between the Amal militia and Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon in the 1980s.

²⁵The religious terrorist groups will also be looking for the new converts seeking salvation.

based on their respective ideological market share, [Nemeth \(2013\)](#) employed the inverse of Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) ([Rhoades, 1993](#); [Hirschman, 1980](#); [Herfindahl, 1950](#)).²⁶

The HHI is calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^N S_i^2} \quad (3.1)$$

where S_i is the market share of firm i , and N is the number of firms in the market.

Unlike [Nemeth \(2013\)](#) I used three potential ideological “markets”: Religious, ethnonationalist and Left-wing, that come from the BAAD-1 and RTG datasets and to determine the number of potential competitors in the market – which are referred as firms in HHI –, I aggregated all terrorist groups that exist within each of the three ideological categories between 1980 to 2011. Later, I calculated the percentage of attacks perpetrated by each group within each market (ideology) to compute the respective market shares for all competitors.²⁷ Finally, the groups per ideology and the number of attacks per group are used to calculate the HHI for each ideological category following the formula mentioned above. HHI scores near one indicate a condition of monopoly while higher scores indicate competitive environments ([Nemeth, 2013](#), 345). The highest intergroup competition in the dataset is 8.8, and the lowest score is 1.0 whereas the mean value is 2.64 with the standard deviation of 2.06.

Regime Type: The impact of regime type has been thoroughly debated in previous studies ([Eubank and Weinberg, 1994](#); [Eyerman, 1998](#); [Li, 2005](#); [Weinberg and Eubank, 1998](#)). Terrorist groups may benefit from operating in democracies; their liberal characteristics such as respect for civil liberties and freedom of the press reduce the operational costs of terrorist groups, allowing them to persist for longer ([Crenshaw, 1981](#); [Hamilton and Hamilton, 1983](#); [Schmid, 1992](#)). I account for this by using the Polity2 variable that comes from the Polity-IV dataset, which is a ten-point scale created by subtracting the AUTO score from the DE-

²⁶The HHI is often used in the economic analyses to assess the concentration of firms in a marketplace. The Justice Department and the Federal Reserve use HHI to predict the market impact of potential mergers of companies ([Hannan, 1997](#); [Rhoades, 1993](#)).

²⁷The recruits may want to enlist in the most active organizations ([Crenshaw, 1985](#); [Oots, 1989](#); [Post et al., 2003](#)).

MOC score while accounting for the effects of transitions, interregnums, and interruptions. This variable has two categories, that is, democracy and autocracy (Marshall et al., 2009).

Figure 3.9 shows the proportion of groups in democratic and autocratic states by their lethality. Democratic states have 82% of less lethal groups and 70% of more lethal groups. Autocratic states have fewer terrorist groups regardless of lethal intensity.

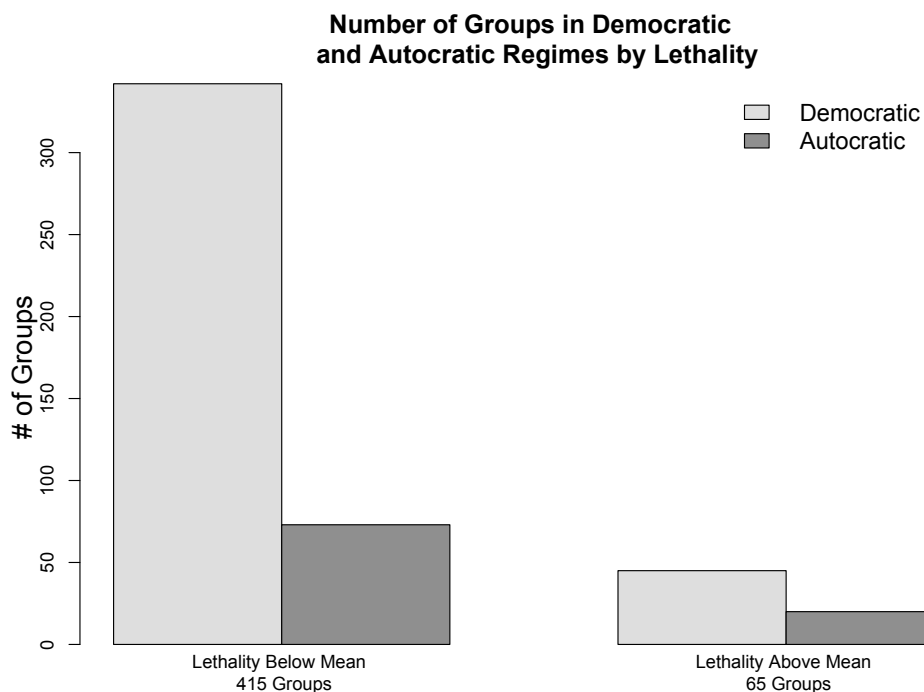


Figure 3.9: *Number of terrorist groups in democratic and autocratic regimes by lethality.*

Economic Development – GDP pc (log): The study will also account for a state’s economic development. While economic discontent has been linked to a variety of political outcomes, research on the role of economics on terrorism has found little support for a direct effect (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2008; Krueger and Malekov, 2003; Piazza, 2011). However, support and recruitment for terrorism seemed to occur more often among the educated and employed than the poor (Krueger and Malekov, 2003). At the same time, wealthier states that can provide adequate social welfare policies are less likely to have popular support for terrorism and to experience terrorism on their soil (Burgoon, 2006). This is unclear at the

level of the group; organizations in low-wealth countries may have a shorter lifespan because it is difficult to assemble enough qualified recruits to meet a group’s operational requirements. At the same time, however, group duration in wealthy countries may also be low as qualified recruits exist, but overall support for terrorism is low. The data for this variable come from the World Development Indicators (2012).

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Lethality	480	7.68	26.58	0	243.4
Death	480	0.49	0.5	0	1
GPM	480	1.96	8.20	0	81.60
Attacks	480	7.52	20.67	0.05	221.93
Age	480	14.94	14.99	1	139
Newness	480	1.46	1.13	0	3
Rel vs. Non-Rel	385	0.24	0.43	0	1
Suicide Bombing	480	0.12	0.33	0	1
NCR	480	0.81	1.04	0	3
PCR	480	.95	0.99	0	3
NCR Dummy	480	0.45	0.50	0	1
PCR Dummy	480	0.58	0.49	0	1
Size	375	2.42	1.00	1	4
Religious	414	0.23	0.42	0	1
Left Wing	414	0.31	0.46	0	1
Ethnonationalist	414	0.39	0.49	0	1
Guerrilla Tactics	480	0.31	0.46	0	1
Broad Goals	404	0.11	0.31	0	1
Competition	385	2.6	2.06	1	8.8
Group Status	480	0.32	0.46	0	1
RPC	470	0.94	0.23	0.29	1.52
State Repression	459	3.11	1.09	1	5
Regime Type	471	4.57	5.54	-10	10
GDP	455	8.48	1.20	5.01	10.62

Table 3.2: *Descriptive statistics.*

State Repression: There is a common belief in terrorism scholarship that repression reduces terrorism (Frey and Luechinger, 2003; Testas, 2004; Rasler, 1996). State repression should reduce the likelihood of terrorism by increasing the costs of terroristic violence. Since autocratic states are less likely to have systemic constraints on the use of force; they can employ repression freely, whereas democracies may experience more terrorism because they

cannot use repression with impunity (Frey and Luechinger, 2003; Testas, 2004; Rasler, 1996).

Repressive states can also adopt indiscriminate counterterrorism operations which are not conducive for terrorist groups. I expect this variable to be positively related to group mortality. State repression is measured using *The Political Terror Scale* data from (Wood and Gibney, 2010). This variable is an ordered scale measuring state repression on the following five level scale:

- Level 1. Countries under the secure rule of law. People are not imprisoned for their view, and torture is rare or exceptional. Political murders are extremely rare.
- Level 2. There is a limited amount of imprisonment for non-violent political activity. However, few persons are affected; torture and beatings are exceptional. Political murder is rare.
- Level 3. There is extensive political imprisonment, or a recent history of such imprisonment. Executions or other political murders and brutality may be common. Unlimited detention, with or without a trial, for political reasons, is accepted.
- Level 4. Civil and political rights violations have expanded to large numbers of the population. Murder, disappearances, and torture are a common part of life. In spite of its generality, on this level terror affects primarily those who interest themselves in politics or ideas.
- Level 5. Terror has expanded to the whole population. The leaders of these societies place no limits on the means or thoroughness with which they pursue personal or ideological goals.

Relative Political Capacity or State Capacity: State capacity plays one of the most important roles in developing a counterterrorism strategy (Hendrix and Young, 2014; Young, 2012). I believe that state capacity will be negatively related to group survival. Overall state capacity is measured using the Kugler and Tammen (2012) relative political capacity measure from TransResearch Consortium datasets on Relative Political Performance of all countries in

the world. The data were last updated on August 2013. They define political performance as “the ability of governments to reach their population, to extract economic resources from that population and to allocate those resources to secure the long-term survival of the political structure.”

3.1.2.6 Method

I argue that group lethality is related to popular support for a group and that both factors influence group longevity. In other words, I want to measure the interdependence between a group’s reputation and mortality as a function of organizational lethality. To estimate this interdependence, we need to acknowledge and model the endogenous association between group lethality, mortality and popularity. The endogenous association means that there is a common factor; popular support links the variation in a group’s lethality with the group’s mortality. Specifically, the common factor can be referred to as an omitted variable – and is represented by the correlated disturbances or error terms. If we do not model the correlation between the disturbances of group popularity and mortality in the model, then our estimation will be biased (Antonakis et al., 2010). Therefore, to model the causal structure of the data correctly, I will use the Seemingly Un-related Bivariate Probit (SUBP) Model.²⁸

The SUBP model is an extension of binary probit or logit models. Since my two dependent variables, *group mortality* (hereafter called death) and *Negative Group Reputation (NCR)*, are correlated, I want to estimate the error correlation between them. The SUBP model is used because it allows an estimation of the error correlations between two equations in the model (Greene, 2003, 738-742). If the error term *Rho* – which shows error correlation between two equations –, is statistically significant, the errors in these two equations are

²⁸Another common way to account for the interdependence is to use Two-Stage Least Squares (2SLS) Regression Analysis. 2SLS model uses the same methodology used in the continuous cases; therefore, the equation of interest becomes a linear probability model (LPM). Using 2SLS model is, therefore, advantageous because of its simplicity to estimate and interpret (a 1-unit change in x causes a β change in the probability of y). However, the disadvantage of using 2SLS model is that the LPM may imply probabilities outside the unit interval. It is because of this reason that we prefer generalized linear models – like probit or logit – to model binary dependent variables in applied research (Diffuseprior, 2012; Rivers and Vuong, 1988). Moreover, an exogenous instrument to estimate the correlation between group lethality and mortality is difficult to find; therefore, I prefer the SUBP over the 2SLS model. For more detail on the SUBP model, see Greene (2003, 738-742).

highly correlated. Estimates of the model are provided in Table 4.1. The two dichotomous dependent variables are *death*, which indicates whether a group has expired yet or not, and *NCR*, which indicates whether or not a group has carried out at least two of the offenses listed in Section 3.1.2.4 in its constituency.

3.2 Event History Analysis (EHA): Group Duration, Group Lethality and Popular Support

EHA is primarily concerned with accounting for why units (which are terrorist groups in this case) make transitions from one state to another state (Singer and Willett, 2003). In the current analysis, the jump from one state to another would be a transition of a group from being alive and functioning to being dead. The event of the death of a terrorist group is called *failure*.²⁹ But there will be groups that have not failed yet. The groups that did not fail are called *censored* observations. I do not have any further information about the terrorist organizations that did not expire in 2011, all I can say is that these groups were still operational. This information is very useful and should be incorporated in the estimation. The SUBP modeling approach explained in the previous section is useful; however, it does not properly handle the groups that never died. EHA techniques are specifically designed to model the observations that never fail (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004), so I will be employing this modeling technique to track terrorist organizations over time until they die while including those who have not yet failed. In the following subsection, I elaborate some basic concepts of event history modeling and its relevance to the current analysis.

3.2.0.7 Units at risk, Failure & Censoring

The EHA has an “implicit interest in risk” (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004, 3). This implies that when the units of analysis – terrorist groups – enter the sample, they become *at*

²⁹The failure could be a result of the group’s success, government repression, negotiations, internal conflict, reorientation of goals, defeat, leadership decapitation, or loss of public support.

risk of experiencing *failure*, or the demise of a terrorist group.³⁰ In event history analysis, the failure rate is defined as the probability that at any given point in time the event of interest will occur given that it has not yet occurred (Golub, 2008, 531). Also, the survival function is defined as the probability that an entity of interest will survive beyond a specified time (Kleinbaum and Klein, 2006).³¹ In the current analysis, survival is the likelihood of terrorist group’s duration.

Units at risk or facing failure are called the *risk set* of the event history analysis (Allison, 1984). In the current event history analysis, all terrorist groups in the dataset are included in the *risk set* because they all are at risk of experiencing mortality. Moreover, terrorist groups are only at risk or face failure up until the time they finally experience mortality. Figure 3.11 shows a pie chart giving the number of terrorist groups based on their entry date in the dataset.

One of the major advantages of using event history analysis over other conventional regression methods is the ability of this technique to censor certain types of data and use the information from the censored observation to maximize the likelihood function (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004). Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (2004, 16) argue that “censoring occurs whenever an observation’s full event history is unobserved. Thus, we may fail to observe the termination.” This means that there is a possibility that some of the terrorist groups may never experience mortality while others die outside the duration of this analysis (1980-2011) and their fate cannot be known. If a group never experiences mortality in the analysis time (i.e., the group dies after $T_n(2011)$) this type of observation is called *right-censored (RC)*. But if a group dies before T_0 (1980) it is a *left-censored (LC)* observation (Yamaguchi, 1991; Cleves, 2008; Singer and Willett, 2003). If a group ends within the temporal range, then this observation is non-censored (NC).

³⁰In other analyses, this can be an undesired event such as machine breakdown or someone dies.

³¹The failure rate is always inversely proportional to the survival rate.

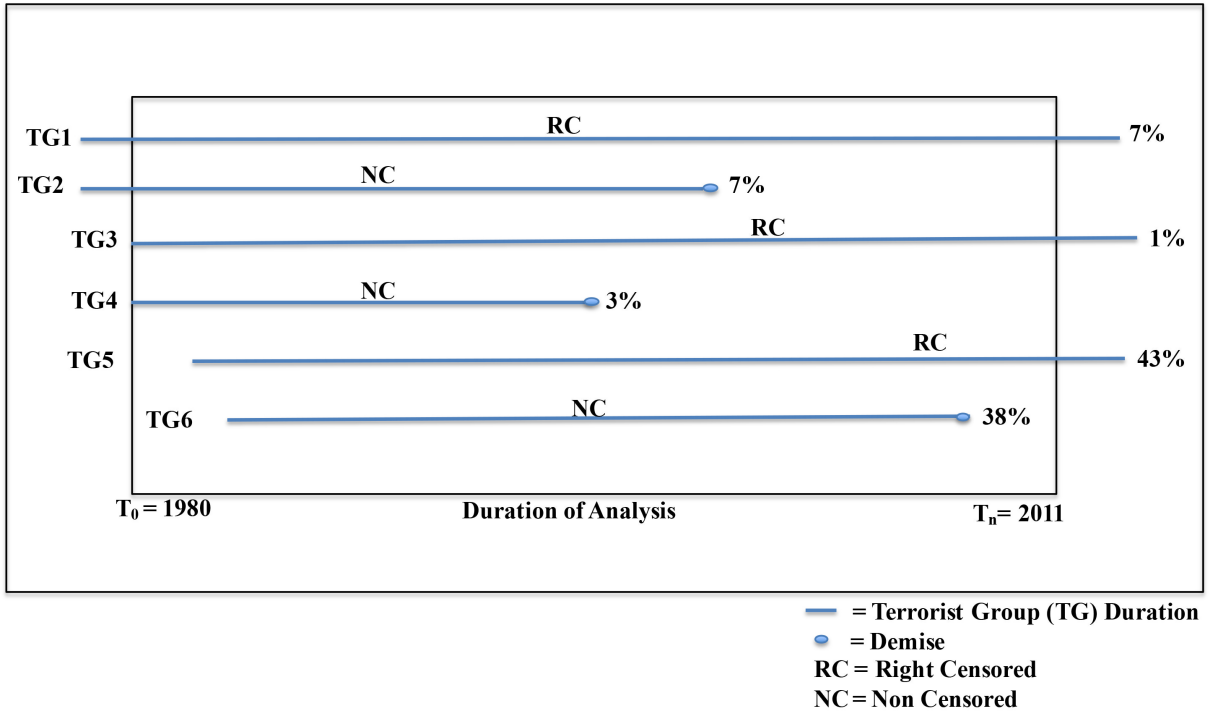


Figure 3.10: *Censored versus non-censored data.*

Figure 3.10 shows censored and NC terrorist groups in the current dataset. Based on this censoring versus non-censoring pattern, there are six distinct categories of terrorist groups (TG) in my dataset. TG1 amounts to 7% of the total organizations in the dataset. These groups were already operational before 1980 – this is when I started observing the groups –, and they remained operational until 2011. Since TG1’s fate is unknown, therefore, they are referred as RC observations. Similarly, TG3 and TG5 are equal to 1% and 43% of the total terrorist organizations in the dataset and they also remained operational by 2011, hence, are RC. The main difference between these two groups is that the TG3 started in 1980 and TG5 after 1980. On the other hand, TG2, TG4 and TG6 are the groups that ceased to exist before 2011 and (NC observations) and they are equal to 7%, 3% and 38% respectively of the total organizations in the dataset. TG2 started before 1980, TG4 started in, and TG6 after 1980.

To sum up, figure 3.10 shows that about 49% of the groups were NC which means they

ceased to exist within the analysis duration. Also, about 51% of the terrorist groups were RC, which means that they are still operational until 2011 and event (demise) did not occur for these groups within the analysis duration. Excluding these categories from the dataset will result in the introduction of bias in the analysis (Singer and Willett, 2003). Instead of excluding these groups, we censor them, allowing us to use information on their survival times in the current study. ³²

3.2.1 Research Design

3.2.2 Operational Definitions of the Variables

3.2.3 Dependent Variable

Group End and Duration: The dependent variable for the EHA is the combination of group end and analysis duration. Duration is a counter from 1980 to 2011. On average, a group has been observed for the duration of about 10 years in the current dataset. ³³ Figure 3.11 shows the number of organizations based on their entry date in the dataset. ³⁴ Operationalization of group end variable has been explained in Section 3.1.2.2. The end of a group is defined as if the group ceased to exist as an organization due to law enforcement interdiction, ³⁵ implosion, or has given up violence to join politics (Cronin, 2009, 210). The missing and/or conflicting information about the terrorist organizations have been accounted for using methodology explained in Section 3.1.2.2. Figure 3.11 shows the distribution of

³²Although RC terrorist groups did not experience demise during their duration; they still contain useful information. For instance, these RC groups may be indicative of the fact that non-lethality in a terrorist group prolongs their lifespan. In other words, we want to use information on groups duration from the survival function, not only from the failure functions in the analysis (Singer and Willett, 2003). In doing so, we are assuming that the group did not die but we just lost sight of these RC groups, and we are telling our dataset that the terrorist groups were no longer observed after T_n time. Since we lost these groups due to RC; we can derive probability estimate that gives us a likelihood function of how much longer these group would have endured, given that the technical demise has not taken place yet. It means estimating a probability that survival time of the groups “would have equaled or exceeded the observed duration” (Warwick and Easton, 1992, 128).

³³A few groups either appeared late in the dataset and had not ended so far or they ended before 2011.

³⁴14% of organizations were already operational before 1980 – this is when I started observing the groups –, 4% of groups started in the year 1980, and about 81% of organizations start after 1980. There are about 51% of the terrorist groups that are still operational until 2011.

³⁵An example of the first scenario is the Shining Path Japanese Red Army in 2001.

organizations based on their expiration or exit from the dataset.

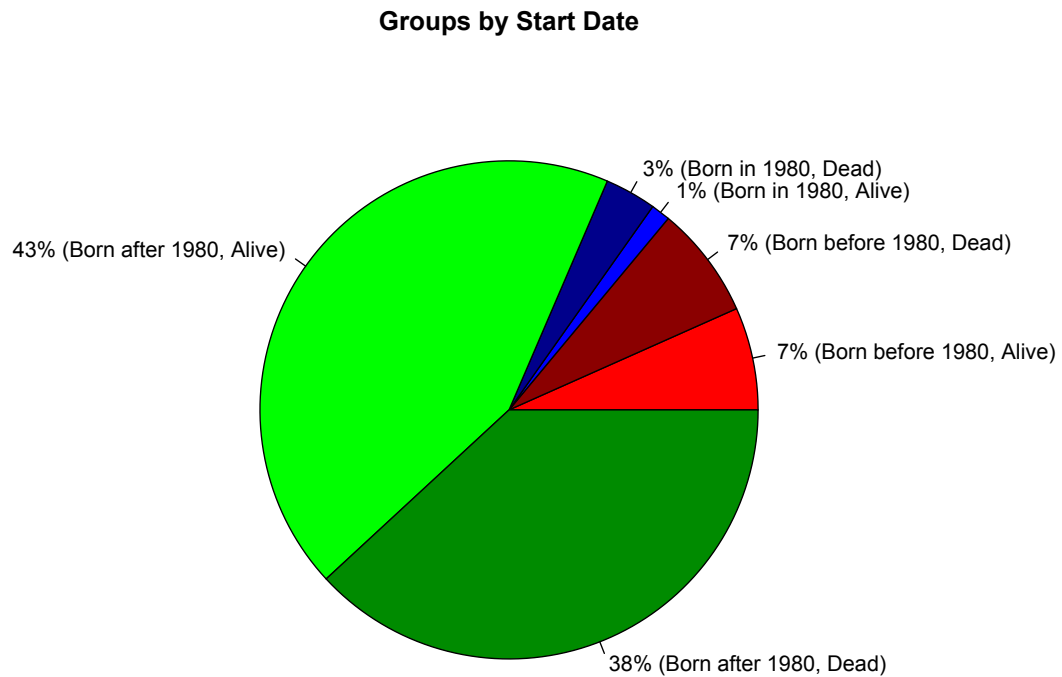


Figure 3.11: *Distribution of the terrorist groups based on their expiration or exit from the dataset.*

3.2.4 Independent Variable and Control Variables

Newness:³⁶ is a categorical variable which is established to test the *Liability of Newness* hypothesis (H-4) proposed in Section 2.3.0.6. It classifies the age of the groups into the following four categories: Category-I includes groups with ages ranging from 0 to 5 years

³⁶This research used group lethality as the independent variable for this EHA for the details on the operationalization of lethality see Section 3.1.2.1. Also, the EHA used the same set of control variables as that of the SUBP model. To see the operational definitions of the control variable, see Section 3.1.2.4 and 3.1.2.5. Both negative and positive group reputation (NCR and PCR) will be categorical for the current EHA (see Section 3.1.2.4 for details).

old; category-II includes groups with ages 6 to 14 years, while category-III and IV include groups with ages from 15 to 26 years and greater than 26 years of age, respectively.

Religious versus Secular Terrorist Groups: A dichotomous variable which is one for organizations with religious ideology and zero for all other organizations.

Suicide Bombing versus Conventional Attacks: A dichotomous variable that records a value of one for the groups that have conducted one or more suicide attacks in the analysis time, and zero otherwise.

3.2.5 Method

To evaluate the relationship between organizational lethality and mortality, the study employs a Cox Proportional Hazards (PH) model to estimate the survival probabilities for a set of 480 groups spread over 84 countries from 1980 to 2011. The Cox PH model is a semi-parametric ‘Event History Model’ that parameterizes covariates but not the baseline hazard rate and allows estimating the hazard function without having to specify the distributional form of the hazard function (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004, 1997; Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn, 2001; Cox, 1972). The Cox model is based on the assumption of proportional hazards, meaning that effect of covariates shifts the hazard by a factor of proportionality and that this proportional effect is not allowed to vary with time (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn, 2001, 973). In order to analyze the relationships between the variables of interest, a unique group duration dataset has been created using the data generating process explained the Appendix C.2.10.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The previous chapter discussed the research design, data, and model for the current study. This chapter presents the results of two statistical models that are employed to empirically analyze a triangular relationship of group lethality, mortality, and popular support. The main hypothesis of the current study argues that the probability of terrorist group survival decreases as the group kills more civilians (H-1). The study also posits that terrorist groups that kill more civilians will be associated with lower levels of popular support (H-2). I expect to find a positive relationship between group lethality and mortality and a negative relationship between group lethality and popular support. Moreover, to investigate the impact of religious and theological motivations (H-3), age (H-4) and use of suicide terrorism (H-5) by terrorist groups in detail, the study estimates three additional models. I anticipate finding a significant and positive association between religious motivation and group longevity. However, it is expected that young groups are likely to end sooner than old terrorist groups, whereas use of suicide terrorism by a group reduces longevity.

This chapter proceeds as such: the first section details the results of a Seemingly Unrelated Bivariate Probit (SUBP) Model (Model-III) that fits two-equation probit models and allows one to determine if popular support for terrorism is indeed endogenous. The equations of the SUBP model are also estimated separately in Model-I and Mode-II to examine the variation in magnitude and direction of coefficients across models. In the following section,

I describe the estimates from the event history analysis and the Cox Proportional Hazard (PH) Model which is a semi-parametric event history model. The Cox PH Model tests the main hypothesis (H-1) and other hypothesis – such as H-3, H-4, and H-5 – discussed in Chapter three.

4.1 Probit and Bivariate Probit Models

Model-I and Model-II are two binary outcome equations that are estimated separately using a simple probit regression and their results are reported in columns 2 and 3 of Table 4.1. Since Model-I and Model-II are simple probit models, they do not account for the possible interdependence in the triangular relationship between group lethality, popularity, and mortality. But the SUBP Model, on the other hand, does account for endogeneity. This modeling technique allows estimation of error correlation in two equations simultaneously. So the SUBP regression will measure the impact of variation in group lethality on group mortality and negative constituency reputation (NCR). The estimates of SUBP model are reported in column 4 and 5 of Table 4.1. In Model-I, the binary variable ‘death’ (coded as 0 for alive and 1 for dead) is its response variable, and the predictor variables are group lethality, age, negative and positive reputation, etc. as shown in Table 4.1. Model-I uses a total of 302 observations.¹

The coefficients of Model-I show that the probability of death of a terrorist group increases with greater group lethality, *ceteris paribus*, which confirms the primary hypothesis (H-1) of this dissertation study. But it predicts no significant relationship between group mortality and positive constituency reputation (PCR), size, goals, status, overall attacks and its use of guerrilla tactics. The model also shows no significant relation of environmental variables like relative political capacity (RPC), GDP and intergroup competition in their homebase. The results indicate that terrorist groups are likely to endure if their violence is directed against government, police and military targets (GPM) and also if the groups are located under a repressive regime. These findings make sense because selective violence against

¹In other words, groups for which all of the response and predictor variables are non-missing.

GPM targets does not alienate a local population; hence, it has a positive influence on group longevity. This result is in line with the findings of [Abrahms \(2006\)](#). Similarly, a state's repressive behavior is expected to produce a backlash effect, subsequently lengthening the duration of terrorist organizations and lowering the probability of outcomes favorable to the government ([Daxecker and Hess, 2013](#)). Model-I also confirms the [Gaibullov and Sandler \(2013\)](#); [Blomberg et al. \(2011\)](#); [Carter \(2012\)](#) and [Hausken et al. \(2015\)](#) conclusions and finds that the groups with religious or ethnonationalist ideologies are likely to endure and it predicts an insignificant relation between group mortality and leftist ideology. Also, the model predicts that terrorist groups fair better in democratic countries.

The most contradictory finding of the Model-I is the negative relationship of NCR and group mortality. As I argued above, NCR should have a positive relationship with group mortality, so the prediction that a terrorist group is more likely to endure if we witness a rise in its NCR is counterintuitive. This result goes against the proposed argument of this study; however, this can be an outcome of possible endogeneity in the model which is accounted for in Model-III.

In Model-II, the response variable is NCR – which is a dichotomous variable² – and the predictor variables are lethality and others as shown in Table 4.1. Model II also uses a total of 302 observations.³ As explained in the Section 3.1.2.3, the NCR is originally a four-category ordinal variable expressing discontent of the local population against forced recruitment, child recruitment, and forced funding by terrorist groups in its home base country. The NCR is dichotomized to show if a group has conducted at least two of these behaviors in its constituency.

Model-II specifically tests if the variation in group lethality leads to an increase in NCR which is the second hypothesis (H-2) of this dissertation study. The coefficients of this probit regression model show that the increase in lethality of a group is associated with its higher NCR, which confirms our hypothesis. This result makes sense because as the group kills more civilians, it loses popular support. In other words, if a terrorist group becomes more

²NCR is coded as zero when the NCR was 0 or 1 – which means low negative reputation –, and one when NCR was 2 or 3 indicating higher negative reputation garnered by the group.

³This means that groups for which all of the response and predictor variables are non-missing.

Variable	Model-I (Death)	Model-II (NCR)	Model-III Eq-I (Death)	Model-III Eq-II (NCR)
Lethality	0.013*** (0.006)	0.021** (0.009)	0.011* (0.006)	0.016** (0.008)
GPM	-0.038** (0.018)	-0.020 (0.019)	0.041*** (0.015)	0.001 (0.001)
Age	-0.006 (0.007)		0.003 (0.007)	
NCR	-0.932*** (0.200)		-0.154 (0.205)	
PCR	0.302 (0.202)	0.065 (0.192)	-0.109 (0.204)	0.070 (0.193)
Size	-0.068 (0.108)	0.169 (0.103)	-0.025 (0.110)	0.147 (0.105)
Left Wing	-0.237 (0.411)	-0.326 (0.407)	-0.276 (0.395)	-0.408 (0.399)
Ethnonationalist	-0.849** (0.403)	-0.259 (0.408)	-0.976** (0.385)	-0.269 (0.400)
Religious	-1.451*** (0.447)	0.094 (0.430)	-1.426*** (0.415)	-0.013 (0.421)
Guerrilla Tactics	-0.012 (0.206)	0.275 (0.199)	0.029 (0.208)	0.224 (0.203)
Broad Goals	-0.041 (0.277)	-0.378 (0.302)	-0.280 (0.292)	-0.380 (0.307)
Competition	-0.002 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	0.000 (0.006)
Group Status	-0.124 (0.181)	0.143 (0.187)	-0.769*** (0.187)	0.237 (0.181)
RPC	0.080 (0.376)	-0.058 (0.399)	0.447 (0.301)	0.203 (0.381)
State Repression	-0.169* (0.103)	0.045 (0.118)	-0.208* (0.107)	0.082 (0.116)
Regime Type	-0.035* (0.021)	0.067* (0.022)	-0.058*** (0.021)	0.057*** (0.022)
GDP	-0.031 (0.099)	-0.470*** (0.114)	0.126 (0.105)	-0.427*** (0.117)
Attacks	0.000 (0.001)		0.000 (0.001)	
Constant	1.897 (1.242)	2.631** (1.319)	0.687 (1.230)	1.918 (1.329)
# of obs.	302	302	297	297
Log Likelihood	-163.51	-147.91	-298.09	-298.09
Rho			-0.513*** (0.116)	-0.513*** (0.116)
$\chi^2(1df)$			12.98	12.98

Table 4.1: *Significance: $p \leq 0.10^*$ $p \leq 0.05^{**}$ $p \leq 0.01^{***}$
Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses reported.*

lethal against civilians, the group’s ability to recruit new members and collect funds without using force diminishes because it will be harder for the leadership to defend its cause.

Model-III employs SUBP estimates to account for interdependence between the group’s death, its negative reputation, and lethality with two regression equations (Model-I and Model-II) combined in the Model-III as shown in Table 4.1. The Wald test of rho shows that the residuals of two equations are indeed correlated.⁴ The absolute value of rho (0.51) shows that the two equations are strongly correlated, and the small p-value indicates that the correlation is significant.⁵

⁴In other words, if one becomes a relatively good or bad model (with smaller or bigger residuals respectively).

⁵The parameter rho usually ranges from -1 to 1 and it represents the estimated correlation of the errors

The coefficients of Model-III are not very different from the respective separate models of lethality and popular support (Model-I and Model-II). Comparing the coefficients of Model-III (Eq-I) with Model-I, the relationship between group mortality and lethality is the same. With an increase in lethality, the probability of death increases. Similarly, the likelihood of death decreases if the group's ideology is ethnonationalist or religious. Also, the coefficients for regime type in Model-III (Eq-I) and Model-I show that the probability of death declines if the group is in a democratic regime as compared to an authoritarian regime. However, the suspect relationship of group's NCR and mortality – which was providing counterintuitive results in Model-I – is insignificant in Eq-I. The NCR is a rough proxy for popular support that expresses discontent of the local population against the forced recruitment, child recruitment, and forced funding by terrorist groups in its home base country, so an insignificant finding is not that surprising.

Moreover, the coefficients in Model-III (Eq-I) show that the likelihood of death is smaller for transnational groups and if the group lives under a repressive state. There is no significant difference in the coefficients of Model-III (Eq-II) and Model-II; in both, the probability of a higher negative reputation increases with an increase in lethality. Model-III shows very similar relationships and trends as described in Model-I and Model-II, and also validates the correlation between the two individual equations.

To interpret the substantive impact of the variables with significant coefficients for Model-I, Model-II, and Model-III, I calculate their marginal effects – shown in Figure 4.1 – holding all other variables at their mean. The marginal effects of all variables for all 3 models are available in Appendix E. I emphasize the variables that show a significant relationship with the response variable. The marginal effects largely reflect similar conclusions of all three models as explained above. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage change in the predicted probabilities for a unit change in the predictor variables like the increase or decrease in the probability of group death (Model-I), NCR (Model-II) and that of both death and NCR between the two equations. In social science, a positive rho is more likely than a negative one. A statistically significant and positive rho indicates that the unmeasured factors affect the outcome of both equations in a similar way. However, a statistically significant and negative rho indicates that common unmeasured factors affect the outcomes of two equations in an opposite manner (Huth and Allee, 2002, 190).

simultaneously (Model-III). Note that for dichotomous predictor variables; the marginal effect is expressed in comparison to the base category ($x=0$), whereas for continuous predictor variables, the marginal effects are expressed as a one unit change in the predictor. Both the direction and magnitude of the marginal effects are interpreted in the following.

The marginal effects of Model-I in figure 4.1 indicate that a unit increase in lethality enhances the probability of the death of a group by 0.5%.⁶ A unit increase in GPM killings corresponds to 1.4% decline in the likelihood of mortality of a group. Similarly, a unit increase in the negative constituency reputation of a group reduces the probability of the demise of a group by 35.5%. However, this outcome may have been driven by a possible interdependence of grassroots popular support and terrorism as discussed previously. The adherents of ethnonationalist and religious ideologies are more likely to endure because the likelihood of group's demise reduces by 32.3% and 55.5% respectively. Also, the probability of death of a group declines by 1.3% with a one unit shift of the regime towards democracy. The marginal effects for Model-II indicate that one unit increase in the group's lethality raises the likelihood of having a negative reputation by 7.5%. Moreover, a unit shift of a country towards democracy results in 2.4% increase, while a unit increase in a country's GDP decreases the negative reputation of a group by 16.7%.

The marginal effects for Model-III indicate that a unit increase in lethality increases the likelihood of the death a group 0.2%. Similarly, a unit increase in selective violence against GPM targets decreases the probability of death by 0.35%. The likelihood of death and having a negative reputation is reduced by 4.4% for groups that are transnational. Also, a unit increase in the country's GDP declines the probability of death and having a negative reputation of the group by 2.9%. Finally, the likelihood of death and having a negative reputation decreases by 10.8% for ethnonationalist, and 12.4% for religious groups as compared to those who are not ethnonationalist or religious. The marginal effects of all three models show that ideology (ethnonationalist and religious) has been consistently found to be the most powerful determinant of group survival.

⁶Note that the effect is small but significant.

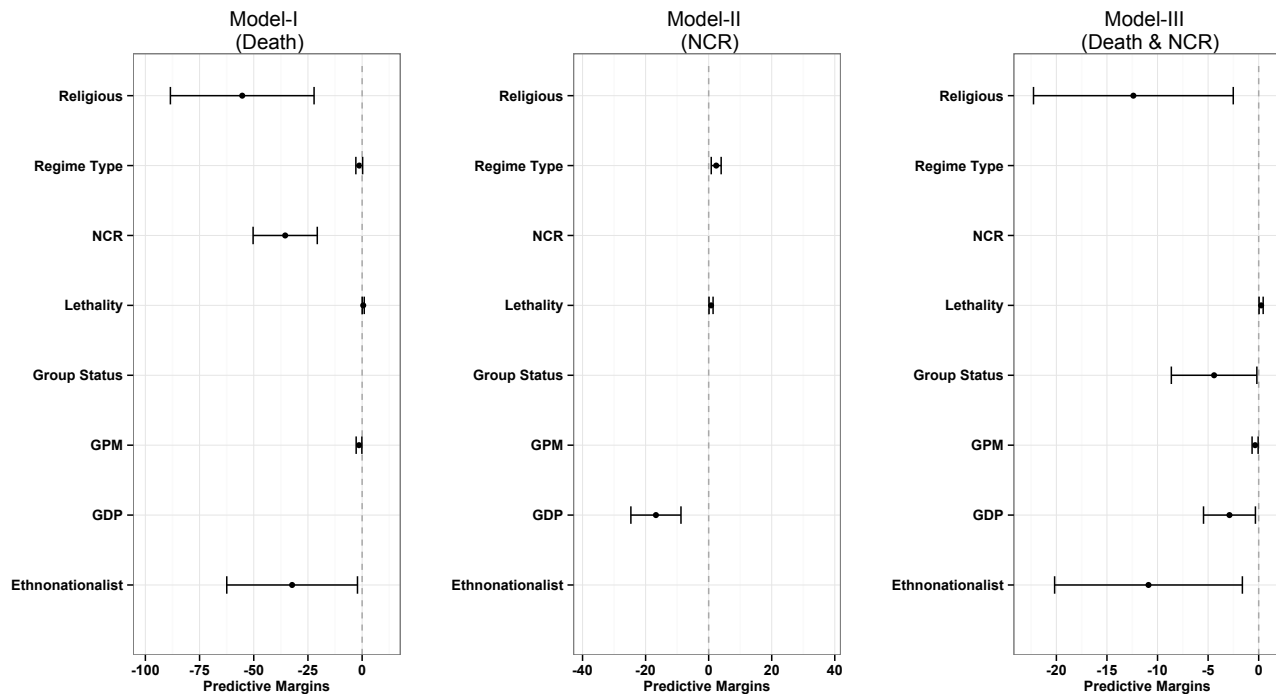


Figure 4.1: *Predictive margins.*

4.2 Event History Analysis

Figure 4.2 presents the null model of the event history analysis (EHA) which has been employed to understand time until an event occurs. As previously explained in Section 3.2.0.7 that the ‘event’ in the current analysis is failure or demise of a terrorist group. The EHA will help us understand how long it takes before a terrorist group experiences failure. The null model is also known as the Kaplan-Meier (K-M) estimates which are a series of declining horizontal steps in survival probability, as shown in Figure 4.2. The dotted curves above and below the K-M curve are the 95% confidence intervals. The K-M estimates do not include any of the covariates, and all of the terrorist organizations are treated as a single population. The K-M estimates of different covariates of terrorist groups’ mortality are available in Appendix D. Since there are fewer organizations at the end of the groups’ duration, the confidence intervals widen out with the progression of time which means very few groups

are expiring in those particular years. I plotted the estimated mean group survival time for all 480 groups at 16.4 years which is represented by the dotted vertical line that intersects the K-M curve. The mean survival time is estimated as the area under the survival curve, and the estimator is based upon the entire range of data.⁷ The mean group survival time is estimated because 246 groups are still operational. If we exclude the groups that are alive, then the actual mean survival time of the defunct groups (234) is 12 years.

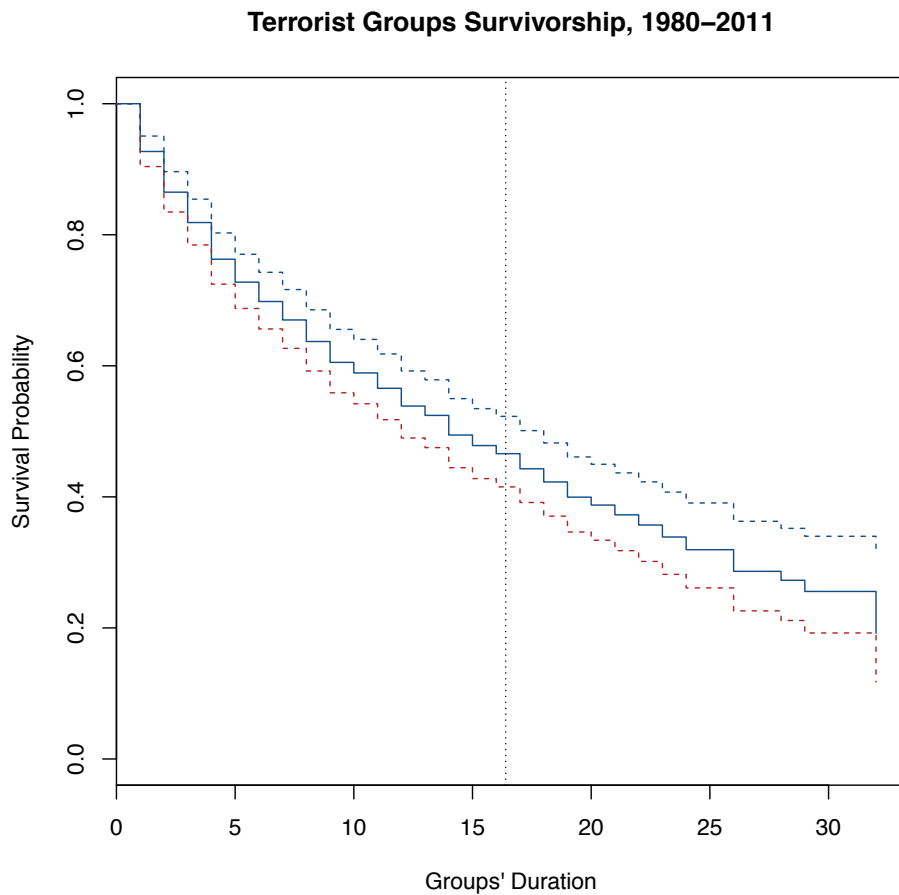


Figure 4.2: *Terrorist groups' survival by year.*

Rapoport (1992, 1067) argues that 90% of terrorist groups last only one year. In the same vein, Gaibulloev and Sandler (2013) reports that while 26% of terrorists do not survive

⁷To learn more about mean and median survival time see Buchan lecture on *Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimates* at <http://www.statsdirect.com/help/Default.htm>.

their first year and 68% do not survive for more than ten years. [Young and Dugan \(2014\)](#), however, found that the mean group survival is 3.33 years and about 68% of groups are terminated in the first year following an attack. These studies report a significant variance in the average survival time of the groups. The mean survival time in my dataset differs quite drastically from the previous studies. According to my dataset, about 6% of terrorist groups ended in their first year, and about 24% of the organizations did not survive for longer than ten years. As previously discussed at length in [Section 3.1.2.6](#), there is a tendency in the current terrorism literature to use an unrestricted sample that includes groups that conduct as few as a single attack ([Blomberg et al., 2009](#)). All studies mentioned above have generally used a similar unrestrictive sample or defined a terrorist group too broadly. Groups that have only one attack associated with them cannot be considered as viable groups. I restricted the sample to the groups that had perpetrated at least five attacks between 1980 and 2011 and killed at least one person. So my findings suggest that terrorist groups that committed at least five attacks and kill at least one person in their lifespan are likely to endure. Moreover, half of the groups in my sample are surviving longer than 16 years which is in line with [Price \(2009\)](#) and [Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu \(2016\)](#).

4.2.1 Cox Proportional Hazards (PH) Models

The study estimated four different models to test the hypotheses from H-1 to H-5 listed in [Chapter 2](#). The results of all of these models are available in [Table 4.2](#). Model-IV is a general model that estimates the relationship between organizational lethality and mortality. Model-V tests hypothesis H-4, whereas Model-VI and Model-VII test hypotheses H-3 and H-5, respectively.

Model-IV: Group Lethality

Model-IV gives the results from the Cox PH analysis using 302 groups in the dataset, out of 302, 124 have died. Model-IV provides the hazard ratios (relative risk of failure – death) in column 1 along with their standard errors in the parentheses.⁸

⁸The global test of proportional hazards assumption indicates no violations of the proportional hazards assumption.

The results show that the groups that are more lethal are more likely to expire. In other words, each additional civilian fatality in a year (which is an indicator of group lethality) at the baseline is associated with approximately 2.6% increase in the hazard, holding all other variables constant.⁹ On the other hand, one unit increase in government, police and military (GPM) killings reduces the hazard by 6.5%, which shows that groups that predominately attack civilians are more likely to die. But the groups that use selective violence against the GPM targets are more likely to survive. These results confirm the primary hypothesis (H-1) of this study.

Also, older groups are more likely to endure as the results show that a unit increase in the age of a group (1 year) reduces the hazard by 5%, *ceteris paribus*. This means that the likelihood of groups' mortality declines as they grow older which confirms the H-4 of the study. However, the impact of age on the group's longevity needs a closer examination which will be presented in Model-V. One of the most surprising results of the Model-IV is the positive relationship of group survival with the overall attacks of the groups (which is an indicator of group activity). The results show that the survival probability of the group increases with the increase in the group's activity. Although the magnitude of decrease (0.01%) is small, however, it is significant. Keeping in view the finding of a positive relationship between group lethality and mortality (explained above), one can conclude that more active and non-lethal terrorist groups are more likely survive. We can speculate that since lethal attacks make a group unpopular, groups would abstain from perpetrating such attacks. Since violence is necessary for organizational maintenance (Crenshaw, 1985), the group would continue to be actively violent and but not lethal.

On the other hand, *ceteris paribus*, negative constituency reputation (NCR) has been found to depress hazard for a given terrorist group in the Model-IV, which means that groups that garner more NCR are more likely to survive. This is a contradictory result which rejects the proposed hypothesis (H-2) of this dissertation study. However, grassroots popular support for terrorism is inherently endogenous, so this contradictory finding can be driven by interdependence.

⁹The hazard ratios are interpreted following the guidelines in Cleves (2008, 131-132).

Moreover, groups that are transnational and are adherents of a religious, ethnonational or leftist ideology are more likely to endure. A comparison of the coefficients of ideologies of the groups shows that religious organizations are most likely to endure at a given time as compared to the groups with other ideologies. Finally, the groups that reside in the democratic regime face 7% less hazard than the groups in autocratic regimes and transnational groups are more likely to endure.

Model-V: Liability of Newness

As discussed in Section 2.3.0.6, younger organizations have a higher rate of failure than older groups. Model-IV's findings have confirmed that the older groups are more likely to endure; however, it was not clear how old a group has to grow to be secure. The K-M estimate of the group's age in Figure 4.3 shows the survival probabilities of the terrorist groups with their age greater than the mean age of all the groups in the data shown in red¹⁰ and the survival probability of the groups with their ages less than or equal to the mean age of the groups in the data. The curves show that young groups with shorter age are less likely to survive, whereas the groups with higher age are more likely to survive. The survival probability of the groups with smaller age falls rapidly with time as compared to those with higher age. Although the K-M estimates provide visual insight, they are a mere representation of the data distribution rather than a regression analysis with multiple covariates.

So, for a closer examination of the groups' ages, I classified the age of the groups into four categories¹¹ and estimated a separate Cox PH model using dichotomous variables of groups' age categories. The hazard ratios of Model-V are reported in the Column-II of Table 4.2. Note that model specification has not changed because all relevant variables are included in the model. Also, the global test of proportional hazards assumption indicates no violations of the proportional hazards assumption.

¹⁰The mean age is 16.4 years which includes all 480 groups.

¹¹Category-I includes groups that are between 0-5 years old. Category-II includes groups between 5-14 years of age, while category-III and IV include groups between 14-26 years and greater than 26 years of age.

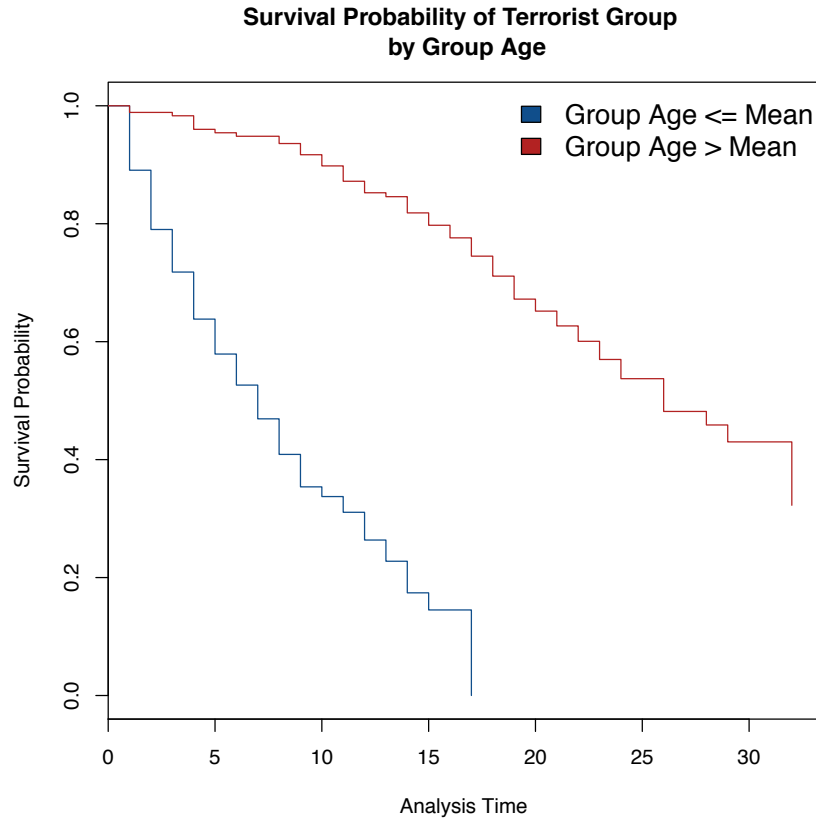


Figure 4.3: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by age.*

The hazard ratios from the Model-V show that the group’s hazard reduces with a unit increase in the newness category.¹² So in other words, as the group’s newness category changes from 0 to 1, the hazard reduces by 73%, as it varies from 1 to 2, the hazard declines by 93%, and as the newness changes from 2 to 3, the hazard decreases by 98%. This means that groups within the five years of their appearance are most vulnerable and after that, the hazard to their survival become drastically small. These findings support the liability of newness hypothesis (H-4) proposed in the study.

Model-VI: Religious versus Secular

Sections 2.3 and 2.3.0.5 deliberated at length about the effectiveness of religious terrorist organizations in the face of principal-agent problems and other organizational constraints.

¹²Newness = 0 for very young groups and newness = 3 for old groups.

The main Model-IV does support the proposed hypothesis (H-3) that a terrorist group with religious motivation is less likely to end than a group with another type of motivation. Similarly, the K-M estimates shown in Figure 4.4 indicate that the religious groups are most likely to survive, whereas the leftist groups are least likely to survive, with the ethno-nationalist groups having intermediate survival probability.

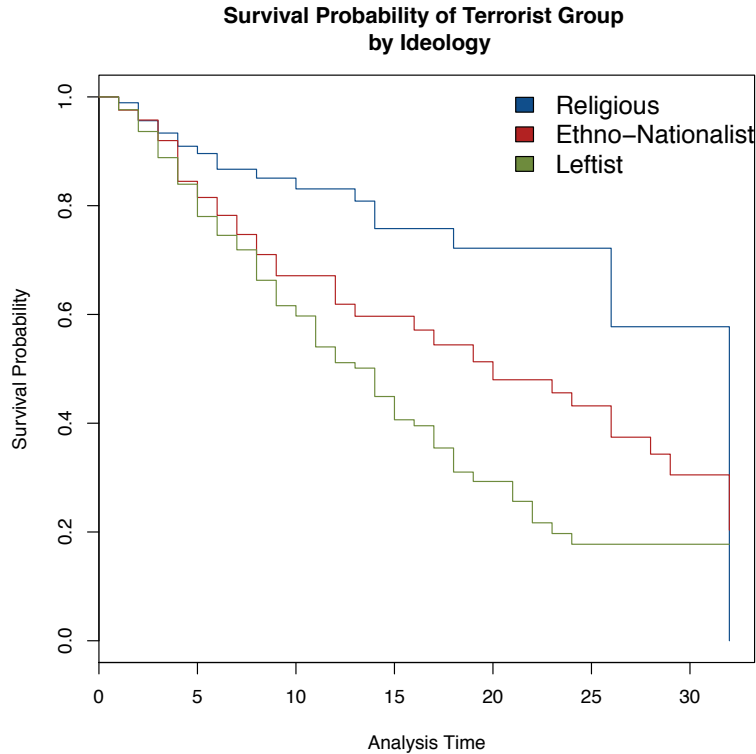


Figure 4.4: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by ideology.*

In Model-VI, I exclusively focus on the impact of religious versus secular ideologies on the groups' longevity. The model uses a dummy variable, which is one for religious organizations and zero for all other organizations. The results show that religious groups have a 64% decline in hazard as compared to those that have any other ideology. This means that the religious groups are more likely to survive, keeping all other variables constant. The magnitude and direction of all covariates remained same as in the main model. Also, the global test of proportional hazards assumption indicates no violations of the proportional

hazards assumption.

Model-VI: Suicidal versus Conventional Terrorist Groups

Model-VII estimates the impact of suicide bombings by a group on its longevity. A dummy variable is generated, carrying a value of one for the groups that have conducted one or more suicide attacks in the analysis time, and zero otherwise. The results show that the groups that have conducted suicide attacks face 64% less hazard than the groups that use other conventional means of violence. In other words, the groups that have used suicide bombings as a weapon of choice are more likely to endure. These results are against the proposed hypothesis of this study and are somewhat counterintuitive because suicide bombings are generally more lethal in their intensity of violence and it has been used indiscriminately by modern Islamic terrorist groups. These contradictory findings should be further explored in the future studies.

4.3 Conclusion

The results of the empirical analysis of this study are summarized in the following:

First, the study consistently finds evidence that targeting civilians is counterproductive and selective violence against GMP targets increases the group's longevity. This is the first empirical evidence that supports [Shapiro \(2013\)](#)'s framework of organizational management. These findings empirically substantiate that the "calibration of violence" is imperative for a group's endurance.

Second, the study confirms that grassroots popular support is inherently endogenous. (Model-III) verifies the findings of previous studies like [Tilly \(2004\)](#); [Sharvit et al. \(2015\)](#); [Hewitt \(1990\)](#); [Henderson \(2002\)](#); [Bueno de Mesquita and Dickson \(2007\)](#); [Sedgwick \(2004\)](#); [Siqueira and Sandler \(2006\)](#); [Parker \(2007\)](#); [Blake et al. \(2012\)](#); [Henderson \(2002\)](#); [Baum \(2004\)](#). I also found that indiscriminate violence against civilians (organizational lethality) is bad for group reputation in its constituency which is in line with previous studies like [Jones and Libicki \(2008\)](#); [Cronin \(2009, 2006\)](#); [Reich \(1998\)](#) and [Heger \(2010\)](#). However, given the interdependence of popular support for terrorism, I found contradictory evidence (in Model-

Variable	Model-IV (Lethality)	Model-V (Newness)	Model-VI (Religion)	Model-VII (Suicide Bombing)
Lethality	1.026*** (0.009)	1.018** (0.008)	1.025*** (0.009)	1.023*** (0.007)
GPM	0.935** (0.033)	0.972 (0.029)	0.969 (0.033)	0.973 (0.023)
Attacks	0.999** (0.001)	0.999** (0.001)	0.999** (0.001)	0.999*** (0.001)
Age	0.953*** (0.015)		0.957*** (0.016)	0.916*** (0.018)
Newness-1		0.267*** (0.081)		
Newness-2		0.072*** (0.029)		
Newness-3		0.019*** (0.009)		
Rel vs. Non-Rel Suicide Bombing			0.360*** (0.141)	0.361** (0.182)
NCR-1	0.519*** (0.124)	0.622** (0.143)	0.539** (0.136)	0.624** (0.139)
NCR-2	0.151*** (0.056)	0.231*** (0.086)	0.112*** (0.047)	0.208*** (0.073)
NCR-3	0.164*** (0.68)	0.227*** (0.098)	0.168*** (0.074)	0.193*** (0.078)
PCR-1	0.984 (0.280)	1.144 (0.305)	0.997 (0.284)	1.155 (0.315)
PCR-2	1.204 (0.453)	1.730* (0.560)	1.268 (0.488)	1.682 (0.579)
PCR-3	0.863 (0.349)	1.385 (0.565)	0.834 (0.367)	1.279 (0.457)
Size	0.868 (0.124)	0.859 (0.121)	0.823 (0.127)	0.878 (0.121)
Left Wing	0.450* (0.191)	0.538* (0.196)		0.548 (0.211)
Ethnonationalist	0.299*** (0.128)	0.286*** (0.111)		0.346*** (0.134)
Religious	0.161*** (0.084)	0.133*** (0.069)		0.195*** (0.097)
Guerrilla Tactics	0.826 (0.212)	1.008 (0.263)	0.756 (0.199)	0.949 (0.257)
Broad Goals	1.213 (0.446)	1.141 (0.364)	1.661 (0.563)	1.269 (0.485)
Competition	0.996 (0.008)	0.993 (0.007)	0.959 (0.066)	0.996 (0.007)
Group Status	0.286*** (0.065)	0.301*** (0.061)	0.453*** (0.104)	0.305*** (0.066)
RPC	1.792 (0.876)	1.437 (0.589)	1.931 (0.911)	1.645 (0.737)
State Repression	0.925 (0.122)	0.938 (0.106)	0.882 (0.125)	1.017 (0.121)
Regime Type	0.933*** (0.024)	0.954** (0.022)	0.944** (0.024)	0.936* (0.024)
GDP	0.919 (0.126)	1.001 (0.129)	0.826 (0.126)	1.089 (0.141)
# of obs.	302	302	289	302
# of failures.	124	124	124	124
Log Likelihood	-515.12	-487.63	-483.42	-496.75
Time at risk.	3496	3496	3496	3496

Table 4.2: Significance: $p \leq 0.10^*$ $p \leq 0.05^{**}$ $p \leq 0.01^{***}$
Hazard ratios with standard errors in parentheses reported.

IV) regarding its relationship to the group's longevity that suggests that it also increases group survival, and when we accounted for the interdependence, this relationship became insignificant in Model-III. The results suggest popular support needs to be studied in greater detail with a better operationalization of public sentiment.

Third, the study finds evidence that the organizations that are less than five years old are most vulnerable which confirms the findings of terrorism studies like [Blomberg et al. \(2009\)](#); [Young and Dugan \(2014\)](#) and studies from business literature like [Arthur Stinchcombe \(2000\)](#); [Freeman et al. \(1983\)](#); [Ranger-Moore \(1997\)](#); [Hannan and Freeman \(1984\)](#); [Aldrich and Auster \(1986\)](#); [Stark \(1998\)](#); [Stern and Modi \(2010\)](#) and [Saunders \(2009\)](#). This finding also suggests that the examination of terrorist organizations through the lens of a business organizational framework is an effective approach.

Fourth, I found strong evidence that despite being more violent in the post-9/11 world – as shown in [Figure 2.2](#) –, and facing principal-agent problems and other agency constraints, religious terrorist groups on average fair better in terms of endurance than any other ideological terrorist groups. These results validate the findings of [Gaibulloev and Sandler \(2013\)](#); [Carter \(2012\)](#) and [Hausken et al. \(2015\)](#) and contradict the findings of [Price \(2009\)](#) that argue that group ideology is of marginal importance to a group’s survival. So, it is possible that the availability of a significant majority of highly motivated religious followers – a proposition presented in [Section 2.3.0.5](#) – allows modern Islamic terrorist groups to endure despite being indiscriminate in their violence against fellow Muslims in the post-9/11 world. This finding hopefully will motivate future studies.

Fifth, the study finds no evidence that group size is a major predictor of organizational survival which has been emphasized in [Jones and Libicki \(2008\)](#); [Oots \(1989\)](#); [Faria and Arce \(2012b,a\)](#); [Faria and M \(2005\)](#); [Gutfraind \(2009\)](#); [Phillips \(2014\)](#) and [Oots \(1986\)](#). Finally, I found that groups using suicide bombings have a better chance to endure than the groups that use conventional weaponry and tactics. This finding also runs counter to the premise of this study because suicide bombings are known to be more lethal in terms of their average fatalities per attack ([Pape and Feldman, 2010](#); [Pape, 2005, 2003](#)). These contradictory finding should be further explored in the future studies.

Chapter 5

CASE STUDY

The previous chapter quantitatively tested hypotheses derived in chapter III and found empirical evidence that the probability of terrorist group survival decreases as the group kills more civilians. This chapter looks at a case-study of Taliban for further investigation and exclusively focuses on Taliban's terrorist activities in Pakistan. It will only discuss the terrorism in Afghanistan when it has implications for Pakistan. Taliban is one of the most vicious terrorist organizations in Pakistan. According to the GTD, they are responsible for 54% of the total terrorist attacks between 1980-2011 in Pakistan that generated about 69% of total civilian fatalities. But despite a large number of civilian fatalities, the Taliban are still operational in Pakistan which presents a deviant case for current study. So, it will be interesting to investigate the Taliban's case and their target selection in more detail.

The chapter is organized into five sections. First, I will provide a brief background on the Taliban, which will present the historical context that is necessary to examine the Taliban's transformation from an insurgent freedom movement against the Soviet Union to a terrorist organization. The second section will trace the targeting patterns of the Taliban and their weapons of choice from 1995 to 2011, which will illustrate what kind of violence has been used by the Taliban over time; whom it is used against, and how it is employed. The third section will situate this case study into the organizational framework described in Section 2.2. The fourth section discusses public opinion and the Taliban's reputation in Pakistan followed by

a conclusion.

5.1 *The Taliban: From State Actor to a Terrorist Group*

Taliban has been operational in Pakistan and Afghanistan since the early 1990s, first as an insurgent movement that drove the Soviet Red Army out of Afghanistan with the help of the Government of Pakistan and later as a terrorist organization that turned against the state of Pakistan in the post-9/11 world. In the following subsections, I will describe the historical context that is necessary to examine the Taliban's transformation from an insurgent freedom movement against the Soviet Union to a lethal terrorist organization. It will also review collaborative networks of the Taliban among different tribal groups that were instrumental in their survival and major counterterrorism strategies that have been adopted by the government of Pakistan and United States against the Taliban.

5.1.1 Rise of the Taliban (1991-2001)

Afghanistan was tormented by a protracted civil war (1989-92) after the Soviet Red Army's withdrawal in 1989. The Soviets left behind a weak communist proxy government that was previously supported (1979-89) by them. This pro-Soviet government of Mohammad Najibullah – then President of Afghanistan – was at war with the anticommunist Muslim mujahideen and other warlords in Afghanistan (Coll, 2005). From this chaos, under the leadership of Mullah Mohammad Omar – an Afghan mujahideen commander who fought against Soviet forces, and later became the Emir and Head of the Supreme Council of former Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan –, the Taliban¹ movement emerged in 1991 from his hometown of Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan (Rashid, 2002, 25).² In the following years, with support and training from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the Taliban movement grew both in its strength and momentum, and became a formidable fighting

¹In the native *Pashto* language of Afghanistan, 'the Taliban' means *the students*.

² [Matinuddin \(2000\)](#) notes that Mullah Omar started the Taliban movement with fewer than 50 armed *madrassah* – religious school – students.

force. Taliban fighters and smugglers freely and frequently moved back and forth across the Pakistan-Afghan border (Bajoria, 2009).³ They conscripted largely from Afghan youth – who were mainly *Pashtun* – living in the squalid Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan (Byman, 2008, 17),⁴ and from mujahideen leaders in Pakistan (Gunaratna, 2007, 54).

On September 26, 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul and established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. However, it was recognized as the legitimate government only by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates (Marranci, 2006, 75-76). The Taliban were now controlling 95% of Afghanistan (Gunaratna, 2007, 54) and became “the pride and ally of the ‘state within a state’ in Pakistan” (Akbar, 2003, 211).⁵ With the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan was able to successfully install a pro-Pakistan government at its western border thereby preserving *de facto* control of 95% of Afghanistan through the Taliban (Beg and Bokhari, 2008, 226).⁶

The Taliban restored order and ended the protracted ethnic and tribal conflict in Afghanistan; they were welcomed by the local Afghans – who were exhausted by more than a decade of continuous war (Coll, 2005; Rubin, 2002; Treverton et al., 2005, 30). However, the Taliban’s vision of Islam was ancient, absolute and unbending; they strictly enforced a violent and gruesome brand of *sharia* where they banned music and television, and public floggings, hangings, and executions by death squads and by stoning was normal. The Taliban were also unable to develop the Afghan economy during their rule. In short, Mullah Omar’s regime completely disregarded fundamental human rights and oppressed women (Marranci,

³Due to their tribal allegiances, the Pashtuns that live on both sides of the border never recognized a century-old frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan called the *Durand Line*. About 40% of Pashtuns live in Afghanistan, and about 15% to 20% of them live across the Durand Line – which has always been considered a soft border in Pakistan. For more details on Pakistan-Afghanistan border disputes, and its relevance in the Global War on Terror see Bajoria (2009).

⁴In the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Afghan refugees migrated to Pakistan. According to the Pakistan’s chapter of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); as of December 2012, approximately 1.7 million Afghan nationals were living in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and northwestern Baluchistan regions. For more information on the refugee’s statistics see <http://unhcrpk.org/contacts/>.

⁵Many fighters of Saudi and Central Asian descent came to Pakistani tribal areas after the fall of Soviet Union. They got married and permanently settled in Pakistan. They enjoyed full immunity and freedom to operate in Pakistani tribal areas.

⁶The national policy of Pakistan at the time was to establish and maintain its strategic depth because it is engaged in a protracted conflict at the eastern border with its archrival India.

2006, 75-76) and put Afghanistan on the path to becoming a failed state (Patrick, 2011, 32).

But the Taliban regime found a rich savior whose name was Osama Bin Laden (OBL). OBL was expelled by the Sudanese government in May 1996, and he chose to go to Afghanistan. The Taliban treated OBL as their guest and also hosted many Al-Qaeda (ALQ) fighters who came with him to Afghanistan.⁷ OBL and ALQ fighters fought hand-in-hand against the Northern Alliance⁸ in Afghanistan. OBL also financed and materially assisted the Taliban regime, and ALQ was integrated within the Taliban troops, which played a significant role in capturing Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan from the Northern Alliance (Gunaratna, 2007, 54). OBL's financial support and the strategic know-how of ALQ fighters made the Taliban a decisive force in Afghanistan, and in return, the Taliban provided the OBL and ALQ a sanctuary to operate freely. Finally, on September 9, 2001, ALQ fighters assassinated the Northern Alliance's last standing commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud in a suicide attack, which made the Taliban the unchallenged leaders of Afghanistan. The symbiotic relationship between the OBL and the Taliban continued, and OBL and Mullah Omar had formed a personal relationship (Bergen, 2006, 236).⁹ ALQ's training camps in Afghanistan were responsible for the United States embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998, and for the suicide bombing of the United States Navy destroyer the USS Cole in 2000 (Combs and Slann, 2009, 353).

Following the attacks of ALQ on the United States on September 11, 2001, the US-led NATO forces along with the Northern Alliance invaded Afghanistan. By December 9, 2001, the Taliban regime collapsed, and Taliban leadership including Mullah Omar and ALQ relocated to the tribal areas of Pakistan (Katzman, 2010).¹⁰ They were welcomed by the

⁷Due to his criticism of the Saudi Monarchy, his Saudi citizenship was revoked, and under increasing pressure from Saudi Arabia and the United States on Sudan, OBL was expelled from Sudan for a country of his choice. He chose to return to Afghanistan – where he fought against the Soviets – on a small charter plane on May 18, 1996, (Scheuer, 2011, 105). For more details about OBL's life in Sudan see (Scheuer, 2011, 79-104).

⁸The Northern Alliance came into being for the Salvation of Afghanistan in 1996. The alliance fought a defensive war against the Taliban government. In the post-9/11 era, the United States and NATO forces helped Northern alliance to take over Afghanistan.

⁹Hamid Mir, a OBL's Pakistani biographer, was quoted by Bergen (2006, 236) about the personal relationship between OBL and Mullah Omar. For more details, see Bergen (2006, 236).

¹⁰For more details on the timeline of the US invasion of Afghanistan and fall of the Taliban see *Council on Foreign Relations*'s U.S. War in Afghanistan chronology from 1999-present at

local Pashtuns in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). ALQ and the Taliban rearmed and regrouped in FATA to initiate a similar guerrilla war against the US and NATO forces, which they fought collectively against the Soviet Red Army (Tarzi, 2009, 275).

The allies and sympathizers of the Taliban in Pakistan had never identified themselves as “Taliban” before the US invasion of Afghanistan (Abbas, 2008). However, the relocation of ALQ and the Afghan Taliban to the tribal areas of Pakistan laid the foundation of what Tarzi (2009, 274-310) and White (2008, 85) call the “Neo-Taliban”¹¹ in Pakistan, and put the Pakistani Taliban in the limelight. Although the Pakistani Taliban were the allies of the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan; they had their own leaders and agenda (Abbas, 2008). The following subsection traces the role of the Pakistani Taliban – which are the main focus of this case-study– in the post-9/11 era and the inceptions of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is the largest militant group in the history of Pakistan (Stanford-University, 2012, Mapping Militant Organizations Project).

5.1.2 Neo-Taliban: From Nek Mohammad to Baitullah Mehsud (2002-2007)

In the months following the fall of the Taliban, the government of Pakistan launched its first ever military operation in FATA since its independence in 1947.¹² This operation was named as “*Operation Meezan*” (2002-2006), and was aimed to monitor and pursue militants

<http://www.cfr.org/afghanistan/us-war-afghanistan/p20018>.

¹¹ Tarzi (2009, 274-310) argues that the use of the word Taliban limits our ability to understand the motivations and makeup of the different actors that have surfaced after the fall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Therefore, he argues that the category *Neo-Taliban* better captures that characteristics and agendas of the new opposition that evolved beyond the old Taliban regime.

¹²The Pakistan’s founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah signed the “Instrument of Accession” with local tribes at the Bannu Tribal Jirga in January 1948, thereby, accepting FATA as a semi-autonomous region. According to the *Instrument of Accession* all tribesmen in FATA became the citizens of Pakistan; however, the administrative system that was introduced by the British government remained intact. Therefore, FATA is still governed under the Frontier Crime Regulation Act (FCRA) of 1901 that was introduced by the British colonial rulers. The FCRA recognizes the role of Sardars, Maliks and Local Elders in the tribal governance structure in FATA. FCRA also allows local customary laws to prevail and prohibits Government of Pakistan to interfere with the local system because traditionally a “Council of Elders” called *Jirga* settles disputes in FATA (White, 2008, 14).

fleeing from Afghanistan to the tribal areas of Pakistan (Jones and Fair, 2010, 46-56). Although Operation Meezan was initiated to stop the inflow of militants from Afghanistan to FATA, Pakistan's military was instructed by its superiors to apprehend only the "foreigners," which included Arabs and Central Asian ALQ fighters, but not Afghan Taliban (Bergen and Tiedemann, 2012; Abbas, 2014, 103). Pakistan did apprehend a lot of ALQ fighters and turned them over to the CIA; however, it kept most of the captured Afghan Taliban in this operation (Jones and Fair, 2010, 46-56; Abbas, 2014, 104). Pakistan's efforts to effectively monitor FATA were derailed when Pakistan had to divert its attention to its eastern border towards the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict (Abbas, 2014, 104).

Given Pakistan's India-centric strategic threat perception, and also the mounting fatalities of the Pakistan Army in Operation Meezan, the army pursued a peace deal with a local militant named Nek Mohammad Wazir. He was a local tribal commander and was accused of harboring many foreign militants. He was successful in negotiating this peace deal called the *Shakai Peace Agreement* in April 2004 with the Pakistan Army (Yusufzai, 2004). As a part of the deal, Nek Mohammad had to renounce militancy in return for amnesty from the army. Also, he had to produce foreign militants before the authorities for registration. Nek Mohammad, however, was unable to produce foreign fighters to authorities despite multiple deadlines (Khattak, 2012); therefore, the amnesty was revoked, and the military operation resumed again in June 2004 (Abbas, 2014, 106-110). On June 18, 2004, Nek Mohammad was killed by the CIA in a targeted predator drone strike in Pakistan (Mazzetti, 2013).¹³

Despite the military operation, the Taliban attacks were spreading in tribal areas and the government was unable to contain further Taliban expansion. Therefore, the Pakistan Army signed a second peace deal in February 2005 with Baitullah Mehsud, a successor of Nek Mohammad. This deal was later extended and imitated in other parts of FATA in September 2006 as the third and final truce between the government of Pakistan and the Taliban. According to the deal, the government had to compensate militants for the destruction of

¹³ Mazzetti (2013) claims that this was the first time the CIA had deployed a predator drone in Pakistan to carry out a "targeted killing," and the target was Nek Mohammad who was declared as an enemy of the state by Pakistan. He also asserts that the CIA had agreed to kill Nek Mohammad in exchange for access to Pakistani airspace which could be used for drone flights in the future.

their homes during the military operations, and Baitullah Mehsud or his supporters were not to be targeted. In return, the Mehsud militants would stop attacking Pakistani targets and stop harboring foreign militants. But they did not have to lay down their arms or surrender foreign militants who were fighting in their ranks at that time (Khattak, 2012). This deal, like the previous one, was also short-lived because clashes between the military and the Taliban increased in the subsequent months rendering the peace agreement useless. However, this deal raised the stature and power of Baitullah Mehsud as an influential tribal leader and set the stage for the inception of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In subsequent years, the Pakistan Army launched many military operations,¹⁴ and it is still fighting for control of tribal areas (Khattak, 2012; Abbas, 2014; Bergen and Tiedemann, 2012; White, 2008; Jones and Fair, 2010).

5.1.3 Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP): From Baitullah Mehsud to Maulana Fazlullah (2007-2011)

Although it is very difficult to trace the exact origin of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – which also known as Pakistani Taliban or Neo-Taliban –; many terrorism scholars have argued that it emerged in December 2007 under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud as a loose coalition of 13 militia groups. These groups also included Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) – a rebel group from Pakistan’s district of Swat – and the Haqqani Network, an Afghan insurgent group that fought against the Soviets and has been supported by the government of Pakistan (Bajoria and Masters, 2010; Valentine, 2009; Abbas, 2014, 2008; Jones and Fair, 2010; White, 2008). Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (means “Students’ Movement of Pakistan”) is strongly linked with ALQ and considered the Pakistan government as one of its main enemies. Since its inception, the TTP launched a defensive jihad against the Pakistani army that has been chasing the TTP, Afghan Taliban and ALQ fighters in the tribal areas of Pakistan (Bajoria and Masters, 2010). The TTP

¹⁴Examples being *Zalzala* (meaning ‘Earthquake’), *Sher Dil* (meaning ‘Lion Heart’), *Rah-e-Haq* (intended meaning showing the militants the ‘Right Way’), and *Rah-e-Rast* (intended meaning bring the militants to ‘Right Way’).

also wanted to overthrow the incumbent government of Pakistan which became an ally of the US and other Western governments against the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. TTP also supports the mission of the Afghani Taliban, that is, the ouster of foreign troops from Afghanistan, and calls for the restoration of the *Khilafat* (Caliphate), and an imposition of a strict interpretation of Sharia throughout Pakistan (Valentine, 2009). Beyond these unifying factors, however, the TTP movement is divided, and the various groups have different opinions regarding engaging in peace talks with the government and their modus operandi (Valentine, 2009; Bajoria and Masters, 2010). According to Yusuf (2014), the TTP is aligned with many criminal gangs in the tribal areas – who are not driven primarily by political or religious motivations – that raise money through kidnappings and extortion within Pakistan.

5.1.3.1 Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation Against TTP

The main counterterrorism strategy of the CIA against the TTP has been leadership decapitation via predator drone strikes in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Although this strategy halted group activities for the time being, it never successfully eliminated the TTP. TTP also went through many transitions due to an abrupt change of leadership. Baitullah Masood, the founding leader of the TTP, was killed in a drone strike on August 23, 2009. Later, his cousin and deputy Hakimullah Mehsud, threatened to avenge Baitullah's death and assumed the leadership of the TTP (Bajoria and Masters, 2010). Hakimullah Mehsud spearheaded a ferocious armed campaign against the Pakistani state and launched limited attacks across the border on the NATO forces in Afghanistan. The TTP sent an American citizen of Pakistani descent named Fasil Shazad to carry out attacks on American soil. But Shazad's car bomb attack in New York's Times Square failed in 2010, and he was apprehended. He later confessed that he was trained and funded by the TTP (Hesterman, 2013, 71). The Pakistani government was in the process of negotiating another peace deal with Hakimullah; however, he was also killed in a drone strike on November 1, 2013. Pakistan criticized this targeted killing of Hakimullah claiming that the US ruined the road to peace in Pakistan. Following

the death of Hakimullah Mehsud, Maulana Fazlullah – a commander of TNSM and founding leader of TTP in Pakistan’s Swat district– was appointed as the new chief of the TTP. Fazlullah is still in hiding somewhere in the tribal areas and plotting to kill Pakistani military personnel and civilians and also launching attacks across the border in Afghanistan.

Since the TTP has existed as a loose network of different tribal groups, leadership decapitation never worked as a counterterrorism strategy against the TTP. Filling a leadership vacuum has never been a problem for the TTP. Moreover, collaboration among different tribal and jihadi groups under the umbrella organization of TTP has also played an effective role in TTP’s resilience. In the following subsection, I will describe the collaborative network of the TTP in more detail.

5.1.4 Collaborative Relationship of Al-Qaeda with the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban

Before examining the significance of the TTP’s collaborative network with Al-Qaeda (ALQ), it is important to analyze the Afghan Taliban’s collaborative relationship with ALQ. The Afghan Taliban paid a huge price by harboring ALQ, and by refusing to hand over OBL to the US after 9/11. They lost their country, which they fought for years to conquer, and their prestige as a ruthless force that single-handedly restored peace by ending the civil war in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban patronized and supported ALQ’s global jihadi activities against the West; however, they were incompatible for a number of reasons. For instance, the Afghan Taliban never adopted ALQ’s idea of Pan-Islamism (Iqbal, 2010, 2), and there have been long-term theological,¹⁵ and tactical differences between them.¹⁶ The collaborative relationship between the Afghan Taliban and ALQ survived the US invasion of Afghanistan. However, in late 2009, it appears the Afghan Taliban realized that this collaboration has never been viewed favorably by local Afghans, and it will be a major

¹⁵ALQ is a strong adherent of Wahabism and Salafi school of thought, whereas Afghan Taliban are influenced by Sufism (Islamic mysticism) that is an open disposition of Hanafi Islam see [Donovan \(2008\)](#) for more details.

¹⁶Mullah Omar was initially against using suicide bombings. See Section [5.2.2.1](#) for more details on the advent of suicide bombings in Afghanistan.

hurdle in re-establishing their writ in Afghanistan (Iqbal, 2010, 1). Therefore, the Afghan Taliban have been seemingly distancing themselves from ALQ's global agenda and trying to build a nationalistic character of their movement (Brown, 2009). The tendency to project themselves as an organization with a domestic agenda was evident in the Mullah Omar's *Eid-ul-Fitr* message of 2009¹⁷ where he referred the Afghan Taliban as an 'Islamic and nationalist movement' and explicitly stated that the Afghan Taliban "wants to maintain good and positive relations with all neighbors based on mutual respect" (Brown, 2009). This statement from Mullah Omar shows the Afghan Taliban's aspirations to regain their status as a 'State Actor.'

In the same vein, the ALQ leadership also had long-term policy differences with the Afghan Taliban and was concerned about the Afghan Taliban's indifference towards ALQ's global Jihadi cause. In an intercepted letter of Ayman al-Zawahiri's, ALQs then second-in-command expressed his concerns regarding the Afghan Taliban's discriminating approach to governance to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, then AQI chief.¹⁸ He wrote that "We don't want to repeat the mistake of the Taliban, who restricted participation in governance to the students and the people of Qandahar alone." Zawaahiri also criticized the Taliban's lack of sincerity to ALQs global cause and wrote that "Taliban had a stronger affiliation with their tribes and villages than with the global Islamic struggle" (Iqbal, 2010, 2).

TTP and its predecessors, the Pakistani Taliban, however, were inspired by ALQ's Pan-Islamic ideology since their inception (Iqbal and Silva, 2013). Rehman Malik, Pakistan's then Interior Minister, said in a statement – quoted in the local newspaper Dawn (2008, Sep 02, 2008) – that the TTP has accepted ALQ's global agenda, and is an extension of ALQ. The data from GTD (2016) substantiate this claim; it shows that the Afghan Taliban has never perpetrated a single attack outside of their *Pashtun homeland*, that is, the Afghanistan and Pakistani tribal areas. Moreover, former president of the Pakistani Atomic Energy Agency Sultan Bashiruddin Mahomood was arrested in 2001 due to his contacts with the Pakistani Taliban. According to a few sources, the Pakistani Taliban arranged Mahomood's meeting

¹⁷Quoted by Brown (2009). The original message is available at <http://www.jihadica.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/10-21-09-mullah-omar-eid-message.pdf>.

¹⁸Quoted in Iqbal (2010, 2).

with the OBL and Ayman al-Zawahiri where they may have discussed the construction of nuclear weapons for ALQ (Overbye and Glanz, 2001).

This evidence shows that the Afghan Taliban has a domestic agenda, whereas the TTP has a global orientation, which is more enticing to ALQ. Also, Baitullah Mehsud, former leader of TTP, categorically endorsed ALQ's global agenda in his different interviews to Pakistani local media (Gunaratna and Iqbal, 2012). The Senior ALQ members are also known to hold high-ranking positions in the TTP's top leadership (Roggio, 2009; Gul, 2010).¹⁹ According to the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, John Brennan, the TTP and ALQ train, plan, and plot together and they are almost indistinguishable.²⁰ In short, ALQ has more influence on the Pakistani Taliban than on the Afghan Taliban (Gunaratna and Iqbal, 2012; Iqbal, 2010, 4). Both have established a symbiotic relationship in which the "T.T.P draws ideological guidance from Al Qaeda while Al Qaeda relies on the T.T.P. for safe haven in the Pashtun areas along the Afghan-Pakistani border."²¹ The TTP also had a substantial collaborative relationship with the Haqqanis that helped the TTP leadership to safeguard against Pakistan's counterterrorism operations in the tribal areas. In the following section, I will examine how this collaborative relationship contributed to TTP's resilience.

5.1.5 Collaborative Relationship of Haqqani Network and the TTP

Since December 2007, the Haqqanis have become a formal part of the TTP in Pakistan, and they have been playing a role of influential mediator to broker peace deals between the TTP and Islamabad (Rassler and Brown, 2011). Sirajuddin Haqqani, the current leader of the Haqqanis, enjoys unparalleled prestige among the Pakistani Taliban due to his family legacy.²² Pakistan has been a supporter and promoter of the Haqqanis from the early 1970s and used them to exert its influence in Afghanistan and against India in the struggle over

¹⁹For instance, the inclusion of Abu Kasha, an ALQ leader, who acted as a liaison between ALQ executive council in the tribal areas of Pakistan and TTP, held a senior position in the TTP's ranks.

²⁰Quoted in *LA Times* by Hennessey (2010).

²¹Stated by Daniel Benjamin, a senior American Diplomat and former, Coordinator for Counterterrorism under Obama Administration, quoted in Savage (2010).

²²Baitullah Mehsud, the founding TTP leader, fought under Jalaluddin Haqqani – who was the founding leader of the Haqqani Network and the father of Sirajuddin Haqqani – in Afghanistan during the 1990s. For more details, see Manzar et al. (2008); Walsh (2009) and Ali (2008).

Kashmir (Rassler and Brown, 2011). Since 9/11, the groups have been a semiautonomous faction of both the Pakistan and Afghan Taliban. Although the Haqqanis have used Pakistani tribal areas as a staging ground for attacks in Afghanistan (Laub, 2013), as figure 5.1 shows they launched only one attack in Pakistan which killed no one. The Haqqanis have been known to have paid the Pakistani tribal leaders to smuggle Afghan and Arab fighters out of Afghanistan after the fall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2008, 268). They have been recruiting fighters and suicide bombers from the Pakistani tribal areas to launch operations against NATO forces in Afghanistan (Mahsud and Fishman, 2012, Quoted on 141).²³ The following section explores the variation in the Taliban’s target selection during its transformation from an insurgent movement to a formidable terrorist group.

5.2 Taliban’s Target Selection

Figure 5.1 illustrates the terrorist activity of different groups that operated under the umbrella name of the ‘Taliban’ both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Figure 5.1 clearly shows that the Afghan Taliban, referred as Taliban (Afghanistan) in the figure, attacked Afghanistan and Pakistan was the prime target of the Pakistani Taliban before its merger into a coalition of TTP. In the same vein, when TTP came into being in 2007 they rarely attacked Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Haqqanis exclusively operated in Afghanistan. Figure 5.1 also evidently demonstrates that although these groups have similar motivations and identical broader goals such as the restoration of *Khilafat* and the imposition of a strict interpretation of Sharia in Pakistan and Afghanistan; they have clearly defined operational boundaries and different agendas. Since this case study focuses only on the groups that are exclusively operational in Pakistan; I will present an analysis of targeting preferences of groups that were operational in Pakistan only.

²³According to an interview with the local former Haqqani commander and the interview of a failed suicide bomber named “Ahmad Noor” in May 2009, Haqqanis have connections with the local commanders in Pakistani tribal areas who train and supply them with suicide bombers. For more details, see Mahsud and Fishman (2012, 130-165).

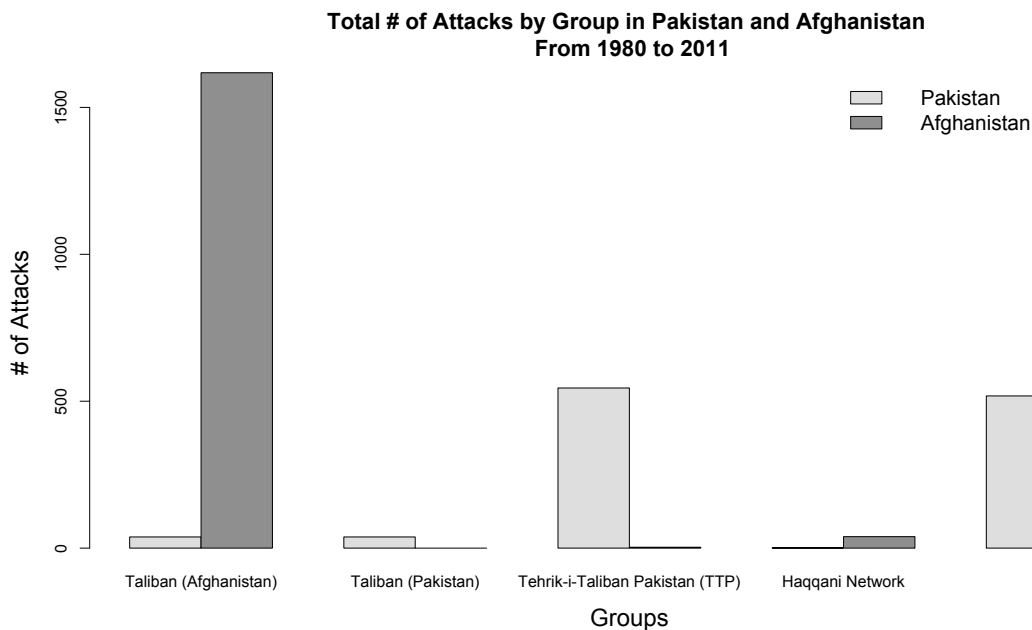
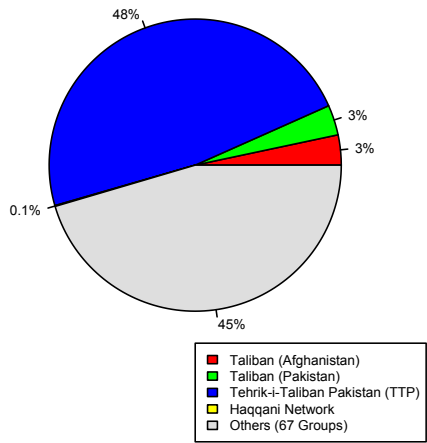


Figure 5.1: *Terrorist activity by terrorist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan from 1980 to 2011. Source: GTD (2016)*

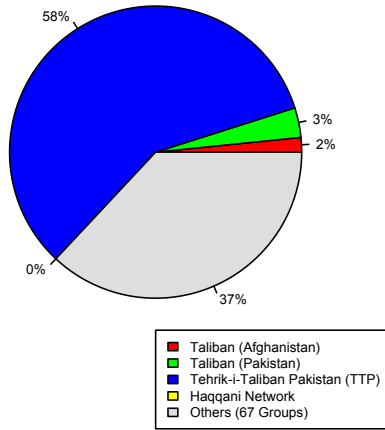
5.2.1 Neo-Taliban’s Targeting Analysis (2002 to 2011)

The TTP often targeted members of Pakistan’s armed forces but also kills civilians for so-called political or religious reasons. Abbas (2008, 2) notes that to establish themselves as an alternative force in the tribal areas, TTP, under the leadership of Baitullah Masood, killed about two hundred tribal leaders by January 2008. Figure 5.2 supports Abbas (2008, 2) claims and shows that the TTP has been the most active and lethal terrorist group in the history of Pakistan. It is responsible for 48% (as shown in 5.2-A) of the total attacks that resulted in 58% (as shown in 5.2-B) of the total fatalities. Also, TTP is responsible for 64% of civilian fatalities (as shown in 5.2-C) and 54% of GPM fatalities (as shown in 5.2-D).

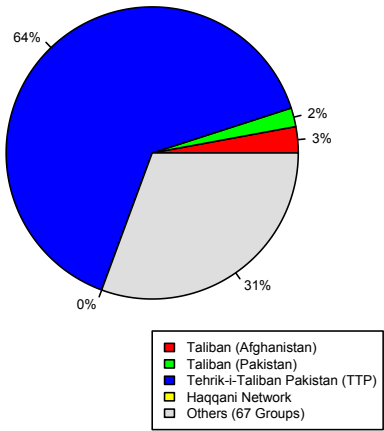
(A) Total Attacks in Pakistan



(B) Total Fatalities in Pakistan



(C) Total Civilian Fatalities in Pakistan



(D) Total Government/Police/Military Fatalities in Pakistan

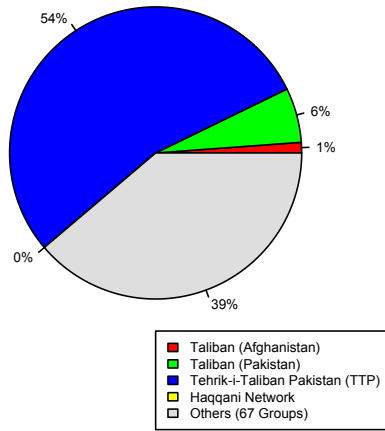


Figure 5.2: Target selection of the Taliban and its affiliates in Pakistan from 1980 to 2011. Source: GTD (2016)

A similar trend can be seen in figure 5.3 that shows the target selection patterns and attacks of the Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Taliban and TTP over time in Pakistan. Figure 5.3-A-H shows that when the Pakistani Taliban merged with other regional groups to form TTP, they became more active and lethal because of a sharp increase (5.3-G) in the number of yearly civilian fatalities as compared to the Pakistani Taliban (5.3-B). Although the Afghan Taliban relocated to the tribal areas of Pakistan, figure 5.3-A shows they attacked less consistently in Pakistan. For overall attacks and targeting selection patterns of these groups

in Afghanistan, see Appendix: E.5.

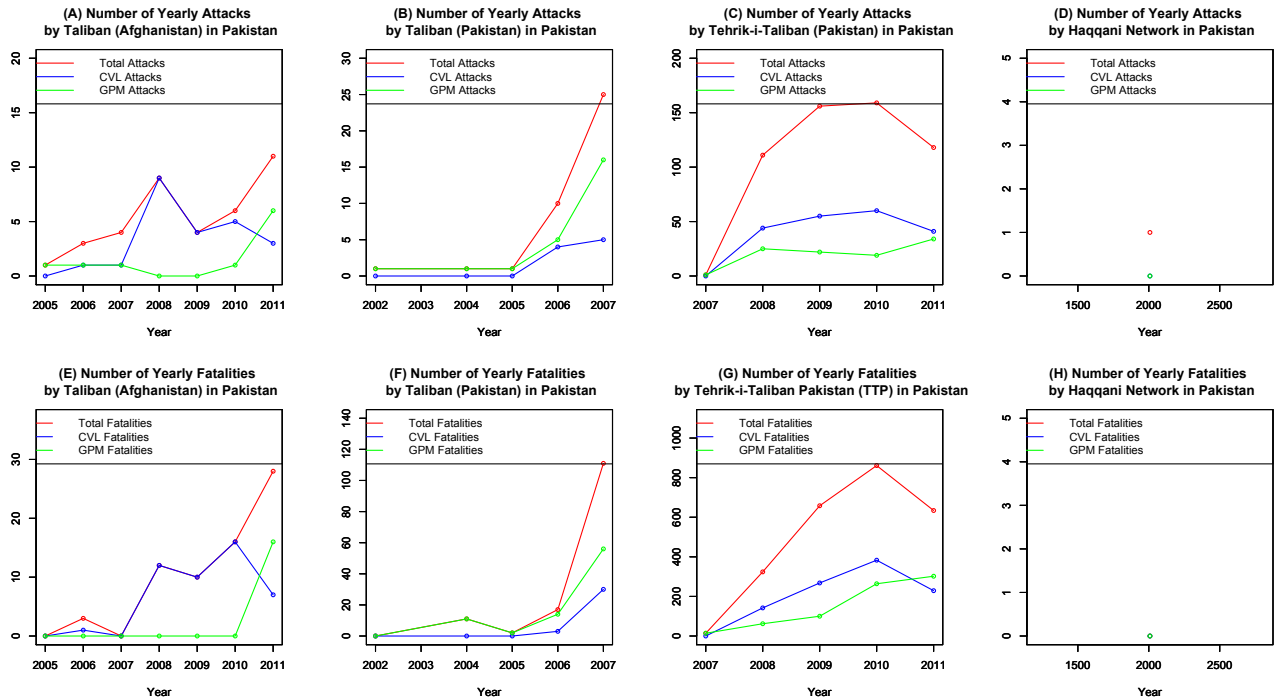


Figure 5.3: Target selection of Taliban and its affiliates over time in Pakistan from 1980 to 2011. Source: *GTD (2016)*

5.2.2 Diffusion of Suicide Terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan

As discussed in Section 2.3.0.7, a terrorist group's use of suicide terrorism as a weapon of choice shows that the group wants to inflict mass casualties indiscriminately.²⁴ Many have argued that given the success of suicide bombing operations in the Middle East, this strategy was gradually introduced in Pakistan and Afghanistan. So it is important to examine when and how suicide terrorism diffused into this region.

²⁴On average a suicide attack kills 6 times as many people as compared to a conventional attack which proves that suicide terrorism is a dangerous strategy of modern terrorist groups. Two-sample t test with equal variances of total number of fatalities (nkill) by suicide attacks in *GTD (2016)* shows that the mean of total number of fatalities caused by suicide attacks is 13.3 and the mean of total number of fatalities caused by non-suicide attacks is 2.22.

5.2.2.1 Advent of Suicide Terrorism in Afghanistan

Suicide terrorism has become a favorite weapon of choice for the Taliban in Afghanistan. According to the GTD (2016), as of December 2011, there had been 380 suicide terrorism attacks in Afghanistan that killed 2561 people at an average of 7 fatalities per attack. These fatalities include 416 civilian deaths and 1401 GPM deaths. But figure 5.4 shows a surprising trend that before 9/11, suicide terrorism was an alien phenomenon both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It neither appeared during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-89) nor did it appear in the subsequent Afghan civil war (1989-96). Lewis (2012, 221-223) argues that suicide bombing was imported by the remnants of ALQ and its allies in Afghanistan first, and then it snowballed into Pakistan. Figure 5.4 substantiates Lewis (2012, 221) claims because none of the four terrorist groups launched a suicide attack before September 11, 2001. Suicide bombing was introduced in Afghanistan with the killing of Ahmed Shah Masood on September 9, 2001, then commander of the Northern Alliance, by a pair of bombers, posing as journalists (Lewis, 2012, 221; Moghadam, 2008, 153; Pape and Feldman, 2010). The tactical success of the assassination of Masood – who had survived assassination attempts previously by the Taliban, the Pakistani ISI, Soviet KGB, and Hekmatyar over a period of 26 years (Gutman, 2008, 34) – was primarily due to the fact that it was carried out by suicide bombers. However, the strategic relevance of suicide bombing as a weapon of war in the Afghan insurgency was overlooked until 2005 as shown in the figure 5.4-A. Williams (2007) suggests two reasons for this delay; first, suicide attacks were fundamentally alien to the culture of the Pashtun people and second, they were not seen as being powerful enough to redress the imbalance of forces between the Neo-Taliban and its adversaries. But Masood's assassination changed that perception.

Moreover, Lewis (2012) claims that remnants of ALQ worked diligently to create a climate to import their suicide bombings in Afghanistan. They highlighted the effective use of this weapon by citing its successes in Iraq. They made Afghan-specific videos dubbed in Pashtu, which carried laudatory messages of the suicide attacks in Iraq, and suicide bomber's testimonies. Lewis (2012) also argues that the first few sporadic suicide attacks in 2003 and

2004 were carried out by Arabs already indoctrinated in the culture of martyrdom, and these attacks served as a litmus test of the effectiveness of this relatively new weapon in Afghanistan. He claims that Mullah Omar, who had previously condemned suicide attacks, reversed his position, and laid the groundwork for the ideological acceptance of suicide bombing in the Taliban culture. If Lewis (2012)'s opinion is correct, then it is imperative to note that suicide bombings defused into the Afghan culture by the virtue of its effectiveness rather than any ideological underpinning.

Figure 5.4-D also shows an interesting trend regarding the Haqqani's weapon of choice in Afghanistan. The Haqqanis also never used suicide bombing before 9/11 but started using this tactic in 2006. Apparently, suicide bombing became their favorite weapon of choice since they employed more suicide attacks than conventional attacks in Afghanistan. Figure 5.4-D also shows that Haqqanis stepped up their suicide terror campaign against the US and NATO forces after 2009.

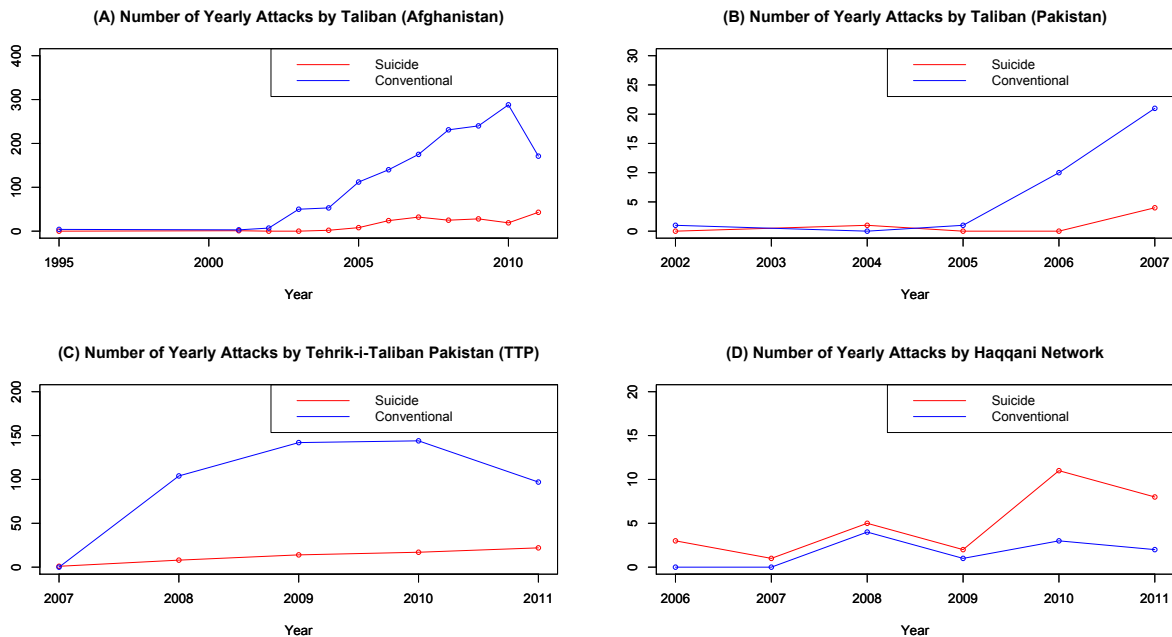


Figure 5.4: *Number of yearly conventional versus suicide terrorist attacks by Taliban and its affiliates in Pakistan and Afghanistan from 1980 to 2011. Source: GTD (2016)*

5.2.2.2 Advent of Suicide Terrorism in Pakistan

Pakistan has witnessed significant bloodshed due to the rise of suicide terrorism all across the country since 9/11. Figure 5.4-B and C show that the Pakistani Taliban did not adopt suicide bombing as a weapon of choice before 2007. However, the TTP subsequently employed this tactic frequently and consistently from its inception in 2007. According to the GTD (2016), as of December 2011, there had been 243 suicide terrorist incidents in Pakistan that killed 4072 people at an average of 17 fatalities per attack, which is higher than the average fatalities per attack in Afghanistan (7 per attack). These fatalities include 1202 civilian deaths and 1525 GPM deaths. If suicide terrorism diffused into Pakistan through Afghanistan – as Lewis (2012, 223) has argued – then what explains much higher average fatalities per attack and civilian deaths in Pakistan.

First, since the TTP was relatively more pro-ALQ, they had no problem adopting the alien culture of suicide bombings. Secondly, the reason for this higher rate of average fatalities in Pakistan is due to a shift in the targeting pattern of the terrorists from foreigners and sectarian targets in 2002–2005 to security forces or the general public in 2006–2009 (Bhatti et al., 2011). Bhatti et al. (2011) notes that terrorists have targeted public installations including mosques, political gatherings, etc. which resulted in a significantly greater number of deaths and injuries per event as compared with attacks on security installations (Bhatti et al., 2011).²⁵

5.2.3 Pakistani Taliban’s Targeting Analysis By Location

Before we conduct the analysis of target selection of the Pakistani Taliban and the TTP by location, it is imperative to understand the ethnic fractionalization in Pakistan. This will elucidate the TTP’s constituency at a provincial level in Pakistan. Pakistan is a country of

²⁵ Bhatti et al. (2011) studied the epidemiological patterns of suicide terrorism in the civilian population of Pakistan for the period from 2002 to October 2009. They found that of 198 suicide bombings, civilians were involved in 194 events. Civilians accounted for 74.1% (N = 2017) of those who died and 93.8% (N = 6129) of those who were injured. In nine districts, mortality rates were more than one death per 100,000 inhabitants per year. Attacks on public installations (mosques) or political gatherings resulted in a significantly greater (P = 0.02) number of deaths (22 vs. 8) and injuries (59 vs. 24) per event compared with security installations.

180 million people which are divided into five main ethnic groups: Punjabi (44%), Pashtun (15.4%), Sindhi (14.1%), Muhajirs (7.6%), Baluchi (3.6%) and Others (15.3%). The country is divided into five provinces: Punjab (populated by a Punjabi majority), Sindh (populated by a Sindhi majority & Muhajir minority), Baluchistan (populated by a Baluchi majority & a sizable Pashtun minority), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (predominantly populated by Pashtuns) which was previously called the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) until the name changed in 2010, currently it is referred as the KPK (short for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Also, there are the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA – populated by a Pashtun majority), Pakistan-Administered Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan (CFR, Ethnic & Political Factionalism).²⁶

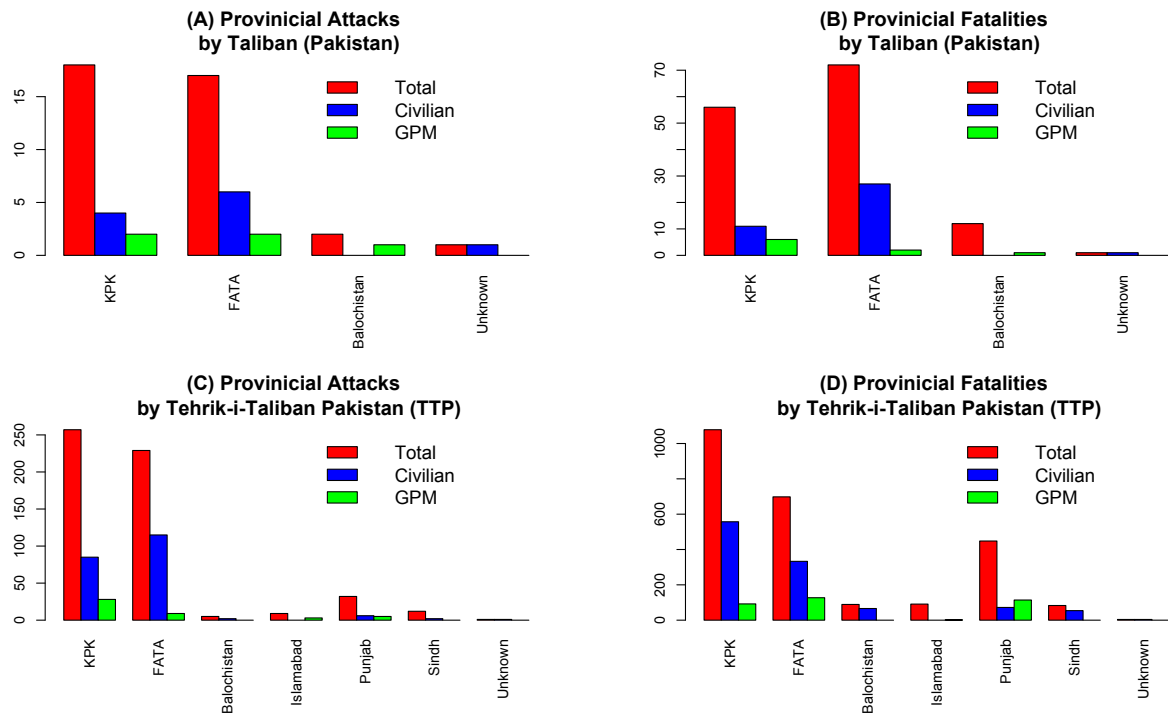


Figure 5.5: Target selection of Pakistani Taliban and TTP by province from 1980 to 2011. Source: GTD (2016)

²⁶For more details about Pakistan’s multi-ethnic society see Crisis Guide: Pakistan (Ethnic & Political Factionalism) in CFR at http://www.cfr.org/interactives/CG_pakistan/index.html?cid=otc-marketinguse-pakistan_c/making-sense-of-pakistan/.

Figure 5.5 presents the targeting patterns by the location of the two most active and lethal terrorist groups in the history of Pakistan, that is, the Pakistani Taliban and the TTP. It is evident from the figure 5.5-A & B that the Pakistani Taliban – who were operational from Dec 2001 to Dec 2007²⁷ –, were most active in FATA and KPK, which are the home of the Pashtun ethnic majority. They launched 17 attacks in *FATA* that killed 72 people in total, which involved 27 civilians and 2 GPM fatalities. Similarly, in *KPK*, they launched 18 attacks that killed 56 people including 11 civilians and 6 GPM personnel.

Figure 5.5-C & D shows that when different factions of the Pakistani Taliban and other like-minded terrorist groups coalesced under the umbrella of the TTP in December of 2007; their attacks increased both in their frequency and lethality. For instance, between Dec 2007-2011 timeframe, the TTP launched 257 attacks in *KPK*, killing 1078 people, which included 557 civilians and 92 GPM personnel. This is a significant deviation and an increase in the number of civilian fatalities as compared to their predecessor's (Pakistani Taliban) target selection and intensity of violence. Similarly, the figure 5.5-C & D shows that *FATA* – the home of the TTP – endured 229 attacks that killed 698 people which included 333 civilians and 127 GPM personnel fatalities. Also, the TTP launched 5 attacks in *Baluchistan* that generated 89 casualties which involved 66 civilians.

Figure 5.5-C & D also illustrate that the TTP expanded its operational boundaries between December 2007-2011, and attacked other regions of Pakistan such as *Punjab*, which was attacked 32 times generating 448 fatalities that included 72 civilians and 114 GPM personnel. *Islamabad* was attacked 9 times resulting in 91 casualties including 2 GPM fatalities, and *Sindh* saw the TTP launch 12 attacks that killed 83 people, which included 54 civilians.²⁸

²⁷Figure 5.5 does not provide the targeting patterns of the Pakistan Taliban and the TTP over time; however, it has been established in Section 5.1.2 that Pakistani Taliban came into the limelight after the fall of Taliban regime in Afghanistan, therefore, were operational between 2002-2007 timeframe. Moreover, as discussed in Section 5.1.3 that Pakistani Taliban merged with other like-minded terrorist groups to form a coalition called TTP in December of 2007; therefore, I will discuss the target selection of the TTP between December 2007-2011 (I stopped collecting data in 2011).

²⁸TTP was also involved in the cross-border terrorism but not actively; it attacked once in the Afghan province of *Paktika* and generated one fatality, and twice in the Afghan province of *Kunar* that resulted 1 civilian and 2 GPM casualties. Last but not least, the TTP was also responsible for a failed attack in *New York* in which an American citizen of Pakistani origin was apprehended.

Since the largest ethnic group in KPK and FATA are the Pashtun,²⁹ therefore, it is safe to assume that a salient majority of civilians that were killed by TTP were also ethnic Pashtun.³⁰ Ironically, TTP primarily draws its foot-soldiers from the Pashtun community (Iqbal and Silva, 2013, 75), and considers it as its reference constituency; this means TTP has been killing its fellow Pashtuns and may have profound implications for the TTP’s organizational survival.³¹

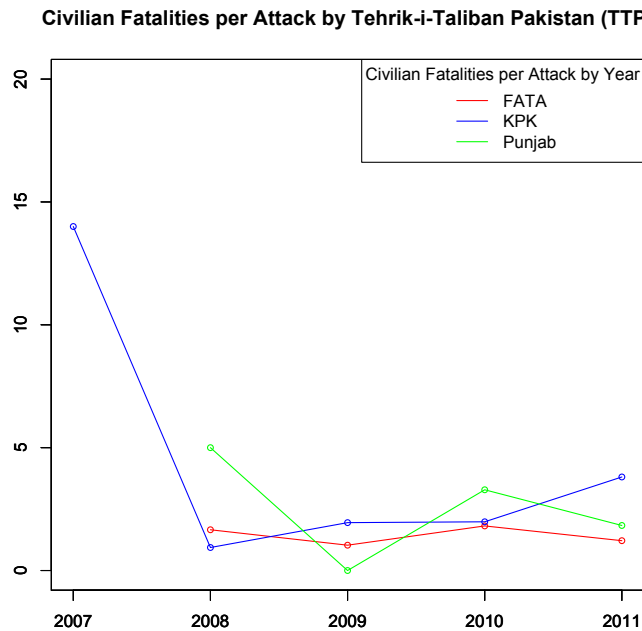


Figure 5.6: Total number of civilian fatalities per attack by TTP from 2007 to 2011. Source: GTD (2016)

²⁹See the Demographic of KPK at Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa official website at <http://kp.gov.pk/page/demographics>. Also, according to PBS (2015, Pakistan’s Year Book 2014-15) about 99.1% of people in FATA are Pashto speakers.

³⁰Due to the lack of availability of data regarding the ethnicity of the victims of the terrorist incidents; this study assumes that majority of victims of terror attacks in KPK, NWFP and FATA are Pashtuns.

³¹Figure 5.5 is also in line with the Bhatti et al. (2011) findings mentioned the previous section regarding the evident rise in civilian fatalities in Pakistan between 2002-2009 timeframe. To sum up, the figure 5.5 shows that about 91% of the overall killings generated by Pakistani Taliban between 2002-2007 period were perpetrated in FATA and NWFP regions in Pakistan, out of which, however, only 25% were civilian fatalities. On the other hand, due to the extension of their operational boundaries to other regions of Pakistan, TTP’s killings in FATA, NWFP, and KPK reduced to 71% between 2007-2011 timeframe. Nevertheless, their tendency of targeting civilians almost doubled to 46.5% in these regions, which is a departure from Pakistani Taliban’s traditional target selection methodology.

On the other hand, Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan with the majority of ethnic Punjabis that constitute about 44% of the total population. Punjab's dominance has generated political disharmony and tussles between the provinces over the years in Pakistan (Dewey, 1991, 256). In addition, many separatist's movements in Pakistan have always seen the military as the key to Punjabi dominance of the Pakistani state because a sizable majority of military brass comes from Punjab (Dewey, 1991, 255). So, it is understandable that Punjabis are likely deemed as enemies by TTP. But surprisingly TTP has been equally active against Pashtuns as well. Figure 5.6 presents a graphical representation of TTP's lethality in KPK, FATA and Punjab. The figure shows the number of civilian fatalities per attack generated by TTP between 2007 and 2011. The figure presents an increasing trend in KPK and decreasing trend both in FATA and Punjab after 2010. A closer look on the statistics explains a more comprehensive picture about the number of civilian fatalities generated by TTP between 2007-2011. In KPK and FATA, the TTP killed 11 and 7 civilians per 5 attacks respectively between 2007-2011 and in Punjab it also killed 11 civilians per 5 attacks in the same time period, which indicates that TTP has been ironically equally lethal in KPK and Punjab.

The figure 5.7 illustrates a more inclusive overview of the total number the fatalities that TTP has generated over time in FATA, KPK and Punjab. The figure clearly shows a much bigger and increasing trend of civilian fatalities over time in KPK (center figure). Although there is a decrease in civilian fatalities in FATA (left figure) in 2010, the magnitude of killings in FATA it is much higher as compared to Punjab. In short these figure show that TTP has been more active against civilians in KPK and FATA as compared to Punjab.

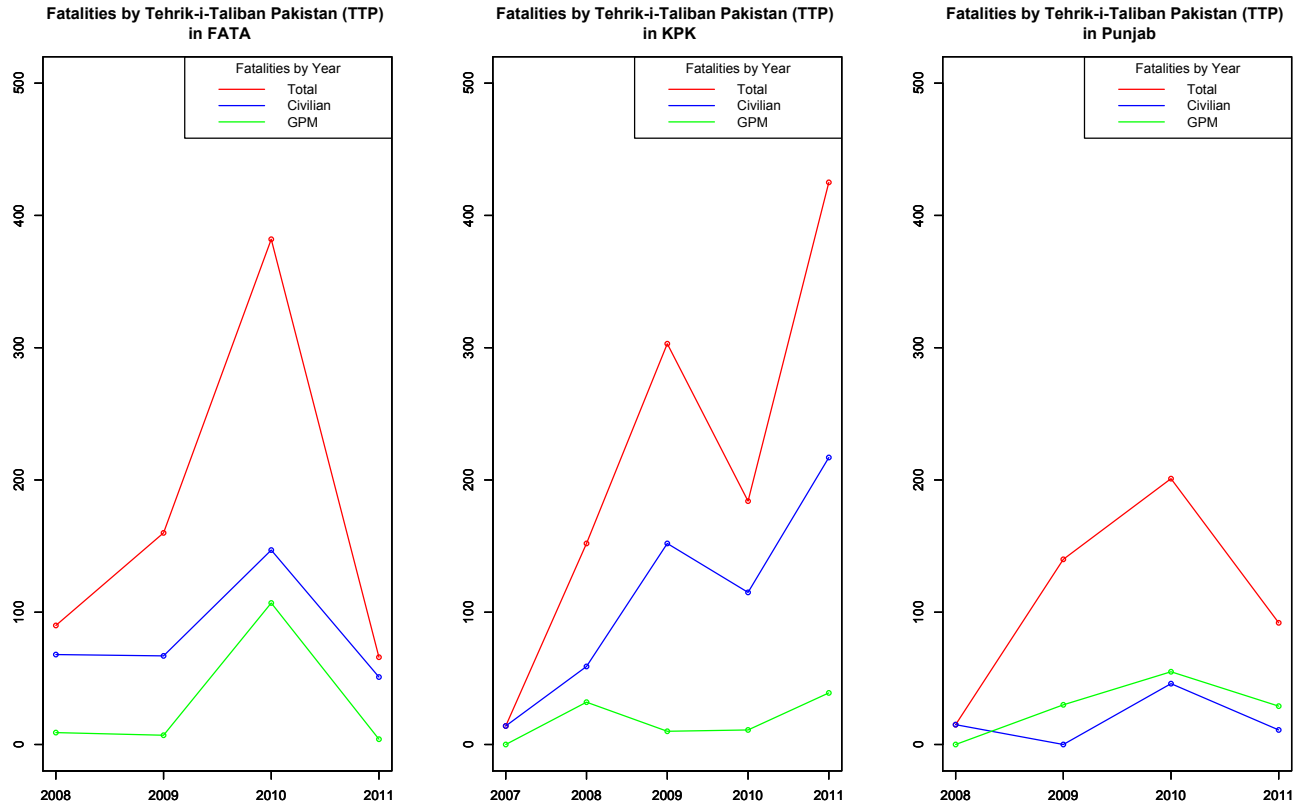


Figure 5.7: Total number of fatalities by TTP from 2007 to 2011 in FATA, KPK and Punjab. Source: GTD (2016)

A favorable public opinion is a prerequisite for the operational continuity of a group, and indiscriminate civilian killings by a terrorist group in its reference constituency generate negative group reputation, which hurts group longevity in the long run – if not immediately.³² Also, as explained in Section 2.3 despite having a slight advantage of overcoming the organizational dilemmas; religious terrorist organizations are not immune from local public opinion. Given that the TTP has killed a lot of Pashtuns, and it is a Muslim terrorist organization; is there something unique about how the TTP is organized that makes it immune to negative approval in its reference community and unusually effective? The following section will address this question by discussing the organizational dynamics of the TTP, and the

³²For more details, see Section 2.3.0.4.

relevance of local public opinion in FATA and KPK against terrorism.

5.3 Testing Assumptions of the Theoretical Framework

5.3.1 Does TTP fit the Organizational Theory Framework?

As described in the Section 2.2.1, a formal organization has “a consciously adopted name,” and “a clearly definable membership.” The TTP certainly fits this criterion because the TTP’s leadership went to a great length to establish their ownership over the title “Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.” [Abbas \(2008, 2\)](#) notes that two organizations with a similar name emerged in the past in FATA; one in 1998, and the other announced its existence in early October 2007 (a month before the Mehsud’s TTP formal announcement). The TTP claimed to be the authentic Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, and systemically suppressed other entities proclaiming the same name in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Also, many recent studies that trace the history of the Pakistani Taliban estimate the TTP’s membership size as about 30,000 to 35,000 operatives ([Valentine, 2009](#); [Abbas, 2008](#); [Yusuf, 2014](#); [Abbas, 2014](#); [Stanford-University, 2012](#), Mapping Militant Organizations Project; [Bajoria and Masters, 2010](#); [Jones and Fair, 2010](#); [Laub, 2013](#); [Franco, 2009](#); [Cla; Sisson, 2011](#)).³³

Moreover, organizational theory literature highlights the importance of an effective leadership that efficiently allocate resources, and designate labor and tasks to middle management and operational commanders ([Mintzberg, 1993, 2](#)). The leadership of TTP at the top has been hierarchical since its inception; they always had a head of the organization (entitled *Emir*) and a second-in-command (entitled *Naib Emir*). Due to its large collaborative tribal network, the TTP has been quick to fill in leadership gaps when required.³⁴ However, the TTP does not have a middle management structure. Instead, it exists as a loose coalition of groups that are united by similar broader ideological goals ([Valentine, 2009](#); [Abbas, 2008](#); [Yusuf, 2014](#); [Abbas, 2014](#); [Bajoria and Masters, 2010](#); [Jones and Fair, 2010](#); [Laub, 2013](#);

³³A few recent studies like [BAAD \(2015, Online TTP Profile\)](#) and [Jamal and Ahsan \(2015, 4\)](#) provided a more conservative estimate of 25000 and 8000 operatives respectively.

³⁴In the case of Baitullah and Hakimullah Mehsud’s killings.

Sisson, 2011). These groups, however, vary in their size, and in their level of coordination with other partners of the coalition. Also, most of the coalition partners are limited to their local areas of influence and cannot expand their operations beyond that territory (Gall and Tavernise, 2010).

The absence of middle management hierarchy does have its benefits for the TTP. The leadership does not have to worry about mobilizing resources to local partners since they generate their own means to support their operations using kidnapping, extortion, and smuggling (Stanford-University, 2012, Mapping Militant Organizations Project & BAAD, 2015, Online TTP Profile). But on the other hand, scholars argue that the hierarchical structure is required to run a prolonged and successful terrorism campaign (Shapiro, 2007, 2005; Shapiro et al., 2013), which makes the TTP case unique because they not only have been successfully launching major attacks in FATA and KPK but they also have extended their reach into other provinces of Pakistan.

Moreover, Yusuf (2014) argues that many leaders of the local factions of the TTP simply signed up to the movement to gain prestige or stature in their own tribes rather than for any ideological reason. The TTP, nevertheless, has faced leadership crises and infighting regarding the issue of whether to negotiate peace deals with the government. A few factions also have splintered on the issue of attacks in public places, extortion, and kidnappings (Siddiq, 2011; Haider and Mehsud, 2011; Jamal and Ahsan, 2015, 3). In short, the TTP does have similar organizational constraints like other conventional organizations; however, the lack of an efficient middle management hierarchy poses additional challenges to control the intensity of violence, and the following subsection examines those problems in detail.

5.3.2 TTP in the light of Agency Theory

5.3.2.1 ALQ and TTP: A Principal-Agent Relation?

Section 5.1.4 discussed the aspirations of the TTP to operate as a global jihadi movement, and many scholars and counterterrorism experts believe that the TTP leaders have been seeking ideological guidance from ALQ. In February 2009, after meeting with Ayman al-

Zawahiri – ALQ’s second-in-command –, Baitullah Mehsud, then TTP’s leader, announced their allegiance to OBL instead of Mullah Omar (Abbas, 2014; Bergen and Tiedemann, 2012, 85).³⁵ This announcement was an official recognition of the long-term collaborative relationship that the TTP and ALQ have established since 9/11. But was there a principal-agent relationship between the TTP and ALQ? If yes, are they subject to the challenges that a conventional organization faces?³⁶ The evidence in a December 3, 2010, declassified letter (to be analyzed in detail shortly) from two high-ranking ALQ officials; Abu Yahya al-Libi and Mahmud al-Hasan to then TTP’s *Emir* Hakimullah Mehsud, undeniably suggests that there is a principal-agent relationship between ALQ and the TTP. Also, due to an absence of a middle management structure and semi-autonomous coalition partners of the TTP, the principal (the ALQ) has had a strenuous relationship with its agent (the TTP).

In the letter, Abu Yahya al-Libi and Mahmud al-Hasan³⁷ wrote to Hakimullah Mehsud (al Libi and Al-Hasan, to Hakimullah Mashud – Harmony Letter # SOCOM-2012-0000007):

“The draft that was written by Hakimullah Mahsud is unacceptable and we don’t approve it because it contains political and Shari’a mistakes. We already sent our comments on this draft.”

From this statement, it will be not irrational to speculate that apparently, Hakimullah Mehsud asked for advice in a written document regarding something related to the management of *Jihadi* campaign in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Also, it is possible that he sought operational guidance regarding *rules of engagement* in the light of ALQ’s Islamic interpretation.³⁸ The authors’ response shows that they were not happy with Hakimullah’s

³⁵The meeting took place in South Waziristan. Before this meeting the Pakistani Taliban answered to the Afghan Taliban.

³⁶For more information on principal-agent relationship see Section 2.2.2.

³⁷Both were killed by the CIA drone attacks in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

³⁸Although the substance of Hakimullah Mahsud’s written draft that he sent to ALQ commanders is not known. However, it is clear from their reply that since Mehsud’s draft contained “political and Shari’a mistakes;” this insinuates that he may have asked for some religious guidance concerning the TTP. Asking written advice called *fatwas* from a religious scholar regarding religious matters is a normal Islamic practice. The advisee uses the *fatwas* to defend his actions in the light this Islamic decree and enforces it in his mandated domain. The fatwas absolve the advisee from any moral, psychological, social, and internal and

proposal, and they outrightly rejected it. The letter did not provide any further details about Hakimullah's written draft. However, points 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the letter,³⁹ that are discussed in the following, show that both ALQ's commanders were seriously concerned regarding TTP's strategy to wage *Jihad* in Pakistan. The authors further wrote:

“1: We have several important comments that cover the concept, approach, and behavior of the TTP in Pakistan, which we believe are passive behavior and clear legal and religious mistakes which might result in a negative deviation from the set path of the Jihadists Movement in Pakistan, which also are contrary to the objectives of Jihad and to the efforts exerted by us”

Item two in the letter addressed the leadership crises and in-fighting between different factions of the TTP and ALQ leaders ordered everyone to swear allegiance to Hakimullah. The authors explicitly disapproved Hakimullah's self-proclaimed title of “Great Imam” instead of “Jihad Emir,” which suggests they were displeased by Mahsud's arrogance, and inappropriate use of his position beyond the TTP's amir. The authors wrote:

“2: Considering Hakimullah as the sole Emir for everyone to swear allegiance to, who ever oppose him and isn't a member of the movement is an adulterer, the none differentiation between the Jihad Emirate and the Great Imam post, and neglecting the daily conditions of the Muslims; all of which according to the Shari'a (Muslim laws) are a misconception of the real situation, and may cause an inter-Mujahidin fighting.”

Item three sharply criticized the surging indiscriminate violence of the TTP against fellow Muslims and its tactics of using civilians as a human shield. They also rebuked the TTP's target selection that maximized civilian fatalities. The authors also condemned the practice of calling Muslims apostates to justify killings of Muslims. The ALQ's leaders wrote:

external stresses.

³⁹The full text of the letter is available in Appendix B.1.

“3: (Of the passive behavior is) killing more people, taking them as shields without basing their action on the Shari’a, killing the normal Muslims as a result of martyrdom operations that takes place in the marketplaces, mosques, roads, assembly places, and calling the Muslims apostates.”

The fifth point denounced the TTP’s use of kidnapping to generate money, and the letter sought to establish clear guidelines according to the Shari’a regarding kidnapping for ransom. The authors wrote:

“5: We are sending the attached short list on what is acceptable and unacceptable on the subject of kidnapping and receiving money, and we hope that you and the Mujahidin in Pakistan will approve it.”

In short, this declassified letter not only furnishes evidence that ALQ (the principal) was, in fact, worried about its brand name, which the TTP (the agent) claimed to represent but also it recognized the long-term consequences of the TTP’s misguided terror campaign against civilians. This is a textbook case of the principal-agent problem as described in Section 2.2.2. The letter clearly shows that the ALQ-TTP nexus suffered from *preference divergence*, which is the root cause of the principal-agent problem. Hakimullah’s preferences to gain prestige in Pakistani Muslim society by becoming a self-proclaimed “Great Imam,” his erroneous target selection and his use of extortion and kidnapping ran counter to the wishes of his principal (ALQ). It seems that ALQ was unable to maintain operational control of the Jihadi movement in the tribal areas of Pakistan, and failed to regulate the *level of violence* against civilians. ALQ faced the *terrorist’s dilemma*, where it had to lose either the operational security – which means, evading local law enforcement, and the US drones (both authors of the letter were later killed by the US drone strikes) – or the tactical control of the global Jihad (where thousands of innocent fellow Muslims were killed in the name of Islam). Moreover, the lack of middle management structure in the TTP poses additional constraints

to establish tactical control even from within the TTP leadership (Khan, 2011).

5.4 Pathways to Public Support for Terrorism in Pakistan

Public opinion in Pakistan has swung from supporting military operations against the TTP and in 2008 and 2009 to against the use of force, and for initiating talks with the TTP (Yusuf, 2014).⁴⁰ Calibration of violence to a tolerable level – against Pakistani Muslims, in general, and the Pashtun community particularly – is a pre-requisite for the TTP’s organizational success (Shapiro, 2013). Then, given the number of civilian fatalities associated to the TTP in Pakistan – especially in the KPK and FATA –; there should be an all out tribal uprising against the TTP similar to Casablanca and Amman uprising against AQI in Morocco and Jordan in 2003 and 2005 respectively (Kalpakian, 2005; Finer and Mehdawi, 2005). But unfortunately, that is certainly not the case in Pakistan.

According to Bullock et al. (2011, 383), the attitudes toward militant groups in Pakistan are regionally clustered, and that support is predominantly lower in the areas where there have been a large number of militant attacks. But on the other hand, several studies measuring the support for militancy in Pakistan have consistently shown that these groups enjoy significant pockets of support, particularly in the KPK and Punjab. (Shapiro and Fair, 2010; Fair et al., 2012, 2010; Shapiro and Fair, 2010). In Spring 2011, the Pew’s Global Attitudes Survey was conducted in Pakistan, and it presents a clear picture of the different shades of public support for the TTP. The survey asked the following specific question to a representative sample of respondents in Pakistan (Pew-Research-Center, 2011):

“Q105A. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Tehrik-i-Taliban?”

⁴⁰In an email correspondence with the author, the Dr. Jacob Shapiro, author of the book Shapiro (2013), argued that the TTP has not been able to calibrate the level of violence to make it tolerable to its constituents, and has clearly overstepped at many places in KPK and FATA.

While 30% of the respondents refused to answer this question or responded ‘*I don’t know;*’ about 51% of respondents replied that they either had ‘*very unfavorable or somewhat unfavorable*’ opinion of the TTP. On the other hand, only 19% of the respondents replied that they either had ‘*very favorable or somewhat favorable*’ opinion of the TTP. This survey result shows that more than half of the country’s population opposes the TTP’s violence. However, what explains the lack of uprising against the TTP in Pakistan as a whole and in KPK and FATA in particular and what explains the 19% support for the TTP? There are a number of plausible explanations of unwavering support for the TTP in Pakistan.

First, the typical answer is that support of terrorists in general, is connected to abject poverty in Pakistan. But many survey studies have found little evidence of a direct link between poverty and terrorism in Pakistan. They instead argue that terrorism should be seen as a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings of indignity, and frustration at lack of opportunity (Kazim et al., 2008; Blair et al., 2013; Shapiro and Fair, 2010; Fair, 2007; Abbas, 2007; Aftab, 2008; Bullock et al., 2011; Shafiq and Ross, 2010; Kaltenthaler and Miller, 2015; Fair, 2009; Davis et al., 2012; Saif, 2011; Kaltenthaler et al., 2010). On the contrary, according to the newspaper commentaries of the late Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan and Hussain Haqqani, former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, the lack of a connection between poverty and support for militancy may explain the motivations of the Islamist leadership or elite. However, they argue that poverty and illiteracy may still be important motivating factors for recruitment of foot-soldiers for the militant organizations (Bhutto, 2004; Haqqani, 2007).

Second, as discussed previously, even if violence is seen as deplorable, it may be perceived as necessary by many sympathizers (Davis et al., 2012, xviii). Since the “Pashtun Homeland” – which extends from Afghanistan to the tribal areas of Pakistan – was perceived to be under the occupation of NATO forces, the Northern Alliance and their enablers, the violence against the occupation forces and their enabler (the Government of Pakistan) was recognized as legitimate and even preferable by many supporters of the TTP. Furthermore, the TTP recruited its militants from a much more homogeneous population, “one that had been pre-

screened through religious institutions” called Madrassas ([Shapiro, 2013, 60](#)). Therefore, they were able to be more ruthless against civilians.

Third, elements in Pakistani military establishment have always seen the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban as an asset because they helped Pakistan to install a pro-Pakistani regime in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. Pakistan’s tolerance if not support to the TTP has contributed to the TTP’s resilience over time. The Pakistani military has been signing peace deals with the Pakistani Taliban and has been reluctant to launch a decisive military operation in FATA, which provided the TTP with territory to establish itself as a force in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

Finally, one of the most compelling arguments about public support for the TTP in Pakistan has been presented by [Kaltenthaler and Miller \(2015\)](#). They argue that ethnic identification is a more important factor in explaining support for the TTP in Pakistan than the religious ideology that the group espouses. They contend that Islamist militant groups with more distinct, salient, homogeneous ethnic composition are likely to be supported by their own ethnic kinsmen. Thus, the TTP should be viewed as an ethno-religious organization rather than just a terrorist organization with the global Islamic agenda. However, these findings still do not explain why ethnic Pashtun will support the TTP when they have been the most favorite target of the TTP’s terrorist campaign, which is a question for future studies.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

A thorough examination of Taliban’s resiliency in Pakistan shows that despite its burgeoning violence against civilians, the TTP’s endurance depends on many inter-related factors.

First, one of the major successes of the TTP during its rise to the national limelight in Pakistan has been its ability to mold public support in its favor by its ethnic similarity with the Pashtun community. Despite the TTP’s indiscriminate violence against civilians, public support stopped the government forces from launching a decisive action against the TTP.

Second, the TTP has managed to survive due to the ambivalence of the Pakistani gov-

ernment to launch a decisive military operation against the TTP. The events of 9/11 and the subsequent American invasion of Afghanistan changed security dynamics in the world, and specifically in South Asia. However, it did not change the India-centric threat perception of Pakistan, and its desire to restore and maintain its strategic depth at its western border via de facto control of Afghanistan through the Taliban. Moreover, Pakistan has been very wary of Indian involvement in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

Under international and American pressure, Pakistan extended its cooperation in the Global War on Terrorism. However, elements in the Pakistani security establishment were still hopeful for a Taliban comeback; therefore, despite suffering huge losses in military operations in the tribal areas, Pakistan never launched a decisive war against the militants in FATA until 2011. Pakistan's ambivalent policy in dealing with the Taliban has always been dictated by its perception to prepare itself to deal with a changed Afghanistan in the wake of the withdrawal of American and NATO troops from the Afghanistan.

Third, the TTP endured in Pakistan due to its ability to survive many leadership decapitations. They have been very quick to install new leadership due to the loose collaborative tribal network. Moreover, the Pakistani Taliban developed a distinct identity and they never integrated themselves into the organizational structure of the Afghan Taliban under Mullah Omar's leadership; instead, they preferred (Abbas, 2008, 1). The TTP established itself by engaging in military attacks and negotiating peace deals with the government of Pakistan with the help of the Haqqanis. The TTP had seemingly recognized the security dilemma of Pakistan, and they were always bargaining to buy time to rearm and regroup under the false pretext of peace deals and ceasefires. The TTP was also aware of the fact that elements in the Pakistan security establishment still viewed both Pakistani and Afghan Taliban as an asset and played their game accordingly.

Finally, since its transformation – from an insurgent movement that was fighting against the foreign occupation of Afghanistan, to a global jihadi organization that endorsed the Pan-Islamization ideology of ALQ – the TTP exposed itself to agency problems. Being a loose coalition of like-minded groups, and due to the absence of an effective middle management structure, the TTP was unable to calibrate violence to a tolerable level in its constituency

despite ALQ wishes, as a result, it became the second most lethal group, in terms of killing civilians in the world ([GTD, 2016](#)).

Chapter 6

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

This dissertation research set out to solve two basic puzzles:

- Why are some terrorist groups more likely to target civilians?
- How does the variation in groups' target selection influence their longevity?

Many qualitative terrorism studies have previously argued that terrorism is inherently a 'self-limiting' phenomenon ([Shapiro, 2013](#); [Abrahms, 2006](#)), and the findings of this project concur with this proposition and present empirical support. The study has strived to explain some of the ambiguities regarding the terrorist's targeting behavior by focusing on terrorist organizations as the unit of analysis, generating a unique dataset of terrorist events, and incorporating a framework based on organizational process and agency theories. I evaluated the targeting patterns and preferences of 480 terrorist groups that were operational between 1980 and 2011 and disaggregated the victims of all terrorist attacks into combatant and non-combatant target-types. The study also incorporates an in-depth case study of the Taliban.

The study consistently found a significant positive relation between group lethality (targeting soft targets) and mortality. The findings also suggest that selective violence against

hard targets prolongs the longevity of a terrorist group. This means that a discriminate and calibrated target selection plays a pivotal role in organizational survival. Also, terrorist activity (launching more attacks) has been found to be a significant positive but weak predictor of a group's longevity, which suggests terrorist groups would continue to be actively violent and but not lethal.

The study presents a simple yet logical explanation of the gradual surge in indiscriminate violence against civilians. I argue that terrorist organizations suffer from a principal-agent problem; where leadership has a hard time controlling violence due to the divergent preferences of its operational commanders who prefer short-term successes over the long term goal of preserving grassroots popular support. The leadership cannot increase its administrative presence due to security concerns and faces a dilemma of choosing between operational security or tactical control. If the leadership chooses the former, it loses the tactical control of the direction of violence which in turn increases indiscriminate violence. However, if the leadership choose the latter, it exposes itself to law enforcement interdiction. Given the rise of indiscriminate violence against civilians, I believe that leaders predominantly choose operational security and lose tactical control of the group's violence that makes terrorism an inherently 'self-limiting' phenomenon.

I also examined the importance of ideology for group endurance. The study found empirical evidence that religiously motivated terrorist organizations are more resilient and violent than non-religious terrorist groups. Also, the study found no evidence of the irrationality of religiously motivated terrorist groups in the post-9/11 world and rejects the premise that they do not seek popular approval, which is highlighted in previous studies like [Benjamin and Simon \(2002\)](#), etc. Instead, I found documentary evidence that religious terrorist groups are not different from non-religious groups and a collective ideological belief does not bulwark against the appearance of the principal-agent problem. The leadership of the religious terrorist groups understands the political risk of indiscriminate violence against civilians, however, they are unable to control violence because they are also subject to the terrorists' dilemma and other organizational constraints. Using primary sources – translations of the original letters and documents from OBL, ALQ's high command and Mullah Omar – from

the Harmony Database,¹ I conclude that the post-9/11 surge in the intensity of violence of ALQ, Afghan Taliban, and the TTP is a product of their organizational dilemma. One reason for the increase in the intensity of violence is the divergent preferences of leadership and the rank and file, and the leadership's lack of control over organizational violence despite their desperate efforts.

In studying the effects of lethality on group mortality, it is concluded that popular support is indeed endogenous. However, grassroots popular support is found to be indispensable to a terrorist group's success and survival regardless of its ideological orientation. Although religious terrorist groups last longer because of their strong adherence to an ideology and availability of highly motivated homogeneous population to draw membership, indiscriminate killing of civilians bothers them too, and the leadership actively seeks to calibrate violence to conserve popular support. The study accounted for the interdependence of popular support for terrorism and found that the group lethality is a significant positive predictor of negative group reputation. Nevertheless, in the case of the TTP in Pakistan, I did find that the ethnic identification is a confounding factor that may explain support for militancy better than the religious ideology of the TTP.

Moreover, it has been argued in previous literature that a group's size is a positive predictor of its survival; however, I found no such evidence in this analysis. I also found considerable support for the 'Liability of Newness' hypothesis because the evidence shows that young organizations face significantly higher hazard to their survival and are more likely to expire as compared to older organizations.

6.2 Future Outlook

First, a simple extension of this work will be to extend the sample of terrorist groups by including data beyond the temporal range of 1980-2011 and by adding data on the groups' structures. Second, the study found strong evidence about the group's religiosity as a strong

¹The dataset is located at the Combating Terrorism Center at the West Point, NY and can be retrieved from <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/programs-resources/harmony-program>.

determinant of its resiliency and suggests that religious groups are in a better position to withstand managerial constraints and agency problems. There is something more to it that makes religious terrorist groups likely to endure. The premise that they endure because of the availability of highly motivated homogeneous population to draw their membership from needs further exploration and could be an avenue to explore in future. Third, the use of suicide bombings and its impact on group endurance needs a closer examination as well. Finally, future studies can improve our understanding of group endurance by introducing a spatial dimension to it, that is, by adding geo-coded data on terrorist groups' targeting and their geographical locations.

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Appendix A

List of Terrorist Groups in the Estimation Sample

Group Name	Country Code	Attacks	Kills	CVL Kills	GPM Kills
Al-Qaida	2	4	2996	2807	189
Americans for a Competent Federal Judicial System	2	5	2	0	1
Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	2	74	0	0	0
Army of God	2	21	3	1	0
Aryan Nation	2	6	0	0	0
Aryan Republican Army	2	16	0	0	0
Coalition to Save the Preserves (CSP)	2	8	0	0	0
Earth Liberation Front (ELF)	2	66	0	0	0
Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy (EMETIC)	2	5	0	0	0
Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion					

Nacional (FALN)	2	13	0	0	0
Jamaat-al-Fuqra	2	5	1	0	0
Jewish Defense League (JDL)	2	30	2	0	0
Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide	2	8	2	0	0
Ku Klux Klan	2	12	1	1	0
May 19 Communist Order	2	14	1	0	0
Omega-7	2	25	1	0	0
Puerto Rican Armed Resistance	2	5	1	0	0
The Justice Department	2	14	0	0	0
The Order (Silent Brotherhood)	2	8	1	0	0
United Freedom Front (UFF)	2	19	0	0	0
World Church of the Creator	2	6	3	3	0
Maximiliano Gomez Revolutionary Brigade	42	14	7	0	0
Popular Liberation Resistance Force	42	6	0	0	0
Democratic Revolutionary Party	70	12	10	10	0
Earth Liberation Front (ELF)	70	2	0	0	0
Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)	70	14	100	98	2
Popular Revolutionary Army (Mexico)	70	21	23	0	23
Zapatista National Liberation Army	70	23	81	61	20
31 January People's Front (FP-31)	90	17	0	0	0
Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT)	90	16	8	1	1
Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG)	90	131	115	0	102

Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP)	90	107	499	99	373
Rebel Armed Forces of Guatemala (FAR)	90	30	47	0	36
Revolutionary Organization of People in Arms (ORPA)	90	109	279	35	216
Right-Wing Death Squad	90	2	1	0	0
Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA)	90	10	9	0	0
Cinchoneros Popular Liberation Movement	91	22	8	1	7
Contras	91	2	0	0	0
Lorenzo Zelaya Revolutionary Front (LZRF)	91	40	25	0	9
Morazanist Front for the Liberation of Honduras (FMLH)	91	6	31	0	31
Patriotic Morazanista Front (FPM)	91	26	10	2	1
Sandinistas	91	5	4	2	2
Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN)	92	3329	8018	1157	6121
February 28 Popular League (El Salvador)	92	10	6	3	0
Manuel Jose Arce Commando	92	6	1	0	1
Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Brigade	92	7	17	0	0
Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR)	92	10	12	5	3
Revolutionary Workers Party	92	2	4	0	0
Right-Wing Death Squad	92	2	11	11	0
Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA)	92	6	0	0	0
United Popular Action Front (FAPU)	92	5	12	3	0
Contras	93	90	427	22	395

Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE)	93	139	1803	30	1759
Ex-Somoza National Guard	93	21	87	10	74
Kisan Indian Organization	93	7	8	0	2
Misurasata Indian Organization	93	34	270	69	199
Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN)	93	886	6630	866	5397
Punitive Leftist Front	93	5	1	1	0
Recontras	93	61	74	31	32
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Nicaragua (FARN)	93	6	100	0	94
Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)	93	12	0	0	0
Sandinistas	93	13	0	0	0
United Nicaraguan Opposition	93	5	8	0	8
Sandinistas	94	1	0	0	0
20 December Movement (M-20)	95	15	1	0	1
Peasant Self-Defense Group (ACCU)	95	2	1	0	1
Revolutionary Front for National Liberation	95	6	0	0	0
America Battalion	100	6	83	17	66
Black Hand (Colombia)	100	6	32	18	0
Death to Bazuqueros	100	6	0	0	0
Death to Kidnappers (MAS)	100	18	43	36	6
Jaime Bateman Cayon Group (JBC)	100	6	1	1	0
M-19 (Movement of April 19)	100	476	1297	272	971
National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN)	100	1226	1391	283	778

Peasant Self-Defense Group (ACCU)	100	22	312	307	0
People's Revolutionary Army (ERP)	100	10	1	1	0
Popular Liberation Army (EPL)	100	207	494	111	329
Popular Militia (Colombia)	100	15	5	0	5
Quintin Lame	100	11	41	13	28
Red Flag (Venezuela)	100	1	0	0	0
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	100	1920	5055	1391	3114
Revolutionary Workers Party	100	5	0	0	0
Ricardo Franco Front (Dissident FARC)	100	62	61	15	41
Right-Wing Death Squad	100	14	209	60	0
Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Board (CGSB)	100	202	384	114	258
The Extraditables	100	109	181	1	62
United Self Defense Units of Colombia (AUC)	100	65	341	305	25
Workers' Self-Defense Movement (MAO)	100	8	1	0	1
Che Guevara Guerrillas	101	5	0	0	0
M-19 (Movement of April 19)	101	5	0	0	0
Red Flag (Venezuela)	101	15	47	0	47
Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Board (CGSB)	101	4	7	0	7
Brunswijk Jungle Commando	115	41	20	7	11
Alfaro Vive	130	25	13	0	9
Montoneros Patria Libre	130	5	0	0	0
Movement of the Revolutionary Left					

(MIR) (Peru)	135	6	2	0	2
Patriotic Liberation Front	135	5	0	0	0
People's Revolutionary Command (CRP)	135	5	0	0	0
Rodrigo Franco Command	135	15	10	2	0
Shining Path (SL)	135	4503	11559	4685	5970
Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA)	135	552	560	37	433
Landless Peasants' Movement (MST)	140	7	5	0	0
Bolivian Socialist Falange	145	8	0	0	0
Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK)	145	22	5	0	0
Zarate Willka Armed Forces of Liberation	145	5	2	0	0
Chilean Anti-Communist Alliance (ACHA)	155	6	1	0	0
Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR)	155	829	93	2	62
Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) (Chile)	155	274	41	1	31
People's Fatherland Movement	155	8	0	0	0
United Popular Action Movement	155	109	19	0	19
Che Guevara Brigade	160	6	0	0	0
OAS-MRP	160	6	0	0	0
People's Revolutionary Organization	160	14	1	0	1
Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades	200	4	0	0	0
Continuity Irish Republican Army					

(CIRA)	200	27	7	5	2
Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)	200	88	77	19	25
Irish People's Liberation Organization (IPLO)	200	20	14	6	2
Irish Republican Army (IRA)	200	1589	753	121	531
Loyalist Volunteer Forces (LVF)	200	22	10	6	0
May 15 Organization for the Liberation of Palestine	200	1	1	0	0
Meibion Glyndwr	200	31	0	0	0
Oglaigh na hEireann	200	11	1	0	1
Orange Volunteers (OV)	200	11	0	0	0
Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)	200	37	33	29	4
Red Hand Defenders (RHD)	200	23	9	5	0
Scottish National Liberation Army	200	7	0	0	0
Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)	200	119	91	49	9
Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)	200	88	84	64	4
Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)	205	3	1	0	0
Communist Combattant Cells (CCC) (Belgium)	211	21	3	2	1
New Armenian Resistance	212	1	0	0	0
Action Directe	220	53	6	2	4
Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group (GAL)	220	15	17	6	0
Armata di Liberazione Naziunale (ALN)	220	7	0	0	0
Breton Liberation Front (FLB)	220	16	4	3	0
Committee of Solidarity with Arab and					

Middle East Political Prisoners (CSPPA)	220	7	4	2	2
Communist Anti-Nuclear Front	220	5	0	0	0
Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC)	220	430	13	3	7
Corsican National Liberation Front- Historic Channel	220	128	0	0	0
Fedayeen Khalq (People's Commandos)	220	2	0	0	0
Gracchus Babeuf	220	5	0	0	0
Guadeloupe Liberation Army	220	2	1	0	0
Indipendenza	220	10	0	0	0
Iparretarrak (IK)	220	57	2	0	2
Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF)	220	6	3	0	0
New Armenian Resistance	220	2	0	0	0
Orly Organization	220	5	1	1	0
Red Brigades Fighting Communist Party (BR-PCC)	220	1	2	0	2
Resistenza	220	73	0	0	0
Spanish Basque Battalion (BBE) (rightist)	220	5	8	0	0
Survivors of Golfech	220	7	0	0	0
Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades	230	6	191	0	0
Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group (GAL)	230	5	2	0	2
Autonomous Anti-Capitalist Commandos (CAA)	230	10	1	0	1
Basque Fatherland and Freedom					

(ETA)	230	1551	604	53	424
First of October Antifascist Resistance Group (GRAPO)	230	108	33	2	25
Free Galician People's Guerrilla Army	230	47	4	0	1
Terra Lliure	230	62	1	0	1
Popular Forces of April 25	235	47	10	3	4
Hekla Reception Committee-Initiative for More Social Eruptions	255	5	0	0	0
New Armenian Resistance	260	2	0	0	0
Red Army Faction (RAF)	260	54	11	0	4
Armed Falange	325	6	0	0	0
Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (NAR)	325	12	85	1	7
Autonomy (Italy)	325	11	0	0	0
CCCCC	325	4	0	0	0
Ein Tyrol (One Tyrol)	325	5	0	0	0
Grey Wolves	325	4	0	0	0
Informal Anarchist Federation	325	15	0	0	0
Prima Linea	325	6	4	0	2
Red Brigades	325	59	37	1	29
Red Brigades Fighting Communist Party (BR-PCC)	325	6	2	0	1
Workers Brigade for Communism	325	6	1	0	0
Albanian National Army (ANA)	343	4	2	0	2
National Liberation Army (NLA) (Macedonia)	343	35	17	0	15
Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)	345	40	35	15	18

1 May Group	350	10	2	0	1
Anti-Authority Group (Greece)	350	13	0	0	0
Anti-State Justice	350	5	0	0	0
Athens and Thessaloniki Arsonist Nuclei	350	8	0	0	0
Black Star	350	7	0	0	0
Conscientious Arsonists (CA)	350	5	0	0	0
Conspiracy of Cells of Fire	350	42	0	0	0
Fighting Guerrilla Formation	350	5	0	0	0
Illuminating Paths of Solidarity	350	6	0	0	0
November 17 Revolutionary Organization (N17RO)	350	111	25	1	8
November 21 Organization	350	5	0	0	0
Revolutionary Nuclei	350	12	1	0	0
Revolutionary People's Struggle (ELA)	350	82	1	0	1
Revolutionary Popular Left	350	7	0	0	0
Revolutionary Struggle	350	22	1	0	1
Cyprus Turkish People's Movement	352	7	0	0	0
Kach	352	1	0	0	0
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)	352	1	3	0	0
Armed Forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria	365	12	99	0	77.75
Caucasus Emirate	365	30	132	10	16
Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat	365	5	13	0	13
Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabo- -tage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs	365	10	412	18	24

Fedayeen Khalq (People's Commandos)	385	1	0	0	0
Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance	433	67	206	72	94
Movement of Niger People for Justice (MNJ)	436	9	37	0	37
National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)	438	1	2	2	0
Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD)	450	6	6	3	1
National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)	450	6	66	48	7
National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)	451	9	128	0	125
Revolutionary United Front (RUF)	451	63	532	425	57
Africa Marine Commando	471	5	7	0	2
Boko Haram	475	152	703	130	256.54
Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)	475	66	255	11	11
Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)	483	1	0	0	0
Ninjas	484	6	91	63	11
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)	490	1	16	16	0
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)	490	29	215	167	11
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	490	45	1045	602	0
Mayi Mayi	490	13	56	23	0
National Congress for the Defense of the					

People (CNDP)	490	5	0	0	0
Popular Front for Justice in the Congo	490	5	1	1	0
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)	500	40	295	208	5
Holy Spirit Movement	500	7	80	18	58
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	500	130	1319	826	107
Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM)	500	19	44	0	38
Uganda People's Army	500	15	136	60	22
Kenya African National Union (KANU)	501	5	5	0	5
Oromo Liberation Front	501	1	1	0	1
Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD)	516	4	9	2	5
National Council for Defense of Democracy (NCDD)	516	15	73	11	47
National Liberation Front (FNL) (Burundi)	516	26	27	1	26
Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU)	516	38	269	78	137
Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)	517	10	102	6	41
Al-Ittihaad al-Islami (AIAI)	520	3	18	0	15
Al-Shabaab	520	276	771	132	421
Hizbul al Islam (Somalia)	520	17	44	6	0
Islamic Courts Union (ICU)	520	12	8	0	4
Mujahideen Youth Movement (MYM)	520	23	58	0	55
Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)	520	1	48	0	0
Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA)	520	7	109	31	0
Somali National Movement	520	7	31	0	0
Somali Salvation Front (SSF)	520	8	0	0	0
Front for the Restoration of Unity and					

Democracy	522	5	236	60	176
Al-Ittihaad al-Islami (AIAI)	530	2	5	0	0
Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)	530	4	86	5	4
Oromo Liberation Front	530	7	136	1	1
Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)	530	5	217	200	0
Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC)	540	14	23	6	11
National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)	540	391	2700	1378	524
Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola	540	9	54	43	0
Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR)	541	174	2323	1050	388
Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (ZANU)	552	9	24	1	6
African National Congress (South Africa)	560	572	613	60	367
Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB)	560	5	6	3	3
Azania People's Organization (AZAPO)	560	5	12	0	5
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	560	50	345	139	2
People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD)	560	9	2	0	1
White Wolves	560	9	7	0	0
South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)	565	31	55	13	16
White Wolves	565	2	0	0	0
Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA)	570	10	19	0	15

Al-Adl Wal Ihsane	600	5	3	0	3
Polisario Front	600	7	202	0	200
Salafia Jihadia	600	5	45	6	0
Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	615	153	578	20	490
Armata di Liberazione Naziunale (ALN)	615	1	1	0	0
Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	615	224	1444	821	227
Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)	615	152	211	6	182
Salafist Group for Preaching and Fighting (GSPC)	615	212	567	120	409
Black September II	625	1	1	0	0
Janjaweed	625	7	168	168	0
Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)	625	11	251	82	149
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	625	37	624	589	7
Sudan Liberation Movement	625	8	19	14	0
Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)	625	42	218	107	87
Sudanese People's Liberation Forces	625	5	32	0	0
Jundallah	630	13	161	88	72
Kurdistan Free Life Party	630	9	47	1	46
Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)	630	71	66	24	28
Orly Organization	630	2	0	0	0
Dev Sol	640	235	122	4	105
Devrimici Halk Kurtulus Cephesi (DHKP/C)	640	17	13	0	9
Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front (IBDA-C)	640	36	27	1	0
Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK)	640	12	2	0	0

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	640	1050	3508	703	2411
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)	640	1	0	0	0
Turkish Communist Party/Marxist (TKP-ML)	640	27	18	2	13
Turkish Hezbollah	640	6	9	0	9
Turkish People's Liberation Army	640	5	5	0	2
Turkish People's Liberation Front (TPLF)(THKP-C)	640	28	24	2	9
Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades	645	1	7	0	0
Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)	645	1	10	0	0
Al-Qaida in Iraq	645	246	2891	1436	927
Ansar al-Islam	645	25	88	5	48
Ansar al-Sunna	645	17	163	49	110
Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq	645	10	4	0	0
Islamic Army in Iraq (al-Jaish al-Islami fi al-Iraq)	645	8	21	1	17
Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)	645	144	1720	630	693
Kurdish Democratic Party-Iraq (KDP)	645	8	64	0	40
Mahdi Army	645	18	57	53	1
Mujahedeen Shura Council	645	8	67	59	8
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)	645	6	128	51	0
Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)	645	10	31	0	31
Tawhid and Jihad	645	49	842	208	371
Abdullah Azzam Brigades	651	3	129	0	0
Al Jihad	651	9	14	0	5

Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (IG)	651	257	489	62	283
Arab Revolution/Liberation Vanguard Organization	652	4	4	0	1
May 15 Organization for the Liberation of Palestine	652	1	0	0	0
Muslim Brotherhood	652	70	207	11	105
16 January Organization for the Liberation of Tripoli	660	24	1	0	1
Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)	660	17	10	0	3
Amal	660	25	24	8	0
Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia	660	19	8	0	2
Beirut Martyrs Battalion	660	7	2	0	2
Force 17	660	1	0	0	0
Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners	660	13	196	47	91
Hezbollah	660	291	701	64	440
Jund al-Sham for Tawhid and Jihad	660	6	6	0	6
Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF)	660	2	0	0	0
Lebanese Liberation Front	660	7	7	0	2
Lebanese National Resistance Front	660	24	46	1	16
Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK)	660	3	1	0	1
Orly Organization	660	2	0	0	0
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)	660	92	191	80	99
Shaykh Subhi Al-Salih Forces	660	18	4	0	4

Soldiers of Truth	660	2	1	0	0
Syrian Social Nationalist Party	660	7	24	1	23
Black September II	663	2	1	0	0
Tawhid and Jihad	663	1	1	0	0
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade	666	76	175	97	15
Al-Fatah	666	10	11	3	1
Black Panther Group (Palestinian)	666	4	5	2	3
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)	666	21	9	2	7
Force 17	666	9	6	2	2
Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)	666	129	508	114	53
Hezbollah	666	33	55	34	20
Kach	666	6	6	5	0
Keshet	666	7	0	0	0
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)	666	21	33	1	27
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	666	122	163	60	13
Palestinian Revolution Forces	666	5	0	0	0
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)	666	56	20	10	6
Popular Resistance Committees	666	34	1	1	0
Terror Against Terror	666	2	0	0	0
Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia	670	7	63	39.66	8
Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	670	6	38	1	2
Al-Qaida	679	4	22	0	19
Al-Qaida in Yemen	679	12	49	0	14

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	679	122	591	48	380
Southern Mobility Movement (Yemen)	679	11	9	0	9
Haqqani Network	700	39	405	97	160
Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-yi Afghanistan	700	5	5	0	0
Hizb-I-Islami	700	24	27	18	5
Taliban	700	1618	4752	1215	2605
Aum Shinri Kyo	740	8	21	8	0
Chukakuha (Middle Core Faction)	740	52	2	0	0
Revolutionary Workers' Council (Kakurokyo)	740	16	3	2	1
Senki (Battle Flag)	740	8	0	0	0
Al-Mansoorian	750	16	70	0	70
Al-Umar Mujahideen	750	10	24	14	8
All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF)	750	5	1	0	0
All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF)	750	13	95	81	14
Babbar Khalsa International (BKI)	750	10	81	25	23
Bhinderanwale Tiger Force of Khalistan (BTHK)	750	9	50	12	23
Black Widows	750	12	55	33	17
Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT)	750	9	78	38	6
Communist Party of India - Maoist (CPI-Maoist)	750	1418	1894	556	1002
Communist Party of India- Marxist-Leninist	750	8	20	7	9
Deccan Mujahideen	750	8	184	0	4

Dima Halao Daoga (DHD)	750	24	32	8	12
Dishmish Regiment	750	43	6	0	4
Garo National Liberation Army	750	25	17	3	7
Gurkha National Liberation Front (GNLF)	750	59	43	8	29
Harkat ul Ansar	750	11	17	0	0
Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami	750	10	39	1	18
Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)	750	85	281	37	231
Indian Mujahideen	750	13	64	29	0
Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)	750	18	51	5	46
Jamaat-E-Islami (India/Pakistan)	750	1	0	0	0
Jamiat ul-Mujahedin (JuM)	750	9	43	0	43
Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front	750	53	65	18	43
Jharkhand Liberation Tigers (JLT)	750	5	8	5	0
Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL)	750	9	21	3	12
Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)	750	30	6	4	0
Karbi Longri North Cachar Liberation Front (KLNLF)	750	15	10	4	3
Karbi People's Liberation Tigers (KPLT)	750	7	7	2	5
Khalistan Commando Force	750	19	114	21	38
Khalistan Liberation Force	750	15	125	35	11
Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	750	97	745	284	240
Maoist Communist Center (MCC)	750	33	226	124	58
Mujahideen Kashmir	750	6	3	0	0
National Democratic Front of					

Bodoland (NDFB)	750	93	405	250	68
National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)	750	59	254	102	123
National Socialist Council of Nagaland	750	17	146	0	116
National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM)	750	33	58	13	20
National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K)	750	14	10	2	0
Naxalites	750	64	402	88	308
People's Committee against Police Atrocities (PCPA)	750	22	11	5	5
People's Liberation Army (India)	750	15	41	0	36
People's Liberation Front of India	750	16	15	13	0
People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)	750	11	1	0	0
People's United Liberation Front (PULF)	750	6	5	4	1
People's War Group (PWG)	750	97	410	26	297
Ranbir Sena	750	5	95	89	0
Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)	750	8	63	52	0
Tripura National Volunteers (TNV)	750	29	154	118	10
Tritiya Prastuti Committee (India)	750	9	3	0	1
United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)	750	243	578	278	158
United National Liberation Front					

(UNLF)	750	7	9	0	9
United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS)	750	7	17	8	9
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)	750	5	3	3	0
Abdullah Azzam Brigades	770	2	1	0	1
Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)	770	1	20	0	0
Al Zulfikar	770	7	13	0	10
Al-Mansoorian	770	1	2	0	2
Al-Qaida	770	19	179	19	133
Baloch Liberation Army (BLA)	770	63	139	14	71
Baloch Liberation Front (BLF)	770	7	14	2	5
Baloch Republican Army (BRA)	770	49	41	9	16
Balochistan Liberation United Front (BLUF)	770	8	10	8	2
Hizb-I-Islami	770	2	2	0	0
Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)	770	3	5	0	0
Jamaat-E-Islami (India/Pakistan)	770	9	7	0	5
Lashkar-e-Islam (Pakistan)	770	35	46	31	3
Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	770	30	366	202	21
Mohajir National Movement	770	9	31	9	6
Muttahida Qami Movement (MQM)	770	170	229	53	55
Pakistani People's Party (PPP)	770	7	5	1	0
Sindhu Desh Liberation Army (SDLA)	770	6	0	0	0
Sipah-e-Sahaba/Pakistan (SSP)	770	17	61	39	5
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	770	545	2491	1022	742
Awami League	771	20	15	6	8

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	771	32	11	9	0
Bangladesh Sarbahara Party	771	6	47	5	17
Harkatul Jihad-e-Islami	771	1	8	8	0
Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)	771	20	38	11	25
Jamaat-E-Islami (Bangladesh)	771	15	29	9	6
Purbo Banglar Communist Party	771	21	49	17	24
Shanti Bahini - Peace Force	771	99	439	268	76
All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF)	775	5	1	0	0
Kachin Independence Army (KIA)	775	12	57	4	37
Karen National Union	775	72	203	126	27
Shan United Revolutionary Army	775	5	16	1	1
Colonel Karuna Faction	780	9	35	12	0
Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF)	780	7	60	0	56
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	780	1592	10900	2597	6042
People's Liberation Front (JVP)	780	433	859	241	472
Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO)	780	8	38	24	4
Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist (CPN-M)	790	23	654	1	652
Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM)	790	26	7	3	2
Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha- Goit (JTMM-G)	790	27	14	5	5

Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha- Jwala Singh (JTMM-J)	790	78	32	15	9
Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha- Rajan Mukti (JTMM-R)	790	13	11	0	10
Madhesi Mukti Tigers (MMT)	790	6	1	0	0
Maoist Communist Center (MCC)	790	2	0	0	0
Ranbir Sena	790	10	0	0	0
Terai Army	790	10	15	4	2
United Liberation Torchbearers Forces	790	5	6	0	6
Young Communist League	790	10	0	0	0
Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN)	800	5	7	5	2
Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA)	800	18	23	7	3
Karen National Union	800	5	12	0	0
Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO)	800	30	33	2	19
Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK)	800	24	13	6	6
United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship	800	21	0	0	0
Cambodian Freedom Fighters (CFF)	811	5	8	0	8
Khmer Rouge	811	158	353	184	43
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	840	201	530	251	69
Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB)	840	11	7	1	2
April 6th Liberation Movement	840	31	1	0	0
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)	840	16	35	4	1
Moro Islamic Liberation Front					

(MILF)	840	334	729	331	229
Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)	840	125	440	75	216
New People's Army (NPA)	840	1307	3381	388	2550
Reform of the Armed Forces Movement	840	9	0	0	0
Free Aceh Movement (GAM)	850	115	139	32	71
Free Papua Movement (OPM-Organisasi Papua Merdeka)	850	16	23	3	6
Jemaah Islamiya (JI)	850	57	304	22	0
Laskar Jihad	850	7	12	12	0
Ninjas	850	3	3	0	0
Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN)	850	11	112	6	102
Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide	900	1	2	0	2
Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA)	910	28	45	0	44

Table A.1: List of Terrorist Groups in the Estimation Sample.

Appendix B

Declassified Letters From Harmony Database

B.1 A LETTER TO HAKIMULLAH MAHSUD – HAR-
MONY # SOCOM-2012-0000007

To the good brother Hakimullah ((Mahsud)), the Emir of Tahrik-e Taliban in Pakistan (TN: TTP - Taliban Movement in Pakistan)

Greetings,

There are certain important issues that we like to bring to your attention:

1: We have several important comments that cover the concept, approach, and behavior of the TTP in Pakistan, which we believe are passive behavior and clear legal and religious mistakes which might result in a negative deviation from the set path of the Jihadists Movement in Pakistan, which also are contrary to the objectives of Jihad and to the efforts exerted by us. Here are some facts to consider:

2: Considering Hakimullah as the sole Emir for everyone to swear allegiance to, whoever oppose him and isn't a member of the movement is an adulterer, the none differentiation between the Jihad Emirate and the Great Imam post, and neglecting the daily conditions of the Muslims; all of which according to the Shari'a (Muslim laws) are a misconception of the real situation, and may cause an inter-Mujahidin fighting.

3: (Of the passive behavior is) killing more people, taking them as shields without basing their action on the Shari'a, killing the normal Muslims as a result of martyrdom operations that takes place in the marketplaces, mosques, roads, assembly places, and calling the Muslims apostates.

4: The draft that was written by Hakimullah Mahsud is unacceptable and we don't approve it because it contains political and Shari'a mistakes. We already sent our comments on this draft.

5: We are sending the attached short list on what is acceptable and unacceptable on the subject of kidnapping and receiving money, and we hope that you and the Mujahidin in Pakistan will approve it.

6: We want to make it clear to you that we, the al-Qa'ida is an Islamist Jihadist organization that is not restricted to a country or race, and that we in Afghanistan swore allegiance to the Emir Mullah Muhammad (('Umar)) who allowed us to carry Jihad. Those that call us as guests do that for political

reasons and don't base this attribute on the Shari'a, and we ask you and all the Mujahidin not to use this attribute.

7: We make it clear to you that the brother Badr ((Mansur)) is one of the soldiers of the Qa'idat al-Jihad Organization who swore allegiance to Shaykh Usamah ((Bin Laden)), is with us, under our command, the Emir of a of a company of ours. Badr Mansur and other members of our group are not to be approached to join another organization or to deploy to other locations. Good manners and group work mandate that such a request be presented to his Tanzim (TN: al-Qa'ida) Emir and superiors.

8: We stress on the fact that real reform is the duty of all, and to succeed we should look for and correct our mistakes and take the advice of others.

We hope that you will take the necessary action to correct your actions and avoid these grave mistakes; otherwise we have to take decisive actions from our end.

We pray to God to grant us success,

Regards,

Mahmud al-Hasan (('Atiyatullah)) and ((Abu Yahya)) al-Libi

27 Dhu al-Hijjah 1431 (3 December 2010)

B.2 A LETTER TO ABU-USAMAH – HARMONY

IZ-060316-02

To: Abu-Usamah

I read your reports about Al-Ramadi, and I have some remarks, and it is as follows:

1. I have a feeling you are going very easy with the brothers in Al-Anbar. For example the operators matter (Phones). If you did not issue the order who did? We have to charge whoever did it no matter who it was so it will be an example for everybody else, because we are going through a very sensitive period with people and we have to hit anyone that helps the enemies. Immediately. According to Islamic laws, make sure not to go easy in these kinds of situations.
2. I read the investigation with (Janti) from Sharkas. What happened to him was wrong. Be more strict and responsible.
3. The killing of the four people who are engaged in the election. I agree we should kill them because they were carrying weapons, what appears to people they are not military or police. We should have securely gotten them out of there. But the way you killed them was not the correct way.
4. The weakness of work in Rawah and Al-Qa'im is clear.
5. Stop the killing of people unless they are spying, military, or police officers. We have to find a secure method because if we continue using the same method, people will start fighting us in the streets.
6. What the status of the subject of the tribes? Also, Sheikh (**illegible, possibly Abu-Yas**) wants to repent. Please take his repentance and give him something to work on. Regarding the statues (**people**) whom are sitting with al-Ja'fari, like Sheikh Abu 'Ubayd. Someone has to meet with them and let them know we knew they met with Al-Ja'fari also warn them to stop meeting with Al-Ja'fari, or otherwise their fate is known.
7. We have to attack and attack hard where it hurts and with accuracy by using rockets. We have to attack Abu-Nimr in Hit. Even if we have to use rockets. For the rest of the statues (**people**) who met with Al-Ja'fari, we have to get them securely (**meaning secretly**) and make them anywhere far (**get them far away**) and kill them, and

not like what we did with Nasr Al-Fahadawi. We killed him in front of everyone. Leave no evidence after the killing and bury them in far-away places and not like what we did with Nasr al-Fahadawi—in front of the people.

8. Do not forget the matter of Amir Jaysh al-Mujahidin and the little boy we killed. You have to follow up on that matter by any means.

9. You know, I like you working with us and I love you more than the members of my family, and we our hopes on you are great, so do what we ask you to do.

I got your letter in which you mentioned Dr. 'Amir's point of view regarding the council, therefore you have to come with Dr. 'Amir the day after tomorrow early in the morning (**this is an order**). It will be coordinated with Karar to discuss this matter and other matters. It is important that you and Dr. 'Amir have to come to me as soon as possible the day after tomorrow (Sunday)

Signed,

Your Brother

**B.3 2007 Version of the Taliban's Rules of Jihad –
HARMONY # AFGP-2007-K0000029**

AFGP-2007-K0000029

Source language: Pushtu

Translation: Full

Page: 1 of 5

The Rules of Jihad established for Mujahideen by the Leadership of Afghanistan Islamic Emirates

Page: 2 of 5

**In the name of God,
Afghanistan Islamic Emirate's Resolutions**

Jihad in the name of God is such a high level of prayer and a holy mission for Muslims that makes the Apostles and the Islamic believers proud to be part of it.

Obviously, this holy mission has many rewards both in this life and life after death, and it could be achieved only if it is done according to the Laws of God and to the framework of the established rules and regulations.

1. An Authority [Translator Comment (TC): From Taliban side] can invite those Afghans that are supporting and working for the Infidels to join the true path of Islam.

2. Those that break up their ties with the Infidels should be given full protection for their lives and properties.

3. Those Mujahideen that have contacts with someone or gives guarantees to someone that works for the opposition must inform the people in charge in their own area of operations and get their advanced approval.

4. Those that do not fulfill their promises and betray us, after the acceptance of the invitation, then the promised amnesty for them is annulled, and we will not make any more promises to them again.

5. If a person breaks up his ties with the Infidels, and the Mujahideen give him guarantees for full protection, and this person is killed by a Mujahid or harmed in some way, then the person who committed the crime is not backed up by the Islamic Movement, and he would be dealt according to the laws of Shariha [TC: Laws based on Islamic Principles].

6. If a group Leader from one district or province is going to fight in a different district or province, he should obtain permission from the authorities of his own district or province and also from the authorities of the newly arrived district or province.

7. If Mujahideen capture a soldier from occupying foreign forces, they are not allowed to exchange that prisoner for money or for a captured Mujahid, without obtaining permission from the Movement's leadership.

8. Those who are in charge of a province, district, or specific area are strictly prohibited from making deals with the opposition for self-benefit in the form of money or other tangible materials. The Organizations [TC: such as non-governmental organizations, or anyone working for the government or Coalition forces] are also classified as opposition.

9. Personal use of equipment that belongs to the cause of Jihad is strictly forbidden, and it is completely wrong.

10. Every person in a superior position can question any other individual working under his supervision, from time to time, for the accountability of the properties that belong to the cause of Jihad [TC: Called from now on: “Jihadi equipment or properties”] and also other related expenses.

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11. Mujahideen do not have the authority to sell the properties that belong to the cause of Jihad without getting authorization from the Provisional leadership.

12. Mujahideen are strictly prohibited from inviting members from other groups for the purpose of strengthening their own positions. If a Mujahid is willing to transfer to another group for a good reason, he should then first get permission from his higher commander and return all Jihadi equipment assigned to him by his original team leader, and also

return all those captured belongings from the enemy, since their ownership to the team was already established.

13. Weapons that are captured from the Infidels or their supporters should be divided among the Mujahideen according to the Islamic laws.

14. If a Mujahid establishes contacts, for the benefit of Islam and Jihad, with someone working for the current Infidel Administration, he should disclose it to the Mujahidin authorities in his area of operations. Killing this person [TC: Government employee] is not allowed, and if someone kills him, then that person is subject to the justice based on the laws of Shariha.

15. If an official or individual misuses his authority as a Mujahid, and causes harm to the public, then it is the responsibility of his immediate supervisor to correct his actions. In case the person is uncorrectable, he should then be referred to the leadership and be expelled from the rank of Mujahideen.

16. It is a strict order for Mujahideen to not take away by force the people's weapons, unless an order was issued by the higher authorities.

17. It is an order for Mujahideen to not take people's money or personal properties by force.

18. As per issued decree, Mujahideen should strictly avoid smoking cigarettes. The same decree is still valid.

19. Taking drugs into Jihadi operations, or sending it to your frontline forces is strictly prohibited.

20. The Management for each province, by taking into consideration the circumstances in the province under their control, has the full authority to invite [TC: Islam and support of Jihad] those that are in the support of Infidels. After they surrender, their life and properties should be fully protected, but only if they accept specific conditions. Before you give any guarantees, you should consult with the Military Commission.

21. Those that have worked for the current Infidel Administration, recruited people to serve the current Infidel Government, searched people's houses, have been implicated for killing Muslims, have insulted Muslims, and finally those that are hated by Muslims, should be not allowed to stand in the rank of Mujahideen. If such a person is given amnesty by the Islamic Emirate leadership, he should then not be given any government position [TC: The way this sentence was written could also have another meaning of "Under house arrest"].

22. If a team leader expels a Mujahid member from his group, because of committing a crime, another Group Leader doesn't have the right to take this person as their associate.

If a Regional Leader fires a team leader from his group leadership position, because of committing a crime, nobody has the right to supply this person until he fully acknowledges his mistakes.

23. If there are situations that have not been discussed in this Guideline, the people in charge for a particular area can discuss and resolve the outstanding issue.

24. It is forbidden for anybody, from an instructor in a Madrassa to a schoolteacher, to work for an empty-name government, because this would help the government to strengthen its position. Certainly, Muslims should take the education of their children, that are today's new generation, very seriously and provide in the scale of their financial ability home studies for them, and also send them to those mosques that are teaching children according to Mujahideen's or Islamic Emirate's era curriculums. Avoid those Mosques that follow the Infidel Administration's curriculum.

25. We are informing all those teachers and mullahs that are working for the current empty-name government that they should immediately stop their cooperation, and if they don't then they should be punished by beatings.

If this teacher or mullah teaches against Islam, they should be punished to death, after a complete investigation by the district leader.

26. All the organizations functioning under the current Infidels occupation are instruments and tools in the hand of the Infidel system. Their services are only a cover-up

for their main goal of destroying Islam. For this reason all their activities, whether constructing a road, bridge, clinic, school, or Madrassa, or any other similar activities are forbidden.

If a school is designated for burning, all the religious books should be removed ahead of time, so you do not disrespect holy books.

27. Punishing a spy is not the right of every authority. This right is given only to the District's General Leader or the War Fronts' Councils. They should do a full investigation about the crime and after they have the full proof and there is no doubt about it, they still should first evaluate the crime. If it is a small crime, and if the person has done much good in the past, and finally if he was a person who did good deeds, then the District's General Leader or the War Fronts' Councils should warn him to stop his activities. In case he continued his actions, he should be punished, first by beating, and if that didn't help, then he is subject to death.

28. If a person comes with complaints to Mujahideen, not everyone has the right to intervene into the people's personal affairs. Only the District's General Leader or the War Fronts' Councils can interfere into the matter. They should first refer the matter to religious scholars and tribal elders for solutions through mediation and arbitration. If a final agreement cannot be reached then the matter should go to the Supreme Religious Council.

29. Following the above-mentioned Guidance is essential to everyone. If anyone breaks these Rules and Guidance, he should be dealt with according to Afghanistan Islamic Emirate laws.

God Gives Us Victory

This Guidance is a powerful instruction for all Afghanistan's Islamic Emirate Mujahideen that are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of God and for the cause of the Holy Jihad. This is their religious and Jihadi duty.

All are rewarded according to their actions both in this life or the life after death.

Appendix C

Data Sources

C.1 Data Collection Methodology

The data sources used to compile final dataset for this study are mostly chosen due to the availability of information on relevant variables, such as group ideology, its area of operations, size, and lifespan, etc. which are discussed in Appendix C. The following subsections discuss the different open-source datasets used for the study and describe the routes and procedures by which data reach a final database.

C.2 Sources

C.2.1 Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPS)

Terrorist Organization Profiles (hereafter TOPS) was one of the rare datasets with group-level information. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) hosted this dataset which was originally maintained by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) with the name, Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) dataset.¹ However, the START did not actively maintain or take responsibility for

¹The TKB's online portal was active from September 2004 to March 2008 and is now out of commission. MIPT-TKB later became the Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPS). TOPS was available at <https://www.start.umd.edu/TOPS> until recently. According to an email correspondence between the

the data. TOPS had information on both international and domestic terrorist organizations starting with the year 1998 to 2005. It included 856 terrorist groups that spread over 112 countries. TOPS contained group-level information on many different organizational attributes of the terrorist groups such as leadership hierarchy, ideology, age, last recorded attack, funding sources, state-sponsorship, group splintering, and so forth.

C.2.2 Big Allied and Dangerous (BAAD)

The Big Allied and Dangerous Dataset (hereafter BAAD – Version 1)² BAAD-1 is established by Prof. Victor Asal and Prof. R. Karl Rethemeyer from University at Albany, State University of New York. BAAD-1 contains information on terrorist groups active during the period 1998-2005. The BAAD-1 dataset has quantified information from the MIPT-TKB dataset, which was later extended in BAAD-1 dataset through open-source coding. The dataset includes 395 terrorist organizations that conducted at least one attack and operated between 1998 and 2005. BAAD-1 provides group-level information about the group’s country of origin (referred to as the home-base country), group’s ideology, size, state sponsorship, and the number of allies with other terrorist groups.

C.2.3 Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

The Global Terrorism Database (hereafter GTD) is an open-source event database that codes information on domestic and international terrorist attack on terrorist events around the world from 1970 through 2015.³ The GTD is one of the most comprehensive and often cited terrorist event databases. In total, this dataset is a repository of over 156772 cases. For each incident (each attack), GTD provides information on the date and location of the incident, the type of weapons used and nature of the target attacked, the number of casualties, and

author and START representative, the TOPS portal has been removed from the START website and will no longer be available. The visitors are now being directed to view similar information available at Big, Allied, and Dangerous (BAAD) database.

²The work on Version 2 of the dataset is currently underway, and it incorporates variation over time within the 1998-2012 time frame. However, BAAD-2 is only accessible online and is currently not available in the downloadable format. To access the BAAD-2 dataset see here <https://www.start.umd.edu/baad/database>.

³See <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

the group or individual responsible for the attack (if the group accepts responsibility, or it is known). The GTD uses a variety of open media sources – such as the media, government, and non-governmental sources – to collect information (LaFree et al., 2010; LaFree, 2010).

C.2.4 Reputation of Terror Groups Dataset (RTG)

The Reputation of Terror Groups Dataset (hereafter RTG) is the only available dataset that systemically measures the popularity or public support of terror groups across countries and time. The dataset includes 443 terror groups operating across 31 years – between 1980 to 2011 –, which makes a total of 2,641 observations. RTG is established by Prof. Seden Akcinaroglu and Efe Tokdemir from Binghamton University, State University of New York, and they introduced RTG in their recent publication Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu (2016). Additionally, the dataset provides information on both positive and negative reputation building by the terrorist group. RTG⁴ provides group-level information about the group’s country of origin, ideology, size, goals and intergroup competition.

C.2.5 End-of-Terror Dataset (EOT)

The End-of-Terror Dataset (hereafter EOT) is a pioneer group-level dataset in contemporary global terrorism that includes 648 groups that existed between 1968 and 2006. EOT was established by Dr. Seth Jones and Dr. Martin C. Libicki from RAND Corporation, and they introduced EOT in Jones and Libicki (2008), which is a leading and the most comprehensive study of “how terrorist groups ends” that uses group-level data. EOT provides information about group’s age, size, the national economic situation of group’s base country of operation and ideology. EOT has quantified the terrorist event information from the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI).⁵

⁴For more information on the RTG see <http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/02/15/0022343315626506.abstract>.

⁵For more information on RDWTI see <http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents/download.html>.

C.2.6 Political Terror Scale Dataset (PTS)

The Political Terror Scale Dataset (hereafter PTS) is one of the most frequently used datasets in the comparative analyses of human-rights practices. PTS covers a time span from 1976 to 2010 in 187 countries in the world. PTS also measures the respect for the rights associated with the integrity of the person. The latest version of the PTS dataset is maintained by Mark Gibney, Linda Cornett, and Reed Wood from the University of North Carolina, Asheville. The information used to compile the PTS comes from three different sources: the yearly country report of Amnesty International, the U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (Wood and Gibney, 2010).⁶

C.2.7 Relative Political Capacity Dataset (RPC)

The Relative Political Capacity Dataset (hereafter RPC) estimates the state capacity of 201 countries from 1960 to 2012 across countries and over time. I chose not to use the more common Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) measure from National Material Capabilities dataset (NMC)⁷ because of temporal constraints – since CINC scores are only available until 2007 – and also because RPC additionally captures a state’s Resource Extraction Capability. RPC consists of three major indicators: Relative Political Extraction (RPE), Relative Political Reach (RPR), and Relative Political Allocation (RPA).⁸

C.2.8 Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics Dataset

The Polity IV project provides the characteristics of political regime. It has been the only known dataset that codes the authority characteristics of states for comparative and quantitative analysis. The current version of the Polity-IV dataset was published in 2015, and it provides information on 206 countries from 1800 to 2014. It also contains information

⁶For more information about the PTS dataset see <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/Data/Documentation.html>.

⁷For more information about the NMC dataset see <http://cow.la.psu.edu/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/nmc4.htm>.

⁸For more information about the NMC dataset see Kugler and Tammen (2012) or visit <http://www.rpcmap.com/>. To download dataset visit <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/16845>.

on some other variables on state fragility, such as regime durability, political fragmentation, political persistence, openness, competitiveness and regulations of executives, executives constraints and so forth.⁹

C.2.9 Sample Description

To analyze the dynamic relationship between variables of interest, groups were selected that matched among the datasets (TOPS, BAAD-1, GTD, RTG, and EOT). The sample was restricted to groups that had perpetrated at least five attacks and killed one person between 1980 and 2011.¹⁰ Due to the clandestine nature of terrorism, finding yearly data for many attributes of the terrorist groups, such as group's size, funding, competition, are not only hard but sometimes unlikely – especially for developing countries. The selected temporal range (1980-2011) for this study, therefore, was restricted to include the maximum number of matched groups among the datasets listed above. Also, the final data sample contains far less missing data on the covariates of the group's reputation and duration; providing advantages over all existing group-level data collections. Moreover, since the reputation building is time-consuming, and can only be employed by groups that survived for some time; restricting the sample of groups to those engaged in attacks above this threshold (five attacks and one killing) is reasonable (Tokdemir and Akcinaroglu, 2016). The final sample is 480 groups operating in 85 countries existing for a total of 31 years.

⁹For more information about the Polity-IV dataset see Marshall and Jaggers (2002). To download the dataset see <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>. For the codebook of the dataset see <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2015.pdf>.

¹⁰Due to temporal constraints and unavailability of data on some groups; the current study has been restricted to the 1980 to 2011 timeframe.

C.2.10 Data Generating Process, Reliability, and Validity

C.2.10.1 Data Generating Process:

Initially, the [Nemeth \(2010\)](#) dataset has been used as a foundation to develop a group-level dataset for this dissertation project.¹¹ The first step in creating a group-level dataset was to define, what is a terrorist group? Identifying the appropriate terrorist organizations is crucial because the range of actors listed in GTD – which is the master dataset –, is diverse; spanning groups that range from well-known and established organizations like Al-Qaeda to more amorphous aggregations known as “unknown,” “rebels,” “rioters,” “activist,” “youth”, etc. Therefore, all ambiguous terrorist groups were removed from the sample to keep the focus simply on terrorist organizations, hence, avoiding confusion that may result from analyzing all potential actors that may engage in terrorism.

Although the basic infrastructure of the group-level data was available, however, [Nemeth \(2010\)](#) dataset had very few variables and had a lot of missing data. So many additional variables were added, and missing data were filled in by reading the terrorist groups profiles from Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB) dataset which was maintained by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT).¹² Later, through extensive research and verification, the coding errors – such as multiple spellings of the same group or the same group given two names – were corrected to get the maximum number of matching groups from all the group-level datasets. The information on the new variables across matching groups was later cross-referenced using EOT, BAAD, and RTG datasets. Whenever possible, before making a final coding decision about filling in the missing or contradictory information in group-level datasets, many secondary resources containing terrorist groups information were employed – example being ([Janke, 1983](#); [Rosie and Rosie, 1986](#); [Jongman, 1988](#); [Schmidt](#)

¹¹I along with Dr. Stephen Nemeth, Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University, started collaborating on this mutual data collection project in 2013, and we extended the [Nemeth \(2010\)](#) dataset using TOPS and EOT datasets. The author thanks, Dr. Nemeth, for his permission to use [Nemeth \(2010\)](#) dataset and for providing his insight and services to extend the dataset.

¹²The TKB’s online portal was active from September 2004 to March 2008 and is now out of commission. MIPT-TKB later became the Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPS). TOPS was available at <https://www.start.umd.edu/TOPS>.

and Jongman, 1984; Schmid, 2011).¹³ Subsequent, the datasets were merged and restricted to the groups that matched in the TOPS, GTD, EOT, BAAD, and RTG datasets, which allowed the collection of additional groups, variables and filled in a lot of gaps in the final dataset. Final dataset has 480 terrorist groups.¹⁴

C.2.10.2 Data Reliability and Consistency:

In any evidence-based and predictive analysis on terrorism, the reliable data increase the strength, accuracy, and validity of the inferences drawn from a correctly specified model (Rusnak et al., 2012, 180). Most of the currently available datasets on terrorist activities use information from the open-sources like the print and electronic media, government reports, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant secondary sources (Silke, 2001; Drakos and Gofas, 2006). While using the open-source information may be cost-effective, but drawing data-driven inferences about terrorism, in general, may have some inherent limitations.

Definitional Issues: As with any global dataset composition involving terrorism incidents, the major difficulty lies with the nature of the data itself. Many of the outlets that record open-sourced information on terrorism events vary widely in their definition of the terrorism, and in the range of years they cover (Shor, 2011).¹⁵ This problem has already been alleviated in the current dataset because data on the terrorism events (attack variable) come from the GTD, and the author concurs with the definition of terrorism that has been used by GTD. All definitional issues and concepts about terrorism have been discussed at length in Section.???. Moreover, a consistent definition that specifies a violent event as terrorism has been followed by all other datasets used in the data generating process, i.e. GTD, TOPS, BAAD-1, EOT, and RTG. The temporal range; however, has been different in all datasets which was restricted from 1980 to 2011 to get a complete and consistent data across

¹³Due to the lack of availability of workforces, funding and time constraints, the search was never extended to collect information from other sources like Lexis-Nexis, ProQuest, Westlaw, Human Rights Watch, and search engines like Google, Yahoo, etc.

¹⁴Although some models involve fewer groups because of missing data on covariates.

¹⁵ Shor (2011) discussed the concerns regarding the data reliability and limitation of constructing the Global Counterterrorist Legislation Database (GCLD) which are valid concerns for constructing any global dataset on terrorism.

all datasets.

Levels of Intercoder Reliability: The intercoder reliability is referred as the extent to which different people are independently coding the same material, would produce the same results (Gochman et al., 1976). Best Jr and Cumming (2007) argue that individuals who are not trained properly in the use of open-source resources are at a disadvantage because the reliability of a dataset depends on coding consistency over time and across raters (Sheehan, 2012, 21). Since 1998, the GTD data – which is the primary source of the terrorist incidents data in the current study – were collected by coders from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. In efforts to ensure intercoder reliability, the perpetrator group attributions entries are routinely reviewed for accuracy and consistency by members of the START staff.¹⁶ Similarly, the data are coded by trained coders to construct the BAAD-1, RTG and EOT datasets. The manual entries, – from the terrorist organization profiles from MIPT-TKB dataset – in the final dataset are reviewed by Dr. Nemeth and his team at the Oklahoma State University. Moreover, the author also followed the consistent coding schemes while merging, collapsing and entering the missing data to construct the final dataset, which ensures intercoder reliability and the quality of the data used in this study.

Sources Reliability: The data reliability becomes a particular concern when data are repurposed (Popp and Yen, 2006, 454) because the data may suffer from inherent systematic bias caused by underreporting. For instance, information about terrorist incidents may suffer from systematic underreporting in the press reports which can limit the scope of a given dataset and raise questions on data accuracy – this happens specifically in autocratic states where press freedom is limited (Drakos and Gofas, 2006). Although all of the datasets that have been repurposed to create a final group-level dataset for this study uses the open-sources information; however, these data have been corroborated by supporting information with multiple valid sources by the data collection organizations maintaining these data. Moreover, the data-collection methodologies of these datasets are transparent and are publicly available, which increases the sanctity of these data. The current study has no means to independently

¹⁶Although no formal tests have been used to check the intercoder reliability (Miller, 2011, 83).

verify the validity and accuracy of the original open-sources, therefore, cannot account for these inherent systematic biases that may already exist in the datasets that are repurposed to collect different organizational attributes of the terrorist groups.¹⁷ Finally, the manual entries to fill in missing data and remove the conflicting information in the different sources were all corroborated by information from multiple secondary sources such as, [Janke \(1983\)](#); [Rosie and Rosie \(1986\)](#); [Jongman \(1988\)](#); [Schmidt and Jongman \(1984\)](#) and [Schmid \(2011\)](#).

¹⁷See [Silke \(2001\)](#) for more on the benefits of using open-sources data for inferential statistics in the terrorism analysis.

Appendix D

Kaplan-Meier Estimates

The analysis also looks at the survival probabilities of different groups when they are divided into 2 or more sets based on their characteristics. Figures D.1- D.11 show the Kaplan-Meier non-parametric survival probabilities of the terrorist groups by their different traits.

Figure D.1 shows that the survival probability of groups who launched fewer attacks is smaller as compared to those who launched more attacks at a given time.

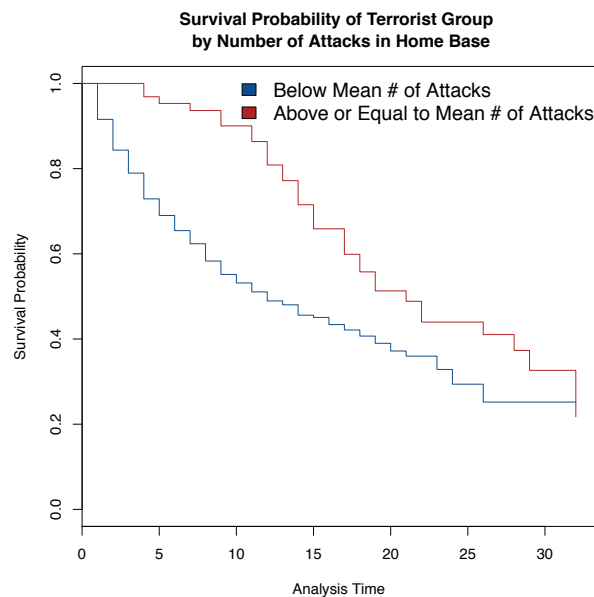


Figure D.1: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by number of attacks.*

Figure D.2 shows the survival probability as time progresses for the groups which faced higher competition and those which faced relatively lower competition. The groups are divided into two sets; one set includes groups which faced below or equal to the average competition in the data, and the other set includes the groups that faced above average competition in the analysis time. As the curves show, the survival probability at a given time for the groups with low competition (blue) is higher than the groups with higher competition (red).

Figure D.3 shows the survival probability curves for the groups with more than mean killings in data (red) and the ones with the lower than or equal to mean killings in the data. The curves show that the survival probability of groups with higher killings is higher at a given time as compared to those with lower number of killings.

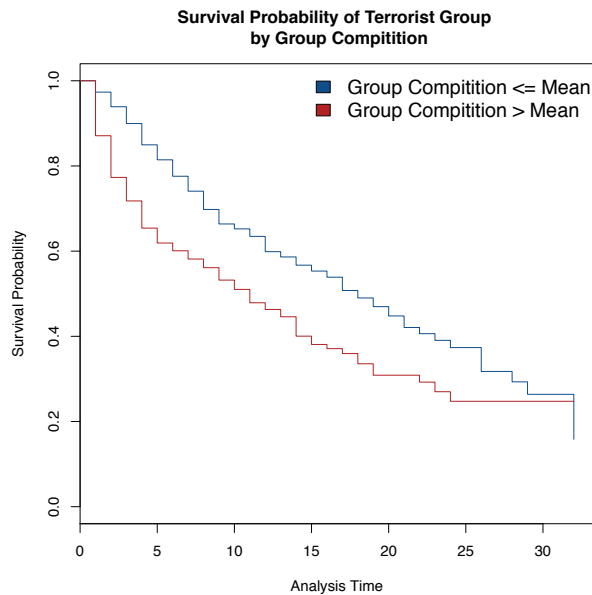


Figure D.2: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by intergroup competition.*

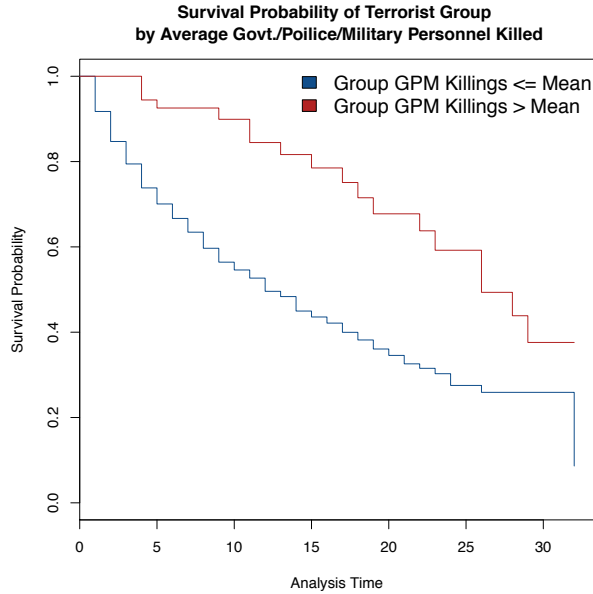


Figure D.3: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by average GPM killings.*

Figure D.4 shows the survival probability curves for the groups that are operating domestically (blue) and those operating internationally (red). The curves show that the survival probability of the groups operating internationally is always higher as compared to the survival probability of the groups operating domestically as the time progresses.

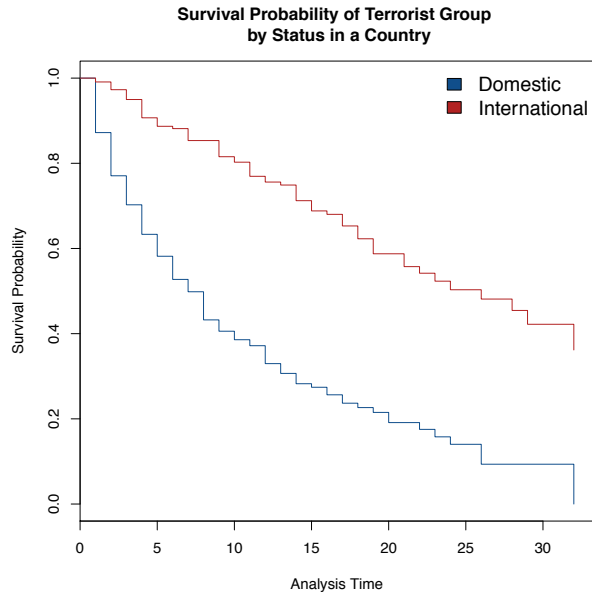


Figure D.4: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by status (domestic vs. international).*

Figure D.5 shows the survival probability curves for the groups with above mean negative reputation (red) and groups with the negative reputation at or below mean value (blue). The curves show that the groups with lower negative reputation have lower survival probability as compared to those, which have a higher negative reputation.

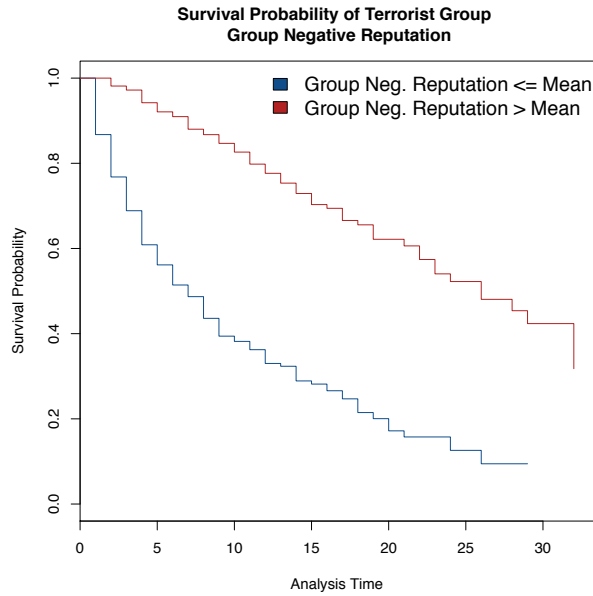


Figure D.5: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by Negative Constituency Reputation.*

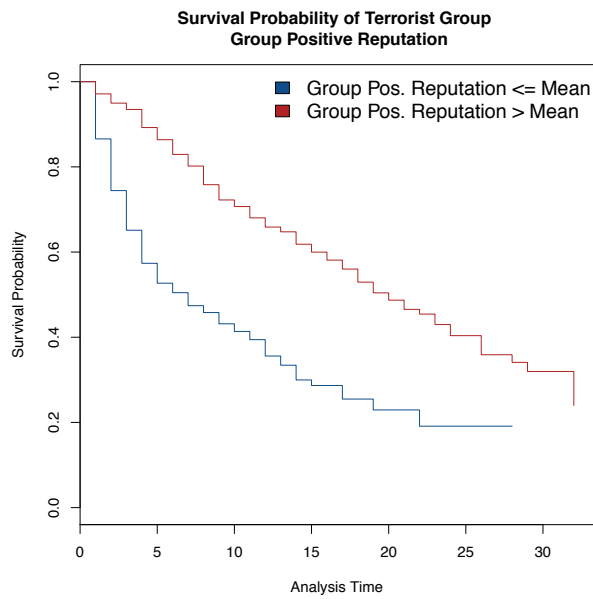


Figure D.6: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by Positive Constituency Reputation.*

Figure D.6 shows the survival probability curves for the groups with above mean positive reputation (red) and groups with the positive reputation at or below mean value (blue). The

curves show that the groups with lower positive reputation have lower survival probability as compared to those, which have a higher positive reputation.

Figure D.7 shows the survival probability curves for the groups that are rebel groups (red) and those which are not (blue). The curves show that rebel groups (the groups that used guerrilla tactics) are more likely to survive as compared to non-rebel groups at any given analysis time.

Figure D.8 shows that the groups that reside in autocratic states (blue) (Regime Type < 0) are less probable to survive as compared to those in democratic states (red) (Regime Type ≥ 0). This results is line with the argument described in the Chapter 3.1.2.5. So terrorist group will survive longer in democracies because they provide more avenues to terrorists to endure, whereas, groups do not endure in autocracies because they can repress their people and employ forces with impunity.

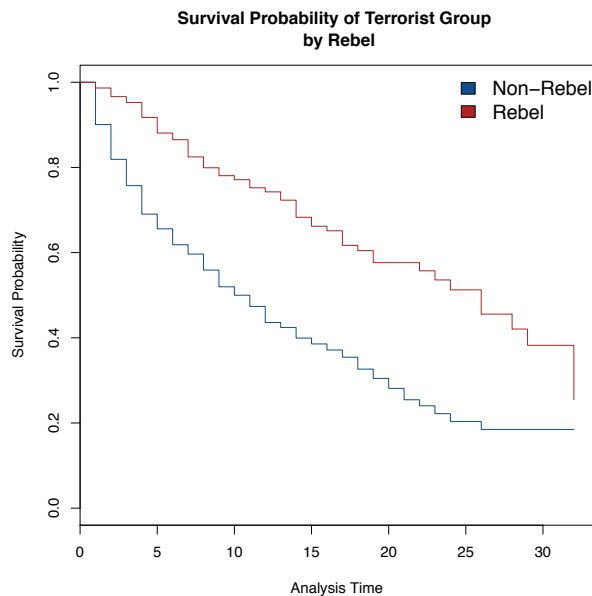


Figure D.7: *Survival Probability of terrorist groups by guerrilla tactics.*

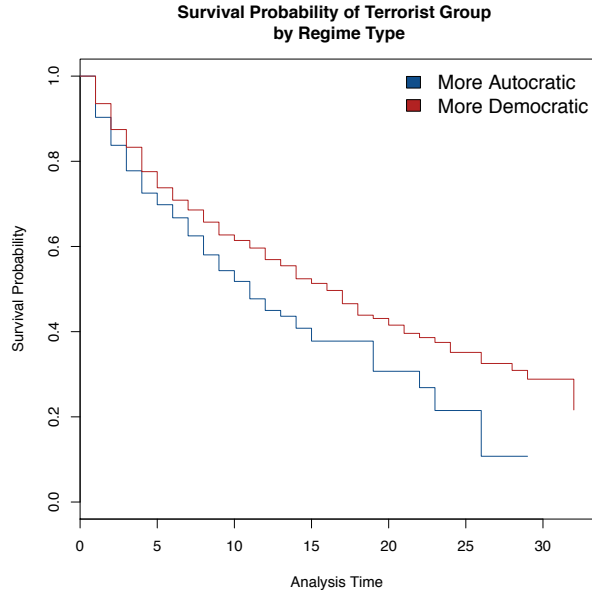


Figure D.8: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by regime type.*

Figure D.9 shows an opposite trend as compared to figure D.8. It shows the survival probability of the groups that are in a state where the state repression is higher than the mean value in the data (red) and the groups that are in a state where the state repression is lower than the mean value or equal to the mean value in the data (blue). This result goes against the common belief in terrorism scholarship that repression reduces terrorism – as argued by [Frey and Luechinger \(2003\)](#); [Testas \(2004\)](#); [Rasler \(1996\)](#) – because we can see that the groups that are in a repressive state are more likely to survive as compared to those that are in less repressive states. This result shows that terrorist groups, in general, succeed in exploiting the popular grievances in the repressive state and thrive because of the favorable public opinion.

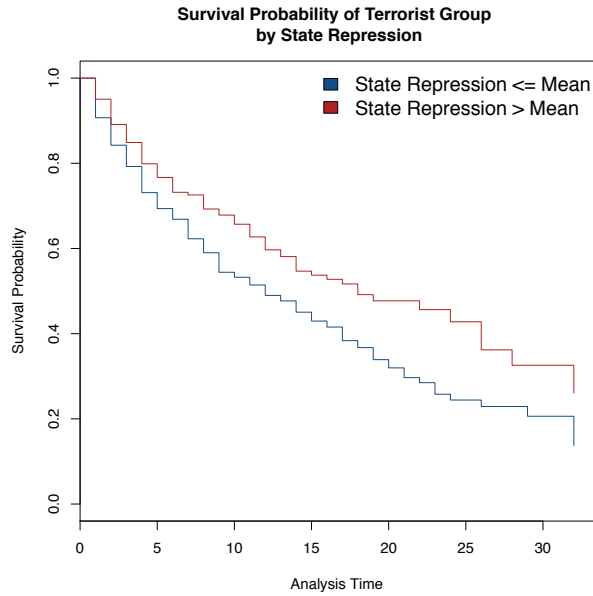


Figure D.9: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by state repression.*

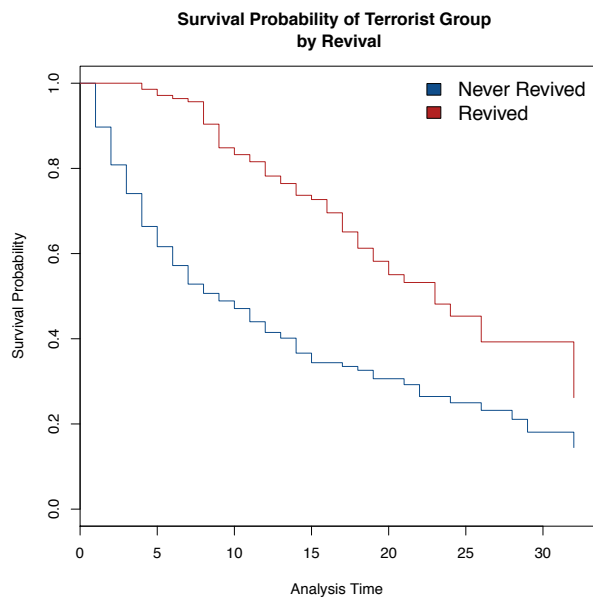


Figure D.10: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by recidivism.*

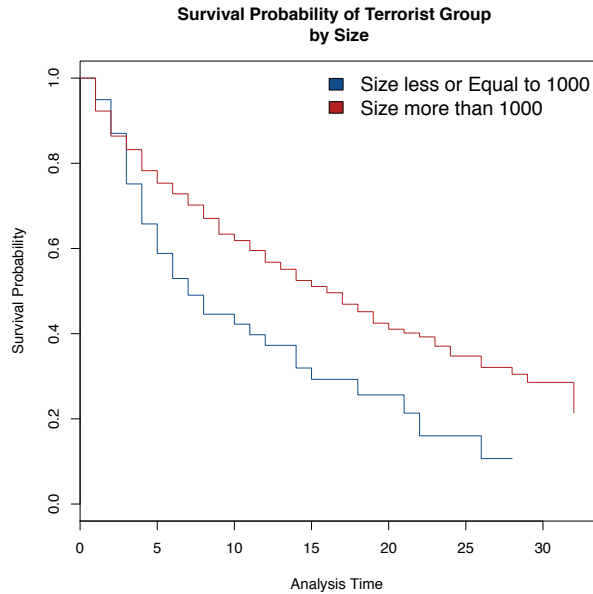


Figure D.11: *Survival probability of terrorist groups by size.*

Figure D.10 shows that the groups that have revived at least once during the analysis time are more likely to survive at any instant in the analysis time as compared to those that have never revived.

Figure D.11 shows the survival probability curves for the groups with the size of 1000 members or less (blue) and for the groups that have a size bigger than 1000 members (red). The curves show that the groups with bigger size are more likely to survive as compared to those with relatively smaller size.

Appendix E

Additional Figures

E.1 Number of Groups by Ideology Over time

The Figure [E.1](#) shows the scatter plot of the total number of religious (left), ethno-nationalist (middle) and leftist (right) groups in a given year. One can see a clear trend of increasing number of religious groups and decreasing number of leftist groups in the recent years.

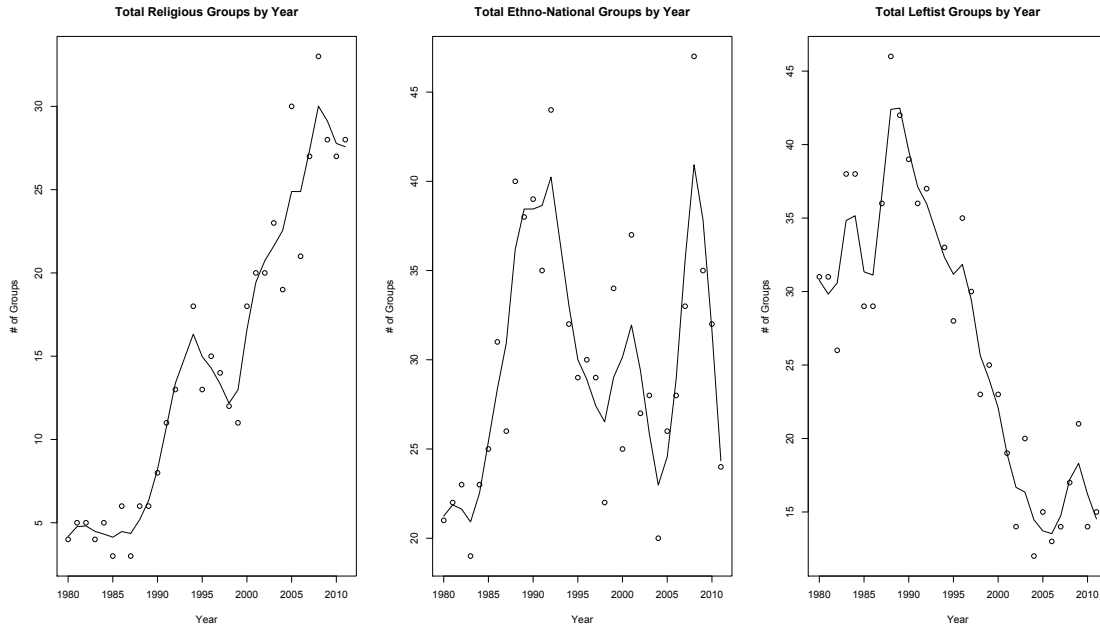


Figure E.1: Increase in the number of terrorist groups by ideology over time. Source: *GTD (2016)*

The Figure. E.2 shows that this new wave of religiously-motivated terrorist groups are indeed more lethal than all other terrorist groups (revolutionary and nationalist) combined in the post-9/11 era because the former caused a far greater number of fatalities per year than the latter.

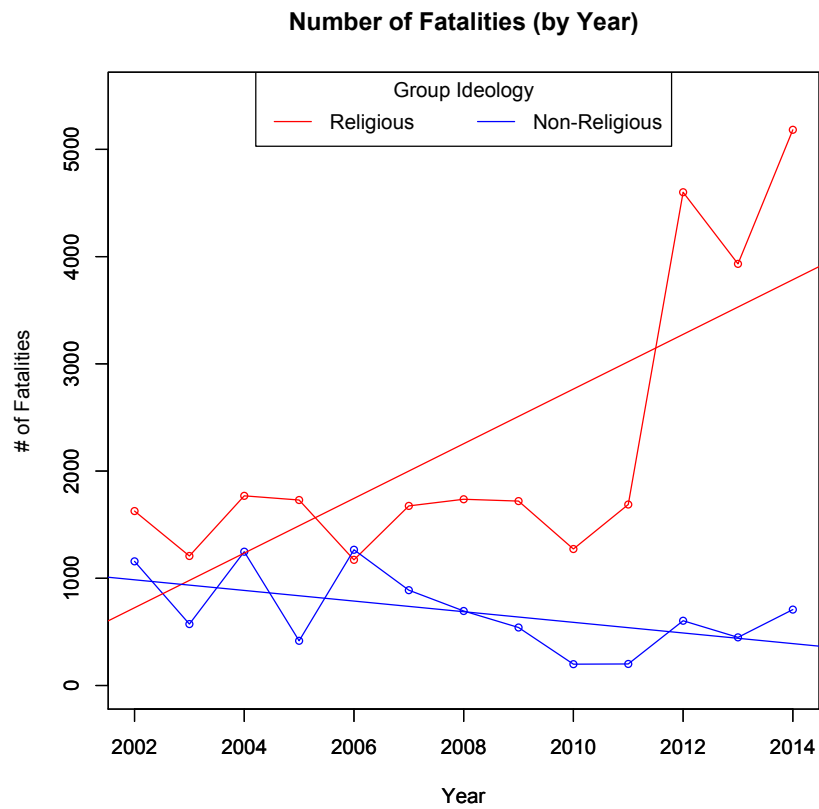


Figure E.2: *Number of fatalities: religious versus secular terrorist groups from 2002 to 2014.*

E.2 Predictive Margins

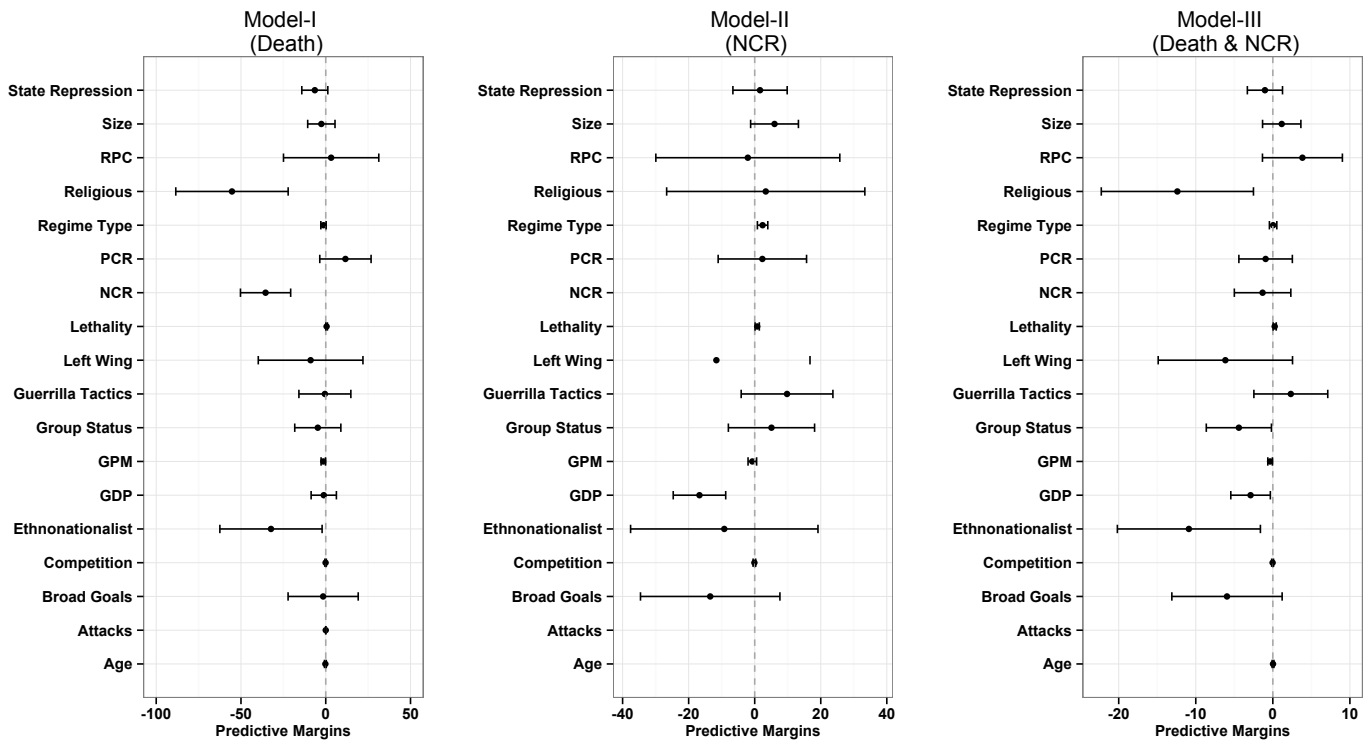


Figure E.3: *Predictive margins.*

E.3 Targeting Selection of Taliban in Afghanistan

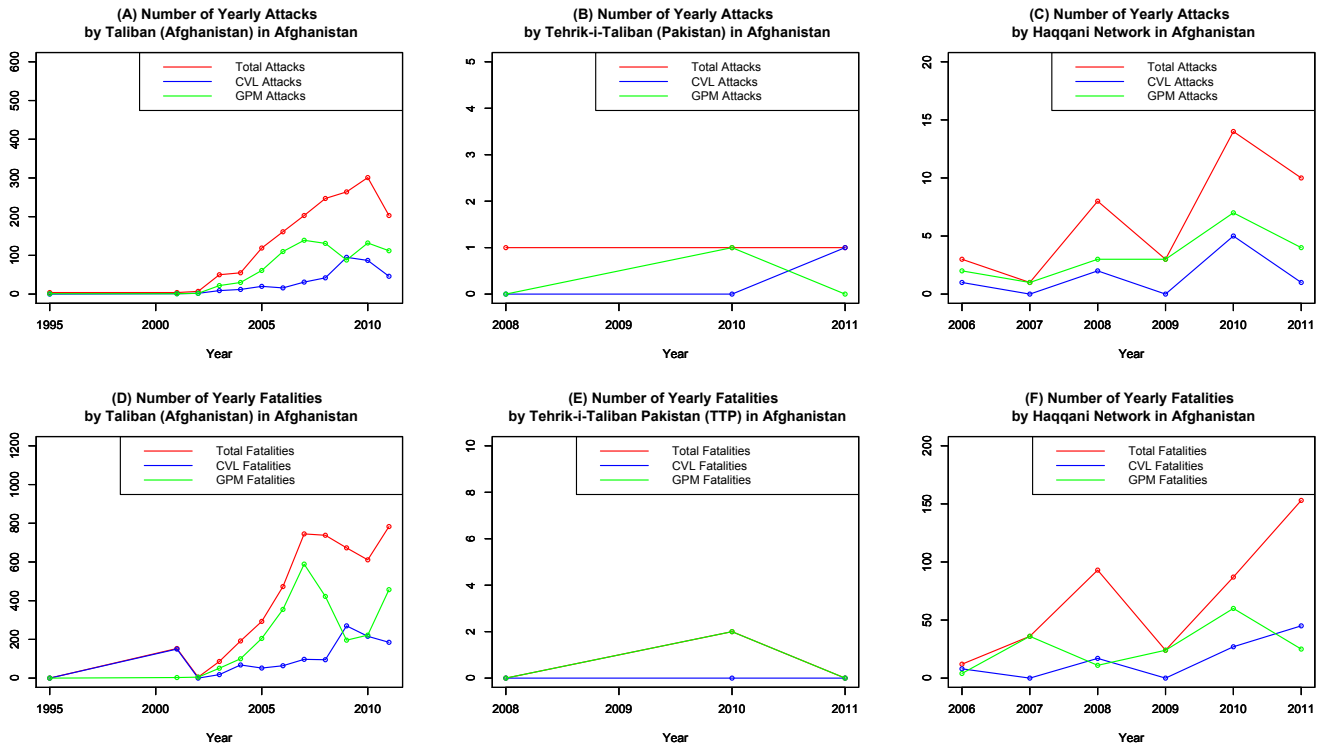


Figure E.4: Targeting selection of Taliban and its affiliates overtime from 1980 to 2011 in Afghanistan. Source: GTD (2016)

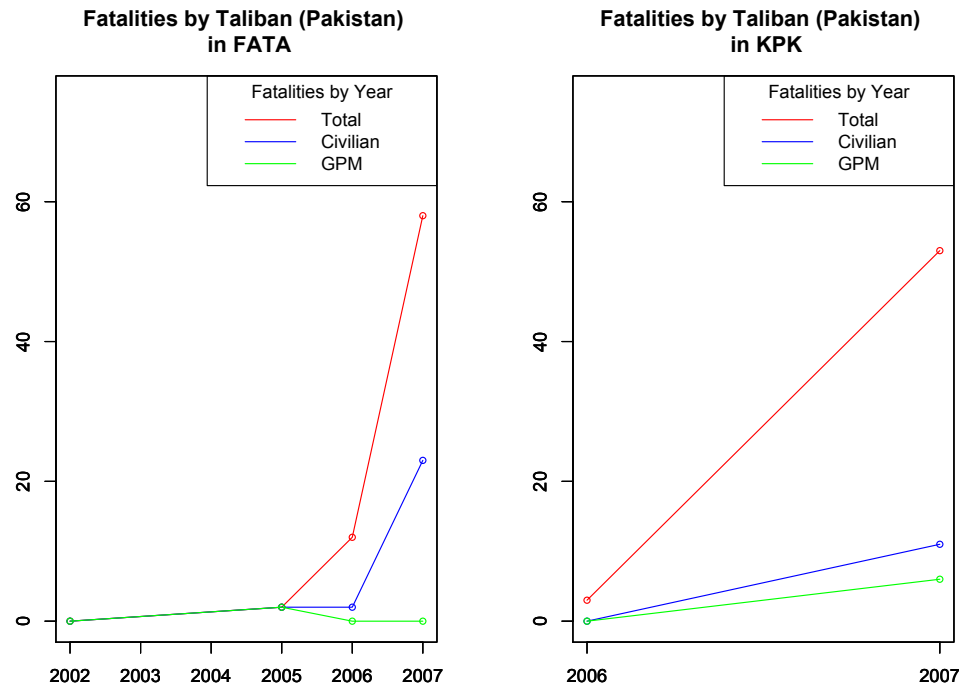


Figure E.5: *Targeting selection of Pakistani Taliban from 1980 to 2011 in Pakistan.*
Source: GTD (2016)