Terrorism and Crime: Their Similarities, Differences, and Lessons Learned

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Both are Bad Bad Things

If we can leverage what we understand about crime and controlling crime while allowing for departures due to their differences, criminologists could contribute to the reduction of global terrorism.
LaFree and Dugan
Book Chapter in DeFlem 2004

- Marks a point in time when criminologists needed to be prodded to study terrorism.
- Predates most terrorism-related research in major criminological journals.
- Was published eight years ago.

- This presentation will use that chapter as a departure point, updating it along the way.
Conceptual Similarities & Differences

**Similarities**
- Cross disciplinary boundaries
- Social constructions
- Definitional ambiguity
- Perpetrator demographics
- Undermine social trust

**Differences**
- Terrorism is not a specific offense.
- Terrorism crosses jurisdictional boundaries.
- Terrorists seek public recognition.
- Terrorists operate toward a broader goal.
  - “altruists”
- Terrorists innovate.
A Closer Look Reveals that Terrorism is Conceptually Similar to Specific Crimes

- **Organizational Structure**
  - Organized crime, Gang activity, Corporate crime

- **Sustained Program of Violence**
  - Organized crime, Gang activity, Serial murder

- **Victim Selection**
  - Mixture of targeted versus convenient
  - Personal versus impersonal
Corporate Crime & Terrorism (Dugan & Gibbs 2008)

Comparing Corporations to the Terrorist Organization

- Very different at first glance
  - Corporation are legal entities, terrorist organizations are illegal by definition.
- YET, each strives to survive in a highly competitive environment.
  - Corporations pursue profit.
  - Terrorist orgs recruit and maintain strong membership.
- Both have become decentralized over time.
  - That decentralization hinders detection & prosecution.
Corporate Crime & Terrorism (cont.)

Implications for Crime Control
- Structural complexity diffuses responsibility & obstructs intelligence.
- Both rely on constituency approval.

Recommendations
- Interorganizational task forces
- Encourage whistle-blowing
- Focus on prevention
Data Similarities & Differences

“All science begins with counting things…”

Crime Data Sources
- Official
- Victimization
- Self-report

Terrorism Data Sources
- Open source media reports
  - GTD
  - RAND (RAND-MIPT)
  - ITERATE
  - Other regional/type specific
Key Methodological Differences

Strategies must accommodate

- Terrorists innovate.
  - Causality moves in both directions.
- Terrorists mostly operate in dynamic groups.
Spatial & Temporal Patterns of Terrorist Attacks by ETA

Takes advantage of this difference by exploiting the dependence of attacks by the same organization to inform our understanding of hierarchical and contagion diffusion.
Key Methodological Similarities

- Analysis of distributions and trends
- Geographic mapping
- Time series
- Series hazard modeling
- Causal analysis
- Life-course analysis
- Network analysis
Applying Trajectory Analysis to the Terrorist Organization

![Graph depicting frequency of attacks over years since birth]

- Avg HF PERS: 3.6%
- Avg HF DECL: 9.2%
- Avg MF PERS: 9.3%
- Avg MF DES: 25.4%
- Avg LF PERS: 41.1%
- Avg LF DES: 11.1%

Years Since Birth

Frequency of Attacks

Legend:
- Avg HF PERS
- Avg HF DECL
- Avg MF PERS
- Avg MF DES
- Avg LF PERS
- Avg LF DES
- Pred HF PERS
- Pred HF DECL
- Pred MF PERS
- Pred MF DES
- Pred LF PERS
- Pred LF DES
Applying Network Analysis to the Terrorist Organization

Diagram showing connections and relationships between different terrorist organizations and movements. The nodes represent various groups such as the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other extremist groups from different regions and with different ideologies. The edges illustrate the relationships and interactions between these groups.
Applying These Ideas to Help Control Terrorism

Drawing on Criminological Theory and Methods
Typical Application of Rational Choice Theory on Violent Behavior

\[ E(u_{\text{terror}}) = p \ U(y-F) + (1-p) \ U(y) \]

where \( p \) = perceived probability of punishment
\( y \) = anticipated benefits of perpetration; and
\( F \) = perceived penalty of the act

Lesson:  Raise the costs of perpetration through increased certainty and severity so that the utility of perpetration falls below the benefit of the act. In other words:  DETERRENCE
Deterrence Findings on Terrorism

- Sometimes works
- High risk of backlash
  - Labeling theory
  - Legitimacy
Northern Ireland Study
(LaFree, Dugan, and Korte 2009)

Terrorist Attacks by Republicans

Falls Curfew
Operation Motorman
Internment
Criminalization
Loughall Incident
Gibraltar Incident
Other Results

- Metal Detectors reduce hijackings... but increase other forms of hostage taking situations (Enders and Sandler 1993)
- US bombings in Afghanistan increased Osama bin Laden’s popularity in the region (Malvesti 2002)

Lesson: If raising the costs of one type of terrorism just leads to switching to another tactic with lower costs, why not raise the benefits of nonterrorism.

- One of our student projects show that the 2004 FACE act seemed to reduce abortion clinic violence by making it more punishable.
How do We Raise the Benefits of Living a Crime-Free Life?

- Rehabilitation versus punishment
- Weed and seed
- Early intervention programs
  - Nurse Home Visitations
- Problem oriented policing
Raising the Benefits of Abstaining from Terrorism

\[ E(u_{\text{nonterror}}) = q \ U(x+G) + (1-q) \ U(x) \]

where \( q \) = perceived probability of rewards from abstention

\( x \) = value of current situation; and

\( G \) = anticipated rewards of abstention
Ways to Raise the Benefits of Abstention from Terrorism

- Establishment of Basque Autonomous Communities in Spanish Constitution
- Turkish opening of educational and health facilities to Kurdish population
- Undoing previous restrictions (e.g., lifting curfews)
- Releasing prisoners
Dugan and Young Policy Proposal for ASC on US Extremism

Target the same group of disenfranchised persons to participate in the policy process, making them active stakeholders and reducing their vulnerability to radical rhetoric.
What Others Have Done to Raise the Benefits of Abstaining from Terrorism

Until Recently we had no idea.
Moving Beyond Deterrence: The Effectiveness of Raising the Expected Utility of Abstaining from Terrorism in Israel (ASR, 2012)

Laura Dugan, Criminologist
&
Erica Chenoweth, Political Scientist
Data: Part of Larger DHS-Funded Research

- Government Actions in a Terrorist Environment (GATE)
- Contains a full range of government actions toward non-state actors— from fully conciliatory to excessively repressive
- Israel, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, and Algeria
3- Tiered Data Collection Strategy

1. Literature Search
2. Textual Analysis by Augmented Replacement Instructions (TABARI)
   - Searches lead sentences of news sources based on complex dictionary that specifies subject, verb, and object (actor-action-target), using CAMEO codes
   - Filters observations into a database
   - Keeps all action by state actors against sub-state actors
   - Auto code in SAS according to assigned action
3. Human validation of auto coding
Dimensions of Countering Terrorism

ACTION

Target

Actor Type

Justice
Politician
Police
Military
Material
Nonmaterial

Repressive

Indiscriminate

Discriminate

Conciliatory
Conciliatory-Repressive Scale

1. Accommodation
2. Conciliatory action
3. Conciliatory statement or intention
4. Neutral or ambiguous
5. Verbal conflict
6. Physical conflict
7. Extreme repression (intent to kill)
7-9-1987: West Bank Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini was released today after three months in Israeli jails and vowed to fight on against Israel's occupation of Arab areas held since the 1967 Middle East war.
3/30/1988: Israel's Supreme Court rejected a petition of the Foreign Press Association (FPA) on Wednesday to open the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip immediately for news coverage.
Data Example: Israel

Indiscriminate material extreme repression (7) by military

2/17/1988: Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian and wounded several others on Wednesday during violent anti-Israeli demonstrations in the occupied West Bank, hospital officials said.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation/Full Concessions</th>
<th>Verbal Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrew from town</td>
<td>Make pessimistic comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed peace accord</td>
<td>Dismissed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handed town to Palestinians</td>
<td>Blame for attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conciliatory Action</td>
<td>Deny responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met to discuss</td>
<td>Threaten military force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Released</td>
<td>Physical Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifted curfew</td>
<td>Demolished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulled out</td>
<td>Barred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate abuse</td>
<td>Sealed off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conciliatory Statement or Intensions</td>
<td>Imposed Curfew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed optimism</td>
<td>Arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed to hold talks</td>
<td>Extreme Repression (deaths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised Palestinians</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed desire to cooperate</td>
<td>Fired missiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted mistake</td>
<td>Clashed with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral or Ambiguous</td>
<td>Raided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infighting over</td>
<td>Helicopter attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed to reach agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host a visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealed for third party assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GATE-Israel

- **Sample**
  - 243,448 Reuters news articles from June 1, 1987 to December 31, 2004
  - Over 10,000 preliminary observations
  - Result: 6,070 cleaned actions

- **Flexible levels of aggregation**
  - Tactics vs. campaigns
  - Daily, weekly, monthly, annual
  - Relative comparisons of conciliatory, repressive, and mixed measures
  - Actors and targets
  - Principals and agents
Current Project

- Aggregate actions to the month
- Partition by conciliatory (1, 2, 3) or repressive (5, 6, 7)
- Partition by target is discriminate or indiscriminate
## Targets of Punishment and Rewards in Israel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>Rewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discriminate</strong> repression directed toward the guilty (direct deterrence)</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Discriminate</strong> conciliation directed toward the guilty (direct benefits of abstention)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indiscriminate</strong> repression directed toward the Palestinians in general (indirect deterrence)</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Indiscriminate</strong> conciliation directed toward the Palestinians in general (indirect benefits of abstention)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Direct deterrence
- Indirect deterrence
- Direct benefits of abstention
- Indirect benefits of abstention
Tactical Regimes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The First Intifada (1987-1993)
- Started as nonviolent
- Dominated by secular nationalists
- Hamas became active near the end

The Oslo Lull (1993-2000)
- Negotiators established Palestinian Authority
- Palestinians recognized 1967 borders
- Neither side held to agreement

- Violent from the beginning
- Dominated by religious groups
- Known for deadly suicide attacks
Figure 1. Quarterly Repressive and Conciliatory Actions by Israel and Palestinian Terrorist Attacks

- Conciliatory Actions
- Repressive Actions
- Palestinian Terrorist Attacks

Quarter, Beginning in Third Quarter 1987 and Ending in the Fourth Quarter 2004

First Intifada
Oslo Lull
Second Intifada
Hypotheses: guided by \( E(u_{\text{terror}}) < E(u_{\text{nonterror}}) \)

1. Any Israeli action leads to fewer Palestinian attacks.
2. Conciliatory actions lead to fewer Palestinian attacks.
3. Repressive actions lead to fewer Palestinian attacks.
4. Indiscriminate repressive actions lead to more Palestinian attacks.
5. Indiscriminate conciliatory actions lead to the biggest decrease in Palestinian attacks.
Examining the Relationship Between Actions and Terrorism

We first test the relationship parametrically (Negative Binomial) and then examine it non-parametrically (GAM). Together and separately for each of the tactical regimes.

Lots of Variations of Actions (Last Month)

Attacks Against Israelis (Current Month)

Lagged Attacks, going back as far as needed
Results for All Actions for Entire Period

GAM 3 df smooth for all actions

Lagged all actions

-0.360915
1.61374

NS
Conciliatory and Repressive Actions—Entire Period

a. Conciliatory Actions

b. Repressive Actions

GAM 3 df smooth for concla

GAM 3 df smooth for reprla

0/-quadratic

NS
a. Conciliatory-Discriminate

b. Conciliatory-Indiscriminate

c. Repressive-Discriminate

d. Repressive-Indiscriminate
Results by Tactical Regime
Conciliatory Actions

a. All Months

b. First Intifada

c. Oslo Lull

d. Second Intifada
Repressive Actions

a. All Months

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - 1 80
  - -.171465
  - 1.57031

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - 1 31
  - -.378483
  - .591733

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - 1 35
  - -.768185
  - 1.07254

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - 7 80
  - -.766279
  - 1.59288

b. First Intifada

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - NS
  - 1.591733

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - NS
  - -.378483

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - NS
  - 1.07254

- Lagged Repressive Acts
  - GAM 3 df smooth for reprla
  - + linear
  - 1.59288

NS

NS

NS

NS

c. Oslo Lull
d. Second Intifada
Conciliatory-Discriminate

**a. All Months**

- GAM 3 df smooth for cdisla
  - Lagged Conciliatory Discriminate
  - 0
  - 0.37635
  - -0.691987
  - 0
  - 0.369726
  - -0.696348
  - 0
  - 0.631996
  - -0.810878

**b. First Intifada**

- GAM 3 df smooth for cdisla
  - Lagged Conciliatory Discriminate
  - 0
  - 0.37635
  - -0.691987
  - 0
  - 0.369726
  - -0.696348
  - 0
  - 0.631996
  - -0.810878

**c. Oslo Lull**

- GAM 3 df smooth for cdisla
  - Lagged Conciliatory Discriminate
  - 0
  - 0.37635
  - -0.691987
  - 0
  - 0.369726
  - -0.696348
  - 0
  - 0.631996
  - -0.810878

**d. Second Intifada**

- GAM 3 df smooth for cdisla
  - Lagged Conciliatory Discriminate
  - 0
  - 0.37635
  - -0.691987
  - 0
  - 0.369726
  - -0.696348
  - 0
  - 0.631996
  - -0.810878

Conciliatory - Discriminate

- a. All Months
- b. First Intifada
- c. Oslo Lull
- d. Second Intifada
Conciliatory-Indiscriminate

a. All Months

b. First Intifada

c. Oslo Lull
d. Second Intifada
Repressive-Discriminate

a. All Months

GAM 3 df smooth for rdisa

Lagged Repressive Discriminate

0 32

-.356292

1.21061

NS

b. First Intifada

GAM 3 df smooth for rdisa

Lagged Repressive Discriminate

0 13

-.527211

1.07024

NS

c. Oslo Lull

GAM 3 df smooth for rdisa

Lagged Repressive Discriminate

0 10

-2.45229

.318519

 +/- quadratic

GAM 3 df smooth for rdisa

Lagged Repressive Discriminate

1 32

-.504824

1.3249

NS

d. Second Intifada
a. All Months

b. First Intifada

c. Oslo Lull
d. Second Intifada
### Summary Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supported Hypotheses</th>
<th>Unsupported Hypotheses</th>
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<tr>
<td>2-Conciliatory actions lead to fewer Palestinian attacks</td>
<td>1-Any Israeli action leads to fewer Palestinian attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Indiscriminate repressive actions lead to more Palestinian attacks</td>
<td>3-Repressive actions lead to fewer Palestinian attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Indiscriminate conciliatory actions lead to a larger decrease in Palestinian attacks</td>
<td></td>
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</table>


Conclusions from this Project

- Tactical regime matters
  - Overall findings are driven by the Second Intifada
  - Repression only seems to matter during the Oslo Lull (i.e., time of peace)
  - Discriminate-Conciliation during the First Intifada seems to lead to more attacks

- Indiscriminate actions matter more
  - Especially during the Second Intifada

- Conciliation should be a serious policy alternative
  - Especially when directed toward terrorists’ constituency
  - Conciliation should be sustained (0/- quadratics)
By the Way

- Preliminary findings show the same results for Algeria, Egypt, and Turkey.
- This is a BIG deal because they are not all democracies.
Bigger Conclusions from Presentation

- Criminological concepts, theory, and methods can help us start to understand terrorism.
- But we must be flexible enough to incorporate the differences into our theory, methods, and data collection efforts.
- And we must work well with others, because terrorism is a big problem that needs ideas from many people with different perspectives.
- AND, LOOK at the research to help with decision-making.