

**ROAD TO REBELLION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC TERRORISM**

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# ROAD TO REBELLION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC TERRORISM

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Why does widespread terrorism develop from some ethnic groups but not others? I define this type of violence - ethnic terrorism - as terrorism conducted in the name of an ethnic identity group. This dissertation examines the development of ethnic terrorism with a framework drawn from the motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) structure familiar from criminal law. I argue that the *motive* for ethnic terrorism is the violation of ethnic groups' human security; the *means* is sponsorship primarily by the host ethnic group but also by foreign actors; and the *opportunity* is a vacuum in political space created by the departure of nationalist leadership, which allows terrorist elites to rise to dominate the ethno-political agenda. Each is necessary for the development of ethnic terrorism.

I conduct paired comparisons between the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka and the Basques and Catalans in Spain to test this argument. The Tamils and Basques have encountered intense and long-lasting terrorism through the respective campaigns of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), while the Sri Lankan Muslims and Catalans have witnessed little violence emanating from within their communities. Data collected from fieldwork in Sri Lanka and Spain support the argument that human security violations, sponsorship, and political vacuums explain large-scale ethnic terrorism. In addition, I estimate a series of regression models to assess the generalizability of my argument. I have created a new statistical dataset on ethnic terrorism that covers the globe by merging publicly available data on ethnic groups and terrorist incidents at the ethnic group-year unit of analysis in accordance with an original coding methodology. The models provide broad support for the argument.

This research advances a three-tiered theory to understand ethnic terrorism, especially the dimension that has been underdeveloped in the terrorism literature: opportunity structure. Terrorism develops when nationalist actors willingly or inadvertently cede to terrorist organizations the occasion to dominate the ethno-political agenda. It also contributes to the burgeoning literature that explores linkages between human security and political violence and broadens understanding of terrorism in the discipline marked primarily by interest in jihadist phenomena.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACTC	All Ceylon Tamil Congress
ADEC	Associació Democràtica d'Estudiants de Catalunya (Democratic Student Association of Catalonia)
AISLS	American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies
ANC	African National Congress
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CC	Crist Catalunya (Catalonia Christ)
CEDOC	Centre Documental de la Comunicació (Communication Document Centre)
CFA	Ceasefire Agreement
CiU	Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union)
CNC	Consell Nacional de Catalunya (Catalan National Council)
CPA	Centre for Policy Alternatives
CPSL	Communist Party of Sri Lanka
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
CWC	Ceylon Workers' Congress
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
EE	Euskadiko Ezkerra (Basque Country Left)
EGI	Euzko Gaztedi Indarra (Basque Youth Force)
EHAS	Euskal Herriko Alderdi Sozialista (Basque Popular Socialist Party)
EIA	Euzko Ikasle Alkartasuna (Society of Basque Students)
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Catalan Republican Left)
ERCA	Exèrcit Roig Català d'Alliberament (Catalan Red Liberation Army)
EROS	Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Fatherland and Freedom)
ETD	Ethnic Terrorism Dataset
ETO	Ethnic Terrorist Organization
FAC	Front d'Alliberament Català (Catalan Liberation Front)
FLNC	Fronte di Liberazione Naziunale Corsu (Corsican National Liberation Front)
FNC	Front Nacional de Catalunya (Catalan National Front)
GAL	Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (Antiterrorist Liberation Groups)
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
HB	Herri Batasuna (Unity of the People)
ICES	International Centre for Ethnic Studies
IPC	Independentistes dels Països Catalans (Independence of the Catalan Countries)
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISGA	Interim Self Governing Authority
ISPA	Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord
ITAK	Ilankai Thamil Arasi Kachchi
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
KAS	Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista (Socialist Patriotic Coordinator)
LAIA	Langille Abertzale Iraultzalean Alderdia (Patriotic Revolutionary Workers Party)
LCR	Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Communist League)
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Good)

LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Lanka Equal Society Party)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MAR	Minorities at Risk
MEP	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front)
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MMO	Motives, Means, and Opportunities
MRC	Moviment de Resistència de Catalunya (Catalan Resistance Movement)
NEPC	North Eastern Provincial Council
OSAN	Organització Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional (Socialist Organization of National Liberation)
PGIS	Pinkerton Global Intelligence Services
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)
PP	Partido Popular (People's Party)
PSAN	Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional dels Països Catalans (Socialist Party of National Liberation for the Catalan Countries)
PSAN-p	Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional dels Països Catalans – provisional (Socialist Party of National Liberation for the Catalan Countries – provisional)
PSUC	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (United Socialist Party of Catalonia)
PVC	Project on Violent Conflict
RAW	Research & Analysis Wing
RCPS	Revised Combined Polity Score
SATP	South Asia Terrorism Portal
SDEUB	Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants de la Universitat de Barcelona (Democratic Students' Union of the University of Barcelona)
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lankan Muslim Congress
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
START	National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
TLL	Terra Lliure
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
TNT	Tamil New Tigers
TSF	Tamil Students' Federation
TUF	Tamil United Front
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UF	United Front
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNP	United National Party
USO	United States Organization

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Al Qaeda's attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 reinvigorated the academic study of terrorism. Much of the research has focused on the global jihadist movement, especially Al Qaeda and its affiliates, but also other groups that take their inspiration from Islamist doctrine. In the process, advances in understanding of ethnic terrorism – that is, terrorism conducted to promote the objectives of ethnic identity groups – have been limited. As this phenomenon has transpired from decolonization through the end of the Cold War into the twenty-first century, this lack of attention is surprising. This dissertation assesses the development of this persistent and overlooked phenomenon.

Ethnic terrorist organizations are active in countries across the globe today. They threaten the lives and livelihoods of all parties within a locality: citizens of the state, members of the ethnic group on whose behalf they purport to act, members of rival and allied groups, and those in neighboring states. My conservative estimate is that between 1985 and 2008 at least one third of all terrorist activity was ethnic in nature.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, more than one third of all terrorist organizations have an ethnic agenda, as opposed to one derived strictly from another ideology, such as religion or socialism.<sup>2</sup> Daniel Masters (2008, 412) finds that ethno-national forms of terrorism are most prevalent both in the number of attacks and in casualty rates.

Ethnic terrorism is a distinct ideological form of terrorism – as well as a strategic form of ethnic conflict – that research has only marginally addressed on its own terms. As Daniel Byman

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<sup>1</sup> The exact figure is 36 percent. See Chapter 3 for information about this calculation.

<sup>2</sup> The exact figure is 39 percent, which comes from assessing the data used in Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer's (2008) study.

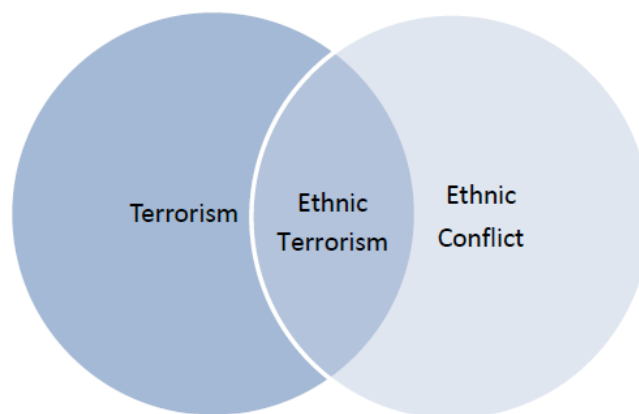
(1998, 152) argues, “ethnic terrorism is often erroneously lumped together with other forms of terrorism . . . to the point of obscuring its distinct nature.” With few exceptions (for example, Byman 1998; Reinares 2005; Sánchez-Cuenca 2007), scholars who do acknowledge the ethnic dimension of some terrorist campaigns usually take one of two approaches. The first is to juxtapose ethnic terrorism with other ideological types of terrorism, such as religious, socialist, and anarchist. While ideology comparisons contribute to our understanding of the breadth of the overall terrorist experience, they sacrifice the depth that research on one ideological type of terrorism should expose. These comparisons often mistakenly assume at the outset that the exclusive goal of ethnic terrorists is separatism, but a research agenda focusing distinctly on ethnic terrorism can reveal intra- and inter-group dynamics. The second approach is to explore the operations of a particular group. These single case studies expose the complicated internal logic of individual organizations but do not directly contribute to a comprehensive cross-case theory, conceptual framework, or typology that elucidates the general ethnic terrorist experience. The goal of this dissertation is to strike a balance between these two approaches, pursuing an agenda more specific than the ideology comparison method yet more general than the single case study technique.

Moreover, scholars of ethnic conflict often do not distinguish between ethnic conflict and ethnic terrorism. Ethnic conflict can be nonviolent or violent, and the latter can be classified as, for example, ethnic skirmishes, ethnic war, genocide, or ethnic terrorism. Yet scholars do not always acknowledge the terrorist component emanating from some groups. One drawback of analyses of interethnic conflict in particular is the assumption that groups act as homogenous actors, in conflict or at peace with other groups. Yet a careful analysis of ethnic terrorism can underscore the dynamic relationship between ethnic groups and the terrorist organizations claiming to act on their behalf, and can point out that some actors within the group contribute to the terrorist campaign, while others suffer from it.



The studies of terrorism and ethnic conflict have traditionally been separate, each operating in its own silo. Together they can offer an extensive explanation of ethnic terrorism. Since ethnic terrorism is where terrorism and ethnic conflict overlap, drawing from both of these fields is not only appropriate but necessary (see Figure 1). This approach is similar to Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin's (1998) consideration of ethnic conflict and political violence to assess ethnic and nationalist violence. These authors write, "Attempts to theorize ethnic and nationalist violence have grown from the soil of two largely nonintersecting literatures: studies of ethnicity, ethnic conflict, and nationalism on the one hand, and studies of collective or political violence on the other" (Brubaker and Laitin 1998, 425). In similar fashion, a study of ethnic terrorism can benefit greatly from the wider academic fields of terrorism and ethnic conflict.

**Figure 1: Venn Diagram of Ethnic Terrorism**



This introductory chapter proceeds as follows. It summarizes the dissertation's main argument and contributions to the theoretical and empirical work on terrorism and ethnic conflict in Section 1.2; defines ethnic terrorism in Section 1.3; underscores the relevance of ethnicity to studying terrorism in Section 1.4; and outlines the remainder of the dissertation in Section 1.5.

## 1.2 Dissertation Argument

Some ethnic groups experience a great deal of terrorism emanating from within their communities, as members participate in, contribute to, or are victimized by terrorism. Other groups encounter little or no terrorist activity at all. What accounts for this variation? *Why does widespread terrorism develop from some ethnic groups but not others?* Many groups can encounter terrorism, but the intensity of this violence varies considerably across groups and time. Terrorist violence can overwhelmingly dictate the ethnic agenda or go largely ignored, depending on the level of violence. Studies abound as to why groups confront violence, but few explain why they do not – or why they do so infrequently or at low levels; this dissertation posits explanations that account for both occurrences.

Informed by the framework of motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) familiar from criminal law and tested with two sets of comparative case study analyses and a series of quantitative models, I argue that human security violations, sponsorship, and the occasion for dominance of the ethno-political agenda cause groups to experience severe terrorist violence, while a low level of at least one of these factors accounts for why they do not. More specifically, the primary *motive* for ethnic terrorism is state-committed human security violations against ethnic groups; the most important *means* is terrorism sponsorship by an array of actors but most importantly the ethnic group; and the most germane *opportunity* is the occasion for terrorist organizations to dominate the group's ethno-political space, which arises when political elites abandon the ethno-political agenda or support terrorism outright.

## 1.3 Academic Contributions

This dissertation aims to improve the underdeveloped academic field of ethnic terrorism and contribute to the well-established fields of ethnic conflict and terrorism. Theoretically, I endeavor to

augment understanding of ethnic terrorism through the adoption of a conceptual framework that includes motive, means, and opportunities (MMO).<sup>3</sup> This approach has not been applied to terrorism thus far. A similar framework – opportunity and willingness – has been applied to international conflict (Starr and Most 1976; Starr 1978; Most and Starr 1989) but does not differentiate between means and opportunity, lumping both in the opportunity category. By making a conceptual differentiation between the two, the MMO approach provides more analytical leverage. Methodologically, I use mixed methods and endeavor to refine the explanatory factors leading to ethnic terrorism by vetting them through positive as well as negative cases in the qualitative analysis and through inferential statistical models in the quantitative analysis.<sup>4</sup> In terms of data, I use an array of qualitative data sources, including original interviews, and construct a new dataset on ethnic terrorism across the globe through the coding and amalgamation of publicly available datasets on terrorism and ethnic conflict at the ethnic group-year unit of analysis.<sup>5</sup> It is my hope that these initiatives will contribute to understanding of ethnic terrorist violence.

### **1.3.1 Contributions to the Ethnic Conflict Literature**

My argument concurs with some theoretical and empirical observations about ethnic conflict and terrorism, while challenging others. The level of terrorist violence corresponds with the character of the interactions between and within groups, including the ethnic group and the state, the group and the terrorist organization, and the state and the organization. Neighbors, regional actors, diaspora societies, and the international community also play important roles. This comprehensive view of ethnic politics runs counter to the overly simplified argument, posited by

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<sup>3</sup> These issues are discussed further in Chapter 2 on the conceptual framework.

<sup>4</sup> These issues are discussed further in Chapter 3 on research design.

<sup>5</sup> These issues are discussed further in Chapter 3 on research design.

Robert Kaplan (1993), that violence can be explained through the lens of ancient hatreds between groups. I do not find evidence that ethnic conflict arises due to group-against-group violence fueled by long-standing hatred and rage. This approach ignores within-group dynamics (which are essential to my theory) and offers fatalist policy advice: “nothing can be done.”

Moreover, ethnic violence cannot be attributed exclusively to opportunistic and ill-disciplined thugs who disregard ethnicity and operate under the mandate of political authorities, an argument made by John Mueller (2000). To be sure, most conflicts set the scene for some level of personal exploitation, but my research shows that the leaders of ethnic terrorist organizations and their cadres are indeed fighting a cause based primarily on protecting their ethnic identity. Thus, Mueller’s sense that ethnic violence is in essence non-ethnic, that it is “banal,” seems misguided.

Finally, I do not find evidence that the geographic concentration of ethnic groups increases the risk of violence. Monica Duffy Toft (2003, 2-3) argues that “Only when both an ethnic group and a state . . . view the issue of territorial control as indivisible will violence erupt.” She claims that states will see their territory as indivisible when they fear that surrendering territory to one ethnic group might cause other groups within their borders to demand independence; as such, they worry about “precedent setting” (Toft 2003, 19). She also argues that ethnic groups will consider their territory as indivisible when they regard it as a homeland and thus they will demand sovereignty. My research offers some critiques of this argument, with the acknowledgement that her outcome of interest (ethnic violence) differs in some regards from mine (ethnic terrorism).

Toft’s argument is most compelling if by “sovereignty” she means an ethnic group’s quest for outright independence. Both a state and an ethnic group will most likely view territory as indivisible when the ethnic group staunchly pursues separation. Yet it is not clear whether or not she does indeed use (or consistently use) the term in this manner. For example, she writes, “Ethnic groups will seek to rule territory if they are geographically concentrated in a particular region of a

country, especially if that region is a historic homeland” (Toft 2003, 19). All four ethnic groups under study in this dissertation are geographically concentrated with some desire to “rule territory,” and yet there is wide variation in the degree of ethnic terrorist violence, suggesting that geographic concentration cannot adequately explain this variation. The difference is that two groups (the Tamils in Sri Lanka and Basques in Spain) have pursued absolute *independence*, while the other two (the Muslims in Sri Lanka and Catalans in Spain) have pursued something short of this goal.

Statistically, Toft shows that geographic concentration is significantly and positively correlated with ethnic violence. However, I also consider geographic concentration as a determinant of my outcome (although I consider it a means rather than a motive) and do not find a significant correlation. I interpret this as follows: group concentration may serve as a means for terrorism once the motive has been established. Moreover, some of my models do show support for a correlation between separatism and terrorism, which further lends credence to the critique that Toft’s argument may be more persuasive if she discusses the indivisibility of territory in terms of a desire for separation rather than geographic settlement patterns.

To conclude, my argument disagrees with the group-against-group ancient hatreds theory; challenges the “banality” of ethnic war; and questions the validity of claiming that geographic concentration is an appropriate indicator of violence.

### **1.3.2 Contributions to the Terrorism Literature**

With regard to terrorism theories, this dissertation falls within the burgeoning stream of logic postulating that human security is an appropriate framework to capture the motive behind terrorism, or at least ethnic terrorism (see, for example, Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens 2006). The human security framework recasts discrimination and repression as security issues rather than mere political, sociological, or humanitarian imperatives. This is an important distinction because it encapsulates

why terrorism is the result when such violations occur. Security violations are most likely to beget the choice for violence.

I agree that an important condition permitting terrorism to occur is the state's inability or unwillingness to fight it (Crenshaw 1981). However, I argue that this, at least in part, is a function of the nature of the ethnic community's political space. Terrorist organizations rise to dominate the ethnic agenda when political leaders voluntarily or involuntarily create a vacuum through which they can secure a footing within the group, allowing them to challenge the state.

I also find that economic factors do not adequately explain terrorism, in agreement with a number of other studies (Abadie 2004; Piazza 2006; Krueger 2007). Although James Piazza (2011) has found that minority economic discrimination explains domestic terrorism at the country-year unit of analysis, I do not find evidence in my statistical models supporting a correlation between economic differential (or discrimination) and terrorist incidents at the ethnic group-year unit of analysis, which may be a more appropriate approach to understanding ethnic-based terrorism.

Finally, I challenge the definitional treatment that ethnic terrorism has received thus far. Most terrorism scholars interchange the terms "ethnic," "ethno-nationalist," "nationalist," and "separatist" terrorism. Although these terms are similar, they are not identical. The goal of "ethnic" terrorism is to advance the cause of an ethnic identity group. Potential causes include countering discrimination, seeking some degree of statehood, or defeating ethnic rivals. "Nationalist" terrorism inherently claims that the terrorist violence is intended for some degree of nationhood. Yet nationalism may be either ethnic or civic in nature (see Reinares 2005, 123; Alonso 2006, 189-193). "Ethno-nationalist" terrorism clarifies that the nationalist intent is indeed ethnic. Finally, "separatist" terrorism is the most extreme form of nationalist terrorism, as it is evident that the goal is to separate from the state. The differences in these terms are noteworthy enough to advise

caution in choosing which should be used. In observing the evolving objectives of terrorist organizations acting on behalf of ethnic groups, this dissertation uses the term “ethnic terrorism.”

To summarize, this dissertation is situated within the human security approach to terrorism; it examines the opportunity for terrorism from the perspective of the relationship between the ethnic community and terrorist organization rather than the state and organization; it claims that the ethnic group-year unit of analysis, rather than the country-year level, is a more suitable way to analyze the causes of ethnic terrorism; and it challenges the assumption that several terms commonly used to describe this ideological variant of terrorism actually denote the same phenomenon.

### **1.3.3 Contributions to Studies of Violence in Sri Lanka and Spain**

Prior research has not directly compared the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka in an attempt to identify factors leading to violence. This dissertation’s chapter on Sri Lanka is the first effort to do so. In contrast, my analysis of the cases of the Basques and Catalans in Spain offers some affirmations, contributions, and qualifications to existing studies examining variation in violence between these two groups, such as those by Juan Díez Medrano (1995), Daniele Conversi (1997), and David Laitin (1999). Juan Díez Medrano’s explanation of the difference in violence fits the opportunity structure of my argument. Díez (1995, 189) claims:

In the Basque Country . . . the separatist revolutionary movement had a virtual monopoly over political opposition to Franco, while in Catalonia revolutionary separatists had to compete in a broad field of political contenders. These differences translated into the greater visibility, legitimacy, and efficacy of Basque separatists as compared with Catalan separatists. This, in turn, generated a more violent region-state confrontation in the Basque Country than in Catalonia.<sup>6</sup>

This corresponds to my observation that a vacuum in the Basque ethno-political space left by the passivity of the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV or Basque Nationalist Party) enabled ETA to rise

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<sup>6</sup> For further explanation of Díez’s argument, see Chapter 11 of his book, *Divided Nations: Class, Politics, and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*.

to dominate the Basque agenda, while in Catalonia this opportunity was denied to terrorist organizations, since they had to compete with a strong, nonviolent pro-Catalonia movement for the attention of the wider Catalan public.

In contrast, Daniele Conversi's (1997) observations focus on motive rather than opportunity. He argues that the political explanation for the dissimilarity in the two national identity patterns stresses state repression, which accounts for the "intensity of Basque radicalism, but only after the emergence of ETA" (Conversi 1997, 259). Yet a question remains: why didn't repression lead to an intensity of Catalan radicalism after the emergence of Catalan terrorist groups? Repression does indeed explain the rise of ETA, but its presence in Catalonia did not cause a similarly violent movement in that region, which upholds the call for incorporating other factors, such as opportunity structures, into the explanation. Interestingly, where Díez focuses less on motives and more on opportunities, Conversi stresses the opposite. Although Díez's argument applies to the Spanish cases quite well, a consideration of motive and opportunity (as well as means) is necessary when examining other cases of ethnic terrorism, as my chapter on Sri Lanka highlights.

Finally, David Laitin (1999) claims that variation between the Basques and Catalans is a result of different social structures, tipping phenomena, and sustaining mechanisms. Of particular note is that Laitin (1999, 41-44) attributes this last factor, sustaining mechanisms, to the rise of violence in the Basque Country, stating that random events and tactical successes led to ETA's dominance. Instead, I argue that this has more to do with support for ETA from the Basque Country than random events. ETA-related events attracted attention of the Basque community (and beyond) not in and of themselves but because the organization stood as the only real opposition to Franco's repressive policies. Organizations in Catalonia, such as the Front d'Alliberament Català (FAC or Catalan Liberation Front), also carried out a series of events against Franco, but they went largely unnoticed by the Catalan community. In addition, the tactical triumphs that ETA achieved



(and the Catalan terrorist organizations did not) were also because of the backing the organization received. In other words, support from the Basque Country 1) contributed to and increased due to ETA's activities and 2) caused ETA to be tactically successful.

In short, my analysis of the Basques and Catalans in Spain supports Díez's view that political structures are perhaps the most important factor explaining variation in violence between the two groups; recognizes, like Conversi, the importance of Franco's discrimination in the Basque Country as a motivator of Basque terrorism, while acknowledging that discrimination should have had the same motivational effect in Catalonia (hence the necessity to embrace other factors); and argues that Laitin's factors of random events and tactical successes are better explained as products of underlying support for ETA by the Basque Country than sufficient explanations (in and of themselves) for terrorism in the Basque Country and not in Catalonia.

#### **1.4 Definition of Ethnic Terrorism**

As a short-hand version, ethnic terrorism can be defined as terrorism that is claimed to be conducted on behalf of an ethnic identity group. A more comprehensive definition requires a review of what it means to be both ethnic and terroristic. The discussion of ethnic terrorism that follows surveys concepts from the academic fields of ethnic conflict and terrorism to produce a comprehensive working definition that guides this dissertation.

A necessary feature of an ethnic group is the shared sense of common ancestry (Brown 1993, 4-5; Smith 1993, 28-29). This sense can be based on myth or reality – what is important is that the group believes that it shares the same kinship (Byman 2002, 5). Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr (2004, 3) refer to ethnic groups as “psychological communities.” Perceptions of ancestry matter more in the group bonding process than reality. Communal ancestry carries with it characteristics that the group believes to be intrinsic (Horowitz 1985, 52). Similarly, the group must believe that it

shares past memories (Brown 1993, 5; Smith 1993, 29). Michael Brown (1993, 5) explains, “The members of the group must share historical memories, often myths or legends passed from generation to generation by word of mouth.” Groups experience these memories in a way that makes them believe they are distinct and enduring.

The belief in a common ancestry and feeling of historical memories are reinforced by shared cultural traits. Michael Brown (1993, 5) states, “The group must have a shared culture, generally based on a combination of language, religion, laws, customs, institutions, dress, music, crafts, architecture, even food.” For example, Gabon’s Babongo people practice the Bwiti religion, which is based in part on the consumption of the hallucinogenic iboga plant. This custom is not only essential to the group but also a characteristic that distinguishes it from other groups. Moreover, ethnic groups are emotionally attached to a specific territory that they may or may not inhabit (Brown 1993, 5; Smith 1993, 28-29; Harff and Gurr 2004, 3). Commitment to a territory brings with it a sense of shared space and belonging. As part of their mission, ethnic terrorist organizations often strive to achieve an independent nation (e.g. Chechnya) or attempt to compel a state to annex what they feel is their territory (e.g. Northern Ireland) (Miller 2007, 335). When a group shares a belief in a common ancestry, set of historical memories, cultural legacy, and commitment to a given territory, it has formulated a distinct ethnicity.

On the whole, most ethnic groups live side by side nonviolently. This is due to the costs associated with continuous interethnic violence and the benefits derived from interethnic peace – stated or tacit institutional agreements minimize opportunities for violence (Fearon and Laitin 1996, 730). This is why the conflict between the Flemish and Walloons in Belgium, for example, has not escalated from tension to war. Nonetheless, relations between ethnic groups can break down, escalating from peace to tension to violence. Daniel Byman (2002, 6) observes that when ethnic conflict erupts, it usually takes one of two forms: “group versus group conflict, with the government

acting as a third party of some kind . . . and group versus government conflict, where the government is an active party acting on behalf of one ethnic group.” In almost all cases, ethnic terrorism takes the latter form. An organization of militants uses terrorist tactics directed against a government to try to achieve the political goals of the ethnic group that it claims to represent.

Ethnic communities engage in violence in order to alter the power relationship with the state (Sambanis 2001, 261). Fearing the loss of political control – or perhaps anticipating the acquisition of political power – an ethnic group may decide to engage in violence in order to keep its current status, gain more leverage with the government, or become the new regime. For example, in Assam, a state in Northeastern India, Bodos and Santhals have clashed over political and economic resources in an attempt to dominate the region. Donald Horowitz (1985, 196) highlights the dilemma: “If all groups merely wanted inclusion, distrust and anxiety would still make ethnic conflict serious, but more tractable than it is. What makes it intractable is that claims to political inclusion and exclusion have an area of mutual incompatibility.”

At times, ethnic conflict can take on a terrorist dimension. Undoubtedly, terrorism is a notoriously difficult term to define. Decades ago, Brian Michael Jenkins concluded that terrorism “has no precise or widely-accepted definition” (Jenkins 1980, 1). In the years since, scholars, governments, and organizations still have not been able to reach consensus on a definition. Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman (2008) observe that more than one hundred definitions exist.

Despite this difficulty in reaching a common definition, terrorism does have several key features. First, a terrorist event is a planned and calculated act (Enders and Sandler 2002, 145; Krueger 2007, 14). Terrorism is not spontaneously or flippantly executed but rather “premeditated and purposeful” (Crenshaw 1983, 2). Terrorists devote much time, consideration, and care to the preparation of a terrorist attack in order to maximize its impact.

Second, terrorist activity is intrinsically violent (Enders and Sandler 2002, 145; Hoffman 2006, 40). Louise Richardson (2007, 4) argues, “If an act does not involve violence or the threat of violence, it is not terrorism.” Often, the use of violence is a characteristic that distinguishes a terrorist group from the political party supporting it. For example, Sinn Fein is not violent itself but does support the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), a group that has continuously used violence in its irredentist campaign.

Third, terrorism is a political act (Hoffman 2006, 40; Richardson 2007, 5; Krueger 2007, 14). If a premeditated, violent act does not have a political dimension (such as a bank robbery), it is not terrorism. Terrorism seeks to manipulate political opinions rather than conquer an opponent (Crenshaw 1983, 2). As Fernando Reinares (2005, 120) points out, “Terrorism becomes political when it intends to affect the distribution of power and social cohesion within a given state jurisdiction or in a wider, international scenario.” Hence, the term “political terrorism” is inherently redundant, while the term “economic terrorism” is an oxymoron.

Fourth, and this is essential, terrorists design their attacks to have prolonged psychological effects beyond their immediate victims (Bjørge 2005, 2; Hoffman 2006, 40). Terrorism is effective when it generates an atmosphere of fear. The terrorist incident, compounded by continuous media coverage, conveys a message that the target audience will remain unsafe until the political environment changes. This was precisely al-Qaeda’s intent when it carried out its attack on the United States on September 11, 2001. For Fernando Reinares (2005, 120), “an act of violence is to be considered as terrorist when its psychical effects within a certain population or social aggregate, in terms of widespread emotional reactions such as fear and anxiety, are likely to condition attitudes and behavior in a determined direction.”

Fifth, terrorists communicate a message to an audience (Victoroff 2005, 4; Hoffman 2006, 40-41). In many cases, the target of the terrorist attack does not have meaning to the perpetrators.

Instead, terrorists intend their attacks to convey a political statement to a government, citizenry, or rival group. Michel Wieviorka (1995, 599) usefully distinguishes between primary and secondary audiences. Terrorists may carry out an attack in order to influence a primary audience, such as the government, so that it adopts a certain course of action or discontinues a given activity. However, at the same time, the attack may send a signal to a secondary audience, such as the community to which the terrorist organization belongs or a funder of that organization. Hezbollah's attacks against Israeli and Western targets, for example, not only demonstrate the organization's resolve in fighting against those that it believes are invaders but also aim to convince Iran and Syria that the group is competent in ascertaining these regimes' interests in the region, thus securing continued funding.

Finally, a defining characteristic of terrorism is the deliberate targeting of civilians (Richardson 2007, 6) or non-combatants (Bjørge 2005, 2; Victoroff 2005, 4). This is a controversial point, and some scholars purposefully do not include it in their definitions (e.g. Hoffman 2006, 40-41). However, the deliberate targeting of civilians is a central feature that separates terrorism from other forms of political violence, especially insurgency. Phil Williams (2008, 14) argues, "For terrorist organizations . . . the use of indiscriminate violence against civilian targets is not only central to their strategy but is also their defining characteristic."

Given this discussion, *ethnic terrorism can be defined as an organization or individual's premeditated use of violence or threat of violence against civilians or non-combatants to produce an atmosphere of fear and to influence an audience on behalf of an ethnic identity group that may or may not support the goals or operations.*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> States can also engage in terrorism, but this dissertation only examines non-state terrorism.

### **1.5 Relevance of Ethnicity to Terrorism**

Ethnic terrorism differs from other types of terrorist activity, especially religious, socialist, and anarchist terrorism. Unlike religious terrorists, especially jihadists, ethnic terrorists commit acts of violence to increase the level of rights for a distinct group of people rather than carrying out divine duties in response to theological imperatives (Hoffman 2006, 88-89). Religious terrorists also use violence in an attempt to correct a system that they perceive as flawed rather than seeing themselves as above or outside of the system (Hoffman 2006, 88-89). They often choose to work within the system rather than destroy it entirely. Ethnic terrorism is usually local while jihadism is a global movement, albeit with local dimensions. In some cases, religious and ethnic terrorism resemble each other. As Louise Richardson (2007, 62) points out, “For many groups religion is just a badge of ethnic identity” because the differences between the state and terrorist organization are political, and religion only “sharpens the differences.” This has been the case with organizations such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). Ethnic terrorists also differ from socialist terrorists, although sometimes ethnic terrorist campaigns encompass socialist ideas. Daniel Byman (1998, 151) notes that ethnic terrorists seek to elevate the level of rights for a distinct segment of the population rather than the population as a whole. This differs significantly from socialist terrorist ideology, which advocates the overthrow of the entire political system for the benefit of working and marginalized classes. Sendero Luminoso, for example, claims that its mission is to overturn the Peruvian political enterprise so that all members of society can benefit equally. Finally, Jerrold Post (1998, 30) argues that nationalist-separatists (many of whom define themselves along ethnic lines) execute campaigns that carry on the mission of their parents’ generation; this is in contrast to anarchist terrorists, who use terrorism for reasons that run counter to their parents’ generation, which they see as being in line with the establishment.

How does ethnicity influence terrorism in a way that other identities do not? Theoretically, ethnicity can contribute to terrorist campaigns in particularly intractable ways. Unlike members of other identity groups, such as proletariat classes, members of ethnic groups are usually geographically concentrated, which shapes their political aspirations and strengthens their ability to participate in and contribute to terrorist violence if indeed the motivation for violence has been established. All identity groups can develop grievances, but ethnic grievances often result in claims for independence. Ethnic terrorist organizations view independence as a straightforward and achievable objective, making their campaigns particularly brutal and long-lasting. Ethnicity also affects resources. Ethnic terrorist organizations can mobilize resources from abroad in a way that other terrorist organizations cannot – by tapping into diaspora communities. Bonds tying ethnic groups with their diasporas, because they are based on familial identities and a sense of shared history and culture, can mobilize financial support in a way that, for example, a right-wing movement in one country trying to secure support from right-wing actors abroad cannot achieve. Foreign countries may also support the ethnic terrorist movement if diaspora members living within their borders lobby them to do so. Thus, ethnicity can lead these countries to contribute to terrorism when they otherwise would not. Finally, ethnicity can affect political opportunity structures. For example, ethnicity can mobilize group actors to demand independence, and when states ban parties with independence goals, terrorist organizations can occupy the space left by the departure of nonviolent nationalist leaders. It is less likely that states would forbid parties championing, for example, environmental issues, as these parties do not pose a direct threat to their territorial integrity. Thus, militant groups like Earth First and the Earth Liberation Front must compete with nonviolent environmental movements for support.

## **1.6 Dissertation Outline**

This dissertation unfolds as follows. In Chapter 2, I explicate the conceptual framework used to assess the central research question. This framework consists of motives, means, and opportunities (MMO). In Chapter 3, I review the research design used to evaluate the analytic leverage of the conceptual framework. The design uses both qualitative and quantitative techniques and data. In Chapter 4, I examine the research question with a comparative case study analysis of the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka. In Chapter 5, I do so with the cases of the Basques and Catalans in Spain. In Chapter 6, I assess the research question through a series of statistical analyses. Finally, in Chapter 7, I conclude the dissertation, highlighting key findings from the study, summarizing academic contributions, and offering some policy implications.



## Chapter 2. The Motive, Means, and Opportunity of Ethnic Terrorism

### 2.1 Introduction

This dissertation uses a framework based on a concept familiar from criminal law to analyze why some ethnic groups experience large-scale terrorist violence while others do not. This concept is the establishment of motives, means, and opportunities (MMO). The underlying assumption is that the process of establishing whether or not a defendant is guilty of a crime can be adapted to analyze the development of ethnic terrorism. During criminal proceedings, a prosecutor must show that a defendant had reason (motive), the ability (means), and an occasion (opportunity) to commit a criminal act. If the prosecutor succeeds, it is likely (although not certain) that the defendant is guilty. Similarly, ethnic terrorism develops when 1) states violate ethnic groups' human security (motive); 2) burgeoning terrorist organizations secure ethnic group support (means); and 3) a vacuum in the group's political space emerges, allowing terrorists to rise to dominate the nationalist agenda (opportunity). In other words, establishing guilt for a crime is akin to witnessing terrorism among ethnic groups – in both situations the presence (or high values) of these three factors should lead to a positive outcome – either guilt or terrorism. This approach provides a systematic and holistic conceptual framework to analyze ethnic terrorism, and creates the space necessary to capture relationships important to the overall phenomenon, such as group-state, group-organization, and state-organization dynamics.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> I have decided to apply the MMO framework to ethnic terrorism based partly on my participation in a research working group through the Ford Institute for Human Security at the University of Pittsburgh. Under the direction of Taylor Seybolt, the group endeavored to apply the MMO framework to another form of political violence – mass killing campaigns. This research evolved into a conference paper titled “Unpacking the Process of Mass Killing: Motives, Means, and Opportunities,” which was presented at the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), American Political Science Association (APSA) (both in 2011), and International Studies Association (ISA) (2012) annual conferences.

In this chapter, I explain what I believe to be the leading motive, means, and opportunity of ethnic terrorism by drawing on a rich body of literature primarily from the fields of ethnic conflict and terrorism. In brief, I argue that the key initial *motive* for ethnic terrorism is the violation of ethnic groups' human security by states; the most important *means* is terrorism sponsorship, which has at least three dimensions – domestic and diaspora, active and passive, and willing and unwilling support; and the often overlooked *opportunity* is the occasion for terrorist organizations to dominate the group's ethno-political space, at which point organizations continue to use terrorism to achieve their goals vis-à-vis the state and maintain their dominant positions. The three empirical chapters then test the argument that high values on these factors lead to widespread ethnic terrorism.

## **2.2 Motive: Human Security Violations**

*Human security violations against ethnic groups by states are the most important and pervasive motive for ethnic terrorism.* Such violations can incentivize hardliners within an ethnic population to organize themselves with the intention of ending these violations through the adoption of terrorist campaigns. These campaigns aim to punish the state, elicit domestic and international attention to the group's plight, and otherwise advance the organization's individual goals. In this section, I discuss the human security paradigm and lay out how human security violations lead to ethnic terrorism.

What is human security? In contrast to the traditional security perspective in international relations (IR), where the state is the unit of analysis and protection of territory and other national interests is the matter of most salience, human security is a paradigm to analyze sub-national actors, such as groups and individuals, and their circumstances. The reality of human security and group and individual vulnerabilities has always existed, but the human security paradigm did not materialize until after the Cold War when intra-state conflict, such as in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, prompted a

new interpretation of security studies. As evidenced in various foreign policy agendas, the international community started taking seriously the idea that wars occurring within states were as imperative as those occurring between them. The academic community responded, and attempts to bring concepts from traditional inter-state security studies, such as the security dilemma, to explain violence at the sub-national level began to materialize (see, for example, Posen 1993).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) made human security the explicit focus of its 1994 Human Development Report: “The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people” (1994, 22). The people-centered approach advocates “freedom from fear and freedom from want” (UNDP 1994, 24) and “synthesizes concerns from basic needs, human development, and human rights” (Gasper 2005, 222). This initiative was the first real attempt to broaden the discussion of security to include sub-national processes and susceptibilities and to secure groups and individuals from all threats to their livelihoods.

The UNDP report cast its net widely. It envisioned that human security would encompass all protective measures, including economic viability, safety from hunger and disease, environmental sustainability, physical security, and beyond. As such, the term has been criticized for being imprecise, expansive, and elusive (Paris 2001, 88) and for reinforcing rather than challenging traditional policy frameworks as it overstates security threats, locates threats in the developing (opposed to the developed) world, and facilitates short-term policy making (Chandler 2008, 428). These criticisms are fair, and any use of human security as a conceptual framework or operationalized variable must address them.

Does human security have analytic power in explicating ethnic terrorism? An advantage of the paradigm is that it shifts the security discourse from inter- to intra-state, a transition that is most

relevant to the studies of ethnic conflict and civil war, as these types of violence occur within the state (albeit also at a transnational level in some cases). Mark Gough (2002, 159) uses the human security paradigm to explain civil war and attributes the Bosnian war in part to a weak and ineffective state that could “do nothing to intervene in the interests of security.” The sub-state level is also important in the subfield of domestic – rather than international – terrorism, the domain into which ethnic terrorism falls most comfortably (see, for example, Piazza 2011). In short, the human security concept has the advantages of being people-centered (see Axworthy 2001), being broad enough to include a wide range of threats, and underscoring critical and pervasive threats (Alkire 2003, 4).

The level-of-analysis advantage does not address the criticism by Roland Paris and others that the term is too vague to be of any use. However, if the concept as a whole is set aside and the components that should have the most bearing on ethnic terrorism are parsed out and examined, the human security approach can be of particular value. This adjustment is in line with Bertrand Ramcharan’s (2004) exploration of the relationship between human rights and human security and its impact on peace and conflict. As Ramcharan (2004, 46) states, “respect for human rights are important not only as intrinsic values but also because they are crucial for the prevention of conflicts.” Ramcharan emphasizes the aspects of human security (e.g. human rights) that have the most bearing on terrorism, conflict, and peace-making.

The idea is not to redefine human security but to examine the features of this broad conceptual umbrella that have been identified in the literature as influencing ethnic conflict and terrorism. The UNDP (1994, 24-25) identifies seven components of human security: 1) economic security, 2) food security, 3) health security, 4) environmental security, 5) personal security, 6) community security, and 7) political security. The vision of human security for my purposes includes the latter three components: personal, community, and political security. I argue that in

employing human security in this manner, the term becomes general enough to include the sum of theoretically relevant factors but specific enough to exclude aspects generally regarded as unrelated or spurious, for example, environmental security.

What are personal, community, and political security? Human security is inherently protective (Alkire 2003, 2), and personal security is an individual's protection from physical violence. In discussing this concept, the UNDP (1994, 30) claims, "In poor nations and rich, human life is increasingly threatened by sudden, unpredictable violence." This category of violence includes threats from the state primarily directed against individuals. Moreover, community security is a communal group's protection from violence, repression, and discrimination. The UNDP (1994, 31-32) states that people can derive security from their participation in a group, such as a community, organization, or racial and ethnic group that provides "a cultural identity and reassuring set of values." Violations of this dimension of human security lead to interethnic strife, especially when the group is harmed or denied opportunities for public services and employment. Finally, political security is an individual or group's protection from state repression. The UNDP (1994, 32) explains that political security is the entitlement for people to live in a society that honors their basic human rights and the protection of people from state human rights abuses and control of ideas. My operationalization of human security draws on these three components. Human security violations most germane to the development of ethnic terrorism are state-committed discriminatory and repressive practices against a group, based on that group's ethnic identity, which have lasting effects on individuals and the community as a whole. As identified by the UNDP (1994, 22), "In the final analysis, human security is . . . an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence."

I address David Chandler's point that human security, like traditional security, overstates security threats by recognizing that human security violations do not automatically lead to conflict through the inclusion of the means and opportunity variables outlined below. Human security

violations do not always lead to ethnic violence. Yet the unfortunate reality is that ethnic terrorism exists, and a discussion of the conditions under which it happens and does not happen can provide strategic policy guidance rather than (in another of Chandler's criticisms) short-term policy making. Moreover, I am agnostic about the location of human security violations with the conviction that inhumane practices can and do happen in developed and democratic countries.

How might human security violations contribute to ethnic terrorism? A burgeoning literature draws a connection between human security and terrorist violence. Rhonda L. Callaway and Julie Harrelson-Stephens (2006) posit a causal argument. They test their theory with the case of the Catholics in Northern Ireland and find that political and civil, subsistence (basic needs), and personal security rights violations lead to terrorism. In particular, they argue that it is the denial of political and civil rights as well as subsistence rights that is conducive to the development of terrorism, while the denial of security rights is a necessary condition for the creation and growth of terrorist activity. Michael Clarke (2008) also investigates the relationship between human security and terrorism and tests Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens' theory with the case of the Uighers in Xinjiang, China. He finds that Uigher terrorism conforms to human security's realm of political and civil rights, with less support for subsistence and personal security rights. Clarke (2008, 294) states that the motivations for Uigher terrorist detainees "almost uniformly stress repression or persecution by the Chinese authorities in Xinjiang and the desire to fight for 'East Turkestan's' independence." Nonetheless, he also argues that China's integrationist policies and the prevalence of Islamic radicalism in the region are important drivers of Uigher separatism and violence.

A well-established body of literature on ethnic conflict and terrorism also informs the connection between human security violations and terrorism. The landmark study by Donald Horowitz (1985) contends that ethnic groups fear for their survival. Ethnic fear is the condition of feeling dread induced by the idea that one's communal identity is in jeopardy. In many situations,

the state is the impetus for a group's ethnic fear. Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr (2004, 3) contend that the ethnic groups of most concern are those that are targets of discrimination, since they are more likely to rebel using violence. Stephen Van Evera (1994, 8) similarly hypothesizes that the likelihood of war increases when nationalities oppress minorities living in their state.

Causes identified in the terrorism literature also include grievances based on discrimination (Crenshaw 1981, 383; Byman 1998, 156; LeFebvre 2003, 3) and state repression (Piazza 2006; Krueger and Laitin 2008). When nonviolent political channels are not offered, some dissidents find it advantageous to use terrorism to challenge the state's control and legitimacy. Similarly, the lack of civil liberties can enable terrorist activity (Malečková 2005; Krueger 2007). Groups and individuals that are able to participate through legal channels without fear of persecution are less likely to use terrorism. James Walsh and James Piazza (2010) specifically cite the violation of "physical integrity rights" (i.e. personal security) as the key motivator of terrorism. They state that "governments violate physical integrity rights when they inflict arbitrary physical harm on individuals"; such violations include extrajudicial killings, torture, disappearances, and political imprisonment (Walsh and Piazza 2010, 7). Violating physical integrity rights increases terrorism, they argue, in three ways: 1) by alienating the state from the population that could potentially supply intelligence about terrorist groups; 2) by creating intrastate political turmoil and thus reducing the effectiveness of counterterrorism policies; and 3) by decreasing the incentive for international actors to cooperate with the state (Walsh and Piazza 2010, 3). In short, human security violations, articulated as state-committed discriminatory and repressive policies directed against ethnic groups, are an essential motive of ethnic terrorism. When they are extreme, severe terrorist campaigns follow.

## **2.3 Means: Sponsorship**

For terrorist organizations to carry out their campaigns in the long run, ethnic groups and other actors must sponsor them. *Sponsorship is the most important means of large-scale ethnic terrorism.* Elites are fundamental in generating and directing organizations but without support their efforts are unsuccessful and can even go unnoticed. Lacking sponsorship, organizations eventually self-destruct or succumb to law enforcement and military actions. Successful terrorist organizations consist of several categories of participants, including – from most dedicated to least – coordinators, committed individuals, sympathizers, and outsiders (Jordan and Horsburgh 2005, 181), and the ethnic group serves as a pool from which to recruit members. As Daniel Byman (1998, 157) notes, terrorist groups “will perish if they cannot recruit, train, and deploy their members.” Supporters play important but different roles in providing organizations with personnel, finances, sanctuary, intelligence, political representation, communication networks, and freedom of movement. Three interconnected dimensions of sponsorship elucidate how ethnic terrorism becomes so severe: 1) domestic and diaspora, 2) active and passive, and 3) willing and unwilling support. Respectively, these dimensions capture the location, practice, and voluntariness of terrorist support.

### **2.3.1 Domestic and Diaspora Sponsorship**

Successful ethnic terrorist organizations benefit from either domestic or diaspora sponsorship and in many cases from both. Although other ideological types of terrorist groups are also assisted at home and abroad, ethnic terrorists garner support from a distinct base – the ethnic community. The community within the borders of the country in which the organization primarily operates, as well as throughout the world, is a crucial source of support. The location of sponsorship matters in understanding the success of ethnic terrorist organizations.



Diaspora support is the most common type of sponsorship that ethnic terrorist organizations secure from abroad. As Daniel Byman (1998, 161) notes, “In comparison with members of other types of terrorist movements . . . ethnic terrorists rely more on kinsmen or a haven in foreign countries and less on foreign governments.” According to Bruce Hoffman (2007, 2), diaspora communities provide four categories of support to terrorism: fundraising, recruitment, weapons procurement, and lobbying of adopted governments. In terms of fundraising, Nicholas Sambanis (2001, 264) concurs that financial sponsorship from diasporas increases the chance of rebel victory. A fifth important dimension of diaspora support is sanctuary. When a diaspora community is nearby, it can be an important source of refuge for terrorists from the state’s counterterrorist efforts, allowing them to reorganize and launch assaults against the state from inside that area. In addition to diaspora support, the support that foreign governments offer to the terrorist campaign is also important.

Domestic support flows to ethnic terrorist organizations so that they can rebuff the state’s repressive and discriminatory policies and achieve the goal of some form of statehood. These factors also explain diaspora support, but constituents of the ethnic group within the state’s borders often feel the effects of the state’s repressive actions more immediately. After an organization becomes active, harsh counterterrorist efforts will often fail to distinguish between the organization and the rest of the community within the country. As a result, the entire ethnic group in the country is afflicted, even though individual members may not have any connection to the terrorist movement. Diaspora communities do not feel this abuse first-hand, as they live in other states (unless they moved abroad because they became victims). Moreover, the prize of independence will usually benefit domestic supporters, while it may or may not attract diaspora community members to the newly independent homeland. Domestic and diaspora support also differ in terms of

procurement. For example, terrorist organizations can more easily force domestic support – through conscription and revolutionary taxes – since constituents are local.

### **2.3.2 Active and Passive Sponsorship**

Ethnic groups and foreign actors also offer terrorist organizations active and passive support and protection. The analytic difference is the practice of taking action or doing nothing. Ethnic groups actively offer support when they take action to contribute funding, services, weapons, and time, and when members enlist in the ranks of organizations. Most notably, active supporters consist of “those who help the organization in various ways (by providing information, housing, money, etc.) or engage in lesser acts of violence” (Sánchez-Cuenca 2007, 301). Diaspora communities are most active by lobbying their adopted governments to embrace conciliatory policies toward the organization, making financial commitments to the struggle, and offering sanctuary arrangements to organization members, while active domestic support most commonly takes the form of recruits, logistical assistance, and funding. Terrorist organizations would wither without the group’s active contributions.

In contrast, passive support involves not taking action vis-à-vis the terrorist organization. In essence, passive supporters turn a blind eye to terrorist activities. Martha Crenshaw (1981, 384) observes, “Perhaps terrorism is most likely to occur precisely where mass passivity and elite dissatisfaction coincide.” When sponsorship is passive, ethnic groups do not take action to contribute to the campaign but neither do they take action to stop it, opting not to report terrorists and their activities to law enforcement officials. Foreign governments and diaspora groups passively support the terrorist movement when they do not prevent terrorist members from taking shelter within their borders and communities. Passive support occurs in two situations. First, it arises when members of an ethnic group hold reservations about the use of violence even though they

sympathize with the terrorist organization's overall objectives. This simultaneously dissuades them from actively contributing to the campaign while deterring them from reporting terrorist activities to officials. Not every member of an ethnic group will be mobilized to fight as an active militant on behalf of the group, but hardly anyone ever fights in opposition to the group (Kaufmann 1996, 140-141). Second, passive support emerges when members of a group do not identify with the terrorist goals and therefore may be tempted to report terrorist activities but are fearful that in doing so they will become a target of the organization. Thus, they remain silent. The decision by some ethnic group members to permit the operation of terrorist organizations by refraining from reporting their activities is as crucial to the success of their campaigns as the decision by others to provide material means.

### **2.3.3 Willing and Unwilling Sponsorship**

The third dimension of sponsorship is willingness to support the terrorist agenda. Ethnic group members and foreign actors will contribute their support willingly when they feel that organizations are providing services to them. These services can include countering official policy with the hopes of ending discrimination and exclusion, fighting for an independent homeland, offering communal and personal protection, providing social service benefits, and achieving some desired objective in the region. When discriminatory practices and abuses by the state are severe, group members will willingly offer their support by joining and funding the organization. Thus, willing support can be active. Yet such conditions also ensure willing, passive sponsorship as they cause those who do not endorse violence to resist the temptation to report terrorist activities to officials, since they sympathize with the organization's circumstances. As coercive movements, terrorist organizations build up willing support by "engendering a sense of fear that their own values and identity are under threat" (UNDP 2004, 75). Ethnic groups are most likely to offer their

support willingly when they feel that organizations are working on their behalf without bullying them for the sake of their own organizational gains and survival in the process. In other words, terrorist organizations survive when they do not alienate their supporters (Sánchez-Cuenca 2007, 300).

At times, ethnic group members may not want to support terrorist movements but are compelled to do so for fear of being punished by the terrorist organization. As Daniel Byman (1998, 160) observes, “Even when a population does not support an insurgent group’s cause, fear of terrorist violence can lead individuals to cooperate.” Extremists are likely to impose sanctions on those who do not willingly contribute to the cause (Kaufmann 1996, 113). For example, terrorists will levy revolutionary taxes or extort funds through blackmail in order to finance their operations. Those subject to such tactics will usually pay, unwillingly, or face repercussions such as death, injury, or harm to family members. Terrorist organizations may also target moderate ethnic group leaders and supporters to deter them from selling them out for ethnic gains and concessions (Byman 1998, 160). Although this occurs more commonly within the homeland of the ethnic group, it can also happen in diaspora communities. Moreover, terrorist organizations may forcibly recruit members into their ranks if a flow of willing participants is not constant. Unwilling sponsorship can also be passive. The general occurrence of organization-induced fear that pervades the ethno-political space can elicit unwilling, passive support. Fear that the terrorist organization will retaliate against them discourages group members from collaborating with the state (Byman 1998, 160).

To summarize the means of ethnic terrorism, group and foreign sponsorship enables the functionality of terrorist organizations. Domestic and diaspora, active and passive, and willing and unwilling support are important dichotomies through which ethnic terrorism can be assessed. In most cases, it is the interplay of the three that explains why some ethnic groups experience large-scale terrorism while others do not. When sponsorship is high, large-scale terrorism ensues.

## 2.4 Opportunity: Occasion for Dominance of the Ethno-Political Agenda

In addition to the motive and means, opportunity matters in explaining the severity of ethnic terrorist violence. Opportunity structures are about the conditions permitting the occurrence of terrorism. The opening for ethnic terrorism is distinct from permissive factors found in other ideological categories of terrorism, as it concerns the relationship between the ethnic group and the terrorist organization. *The occasion for terrorist organizations to dominate the group's ethno-political agenda serves as the most important opportunity accounting for the severity of ethnic terrorism.* In conflict situations, when motivations and support for violence have been ascertained, group leaders can voluntarily or involuntarily enable terrorist organizations to hijack their ethno-political agenda, that is, allow them to speak on behalf of the group. The consequences of this are severe, as it allows organizations to dominate. Thus, groups in which a terrorist organization manages to usurp the ethnic agenda are more likely than other groups to experience severe terrorist activity. Dominating organizations can do what they wish, while inferior organizations cannot.

Martha Crenshaw (1981, 382) observes that “The most salient political factor in the category of permissive causes is a government’s inability or unwillingness to prevent terrorism.” This often translates to a discussion about the state’s military capabilities and political commitment in eradicating terrorism. Often ignored, but with direct bearing on ethnic terrorism, is the possibility that a state may be unable or unwilling to eliminate a terrorist organization because the organization has risen to hijack the ethnic community’s agenda. States may be less able and willing to eradicate a terrorist organization (thereby permitting its existence) when it dominates than when it does not. Thus, a state’s position can be characterized by the dynamic between the ethnic group and the terrorist organization. This is because dominating terrorist organizations are usually 1) quite militarily powerful, and states are therefore unable to guarantee victory and 2) rooted within the wider ethnic community, inducing state skepticism about a large-scale counterterrorist campaign in

which civilian casualties are likely to be high. Furthermore, when a terrorist organization assumes the role of the ethnic group's spokesperson, a state may believe that it can convince the organization to forgo violence in exchange for political concessions. In short, the opportunity for terrorism as typically characterized at the state level can be considered as a function of the ethnic group's occasion for organizational dominance.

How does this occasion emerge? There are at least two possible routes. First, a vacuum in the community's ethno-political sphere can manifest, which terrorist organizations eagerly fill. This gap occurs most often when the ethnic group's political leaders formally or informally forfeit their positions as representatives of the ethnic group. Nationalist political party elites can become unable or unwilling to pursue group objectives within the political structures of the current regime. Thus, they surrender their authority, and in severe circumstances flee the state. In such cases, they voluntarily, reluctantly, or passively defer to a burgeoning terrorist movement to take over the ethnic agenda. Coercive movements for cultural domination fill a vacuum created by failures of development and governance (UNDP 2004, 76). Second, the group's leaders may choose to support or condone terrorist activity, allowing organizations to gain momentum and strength. This occasion is not the creation of a vacuum but the decision to abet the organization actively or passively. Sponsorship from political representatives is simultaneously a means and an opportunity, as it enables terrorist organizations to dictate the nationalist program. As Dawn Brancati (2006, 653) notes, one way that regional parties increase ethnic conflict and secessionism is by supporting terrorist organizations. This opportunity also most closely corresponds with Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur's (2003, 37) third way in which political parties turn to terrorism: "situations arise in which political parties actively promote or trigger terrorism but do not practice it directly."

Either occasion for organizational dominance puts ethnic groups on an especially bloody path to violence. This occurs because terrorist organizations not only direct their violence against

the state in trying to achieve some ethnic goal but also maintain their preeminence by targeting various actors within their own ethnic community – as well as, on occasion, other ethnic groups. Terrorist organizations strive for authority and “go as far as to eliminate any internal dissent” (LeFebvre 2003, 4). Thus, terrorism is a method to achieve simultaneously the larger campaign goal and the cooperation or elimination of potential dissenters. Almost everyone is a possible target of a dominating terrorist organization: the state and majority ethnic group (as they are almost always seen as obstacles to the campaign goals); ethnic rivals, moderates, and allies (as they may challenge or potentially turn against the organization in order to control or participate in the ethnic agenda); and members of other ethnicities (as they may cooperate with the regime or pose a threat to local security). These dynamics make for a particularly violent scenario.

By nature, intransigent elite competition and ethnic outbidding are contributors to and consequences of the organization’s drive to domination. Fernando Reinares (2005, 127) states, “Resorting to terrorism may . . . be a procedure to violently differentiate a given group from similar others within a multi-organizational and highly competitive nationalist sector, particularly when the contention for power intensifies.” Mia Bloom (2004, 71) observes this strategy in Palestine, arguing that Palestinian terrorist organizations aim to outbid each other with increasingly more stunning suicide bombings in an effort to win the attention of the Palestinian people. Leaders of terrorist organizations initially justify the call for terrorism when human security violations occur and actively seek to rally support from the population around this call. In the process, they endeavor to bring their organizations to supremacy through the elimination, subjugation, and appeasement of others.

Michael E. Brown (1996, 577) observes that intensifying leadership struggles are proximate causes of internal conflict. Most often, ethnic terrorist campaigns, as a class of internal conflict, are elite-triggered and internally-driven (albeit with international dimensions); thus, heads of these campaigns are “bad leaders” by his definition (Brown 1996, 580). In contrast, “good leaders” within

the ethnic community work to avoid, eliminate, or mitigate terrorism. Stuart J. Kaufman (1996, 109) further adds, “Belligerent elites contribute to ethnic conflict through a process of ‘outbidding,’ in which they compete with each other to promote increasingly extreme nationalist positions.” Terrorist leaders possess intransigent ideologies and a commitment to violence, and these characteristics push them to engage in ethnic outbidding so that their organizations can dominate. Organizations have succeeded in reaching domination when their leaders have competed against and successfully outbid rivals, at which point they can confidently speak on behalf of the group.

How can groups deny terrorist organizations the occasion to dominate? Political parties and other civil society organizations deny terrorist organizations the occasion to dominate when they do not hand over the ethnic agenda to them. In other words, they avoid passively permitting a political vacuum to emerge by choosing to stay and seek a political solution to challenges. Neither do they actively endorse or overlook terrorist demands. Denying terrorists the opportunity to dominate is easier when the terrorist movement is in its infancy stage than when it has already been established. Nascent terrorist organizations denied the initial opportunity to dominate often self-destruct or become easy prey for counterterrorist forces. It is much more difficult to deny well-established organizations the opportunity to continue to dominate. Essentially, it requires either a reduction of all levels of sponsorship to a point at which the organization has lost operational effectiveness or outright military victory. Both solutions come at great costs. When necessary, terrorist organizations will replace sponsorship that they have received voluntarily with support that they secure through intimidation and other violent methods. Moreover, a government’s military victory often comes with numerous civilian casualties. Because group members usually become as miserable under the control of a terrorist movement purporting to act to advance their goals as they are under the repression of the state, and because evidence suggests that terrorists do not win in achieving their ultimate goals (Abrahms 2011), ethnic groups have rational incentive to refuse



terrorists the opportunity to dominate in the early stages. In sum, when groups provide the occasion for terrorist organizations to seize the ethno-political agenda, extensive terrorist activity follows.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The interaction between these three conditions outlined above is critical to the overall explanation of the development of ethnic terrorism but will likely differ from case to case. For example, where human security violations are high, whether or not terrorist activity follows will be determined by the ability of the burgeoning terrorist movement to control the ethnic agenda, which will be a function of its operational capabilities as well as the perspectives of ethnic political and civil society stakeholders. In other conflict-prone situations and where the potential for sponsorship and organizational dominance is high, terrorism will depend on the level of human security abuses.

This chapter has adapted a framework from criminal law – motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) – to theorize about ethnic communities and their encounter with terrorist violence. It argues that human security violations against ethnic groups are an important impetus for the emergence and development of ethnic terrorism; that sponsorship – in many different forms – provides the means for organizational operation; and that the occasion for organizational dominance of the ethno-political space offers an opportunity for large-scale terrorist violence. The next chapter explains the research design and methodological approach for testing this argument.

## **Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This dissertation adopts a mixed method design and uses both qualitative and statistical data to analyze ethnic groups and their experiences with terrorist violence. I evaluate the conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter with comparative case study analyses of positive and negative cases as well as statistical regression models. The utility of this approach is that it elicits empirical results through two different but complementary processes, and compensates for the weaknesses inherent in relying on one method (Lee 1999, 14). The assumption is that qualitative approaches are useful in capturing history, context, richness, and process, while quantitative techniques are better suited to determine applicability and generalizability. Together, they should offer a comprehensive assessment of the framework and a rich understanding of ethnic terrorism. Although many studies that employ a mixed methods approach begin with a statistical analysis followed by a qualitative assessment, I reverse this sequence in order to augment the testing of theoretical relationships with case study findings and to bring substantive meaning to regression results with examples from the cases. Section II describes the qualitative analysis, and Section III explains the quantitative approach. Section IV concludes this chapter.

### **3.2 Qualitative Analysis**

Chapters 4 and 5 evaluate the conceptual framework with qualitative methods. In each chapter, I compare an ethnic group that has experienced a high level of terrorism with one that has experienced a low level within the same country. The unit of analysis is the ethnic group, although I pay considerable attention to terrorist organizations as they embody the agency of terrorist violence. The comparative case study approach between a positive and negative case will be useful in

determining how well the conceptual framework captures variation in terrorism between groups – especially when the groups reside “under the same roof.” The first of these two chapters compares the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka, while the second contrasts the Basques and Catalans in Spain. The Tamils and Basques serve as methodologically positive cases, as they have experienced a substantial amount of terrorism primarily through the respective campaigns of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), while the Muslims and Catalans have experienced low levels of terrorist activity.<sup>9</sup> In this section, I discuss the method of structured, focused comparison; positive and negative cases; types of comparisons; case selection criteria; and qualitative data sources.

### **3.2.1 The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison**

I use a comparative case study approach adopted from Alexander George and Andrew Bennett’s (2005) structured, focused comparison method. The authors (2005, 67) state:

The method is ‘structured’ in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of these cases possible. The method is ‘focused’ in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined.

Thus, I develop a case study protocol of questions to ask of each case under study to ensure that the comparison is structured, and I base these questions on the conceptual framework to ensure that it is focused. The protocol is presented in Appendix 1.

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<sup>9</sup> The LTTE and ETA are sometimes considered insurgent groups rather than terrorist organizations. In reality, they are organizations that use insurgent, terrorist, and a range of other tactics. This dissertation is concerned with explaining ethnic terrorism; thus, I use these organizations as cases of ethnic terrorism and accordingly focus on their terrorist behavior. ETA relies “almost entirely” on terrorism (Byman, Chalk, Hoffman, Rosenau, and Brannan 2001, 6), and I focus primarily on the initial development of the LTTE (1970s – 1980s) during which time the organization primarily used terrorism without controlling territory (a key feature of insurgencies).

### 3.2.2 Positive and Negative Cases

Comparing positive and negative cases of ethnic terrorist activity offers variation on the dependent variable. Allowing the dependent variable to vary is important in refining understanding about terrorist occurrences and processes. Often in qualitative approaches to security studies the consequence of interest remains constant; that is, across the cases the outcome is always present (or absent) or always occurs in extremely high (or low) values. The conventional thinking is that in order to understand terrorism, insurgency, organized crime, war, nuclear proliferation, and other important security concerns, it is necessary to examine when these problems occur rather than when they do not. The limitation to this logic, however, is that factors identified and proposed as leading to the outcome (most often a positive outcome) may also be found in cases with different outcomes. For example, the question of whether or not greed leads to civil war cannot offer much of an explanation if the outcome under investigation is indeed always war. As Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sydney Verba (1994, 147) explain, “We can . . . learn nothing about causal effect from a study which selects observations so that the dependent variable does not vary.” David Collier, James Mahoney, and Jason Seawright (2004, 100), who are generally skeptical of the King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV) approach to research, concur that “cross-case comparisons encompassing the full range of variance on the dependent variable yield a greater capacity to refine conceptualization and measurement, which is in turn a foundation for good causal inference.”<sup>10</sup> The occurrence or degree of a factor put forth to explain a positive outcome should be different when the outcome is negative. Thus, the levels of the explanatory variables proposed in the previous chapter – human security violations, sponsorship, and the occasion for dominance – should vary to at least some degree across positive and negative cases.

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<sup>10</sup> David Collier, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright (2004, 210) argue, however, that no-variance designs are appropriate for within-case analyses.

Negative cases are difficult to identify and assess, as they are essentially non-events. Thus, I adapt Gary Goertz and James Mahoney's (2006, Chapter 7) "Possibility Principle," which advises selecting negative cases when they could have possibly taken on positive outcomes. The cases of the Muslims and Catalans adhere to this principle. Although they are not strictly non-events, they do represent low levels of the outcome. In other words, although they do not fundamentally represent the "dog that didn't bark," they do exemplify "the dog that didn't bark loudly," which offers an interesting and valuable juxtaposition with the large-scale terrorism cases.

### **3.2.3 Types of Comparisons**

I carry out a comparison between ethnic groups within and between countries. The within-country comparisons control for some state-level characteristics, such as overall regime type, economic development, and geographic location, although the interaction between the state and each individual ethnic group differs. This approach offers as much control as can be hoped for in the social sciences. The between-country comparisons clarify – and offer some, albeit limited, generalizability of – the causal processes that would have otherwise been more idiosyncratic if examined in one setting alone. As the cases are "instrumental," serving the purpose of illustrating ethnic terrorism, and the overall approach is a "collective case study," as multiple cases are compared, the cases should reveal a good deal of information (see Miller and Salkind 2002, 162-163).

### **3.2.4 Case Selection Criteria**

Why are the historical cases of the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka and the Basques and Catalans in Spain appropriate to examine the analytic power of the conceptual framework? Four case selection criteria ground this decision. Two reasons concern the choice of the countries: 1)

variation in political regime and 2) variation in geographic location. Sri Lanka and Spain have had very different political regimes, so findings across these countries mitigate bias that the framework only applies within a given type of political environment. Once a British colony, Sri Lanka transitioned to a self-rule dominion within the British Empire in 1948 and then to a fully independent republic in 1972. Since independence, it has been a parliamentary democracy. In contrast, Spain had been an authoritarian regime under Francisco Franco from 1939 to 1975, after which the country evolved into a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy, with a significant amount of power devolved to autonomous communities. Moreover, Sri Lanka and Spain belong to completely different geographic regions of the world – South Asia and West Europe – which helps to avoid potential bias resulting from cases located in one specific region of the globe.

I choose to compare the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka and the Basques and Catalans in Spain in accordance with two other criteria that come from Stephen Van Evera's (1997) guide on political science research methods: 3) data richness and 4) controlled comparison suitability. First, all four cases are data-rich. Scholarly research provides a prolific body of descriptive and empirical instruction on the cases of the Tamils and Basques, as these communities have struggled with the respective campaigns of the LTTE and ETA. In addition, some work exists on Sri Lankan Muslim and Catalan history, nationalism, and violence, and this work is more abundant and data-rich than other potential negative case candidates, such as the Burghers in Sri Lanka or Galicians in Spain. Second, the two sets of cases are appropriate for controlled cross-case comparisons in general (as each set of cases exists in one country, allowing for some control) and the method of difference in particular (as the outcome in each set varies). This criterion is perhaps the most important, as proposed causal links should be strong when the case exhibits a positive outcome and weak when it does not.

### 3.2.5 Qualitative Data Sources

Multiple forms of data are often necessary for in-depth understanding of cases (Miller and Salkind 2002, 163-164). Data for the qualitative analysis in this dissertation come from an array of sources, including secondary sources, such as scholarly books and articles; newspaper accounts; databases on terrorism and ethnic conflict; and primary documents, such as those located in archives. I benefited greatly from on-location research in Spain and Sri Lanka. I collected secondary and archival data in Spain at the Instituto Hemingway; Biblioteca de la Universidad de Deusto (Library of the University of Deusto); Biblioteca Foral de Bizkaia (Regional Library of Biscay); Fundación Sancho el Sabio (Sancho el Sabio Foundation); Sabino Arana Fundazioa (Sabino Arana Foundation); Archivo Benedictino de Lazkao (Benedictine Archive of Lazkao); Centre Documental de la Comunicació (CEDOC) de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Communication Document Centre at the Autonomous University of Barcelona); and Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya (National Archive of Catalonia). Also for the case of the Basques, I gathered information at the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. I collected data in Sri Lanka at the American Institute for Sri Lanka Studies (AISLS) Colombo Centre; International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES); and Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA).

In addition to these data collection efforts, I conducted interviews. I use these interview data to better understand the nature and context of the cases and to vet information collected and analyzed from secondary sources. In total, I interviewed twenty individuals: nine knowledgeable of the Spanish cases and eleven familiar with the Sri Lankan cases. I selected interviewees through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. As my interviewing agenda specifically aimed to collect information on the terrorist campaigns and their contexts, I chose to interview people with deep knowledge of these cases. For some interviews, I personally identified and independently contacted individuals. For others, colleagues, acquaintances, or interviewees recommended

individuals they thought I would benefit from interviewing (and in some cases even set up the interviews). The interviewees came from a wide range of professional fields and perspectives, including academia and education; public service; research, foundation, and development work; journalism; library services; religious work; and community activism. Some had observed the conflict from afar; others had been personally involved in conflict resolution efforts; a few were nationalists; and one admitted that he financially contributed to a terrorist organization. Interviews took place in Spain (summers of 2010 and 2011), Sri Lanka (March 2012), the United States (February 2011; December 2011-February 2012), and in one instance Northern Ireland (June 2010). The interviews were semi-structured, and questions were open-ended. I entered each interview with a pre-established set of broad themes and questions that I wanted to cover but allowed ample space for interviewees to share other information and perspectives relevant to my research (see Marshall and Rossman 1989, 82). Responses were handwritten and reviewed for background information and themes that could inform the overall argument. Appendix 2 anonymously summarizes details about the interviews, and Appendix 3 offers an interview protocol with themes and questions generally covered during the interviews.

### **3.2.6 Interview Data Limitations and Discussion**

Interview data can potentially be biased. In particular, the snowball sampling technique may result in homogenization bias, as respondents might recommend people with similar views to their own, thus offering a one-sided or incomplete interpretation of the topic under study. Although I cannot be certain, I believe the risk of homogenization bias in this study is quite low. The key driver leading respondents to recommend other people appeared to be the assumption that these individuals could provide more information about a given area than they themselves could offer. For example, one interviewee with general knowledge of the Basque case recommended a colleague



with more detailed knowledge of Basque political parties. In Sri Lanka, one interviewee (a researcher) recommended an individual with significant first-hand experience working with the Muslim community.

Another potential source of bias may be the heavy reliance on data from people in one given sector. For the cases from Spain, I rely extensively on information from people in the education and academic sector, given their willingness and ability to meet with me. Educators and academics may not appreciate the sentiments and viewpoints of people involved directly in the conflict in a way that, for example, community activists and policy makers would.

Finally, the location of interviews may result in bias since individuals could be sympathetic or hostile to the actors under study. Five of the six interviews conducted in Spain were in Bilbao (the other was in Barcelona). Bilbao is the largest city in the Basque Country, and therefore interview data from there may be biased in favor of ETA. On the whole, however, my impression is that respondents may have been sympathetic to the goals of the terrorist movement (e.g. independence) but disapproved of the persistent use of violence – if for no other reason than that Basques were also victims of ETA’s campaign. All of the interviews conducted in Sri Lanka were held in Colombo. The potential for bias against the LTTE is high in Colombo since it is the capital and thus the center of the government’s activities. Nonetheless, I did not sense that my respondents were biased against the LTTE, perhaps because my interviews took place well after the end of the civil war, and the general sentiment in the city (at least according to my impression) is centered on restoring peace between the Sinhalese and Tamils.

### **3.3 Quantitative Analysis**

Chapter 6 provides a statistical assessment of ethnic terrorism. There, I offer descriptive statistics of ethnic terrorist incidents, casualties, and organizations and test the generalizability of the

conceptual framework and case findings with a series of regression models. The unit of analysis in these models is the ethnic group, as in the case study analyses, which provides a systematic way to compare case and statistical findings. Below, I elucidate the coding process used to produce an ethnic terrorism dataset (ETD); provide an overview of the data time frame, methods, and quantitative data sources; and highlight data limitations and robustness checks. Chapter 6 provides additional details on these aspects and explanations of variable constructs and model specifications.

### **3.3.1 Ethnic Terrorism Dataset (ETD)**

It would be ideal to work with a comprehensive statistical dataset on ethnic terrorism but regrettably none exists. Therefore, I construct my own by merging data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and the Minorities at Risk (MAR) Project at the ethnic group-year unit of analysis. The GTD is a project of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. It is one of the most comprehensive databases on terrorism in operation. The Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset is a project of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, also at the University of Maryland. It monitors the status of politically active communal groups throughout the world. In essence, I create an ethnic terrorism dataset (ETD) by paring down the GTD to only include incidents of terrorism that have been carried out to advance the political interests of ethnic groups, and then matching these incidents with corresponding ethnic groups included in the MAR dataset. MAR does not provide a specific measure of terrorist incidents, so combining these two datasets allows me to assess the terrorist dimensions of ethnic groups. The ETD enables two tasks: in Chapter 6, I first present information on ethnic terrorist incidents, casualties, and organizations (in Section II) and then estimate models to assess the generalizability of the motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) of ethnic terrorism (in Section III).

For an incident to be included in the GTD, it must have occurred between 1970 and 2008 (inclusive) and meet all three of the following criteria:

- 1) The incident must be intentional.
- 2) The incident must entail some level of violence or threat of violence.
- 3) The incident must be carried out by sub-national actors.

In addition, the GTD requires that an incident must meet at least two of the following three criteria for inclusion:

- 4) The incident must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal.
- 5) The incident must aim to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims.
- 6) The incident must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities.<sup>11</sup>

The coding of criteria 4-6 enables users to decide which incidents in the database they want to include in their analyses. For example, a user may decide to include all incidents that meet criteria 4 and 5 but not 6 (and so forth). Because each of these three additional criteria applies to my definition of terrorism, I retain only those incidents that meet all three. Of the over 88,000 incidents in the original dataset, 72,586 meet all six criteria.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information about coding methodology, see p. 5 of the GTD codebook at: <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>> (last downloaded on May 7, 2012). This sixth criterion is especially important as it determines whether or not the incident was committed outside the norms of international humanitarian law, particularly concerning the deliberate targeting of civilians or non-combatants.

I restrict my dataset to 1985-2008, which leaves 52,824 incidents of terrorism. I start the dataset in 1985 since the MAR project began to provide annual data on ethnic groups at that point (previously it was every five years). The MAR project ends in 2006; however, I extend the ETD through 2008 when – at the time I finished coding the data (May 2011) – the GTD ended.

Although the GTD provides many details about each terrorist incident, it does not provide a code for the ideological goals of the perpetrator (e.g. ethnic, jihadist, socialist, anarchist, etc.). Thus, I investigate the goal and membership of the perpetrator and retain only those incidents that are attributed to an ethnic terrorist organization (ETO) or are otherwise inherently ethnic in nature.

In most cases, the perpetrator is an actual terrorist organization (e.g. Oromo Liberation Front). I determine whether or not this organization is an *ethnic* terrorist organization by investigating its goal and membership. If its goal is to defend or advance the political agenda of a specific ethnic group and its membership is composed mostly of members of the group for which it operates, then I consider it an ETO and retain all of its incidents in the dataset. I consult several sources to obtain information about organizational goals, such as START's Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPs); the MAR Project; the Project on Violent Conflict (PVC) at the State University of New York at Albany (SUNY-Albany); the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) at the Institute for Conflict Management; and newspapers and books.

In other cases, the perpetrator is not an actual organization but is listed in the GTD as a group (e.g. Hutus) or militant actor (e.g. Sikh extremists). In these cases, I investigate whether or not the attack is inherently ethnic in nature by reviewing the description of the perpetrator as well as the incident, and I include only those incidents that are ethnic.<sup>12</sup> Some perpetrators are listed as

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<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise noted, I use the term “ethnic terrorist organization” (“ETO”) to denote perpetrators that are actual organizations as well as those that are ethnic in nature but not actual organizations.

unknown, or information is insufficient to determine whether or not they are ethnic in nature. Thus, these incidents are omitted.

Determining whether or not an organization is ethnic is fairly straightforward. For example, the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) “ultimately hopes to achieve self-determination for Corsica through independence and to preserve Corsican language and culture” (START’s Terrorist Organization Profiles). As such, I classify it and similar organizations as ETOs. However, classification can be more difficult for two reasons. First, some organizations purport to represent groups’ interests, but their claims are specious. For example, although the Shining Path in Peru initially claimed to represent indigenous interests, its primary objective has been to transform Peru into a Maoist regime through a violent revolutionary movement. It principally acts to advance the interests of the poor rather than the indigenous. As it lacks a strong ethnic agenda, I do not consider it and similar organizations as ETOs. Second, some organizations do not represent group interests even though their members come from the group. The Taliban is a notable example. Although most of its members are ethnic Pashtuns, the organization operates according to strict jihadist ideology and works to enforce Sharia law in Afghanistan rather than to promote Pashtun objectives. As another example, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) “is largely Acholi, but does not represent the interests of most Acholi in Uganda” (Minorities at Risk Project 2009). It is not sufficient for an organization to be composed primarily of members from one ethnic group; it must actually act to advance the group’s political agenda or claim to protect the group in some way. Thus, I do not classify these and similar organizations as ethnic in nature. Nonetheless, I recognize the dual ideology of some organizations. The Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyrs’ Brigade, for example, is a Chechen separatist organization and a jihadist group that relies on suicide martyrdom. Similarly, ethnic terrorism can take on a socialist dimension (e.g. PKK in Turkey). Ideologies are not mutually

exclusive in reality; thus, when organizations take on other ideological casts while maintaining a strong ethnic component, I classify them as ETOs.

Finally, only ethnic terrorist incidents that can be attributed to ethnic groups represented in the MAR dataset are included in the ETD. This is because in Chapter 6 I perform statistical regression analyses in order to test the motives, means, and opportunities framework, and most independent variables come from the MAR data. For example, the MAR dataset does not include the Galicians in Spain. As such, terrorism conducted on behalf of the Galicians (e.g. by the Free Galician People's Guerrilla Army) is excluded from the dataset. Furthermore, ETOs are assigned to only one ethnic group in the dataset with the assumption that organizations primarily act on behalf of one group. In most cases, this assignment is uncontroversial. For example, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) acts to advance the political interests of the Catholics in Northern Ireland, and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) fights for the Karen people of Burma. In cases where organizations carry out attacks for the advancement of more than one group (for example, ETA acts to defend the Basques in Spain and to a lesser extent in France), these organizations are assigned to the principal ethnic group (e.g. the Basques in Spain). Once an organization has been assigned to an ethnic group, all of the attacks that it has carried out regardless of location – and all of the casualties that have resulted from its activities – are deemed to be for the advancement of that ethnic group.

In sum, the ethnic terrorism dataset is constructed by assigning GTD incidents to MAR ethnic groups through a coding process. Incidents that: 1) do not meet all three additional criteria (criteria 4-6) in the GTD, 2) occur outside of the 1985-2008 time period, 3) are not deemed to be ethnic in nature, or 4) cannot be attributed to MAR groups are excluded. In all, the dataset includes 10,370 incidents of ethnic terrorism. This represents approximately 20 percent of all terrorist

incidents from 1985-2008 and 36 percent of those incidents in which at least some information about the perpetrator is known.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.3.2 Data Time Frame, Methods, and Quantitative Data Sources**

The data are time-series cross-sectional. The ethnic terrorism dataset covers the period from 1985 to 2008, but since the primary MAR dataset (Phases I-IV) ends at 2003, the regression models use data only from the 1985-2003 period. There is a separate MAR dataset (Phase V) that covers the period from 2004 to 2006, but the project redeveloped criteria for defining a “minority at risk” and revised the codebook, so I do not combine it with the 1985-2003 data. However, I do use these data to: 1) run robustness checks on key findings generated from the 1985-2003 data and 2) explore relationships that I cannot investigate with the 1985-2003 data, such as the connection between diaspora support type and terrorism, since the 2004-2006 data include some relevant variables that are absent from the other dataset. In the 1985-2003 data, 354 ethnic groups are present, and in the 2004-2006 data, 284 groups are present.<sup>14</sup>

The dependent variable is an event count (number of terrorist incidents), so I use a negative binomial regression model to handle this feature. Unlike the Poisson regression model, which is also appropriate for count data, the negative binomial can accommodate overdispersion, adding an additional parameter that captures unobserved heterogeneity among observations (Long and Freese

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<sup>13</sup> The 36 percent estimate is calculated by taking the total number of terrorist incidents that are deemed to be ethnic (10,370) and dividing it by the number of incidents that were committed by perpetrators not listed as “unknown,” “other,” or “individual” in the GTD (29,036) for the years from 1985 to 2008. Since much of the other perpetrator information is insufficient to determine whether or not the perpetrator is indeed ethnic in nature (for example, when the perpetrator is listed as “guerrillas” or “gunmen”), the 36 percent figure should be regarded as a low estimate.

<sup>14</sup> This is my own calculation, not MAR’s. Ethnic groups that are related but live in separate countries (e.g. Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq) are counted as separate groups. Similarly, groups before and after political transitions (e.g. Tatars in the Soviet Union vs. Tatars in Russia; Tutsis in Zaire vs. Tutsis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) are counted separately. The rationale for this latter point is that the dynamic between ethnic groups and countries is likely different after political transitions.

2006, 372). For Model 12, in which I substitute group rebellion – an ordinal variable – as the dependent variable, I use an ordered logistic regression model. Due to the possibility of correlation between observations within the same ethnic group, I report robust standard errors clustered on ethnic groups (see Cameron and Trivedi 2010, 335). All independent variables are lagged one year behind the dependent variable to help address potential endogeneity issues. Count models, such as negative binomial models, do not provide the substantive impact of independent variables in an easy-to-understand manner. Thus, I conduct post-estimation substantive effects using STATA's CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) on key independent variables.

The dependent variable comes from the Global Terrorism Database. All independent and control variables come from the MAR dataset except for country democracy level, which is the revised combined polity score (RCPS) from the Polity IV Project. Chapter 6 provides more information about variable constructs and model specifications.

### **3.3.3 Statistical Data Limitations and Robustness Checks**

Like all data, the statistical data used in this dissertation suffer from some weaknesses. Here, I acknowledge and address them to the best of my ability. Most notably, the ethnic terrorism dataset likely underrepresents the total number of terrorist incidents for a few reasons. First, data for the GTD, like most terrorism databases, come from publicly available, open-source news accounts. As is commonly recognized, countries with inadequate or state-controlled media outlets may underreport terrorist activity, and international media outlets may not have access to some countries, especially authoritarian regimes, to report terrorist attacks; thus, terrorism may be underreported in developing and/or non-democratic countries (Li and Schaub 2004; Drakos and Gofas 2006a; Drakos and Gofas 2006b). To help mitigate this issue, GTD researchers use a variety of open source materials and make attempts to corroborate attacks. Nonetheless, the issue likely remains.



An underrepresentation in non-democracies would most affect the relationship between democracy level and terrorism in my models, as it would push the correlation towards being positive. However, as democracy level is a control variable in my analyses, I am not exceedingly concerned that this weakness would bias the overall testing of the conceptual framework. In fact, a significant and positive correlation between human security violations and ethnic terrorism, for example, would provide particularly strong support for the argument that such violations are a motive for terrorism, given that human security violations would likely be less severe in democracies.

Second, data on incidents that occurred in 1993 are inherently underrepresented due to the initial loss and incomplete reconstruction of these data. GTD data originally come from Pinkerton Global Intelligence Services (PGIS), but prior to the transfer to START, data for the year 1993 were lost and the GTD excludes this year from the downloadable database as a result. GTD researchers have made an effort to reconstruct the 1993 data, but their collection of incidents from that year is only 15 percent of the original PGIS figure. Nonetheless, I add these 1993 data to the original database rather than omit the year altogether, with the logic that this is the lesser of two evils.<sup>15</sup>

Third, some acts of ethnic terrorism are omitted from the ethnic terrorism dataset because information is not available to determine if they are indeed ethnic (i.e. the perpetrator is unknown), although this problem would plague any ideology coding process and not just ethnic terrorism.

Fourth, incidents that cannot be attributed to an ethnic group in the MAR data are omitted even though they are indeed incidents of ethnic terrorism. However, the assumption is that such groups should be missing from the dataset at random. Due to issues that may arise from these limitations in the GTD data and the process of pairing the GTD and MAR data, I substitute the

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<sup>15</sup> For more information about this and other data inconsistencies, see START's "Caution about Data Consistency" section at: <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/>> (last accessed on May 7, 2012).

rebellion variable as the dependent variable in Model 12 to see if my results are robust to an altogether different conceptualization of terrorism.

Some additional problems exist with the MAR dataset. Notably, much of the 1985-2003 MAR data are missing. A complete dataset would consist of 5,809 observations but given missing data, Models 1-12 maintain anywhere between 1,059 and 2,381 observations (18-41 percent). Some variables and years are missing more observations than others, but no group or region is noticeably underrepresented. The inherent weakness of the 2004-2006 MAR data is that they only cover a three-year period. The advantage, however, is that these data are more complete. If the data did not have any missing values, each variable would maintain 852 observations, and Models 13-18 consist of between 770 and 783 observations (90-92 percent), showing a relatively low loss of observations. The results from the 2004-2006 time frame, given that it is only three years, may not “travel” well to other periods, but I principally use these data for robustness checks on the primary dataset (1985-2003). Nonetheless, more research on the relationship between kindred group support and terrorism – which I am only able to assess with the 2004-2006 data – should be conducted to see whether or not my findings hold. The tradeoff is that the 1985-2003 data cover a longer time span but are less complete, while the 2004-2006 data are more complete but cover a shorter time span. My hope is that they give a full picture, and that each compensates for the other’s limitations.

Finally, a given operationalization of an independent variable may not accurately or fully capture a particular theoretically-derived idea. For example, perhaps the proxy is missing important information, or only offers one dimension of the concept. Thus, I use several proxies to give a fuller picture of the motives, means, and opportunities of ethnic terrorism. Variables and proxies are discussed further in Chapter 6. In short, to mitigate bias that may arise due to the weaknesses of the statistical data, I conduct robustness checks on the dependent variable, the dataset, and the independent variables.

**Table 1: Summary of Research Design**

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Dependent Variable	Terrorism	Terrorism
Operationalization of Dependent Variable	Amount and intensity of terrorist violence from ethnic groups	Number of terrorist incidents from ethnic groups (count)
Method	Structured, focused comparisons between positive and negative cases	Negative binomial regression models
Cases	Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka; Basques and Catalans in Spain	354 ethnic groups (1985-2003 data); 285 ethnic groups (2004-2006 data)
Unit of Analysis	Ethnic group (over time)	Ethnic group-year
Time Frame	Sri Lanka: 1948-2009; Spain: 1876-2011	1985-2003; 2004-2006
Data Sources	Secondary sources; newspaper accounts; databases; archives; interviews	Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset; Global Terrorism Dataset (GTD); Polity IV Project

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research design that I use to evaluate the conceptual framework outlined in the previous chapter. The assumption is that mixed methods and several sources of data can offer a comprehensive assessment of ethnic groups and their experiences with terrorism, as one method and data source compensate for the weaknesses of others. The qualitative component primarily offers context and process, while the quantitative analyses offer a degree of generalizability. Together, they provide a thorough explanation of ethnic terrorism. The next three chapters are empirical, and each adds its own critique of the framework.

## Chapter 4. The Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka

### 4.1 Introduction

The overarching research question of this dissertation asks: why does widespread terrorist violence develop from some ethnic groups but not from other groups? This chapter compares the cases of the Tamils and Muslims in post-independence Sri Lanka to address this question. From its inception in 1976 until its military defeat in 2009, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an organization dedicated to an independent Tamil Eelam state, terrorized all actors in the Sri Lankan polity, including political officials and military personnel as well as civilian members of the Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim ethnic groups. Although other Tamil terrorist organizations had strived for a similar goal, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, the LTTE was the most long-lasting and brutal. In contrast to the Tamil experience, very little terrorist activity has emerged from within the Sri Lankan Muslim community. What factors account for this disparity? Why has terrorism emerged in full force from the Tamil community but not the Muslims? A comparison between the Tamils and Muslims is appropriate since the two groups reside within the same polity, are geographically concentrated in certain regions, and are different ethnically from the Sinhalese majority in terms of language, religion, culture, and history.

If the argument put forth in Chapter 2 is correct, these cases should reveal that large-scale terrorism is a result of human security violations against ethnic groups, sponsorship, and an occasion for terrorist organizations to dominate the ethno-political space.

This chapter provides a good deal of support for the argument. It shows that the *motive* for LTTE terrorism originally centered on human security violations against the Tamil community by the Sri Lankan government and some members of the wider Sinhalese population. These violations included discriminatory language policies, which impaired Tamils' access to education and

employment, and threats to basic security, protection, and livelihood. In contrast, the Muslims have largely avoided discrimination, and their political elites have worked through nonviolent political channels to advance their economic, educational, and political interests. The most important *means* garnered by the LTTE to carry out its campaign was support from the Tamils in Sri Lanka, India, and the wider diaspora community, as well as from the Indian government. At the beginning of the organization's campaign, many Tamils, both domestic and abroad, sympathized with its goals, but their support became expected and often coercively pursued as the terrorist campaign went on. Muslim terrorist activity, on the other hand, has received very little support, largely because the Muslim community considers terrorism against the state as unjustifiable, as the state has endeavored to accommodate rather than marginalize the community, and because the dominant actor in Muslim politics – the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC) – has opted for nonviolent political means to ascertain Muslim interests. Even Muslim support for terrorism against the Tamil community has been markedly low, despite the brutal attacks that the LTTE has conducted against the Muslims. Finally, the *opportunity* for the LTTE to dominate the Tamil ethno-political space came when members of the nationalist party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), first condoned LTTE violence in the late 1970s and then faded away from the Tamil political sphere during a crucial time in the Tamils' political development. This left a political vacuum that Velupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE's leader, filled. Ironically, the LTTE solidified the opportunity to dominate when it launched a campaign to eliminate rival Tamil organizations, including the TULF and competing terrorist groups. To date, no Muslim terrorist organization has become a threat in Sri Lanka, largely due to the lack of motive or means. However, if one were to arise, the organization would find it difficult to challenge or marginalize the SLMC leadership or other Muslim actors, and thus would struggle to dominate the Muslim ethno-political space and secure long-lasting appeal.

This chapter begins with a detailed narrative of the Tamil community's experience with terrorism, paying particular attention to the LTTE's campaign as it represents the vast majority of violence stemming from the Tamil community, and then provides a description of Muslim identity, nationalism, and terrorist violence. It ends with a direct comparison between the Tamil and Muslim communities and explains their drastically different levels of terrorism in accordance with the motive, means, and opportunity (MMO) framework outlined in Chapter 2.

## **4.2 The Tamils and Terrorist Violence**

### **4.2.1 Overview of Tamil Eelam**

So-called "Tamil Eelam" is the name Tamil nationalists give to the northeastern region of Sri Lanka, which they hope will become a separate independent state, claiming that it is their historical and cultural homeland.<sup>16</sup> This region consists of Sri Lanka's separate Northern and Eastern Provinces.<sup>17</sup> Its population is approximately three and a half million. Sri Lankan Tamils constitute 13 percent of the country's total population and 54 percent of the northeastern population (with a larger concentration in the north than in the east). The rest of the region consists of Sinhalese (27 percent), Muslims (16 percent), and Indian Tamils (3 percent).<sup>18</sup> Thus, although the Tamils constitute the majority of the region's population, it is notable that nearly half (46 percent) are non-Tamil. In total, the region is 22,000 km<sup>2</sup>, which is about the size of New Jersey. Nationalists designate Jaffna, a city located at the northern tip of the island and center of the separatist

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<sup>16</sup> "Eelam" is the Tamil name for Sri Lanka.

<sup>17</sup> Under the auspices of the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord (ISPA), the Sri Lankan government united the Northern and Eastern Provinces in 1988, resulting in the North Eastern Province, but the Supreme Court deemed this merger unconstitutional in 2006, leading to the separation of the provinces.

<sup>18</sup> Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka constitute two distinct ethnic groups. Sri Lankan Tamils are native to Sri Lanka, whereas Indian Tamils (also known as Hill Country or Up-country Tamils) are descendants of Tamils who came from south India to work on plantations in Sri Lanka in the 19th and 20th centuries. Sri Lankan Tamils live primarily in the North, the East, and Colombo while Indian Tamils live mainly in the central highlands region.

movement, as Tamil Eelam's capital. With 102,000 people, Trincomalee on the eastern coast is the largest city in the region.

Tamil-speaking and Hindu, the Tamils are different ethnically from the Sinhalese-speaking, Buddhist majority. Many Sri Lankan Tamils regard their homeland as a distinct nation and call for secession from the south, with some participating in terrorist activity to achieve this vision. They have drawn support for their cause from the global Tamil diaspora, particularly the 61 million Tamils residing in India (the majority from the southern state of Tamil Nadu) as well as large Tamil populations in Canada and Europe. The Sri Lankan government has offered the Tamils increasing degrees of autonomy since the 1980s in order to accommodate their demands, but it has never yielded to calls for independence. This has been a leading cause of the Sri Lankan Civil War and source of the wider conflict between the two ethnic groups. Neil DeVotta (2004, 198) usefully distinguishes between different periods of Sinhalese-Tamil relations in the country since independence: ethnic cohabitation (1948-1956), autonomy (1956-1972), soft separatism (1972-1983), and ethnic conflict (1983-present). This last period can be broken down further into Eelam War I (1983-1987), the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) phase (1987-1990), Eelam War II (1990-1995), Eelam War III (1995-2002), the Norway-facilitated peace initiative (2002-2006), and Eelam War IV (2006-2009), which ended in the military defeat of the LTTE.

#### **4.2.2 Overview of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)**

From 1983 until 2009, Sri Lanka suffered a brutal civil war marked primarily by conflict between the Sri Lankan state and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Additional groups had violently challenged the state, including other Tamil organizations as well as the socialist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP or People's Liberation Front), but the campaign of the LTTE had been

the most ruthless.<sup>19</sup> The organization carried out attacks against the Sri Lankan government and ethnic Sinhalese as well as fellow Tamils and ethnic Muslims. It fought on behalf of the Tamils, whether or not individual Tamils actually agreed with its goals; used terrorist tactics and an array of other methods, such as insurgency, ethnic cleansing, and negotiations, in an effort to achieve its aims; and killed over ten thousand people, making it one of the deadliest ethnic terrorist organizations to have ever existed.<sup>20</sup> The organization maintained extremely well-developed military, intelligence, and political divisions. Its military wing in particular was one of the most sophisticated for a non-state entity, consisting of the Black Tigers, a unit that conducted suicide attacks, and an infantry, navy (Sea Tigers), and air force (Air Tigers). The organization notoriously enlisted women and children to carry out its missions. Leaders also instructed members to wear cyanide capsules around their necks at all times and to consume them if captured, thus killing themselves to avoid revealing organizational information to government authorities (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1988-1989, 612).

Velupillai Prabhakaran founded the LTTE in 1976 as the successor to the short-lived Tamil New Tigers (TNT). The LTTE began its militant activity in the late 1970s and early 1980s in response to discrimination against the Tamil community and as an uncompromising faction of the growing Tamil nationalist movement. It carried out its first major attack in 1983 when it killed thirteen members of the Sri Lankan Army. Sinhalese mobs sought revenge for the attacks by retaliating against Tamils, primarily in Colombo, killing hundreds, destroying thousands of homes,

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<sup>19</sup> The most notable of these other Tamil organizations are the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). Respectively, these organizations were founded in 1974, 1975, 1979, and 1980 (O'Ballance 1989). These groups, along with the LTTE, are considered the "Tamil Five."

<sup>20</sup> The exact number of deaths caused by the LTTE is unknown, but an approximate estimate is over 10,000 between 1970 and 2008 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism 2010). This is likely a low estimate, since some incidents fail to be reported altogether and others are unable to be attributed to the LTTE even when the organization likely committed them. The Sri Lankan Civil War has claimed approximately 80,000 lives in total (BBC 2009).



and displacing tens of thousands of Tamil residents. Known as Black July, this event is regarded as the beginning of the civil war. As fighting increased, India and Sri Lanka brokered the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord (ISPA) in 1987, and India introduced the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to enforce the agreement. However, many Tamils viewed the accord as illegitimate. The peacekeeping effort ultimately failed when fighting between the IPKF and the LTTE broke out. In 1991, the LTTE assassinated former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and in 1993 it killed Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, becoming the only terrorist organization to assassinate two heads of state. Although the government and the LTTE attempted a peace initiative in 1994-95, it ultimately failed and fighting continued. In 2002, the two sides entered into the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), managed by Norway and monitored by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). However, the LTTE, and to some extent the Sri Lankan government, violated the agreement, prompting the government to abrogate its commitment to a political solution. In 2007, the military defeated the LTTE in the Eastern Province, and then in May 2009, it declared victory over the organization in the Northern Province where it had been the strongest. As part of the northern offensive, the military killed Prabhakaran, effectively bringing an end to the organization and to the war.

#### **4.2.3 The Origins of the LTTE: The JVP, Early Tamil Terrorist Groups, and Vellupillai Prabhakaran**

Despite Sinhalese-Tamil tensions mounting in the early 1970s, the first significant challenge to the Sri Lankan state did not come from the Tamil community but rather from a Sinhalese communist youth organization known as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP or People's Liberation Front). After having been organized a few years earlier, in 1971 the JVP attacked dozens of police stations, cut power and telephone service to several cities, and hijacked buses in Colombo

in an attempt to launch a full-scale socialist revolution (O'Ballance 1989, 6-8). In all, this event claimed approximately 4,000 – 5,000 lives before security forces succeeded in overpowering the militants (Fernando 2010). While the JVP insurrection had nothing to do with Sinhalese-Tamil relations, it did provide aspiring Tamil militants with the inspiration necessary to challenge the state violently (O'Ballance 1989, 11). In fact, some early Tamil terrorists had met JVP members in jail (Bandarage 2009, 66). The two movements had commonalities. As K.M. de Silva (1998, 138) notes, “while the Sinhalese youth in the JVP insurrection rose against a system which appeared to them as the embodiment of class privileges, and social and economic stagnation, the Tamil youth’s perception accommodated all these but went beyond them in their sense of an ethnic alienation.” Gamini Samaranayake (1999, 116) adds that the JVP insurrection affected the Tamil militants in two meaningful ways. The first was that the uprising taught the early Tamil militants that political violence was an important instrument in expressing grievances. The second was that the incident exposed the Sri Lankan military’s strengths and weaknesses.

Thus, influenced by the impact that the JVP had on Sri Lankan society, Tamil organizations – whose memberships also comprised mostly disenfranchised youths – began to emerge with the intent of using violence to achieve their goals.<sup>21</sup> In 1970, some youths formed the Tamil Students’ Federation (TSF) (DeVotta 2004, 168). In 1972, Prabhakaran, who had been active in early Tamil militancy, founded the Tamil New Tigers (TNT). Most notoriously, while a member of the TNT, Prabhakaran assassinated Jaffna mayor Alfred Duraipppah in 1975. Duraipppah, although a Tamil, had been a member of the pro-Sinhalese Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), earning him a reputation among Tamil dissidents as a traitor. In 1976, Prabhakaran transformed the military wing of the TNT into the LTTE with an intransigent independence-seeking ideology.

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<sup>21</sup> Even before the JVP revolt, a relatively inconsequential organization, known as the Tamil Liberation Organization (TLO), had been founded at some point between 1967 and 1969 to carry out violent struggle against the state (Bandarage 2009, 66).

#### 4.2.4 The Ideological Inspiration for the LTTE: Tamil Nationalism

The LTTE was a product of Tamil nationalism aimed at rebuffing discriminatory policies. Therefore, to understand fully the organization's emergence and development, it is essential to examine the historical context in which the wider Tamil community mobilized in response to political and social changes in the country since independence.

Early Tamil nationalist sentiments became clear in the late 1940s and early 1950s – a period of time in which the country transitioned from a colony of Britain to a self-rule dominion within the British Empire.<sup>22</sup> At that time, the Tamils began to consolidate their interests in response to threats against their ethnic identity from various policies and in defense of the privilege that they had enjoyed during colonialism. Tamil organizations, notably the Federal Party, which was founded in 1949 by S.J.V. Chelvanayagam and was the precursor to the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), began to espouse that the Tamils maintained a historic and cultural homeland and thus had the right to regional autonomy.<sup>23</sup> But as K.M. de Silva (1998, 151) points out, “The concept of the Tamil ‘traditional homelands’ was itself based on a fragile foundation of pseudo-historical data and a cavalier disregard of the composition of the demography of the ‘homelands,’ past and present.” The articulation of this Tamil homeland thesis, although based on revisionist history, notably did not advocate violence.

The Soulbury Constitution, in effect from 1947 to 1972, established Sri Lanka as a secular country and in Article 29(2) prohibited discrimination based on ethnicity or religion (Imtiyaz 2008, 134). Moreover, the United National Party (UNP), founded in 1946, had overseen the country's

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<sup>22</sup> Sri Lanka became a dominion within the British Empire in 1948 and gained republic status within the British Commonwealth in 1972.

<sup>23</sup> The Federal Party is also known as the Ilankai Thamil Arasi Kachchi (ITAK).

transition from British to Sri Lankan rule. Since it had been composed of Sinhalese, Muslims, and some Tamils (Bandarage 2009, 38), the party had advocated ethnic pluralism and been particularly careful to protect minority rights in the early phase of independence. Thus, legal and political principles had been established during the transition to safeguard against the discrimination of minorities. Nonetheless, some lobbied for the advancement of the status of the dominant Sinhalese-Buddhist culture at the expense of ethnic and religious minorities. These proponents coalesced in 1951 into the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which has gone on to become one of two leading political parties in the country (the other being the UNP). As K.M. de Silva (1998, 86) notes, “From the outset, the new party offered a home to those who rejected the concepts of a multi-ethnic polity, of a Sri Lankan nationalism, and of a secular state.” For them, the Sinhalese-Buddhist ethos needed to become the foremost feature of the newly-established Sri Lankan state.

The 1956 election brought the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP or People’s United Front) coalition, dominated by the SLFP, to power. Predictably, the coalition had run on a platform of prioritizing Sinhalese and Buddhism. That year, the MEP passed the piece of legislation that is regarded today as the first official act of political prejudice against the Tamils – the Official Language Act No. 33, also known as the “Sinhala Only Act.” The act sought to promote the status of the majority Sinhalese and reverse the privilege that many believed the Tamil community had during British colonialism. However, it was widely regarded as discriminatory by the Tamils. It made Sinhalese the only official language of the country, replacing English. This designation had significant consequences for the Tamils’ access to higher education, employment, government bureaucracies, and public services (Bose 2002, 634-636). Essentially, the Tamils had to learn Sinhalese or face being edged out of basic public provisions. Neil DeVotta (2004, 2) asserts that the Sinhalese-only movement led to ethnocracy and ethnic outbidding, marginalized the country’s minorities, and undermined the Tamils’ confidence in government institutions. Moreover, the

government was seen as favoring Buddhism over minority religions, as it had tasked the Buddha Sasana Commission in 1957 with coming up with recommendations to ensure Buddhism's place in Sri Lanka. Bhikkus, or Buddhist monks, who pressured the government to elevate Buddhism to the state religion, wielded considerable influence throughout the 1950s (de Silva 1998, 90; O'Ballance 1989, 3). The government's actions secured Sinhalese and Buddhism preeminence.

Unsurprisingly, Sinhalese nationalism was met with animosity from the Tamil community. The Federal Party especially condemned the special place given to Sinhalese and Buddhism in the country. Riots over language policy broke out in 1956 and again in 1958, bringing an end to the peace that the country had experienced for forty years. The 1956 riot occurred when a mob of Sinhalese nationalists attacked a group of Tamils protesting language reform, and the 1958 riot erupted when bhikkus protested negotiations between the MEP and Federal Party. During her first term in office (1960-1965), Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike solidified the primacy of Sinhalese and Buddhism in the state, further strengthening the intensity of the Tamil nationalist movement.

Another crucial source of Tamil mobilization was the establishment of the 1972 constitution, which replaced the Soulbury Constitution. The 1972 constitution reaffirmed the sentiments of the Sinhala Only Act. In 1970, the United Front (UF), a coalition consisting of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP or Lanka Equal Society Party), and Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL), won the general election.<sup>24</sup> This returned Sirimavo Bandaranaike, as leader of the SLFP, to power. Bandaranaike's position on Tamil rights had not softened since her previous term in office. The 1972 constitution reaffirmed the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 and rejected the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act of 1966 (de Silva 1998, 62), which had been approved during the

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<sup>24</sup> The 1970 election was the last election that was held under the Soulbury Constitution, as the country made the transition from dominion to republic status in 1972.

UNP-led National Front government (1965-1970) as an effort to ameliorate Tamil grievances. The constitution also endorsed Buddhism as Sri Lanka's *de facto* religion. Moreover, its insistence that Sri Lanka remain a unitary state also irritated Tamil leaders. Sumantra Bose (2002, 635) summarizes these constitutional features as follows:

A new state constitution enacted into law by parliament in 1972 against vociferous but ultimately ineffectual opposition by the minority of Tamil legislators amounted to a virtual charter of Sinhalese-Buddhist supremacy, formally recognizing Buddhism as the state religion, reaffirming the monopoly of the Sinhalese language in public life, and abolishing the safeguards for minority rights incorporated into the previous constitution, which had been framed by the British immediately prior to their departure in 1948.

Fifteen of the nineteen Tamil representatives boycotted the May 1972 Assembly that adopted the constitution (Bandarage 2009, 65).

Against the backdrop of the development of the constitution in the early 1970s was a revolution in education policy that Tamil community members interpreted as highly discriminatory. "The new university entrance policy of the 1970s made entry to the professions and to scientific and technical education much more difficult for the Tamils. Nothing has caused more frustration and bitterness among Tamil youth than this, for they regarded it as an iniquitous system deliberately devised to place obstacles before them" (de Silva 1998, 132). In effect, these discriminatory policies squeezed the Tamils out of professional higher education, which had been the primary route to professional careers (Bose 2002, 635). By all accounts, the Tamils felt discriminated against in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, and education by these new reforms.

At this time, hitherto independent Tamil actors decided to consolidate their political objectives. The Federal Party, All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), and Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC, which represented Indian Tamil plantation workers) coalesced into the Tamil United Front (TUF) in 1972, advocating an outright separate Tamil state to be composed of the Northern and Eastern Provinces (Bandarage 2009, 65). It is noteworthy that although demands for federalism and autonomy had been present since independence, they transformed into calls for outright separatism

based on the sense that the Tamil community could not continue to live within the Sri Lankan polity due to violations of its essential human security rights. In 1976, the TUF became the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), reflecting a hardening of its original separatist platform. The first half of the 1970s saw a qualitative change in the Tamil nationalist movement. As K.M. de Silva (1998, 155) observes, “Between May 1972 and end of 1976 we see a momentous shift in the political aspirations of the Sri Lanka Tamils, from demands for structural changes and constitutional reform, to an assertion of the right to self-determination on the basis of a Tamil state in Sri Lanka.”

The UNP won the 1977 election and the TULF became the leading opposition party, a position that no other Tamil party had previously achieved, demonstrating support for separatism from the Northern Province (particularly the Jaffna Peninsula) and a few areas in the Eastern Province. The outcome of the election can be attributed to ethnic unrest throughout the country and the desire to alleviate Sinhalese-Tamil strife. In 1978, the government introduced a new constitution, replacing the 1972 one that had been the primary source of Tamil separatist demands and burgeoning terrorist organizations. This was an attempt to satisfy Tamil demands without selling out to the minority. Specifically, the new constitution recognized Tamil as a “national” language, although Sinhalese was maintained as the only official language. The government also reversed anti-Tamil discriminatory education policy by removing language-based ethnic quotas. Despite these efforts, Tamil leaders argued that they fell short in reversing discrimination. As Asoka Bandarage (2009, 76) explains, “The dropping of the Sinhala nationalist agenda hitherto promoted by both the SLFP and the UNP and conciliatory policies introduced by the new UNP government after 1977, such as the enactment of a new constitution in 1978 and changes in language and university admissions policies, did not change the Tamil separatist resolve to establish Eelam.” A complicating factor in the effort for reconciliation was the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979. The government introduced it to enable the army and police to hold prisoners for up to eighteen

months without trial. S.J. Tambiah (1986, 18) asserts that this created “classical and diabolical conditions for torture” and “simply carried the abuse of human rights to a degree that is difficult to credit to a country that has been considered one of the few countries of the third world to systematically practice democratic principles, to stage relatively orderly elections, and to try to uphold the rule of law.” For a large segment of the Tamil population, it was too late; the political and ethnic context that favored separatist terrorism had already been established, and the path to the LTTE’s campaign, the most brutal the world has ever encountered, was well underway.

#### **4.2.5 The LTTE before the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord (1987)**

Once established in 1976, the LTTE initially engaged in low-profile attacks against policemen, defectors, and moderates – not unlike other Tamil terrorist organizations at the time. Yet over the course of a decade, the organization rose to become the dominant force acting on behalf of the Tamil community and gravest threat to the Sri Lankan government. It justified its violence by pointing to policy that discriminated against the Tamils (even though the 1978 constitution was a serious attempt to mitigate grievances) and to the thesis that the Tamils inhabited a historical Tamil homeland (itself based on revisionist history). More importantly, the organization established the means to carry out a vicious terrorist campaign by garnering support from various sources, including the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and India, and creating the opportunity to dominate Tamil political space by edging out other Tamil groups, including rival terrorist organizations and eventually even the TULF itself.

The latter half of the 1970s and the early years of the 1980s were a pivotal time for the LTTE’s development. As the organization carried out its initial wave of attacks, it benefited from the support of TULF leaders. The TULF had simultaneously pursued a non-violent track by



maintaining its position as the leading opposition party in government and a violent one by clandestinely supporting Tamil militants. Bruce Hoffman (2006, 138) observes:

in addition to engaging in legal, overt political activities . . . the TULF was also preparing for war. Unwilling to put its trust in a political system that had long demonstrated its bias against basic Tamil civil rights, the TULF sought to hedge its bets by establishing a parallel, clandestine organization to recruit radical young Tamils who believed that the only solution to their political problems would be found at the point of a gun. Prabhakaran, who joined the TULF in 1972, was among these recruits.

Moreover, Appapillai Amirthalingam reportedly used his position as TULF leader to raise funds for the LTTE and other groups (Bandarage 2009, 98). It became clear that the objective of the TULF leadership was the attainment of a separate Tamil state, rather than seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict. TULF leaders sanctioned and even supported early Tamil terrorist activity, believing that they could exercise control over the nascent organizations, in an effort to pressure the UNP government into granting the Tamil community independence. Tensions between the TULF and the UNP government intensified, especially by the end of 1978, as the TULF remained close to violent Tamil factions in Jaffna (de Silva 1998, 183).

UNP-TULF relations further deteriorated in the wake of the July 1983 riots, an event regarded as the beginning of the Sri Lankan Civil War. On July 23, 1983, the LTTE attacked the Sri Lankan Army in Jaffna, killing thirteen soldiers (Pathirana 2012). In retaliation, several ethnic Sinhalese rioted against the Tamil community throughout the country but especially in Colombo. The riots killed 3,000 Tamils and left 150,000 homeless (Bose 2002, 632).<sup>25</sup> Some evidence suggests that “thugs and agents” of the UNP government actively incited Sinhalese violence (Bandarage 2009, 106-107). “Black July” provoked Tamil youths to join one of several violent separatist groups already active at the time. As Sumantra Bose (2002, 632) points out, “Following these killings, a small hit-and-run Tamil separatist insurgency in the north, involving at most a couple hundred committed militants, was transformed by 1984 into a mass-based armed struggle with thousands of

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<sup>25</sup> Bose’s estimates are at the higher end of the range. Asoka Bandarage (2009, 105) states that the number of Tamils killed was between 200 and 2,000, and the number of homeless was approximately 100,000.

fighters drawn from radicalized Tamil youth.” Jayadeva Uyangoda (2007, 20) adds, “The UNP regime’s complicity in the riots, as well as the ferocity with which Sinhalese mob violence was unleashed against Tamil citizens, strengthened the embryonic secessionist drive in Tamil nationalist politics, giving a massive impetus to the armed struggle for separation.” The Tamil community, having already come to believe that the government failed to address its political grievances, now feared for its basic security and protection.

The government’s management of political affairs immediately after the riots was instrumental in furthering Tamil violence. In August 1983, the UNP government passed the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution, which required political leaders to respect the country’s territorial integrity, thereby explicitly demanding that they accept a united Sri Lankan polity. However, the TULF refused to accept the amendment, as the party had been inherently separatist from the outset. The fact that the UNP had tolerated Sinhalese violence against the Tamils after the LTTE attack also made the TULF’s position particularly intransigent (as did pressure from Tamil militants). As a result, the TULF leadership effectively resigned from government and left for Tamil Nadu in India. This resulted in a void in the Tamil’s ethno-political space, leaving the Tamil community without a political voice. It was a vacuum that Tamil militants, especially LTTE terrorists, were eager to fill. The TULF’s decision to leave the political process “legitimized the militants, who were now determined to fully marginalize the moderates and violently pursue *eelam*” (DeVotta 2004, 170, italics in original). Ravi Vaitheespara (2009, 34) adds, “The rise of Tamil youth militancy was seen . . . as an inevitable and logical outcome given the repeated failure of the Tamil parliamentary parties to safeguard Tamil interests.” For many, the departure of the TULF leadership left only the militant option.

In addition to the TULF, the other major sponsor of the LTTE (and other Tamil terrorist organizations at the time) was India. India supported the militants prior to the July 1983 riots but

became especially interventionist afterwards. Tamil Nadu, a state in the southern region of India just across from the Palk Strait, is home to over fifty million ethnic Tamils. For years prior to the riots, it served as a refuge for early Tamil militants from capture by Sri Lankan authorities. After the riots, the Tamil diaspora in Tamil Nadu (and beyond) sponsored the LTTE through publicity and propaganda, as well as finance generation (Chalk 2008, 99). In August 1983, immediately after the riots, the Indian government became more active in fueling Tamil terrorism by providing military support, including training and weapons, through its external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW). RAW-sponsored training camps throughout India, but particularly in Tamil Nadu, provided the support necessary for the LTTE and other groups to carry out their campaigns. As Sumantra Bose (2002, 633) observes, “Tamil Nadu was converted into a virtual safe haven, logistical and supply area, and staging base for offensive armed operations for the exploding Tamil insurrection in Sri Lanka.” Between 1983 and 1987, the leading Tamil organizations were headquartered in Tamil Nadu and also established outside the region in Andhra Pradesh, New Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh (Bandarage 2009, 114). Without this support from Tamil Nadu and the central Indian government, it is improbable that the Tamil militants would have been able to emerge as an overwhelming threat to the Sri Lankan government.

With initial support from the TULF, Tamil Nadu, and the central Indian government through RAW, the LTTE became increasingly more violent, targeting not only Sri Lankan government and military officials but also Sinhalese and Muslim civilians and ethnic Tamil rivals and moderates. For example, in November 1984, the LTTE massacred a hundred unarmed Sinhalese civilians in Welioya (Northern Province) in its first large-scale killing of civilians (Bandarage 2009, 120). Moreover, the Tamils and Muslims fought each other for the first time in April 1985, as the Muslims, although they speak the Tamil language, feared living as an ethnic minority in a separate Tamil Eelam. The LTTE also initiated a movement to eliminate rival organizations as it became

convinced that it could defeat the Sri Lankan armed forces alone. In 1986, the organization succeeded in eliminating the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) – the LTTE only allowed the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) to remain in an “uneasy alliance” (Joshi 1996, 24).<sup>26</sup> As Sumantra Bose (2002, 634) notes, by 1987 the LTTE emerged as the dominant Tamil force, partly because of its proficiency in killing rival groups. Finally, the LTTE targeted TULF members, even though the party was essential in establishing the organization in the first place. Howard Wriggins (1995, 55) observes that Tamil militant leaders gained strength at the expense of the parliamentarians. By the mid-1980s, relations between TULF moderates and the LTTE reached an all-time low. As one example, in 1989, members of the LTTE shot and killed Appapillai Amirthalingam, leader of the TULF and one-time supporter of the LTTE. The LTTE's strategy eventually allowed it to capture control of the Jaffna Peninsula, where it established its stronghold during the early 1990s. Thus, the LTTE maintained its power by striking against civilians of all ethnicities as well as rival Tamil organizations.

To summarize the development of the LTTE up to the first accord, the organization emerged when the Tamil nationalist movement became particularly insistent as a result of discriminatory policies inherent in the 1972 constitution and set out from the Bandaranaike administration. The government introduced a new constitution in 1978 to placate tensions, but many Tamils felt conciliatory efforts did not go far enough. The anti-Tamil riots that occurred in 1983 destroyed the prospects for compromise, which had already been fragile. Moreover, like other Tamil terrorist organizations, the LTTE benefited from the backing of the TULF political party and India, especially Tamil Nadu and RAW. However, it rose to dictate Tamil interests when TULF leaders forfeited their positions in government, and maintained this dominance by targeting rival

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<sup>26</sup> Moderates within these organizations joined the democratic process.

Tamil organizations, including other terrorist groups and the TULF itself. By 1987, it had become the leader of the Tamil community and most dangerous Tamil threat to the Sri Lankan government.

#### **4.2.6 The LTTE after the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord (1987)**

The first serious attempt to resolve the Sri Lankan conflict came in 1987 when the Indian and Sri Lankan governments agreed to the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord (ISPA).<sup>27</sup> At that time, India appeared to both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE as an appropriate mediator. The Indian government initially supported the LTTE but began to reconsider the extent of its support in the late 1980s. On the one hand, bolstering the Sri Lankan Tamil militants was popular domestically, as Tamil Nadu in return extended its support to the central government. On the other hand, as the LTTE became more powerful, the Indian government feared unrest in Tamil Nadu, which would lead to domestic and regional insecurity. It was evident that the Indian government could not accept repression of Sri Lankan Tamils, but neither could it accept a separate Tamil state, as unrest in Tamil Nadu would likely follow.

To avoid both fates, India offered a devolution accord to the Sri Lankan government, which the two states signed on July 29, 1987. Decentralization, the Indians believed, would be a fair compromise for both sides (the Sri Lankan government and the Tamils) as well as the best option for their own regional concerns. The plan had several provisions. First, it required the Sri Lankan government to devolve power to the provinces. Most importantly, this would grant administrative autonomy to a newly-created North Eastern Province, which would be formed by merging the separate Northern and Eastern Provinces. This provision innately gave recognition to the Tamil homeland thesis – that the Tamils had historically and culturally inhabited the northeastern region of the country. The plan also afforded the Eastern Province the opportunity to decide whether or not

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<sup>27</sup> Although the government and several Tamil actors engaged in the Thimpu Talks in July-August 1985, they broke down quickly, failing to produce any real initiatives to resolve the conflict.

it wished to remain united with the Northern Province by calling for a referendum to be held no later than December 31, 1988.<sup>28</sup> Second, the plan mandated that the government remove military personnel from barracks in the North Eastern Province and release and give full amnesty to Tamil prisoners. Third, although the 1978 constitution recognized Tamil as a national language, the plan required that it be made an official language.<sup>29</sup> Finally, for their part, all terrorist organizations would have to cease their violence and surrender arms, and the Indian government would agree to stop supporting these organizations and recognize a united Sri Lankan polity.

By and large, the Sri Lankan and Indian governments held to their end of the agreement, and all remaining members of the LTTE's adversaries agreed to forgo violence (albeit with reservations), with some members, for example of the TELO and EPRLF, even joining the democratic process. Only the LTTE opposed the accord. It felt that it should have been a part of peace negotiations, since by 1987 it had emerged as the leading advocate of Tamil interests. In fact, no representatives from the Tamil community participated in negotiations. LTTE leaders also argued that the accord did not satisfy even their minimally acceptable demands. For example, they staunchly opposed the referendum, as they believed that the historical Tamil homeland would ultimately be divided since the voters in the Eastern Province would likely decide to separate from the Northern Province.<sup>30</sup> Prabhakaran was also unwilling to give up the LTTE's cache of arms, arguing that it would invite "genocide" of the Tamil people (Premdas and Samarasinghe 1988, 682). Therefore, the organization opposed both the agreement and those Tamils supporting it, such as other militant groups and

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<sup>28</sup> The referendum to decide whether or not the Northern and Eastern Provinces should remain united was never held, as successive presidents continuously postponed it. In 2006, however, the Supreme Court declared it to be illegal, and the province was de-merged into the separate Northern and Eastern Provinces once again.

<sup>29</sup> The government approved the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in November 1987, which recognizes Tamil as an official language (and English as a link language).

<sup>30</sup> Although they were the dominant ethnic group in the province, the Tamil community constituted less than 50 percent of the Eastern Province's total population. Since the referendum would be decided by simple majority, the LTTE feared the province would separate from the Northern Province. See Sumantra Bose (2002, 641) for more information.

TULF members, believing that they betrayed the Tamil cause. Indeed, for the LTTE, Amirthalingam's support for the decentralization plan justified his assassination. Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam (1994, 171) maintains, "Amirthalingam was accused of betraying the ideas and programs of the founder-leader [S.J.V. Chelvanayakan] for small privileges from the 'fascist' Sinhalese government, a fact which probably led to his assassination." His murder is exemplary of the LTTE's opposition to the accord and its sponsors.

As the regional hegemon, India not only brokered the accord but also led the effort to enforce it. In July 1987, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) arrived in Sri Lanka to monitor adherence to the ISPA. It was inherently biased at the outset. At first, the Indian force "overlooked, if not supported, LTTE violence against other Tamil political groups and non-Tamil communities in the north and the east" (Bandarage 2009, 149). At least initially, the IPKF sanctioned LTTE violence against Sinhalese and Muslim civilians and served for many as the protector of the Tamils. However, tensions between the IPKF and the LTTE began to mount over the course of the first few months of the peacekeeping operation. This was the result of a confluence of factors. As per the principles of the accord, India stopped granting Tamil militants sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and expected all Tamil militants, including LTTE members, to surrender arms. This was unacceptable to the LTTE. The organization also charged that the Indians were not protecting them against government detentions. Equally importantly, the IPKF and LTTE could not reach an agreement on who should control the transitional administration until elections (to be held by December 31, 1987) determined the leadership of the newly established North Eastern Provincial Council (NEPC) (Bose 2002, 648). The LTTE believed that it should have a stake in the administration as a fair reward for cooperating with the IPKF. The Indians, contrarily, believed that the administration should be composed of individuals from various Tamil organizations, including

the TULF and non-LTTE terrorist groups (whose members had been supportive of the accord and cooperative with the IPKF).

These tensions initially led to minor tit-for-tat acts of violence between the IPKF and the LTTE, but by October 1987 the Indian force had initiated a full-on campaign against the organization. Until this move, the Tamils had given their support to the Indian force, but as it resulted in a high number of civilian casualties, they began to cast their allegiance to the LTTE. What started as a peacekeeping force had transformed into a full-blown combat unit that produced innumerable civilian casualties. For many Tamils, the IPKF became known as the “Innocent People Killing Force.” The brutality with which the IPKF and the LTTE fought each other and the perceived corruption that surrounded the election and administration of the NEPC killed any chance of success the ISPA might have achieved. The IPKF not only failed to eradicate the LTTE but also inadvertently contributed to its enlargement as its membership more than tripled at this time (Bose 2002, 653). Suffering severe casualties from the LTTE and facing pressure from Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, the IPKF pulled all forces out of the country by March 1990.<sup>31</sup> With its departure, the LTTE gained control of large parts of the north and east (Rajanayagam 1994, 196). Many wonder if the IPKF could have eliminated the LTTE had the force been able to stay in the country and maintain its assault on the organization.<sup>32</sup> In any event, the LTTE repositioned itself in the void left by the departure of the Indians.

By all accounts, the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka was a colossal failure. Sumantra Bose (2002) identifies three reasons why this was the case. First, the Gandhi government did not have a coherent strategy to enforce the ISPA, as it overestimated the LTTE’s willingness from the outset to

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<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, the Sri Lankan government and LTTE found common ground at this time on the basis that each side wanted the Indians out of the country. To this end, the government supplied weapons to the LTTE to fight the Indian force. Ironically, however, the organization used these weapons against the government once the Indians pulled out (author interview with Respondent 17 March 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Author interview with Respondent 17. March 2012.



buy into the agreement. Perhaps because the other Tamil actors seemed committed to the settlement, the Indians thought the LTTE would be as dedicated to peace. Second, the Indian government misunderstood the significance of the LTTE in the wider Tamil nationalist movement and thus believed that it could impose its implementation strategy on the organization, rather than seeing it as an equal partner in reaching peace. In essence, the Indians misjudged the premier place that the LTTE had created for itself. Third, once the IPKF began to fight the LTTE after October 1987, it miscalculated the strength of the organization and as a result floundered in trying to eradicate it without harming civilians. This error turned the Tamil population against the mission, which prevented it from achieving success. As Sumantra Bose (2002, 656) notes, “The cumulative effect of these three factors – each crucial at different junctures – helps explain India’s rigid, blundering strategy, which degenerated by late autumn of 1987 into a counterproductive coercion-intensive approach to peace implementation and brought about the virtual collapse of the ISPA.” 1,555 IPKF forces and 2,592 LTTE cadres died during the IPKF mission; thousands of civilians were killed by both parties (Bandarage 2009, 153).<sup>33</sup> The great irony is the country which had abetted Tamil terrorism in the beginning became a leader in trying to eradicate it.

The LTTE left the IPKF era more emboldened than before and began to carry out a campaign of violence against the Tamils, Sinhalese, and Muslims living in the North Eastern Province in an attempt to control the entire region and bring about independence. For example, in 1990, the LTTE pushed out 75,000-100,000 Muslims from Jaffna in “one of the worst incidents of ethnic cleansing in any country at any time” (Bandarage 2009, 153). It also became effective at targeting key political leaders in the conflict. On May 21, 1991, the organization assassinated ex-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi while he was campaigning for re-election, fearing that he would

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<sup>33</sup> Also during this time, the Sri Lankan government fought a JVP uprising in a war that resulted in approximately 60,000 deaths (Bandarage 2009, 153).

reintroduce an Indian force into Sri Lanka to fight the LTTE if he was again elected. The LTTE lost substantial support from Tamil Nadu as a result (Rajanayagam 1994, 201). Moreover, on May 1, 1993, the organization killed Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. Ironically, Premadasa had given weapons to the LTTE a few years earlier in order to oust the Indian force.<sup>34</sup> Carrying out both assassinations with the use of suicide bombs, it is the only terrorist organization to have been able to assassinate two heads of state.

In a little more than three years, the LTTE managed to defeat the military of the most powerful country in the region and kill two state leaders. Understanding the power the organization had acquired, Chandrika Kumaratunga, who had won the November 1994 presidential election, initiated a new peace process in yet another attempt to resolve the conflict.<sup>35</sup> Peace negotiations began in 1994 and culminated in the Declaration of Cessation of Hostilities, a ceasefire agreement reached by the Sri Lankan government and LTTE on January 5, 1995. Unfortunately, however, peace was not forthcoming. On April 19, 1995, the LTTE attacked two of the Sri Lankan Navy's boats. On May 25, 1995, the organization slaughtered 42 Sinhalese men, women, and children in the eastern village of Kallarawa (Bandarage 2009, 163). In August 1995, the government released plans to further devolve power to the provinces in a conciliatory effort that went far beyond the devolution arrangement set out in the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 1987. Despite this announcement, however, war continued, and in December 1995, the Sri Lankan military seized the Jaffna Peninsula from LTTE control during Operation Riviresa as part of the government's "war for peace" strategy. The LTTE retaliated by attacking the Central Bank in Colombo on January 31, 1996, killing 91 and injuring 1,400 (Irshad 2012), and launching an assault on a military base in Mullaitivu on July 18, 1996. This latter attack resulted in the eight-day Battle of Mullaitivu, which

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<sup>34</sup> Author interview with Respondent 17. March 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Kumaratunga was the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which led the People's Alliance coalition.

claimed the lives of over 1,000 Sri Lankan military personnel (Wijayapala 2009). The LTTE did not slow down its violence, attacking the Sri Lankan World Trade Center in Colombo in 1997 and the Temple of the Tooth (a Buddhist shrine) in Kandy in 1998, and executing at least 50 Sinhalese civilians in Gonagala in 1999 (Erpini 2012). On July 29, 1999, the organization assassinated TULF politician and International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) director Neelan Tiruchelvam, the architect of the Kumaratunga devolution initiative, delivering the final blow to the fledgling peace plan. Empowered by its victory over the Indians at the close of the 1980s and success in attacking highly visible and valued targets throughout the 1990s, the LTTE had acquired a significant amount of command and confidence by the close of the 1990s.

At the turn of the century, the LTTE reached out to the government in a seemingly odd change of position. However, there were at least two reasons for this new strategy. The first is material. When several countries in the West labeled the LTTE a terrorist organization in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, it became a criminal act for diaspora community members in these countries to finance the organization's activities. This may have convinced the LTTE to become willing to negotiate, fearing a loss of relative power as a result of a decrease in its funding. The second reason is more theoretical. Jayadeva Uyangoda (2007) argues that it was the very strength of the organization at the time that propelled it to initiate fresh talks with the government. He writes that the LTTE "thinks and acts like an emerging regional, or subnational, state" (Uyangoda 2007, 40) and since states negotiate with other states, the LTTE – as leader of the Tamil "state" – desired to negotiate with the Sri Lankan government. In any event, the government embraced the offer, and the subsequent negotiations culminated in the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) on February 22, 2002. Norway agreed to oversee the agreement and lead the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The truce held until the beginning of 2006 when severe violence erupted again, with both sides guilty of infractions. The SLMM left in January 2008, as the government officially

pulled out of the CFA and engaged in full-scale violence against the LTTE once again. Although a plethora of factors contributed to the breakdown of peace, many observers charge that a leading cause was the SLMM's alleged partiality toward the LTTE. Friction also emerged over the LTTE's Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal, which recommended power-sharing in the north and east. Proponents argued that the government should have welcomed the ISGA, as it was the first time the LTTE offered an arrangement less than full independence. Critics noted, however, that the ISGA was a blueprint for independence.

Violence between the government and the LTTE intensified despite the peace agreement. In April 2006, an LTTE suicide bomber seriously injured Sarath Fonseka who served as military commander during the end of the war. In retaliation for the attack on his life, the army carried out an aerial assault on LTTE bases in the north and east. Believing the CFA was unsalvageable, the government began to execute a plan in December 2006 to eradicate the LTTE in the Eastern Province. It focused nearly its entire effort on the Eastern Province, and by July 2007 it succeeded in the offensive with the help of General Karuna, a defector from the LTTE. In January 2008, the military then turned its attention to the Northern Province. The Sri Lankan government finally declared victory over the entire LTTE when it defeated the organization in the north and killed the organization's long-time leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in May 2009.

To sum up the events that unfolded from the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of 1987 until the end of the war in 2009, the LTTE reinforced its role as the dominant actor in Tamil politics by ousting the Indians, continuing to attack and intimidate Tamil and Muslim civilians, and ensuring support from the Tamil diaspora community, thought to number between 600,000 and 800,000 (Chalk 2008, 98). The LTTE repeatedly broke peace agreements, using negotiations to regroup and rearm, and continued its violence for the sake of Tamil Eelam until it was finally defeated by the Sri

Lankan military. It has been the deadliest ethnic terrorist organization to have ever existed (see Table 11).

### **4.3 The Muslims and Terrorist Violence**

#### **4.3.1 Overview of the Muslims in Sri Lanka**

The Muslims have been overlooked in the dominant narrative of the Sri Lankan conflict, yet they are a distinct community and have played a pivotal, albeit different, role for the Sinhalese and Tamil sides in the conflict. The Muslims in Sri Lanka consist of the Moors (97 percent) and the Malays (three percent) (Bandarage 2009, 6).<sup>36</sup> There is also a small Indian Muslim population. The Muslims comprise roughly seven percent of Sri Lanka's total population (Nuhman 2007, 17). Although dispersed throughout the country, they maintain a concentrated population in the Eastern Province, as one third of all Muslims in the country resides there. The Muslims constitute 42 percent of the population of the Ampara District, located in the Eastern Province, making them the largest ethnic group in the district (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 8; International Crisis Group 2007, 1). They had constituted roughly five percent of the Northern Province's population until the LTTE expelled them in 1990 in a massive ethnic cleansing campaign. Two thirds of Sri Lanka's Muslims reside in the Sinhalese-majority south, with large populations in urban areas, such as Colombo and Kandy.

The Muslim community is a group ethnically distinct from both the Sinhalese and Tamils. With some exceptions, whereas the Sinhalese practice Buddhism and the Tamils are Hindus, the Muslims follow Sunni Islam. Hence, Islamic traditions, customs, and principles distinguish Muslim identity from other groups in Sri Lanka. Most Muslims speak Tamil and many reside in the Eastern

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<sup>36</sup> Because the Moors make up the vast majority of the Muslim community, some interchange the terms, "Moor" and "Muslim."

Province, a region claimed for Tamil Eelam, which has led Tamil nationalists to insist that the Muslim community is not a distinct community at all but a faction of the larger Tamil ethnic group.<sup>37</sup> The LTTE, for example, consistently attempted to dominate the Muslims and subsume Muslim interests under the wider Tamil cause throughout its campaign. However, the Muslims have always rebuffed these efforts, as they have felt a stronger connection to their religion than to the Tamil language (Imtiyaz 2009, 407).<sup>38</sup> This response differs from that of the Muslims in Tamil Nadu, who have sustained their ethnic and linguistic classification as Muslim Tamils (McGilvray 2008, 314). Sri Lankan Muslims feared for their survival in the event that an LTTE-dominated Tamil Eelam state, in which they would have become a minority, materialized. As K.M. de Silva (1998, 251) states, “For decades, Tamil leaders or politicians spoke of the Tamils and Muslims as one people united by language but divided by religion. That is at best a half-truth, and in any event it is passionately rejected by the Muslims for whom the language they speak is much less important than the religion and culture that divides them from the Tamils.”

#### **4.3.2 Muslim Identity and Nationalism**

The Muslims have had a long presence in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Moors trace their roots to Indo-Arab and Persian traders who settled in Sri Lanka (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 1) between the eighth and fifteenth centuries. Other Muslims, such as the Malays and Indian Muslims, came to the country during Portuguese, Dutch, and British rules.<sup>39</sup> Traditionally, the Muslims have been associated with trade, agriculture, and business. After a lengthy and heated debate in the twentieth century over which term should be used to identify the group, most now refer to the community as

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<sup>37</sup> Many Muslims also speak Sinhalese in the southern region of the country.

<sup>38</sup> Author interview with Respondent 13. February 2012.

<sup>39</sup> The Portuguese era lasted from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century; the Dutch era spanned the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and British rule was from 1815 to 1948.

the “Muslims” rather than the “Moors,” reflecting a desire to categorize all adherents to the Islamic faith into one group rather than only those who identify with Moorish culture.

Until the early twentieth century, the Muslims had been more or less apolitical (de Silva 1998, 254). Even after the Sinhalese-Muslim riots of 1915, during which time members of the Sinhalese-Buddhist community launched an assault on Muslim merchants that the British had to suppress (McGilvray 2011, 53), they did not appear to be interested in establishing a separatist or even nationalist agenda vis-à-vis government authorities, although they approached Sinhalese political action with some suspicion. Moreover, although Muslim politicians participated in government, none were major political figures, and they were only interested in achieving recognition of personal laws derived from Islam and securing education rights (de Silva 1998, 256).

Despite the Sinhalese-Muslim tensions after the 1915 riots, from independence in 1948 until the outbreak of war in the 1980s the Muslims thought it most strategically beneficial to partner with Sinhalese-majority national parties, such as the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP), to advance their political and economic interests rather than take the route of the Tamils and mandate at first administrative autonomy and then outright independence. This explains why until the 1980s pragmatism was the dominant political feature of the Muslim community (Klem 2011, 746) and Muslim nationalist political parties had been noticeably absent. One Muslim leader, Razik Fareed, even supported the controversial Sinhala Only Act of 1956 although the act affected the Muslims since they speak Tamil (McGilvray 2008, 317), reaffirming the notion that the Muslims are more committed to advancing their religious and cultural goals than preserving their use of the Tamil language. The Muslims particularly gained with regard to education policies.<sup>40</sup> Dennis B. McGilvray and Mirak Raheem (2007, 14) claim, “The general tendency of Muslim politics from independence in 1948 up to the outbreak of the armed conflict in

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<sup>40</sup> See K.M. de Silva (1998, 262-263) and Dennis B. McGilvray (2008, 317) for more details.

the 1980s was to accommodate Sinhala nationalism in exchange for socioeconomic concessions and privileges for the Muslim community, and to remain aloof from the Tamil ethnic struggle.” Sinhalese-majority parties like the SLFP and UNP, for their part, have extensively relied on the Muslim community to win elections. “Governments have changed with remarkable frequency in Sri Lanka, and the Muslim community, small though it is, has contributed mightily to these swings of the electoral pendulum” (de Silva 1998, 264). Moreover, the benefits to the Muslim community were due in great part to the government’s interest in securing a buttress against the Tamils (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 18). Thus, the partnership between the Muslims and Sinhalese benefited both sides.

Muslim identity has always been a signature feature of Sri Lankan politics throughout the state’s history but has played an especially important role since independence as the ethnic group consolidated its interests and pursued its objectives through strategic partnerships. However, a specific Muslim nationalist movement, with the fundamental objective of advancing Muslim interests on their own terms, began to surface in the 1980s during the country’s descent into civil war. As the Sri Lankan military and Tamil militants became embroiled in battle after the 1983 riots, the Muslims began to articulate their own nationalist agenda. This was the result of two related factors. On the one hand, the Muslims had managed to pursue their interests through partnerships with the Sinhalese-majority political parties. Yet as Sinhalese-Tamil relations deteriorated, the government intensified its promotion of the Sinhalese nationalist agenda vis-à-vis the Tamils, much to the dismay of the Muslims (and other minorities in the country). In addition, the Muslims felt that the national government and the Indian Peace Keeping Force could not safeguard their community against Tamil violence. On the other hand, although tensions between the Tamils and Muslims in the northern and eastern areas of the country had existed since independence, relations had been more or less stable with very few episodes of violence. This changed when the conflict



began, as Tamil militants forcibly recruited Muslims to participate in the Tamil struggle and attacked Muslim rivals and moderates, on the conviction that the Muslims were linguistically Tamils and therefore should contribute to the war effort. In the late 1980s, the LTTE in particular targeted the Muslims for their support of the EPRLF-dominated North Eastern Provincial Council and tolerance of the Indian military presence (de Silva 1998, 268). Thus, Muslim elites, neither comfortable with Sinhalese nor Tamil nationalism, formulated their own agenda, feeling as though Muslim representatives in mainstream national parties “failed to offer an effective response to the concerns of the victimized northeastern Muslims” (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 24). Thus, the distinct Muslim agenda was the product of ethnic chauvinism that intensified for both sides at the start of the war.

The Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC) came to dominate this agenda. The SLMC emerged as a political party in 1981 and first contested the elections of the North Eastern Provincial Council in 1989, becoming the main opposition party (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 25). The party’s charismatic leader, M.H.M. Ashraff, managed to stimulate support especially in the east (but also across the country) on the basis of articulating a platform purely interested in promoting and protecting Muslim interests. The SLMC was not the first Muslim nationalist organization; however, benefiting from effective leadership and the political environment in which it emerged, the party succeeded in becoming the leading advocate for the Muslims. It rose to become the overarching actor in the growing Muslim nationalist movement and advanced Muslim interests while the Muslims became increasingly sidelined by Sinhalese and Tamil nationalist agendas. Indeed, the Muslims in the east had pushed for a party to protect them from LTTE atrocities (McGilvray 2011, 55). Since the 1980s, the SLMC has been the dominant force in Muslim politics.

The establishment of the SLMC did not go unchallenged, however. The party’s popularity and influence signaled to the LTTE that the Muslims could not be brought under its control. As the

International Crisis Group (2007, 6) observes, “The formation of the SLMC was a clear political threat to LTTE domination of the region’s politics.” Ashraff had been negotiating a Muslim Provincial Council, with the Ampara District as its core, to manage Muslim communities in the Eastern and Northern Provinces (de Silva 1998, 269). Ashraff’s push for Muslim autonomy meant that the Muslims would likely elect to separate from the Northern Province once the referendum set out in the ISPA took place in order to avoid domination by Tamil elites. In addition to the growth in Muslim nationalism, the LTTE resented continued Muslim cooperation with the government.

For the LTTE, these developments were unacceptable, since they threatened plans for an LTTE-controlled independent Tamil Eelam. The organization therefore retaliated against the Muslims with brutal assaults in 1990. In August 1990, the organization killed 260 Muslims in attacks against mosques in Kattankudy and Eravur (Eastern Province) (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 22). Moreover, the LTTE expelled the Muslims from the north in October 1990. The LTTE gave the Muslims 48 hours to leave the area (International Crisis Group 2007, 7). K.M. de Silva (1998, 269) describes the pogrom: “The LTTE was unrelenting in its pressure – the Muslims were expelled, their houses looted of their contents including cash, jewellery and other valuables. The people who were thus driven out took refuge in Muslim villages in the Sinhalese districts adjacent to the Northern Province.” Thus, the emergence of the SLMC and the wider Muslim nationalist movement was, in large part, a response to Tamil aggression. However, it is an unfortunate consequence that in endeavoring to protect their interests they attracted more LTTE violence, leading to the death and displacement of countless Muslims.

These episodes only reinforced Muslim nationalism, pushing the community to continue to pursue its interests and protection in the Sri Lankan polity. For example, in the last ceasefire arrangement (2002-2006), the SLMC demanded that negotiations include Muslim representatives, as the Muslim population in the east would be significantly affected if LTTE demands for an interim

administration or permanent constitution reform were met (Peiris 2002). One argument made was that the war had been a tripartite conflict that required a tripartite solution. Despite this push, however, Sinhalese and Tamil nationalists rejected Muslim demands to be full participants in the peace process (McGilvray 2011, 56; International Crisis Group 2007, 9).

It is important to note that although Muslim nationalism did emerge, albeit late in comparison to other nationalist movements in the country, and has intensified since its initial development, it has not progressed in an antagonistic fashion. The Muslims have neither detached themselves politically from the Sinhalese, who as the majority group dominate the state, nor from the Tamils, beside whom they live in the northeast region of the country. In fact, the SLMC has collaborated with the Sinhalese-majority parties in the tradition of Muslim-Sinhalese political cooperation, and even entered into coalitions with these parties, for example with the SLFP in 1994 (de Silva 1998, 270). The Muslims have also played a critical military role for the government during the war. As one interviewee (2010) notes, “they have been used effectively for intelligence gathering by the government as they speak Tamil.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover (while to a lesser extent), the Muslims have continued to cooperate with various Tamil representatives. For example, although the LTTE forcibly recruited many Muslims into its ranks, a few Muslims voluntarily joined the LTTE, as well as the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS) (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 20). At times in the process to establish a Muslim administrative unit in the Eastern and Northern Provinces, the SLMC negotiated with the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) as well as the Ceylon Workers Congress, a political party representing Indian Tamils (Bandarage 2009, 159-160). In February 2002, Prabhakaran and SLMC leader Rauf Hakeem endorsed a deal which included provisions for the Muslims who were expelled during the 1990 campaign to return to their homes (Ramachandran 2002) although this deal did not materialize in the end.

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<sup>41</sup> Author interview with Respondent 10 (via e-mail). June 2010.

Thus, the Muslim nationalist movement not only aimed to advance Muslim interests irrespective of Sinhalese and Tamil positions but also pursued Muslim goals in partnership with the government and at times with some segments of the Tamil community, even after the atrocities of 1990. For their part, the Sinhalese-majority parties relied on the support of the Muslim community to advance their own political objectives, such as endeavoring to win elections and establishing a buffer against the LTTE. Meanwhile, Tamil actors repeatedly tried to acquire Muslim support – through both violent and nonviolent means – in order to achieve an independent Tamil Eelam. Thus, in reality, Muslim politics are strikingly complex, as the Muslims often find themselves “caught in the crossfire” (International Crisis Group 2007).

#### **4.3.3 Muslim Terrorist Violence**

Muslim violence has been strikingly low in comparison with Tamil terrorism. This has been the case despite tensions the Muslim community has had with the Tamils – as well as the Sinhalese on occasion – throughout the war. The fact that a terrorist strategy has been missing from the Muslim nationalist agenda has been the result of the government’s willingness to reach out to the Muslims, albeit to advance its own agenda, rather than discriminate against them as it did against the Tamils before and during the war. In addition, the leadership of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC), a strong and steadfast force in Muslim politics, has been adamant about channeling Muslim grievances through nonviolent political routes instead of terrorist activities.

While at a low level, the violence that has occurred from the Muslim community has taken shape in two distinct ways: 1) Muslim participation in Tamil terrorist organizations in the 1980s and 2) Muslim retaliation for LTTE attacks in the early 1990s.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, there is concern that the

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<sup>42</sup> Although the Muslims have been involved in some riots and skirmishes since before independence, this level of violence has been markedly low.

radicalization of the Muslim community, which has been in process since at least the early 1990s (International Crisis Group 2007, i), will lead to terrorist activity. It is as yet unclear whether or not this movement is (or will become) principally ethnic/nationalist or in line with the global ummah (McGilvray 2011).

Some Muslims willingly participated in Tamil terrorist organizations, namely the LTTE and EROS, in the early stage of the war. One Muslim even became an area leader of the EPRLF (Nuhman 2007, 152).<sup>43</sup> The International Crisis Group (2007, 5) observes, “As Tamils began to organise militant groups in the 1970s, some Muslims in the north and east also joined in the struggle for Tamil rights, reflecting common concerns over land, language and the failure of the Sinhalese community to recognise the grievances of minority communities.” Moreover, many Tamil militants took advantage of the wider Muslim community’s sympathy and hid from security forces in Muslim villages. The LTTE enjoyed the support of the Muslims and became popular among some sectors of the community (Imtiyaz 2009, 410). At that time, many Muslims felt a kinship to the Tamils based on their shared status as minority groups in the country and thus sympathized with the Tamil struggle for independence. Muslim nationalism was also not fully matured then to mark clear dividing lines between Tamil and Muslim identities and aspirations (the SLMC did not become an influential fixture in Muslim politics until the late 1980s). Thus, Tamil armed groups benefited, at least in the beginning, from some active – and extensive passive – support from the Muslim community. However, the extent of Muslim participation is regarded to have been quite low.

As the war waged on, the LTTE became the dominant actor in the Tamil separatist movement. In part, it had secured this status due to the willing support of some members of the Muslim community. Thus, it came as a great shock to the Muslims when the LTTE expelled its

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<sup>43</sup> It is important to note, however, that Tamil terrorist groups also forced Muslim support in the form of finances, logistics, and recruitment (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 20).

Muslim cadres and launched attacks against the Muslim community in 1990. As mentioned above, the LTTE resented Muslim elites' pursuit of administrative autonomy and feared that the Muslims in the Eastern Province would elect to de-merge from the Northern Province once the referendum was held. This appears to have been a strategic blunder on the part of the organization, as the anti-Muslim attacks only hardened Muslim identity politics and reaffirmed that Muslim interests were indeed different from Tamil aspirations. Any Muslim support and sympathy that the organization had enjoyed before the 1990 attacks in effect ended. In fact, some Muslims retaliated against the LTTE's assaults, which apparently included attacks on Tamil civilians (Hoole 2001). The Muslims who had been members of the LTTE (but were later expelled) were also targeted (International Crisis Group 2007, 7). Despite the LTTE's egregious attacks on the Muslims, a terrorist campaign did not emerge, as this possibility lacked support due to fear of further LTTE violence, disorganization, and political moderation. Muslim reprisals at the time should not be condoned, but the reality is that the campaign of retaliatory violence could have been much more severe.

The most recent fear concerning violence has centered on a possible Islamist threat emanating from the Muslim community, particularly in the Eastern Province. Some armed Muslim gangs and extremist preachers have existed in the region (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 42) since the 1990s. These groups have included the Osama Group, Muttur Jetty Group, and Knox Group, but they appear to have been small and ineffective and concerned only with protecting their people against LTTE attacks rather than targeting the state (Ramachandran 2005). The International Crisis Group (2007, 25) explains, "None of these groups were large or very powerful; they mostly focused on semi-criminal activities and racketeering, as well as some attacks on the LTTE." Moreover, tensions between radical and moderate Muslims have also been developing. Since the 1980s, the development of ultra-orthodox interpretations of Islam has provoked conflict with Sufism (International Crisis Group 2007, 22). As one example, Orthodox Wahhabi clerics, trained in Saudi

Arabia, incited a mob to attack followers of Sufi Islam and their mosque in October 2004 in Kattankudy in the Eastern Province (Ramachandran 2005). Yet these episodes have been local, not widespread. Thus, although attention to Muslim extremism in the east has increased over the past decade or so, the threat of separatist or jihadist terrorism seems exaggerated. As Dennis B. McGilvray and Mirak Raheem (2007, 13) point out, “no conclusive evidence of militant or violent Islamist movements has been found.” One important reason that this has been the case is the moderation advocated by the SLMC. The SLMC’s agenda is to preserve the status quo without advocating radicalism that would entice extremists (McGilvray 2011, 56).

To summarize, Muslim involvement with terrorism has been notably low in comparison to Tamil engagement. Although some Muslims supported Tamil terrorism in the 1980s, their involvement was minimal and ended after the LTTE’s horrific massacres against the Muslims in 1990. It is difficult to determine the precise character of the violence used by the Muslims in retaliation for the 1990 attacks, but in any case, it did not escalate into full-scale terrorist activity against either the Tamils or the state. In fact, the Muslims pursued nonviolent political channels to ensure their protection, primarily because cooperation with the state precluded the motive for terrorism. In addition, the Muslims have not resorted to separatist or jihadist terrorism even after many Muslims throughout the world opposed the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nonetheless, the concern about radicalism among segments of the Muslim community, especially in the east, remains valid as a few incidents have highlighted conflict between extremists and moderates. Thus, the Muslim leadership and wider community must continue to play an active role in monitoring and preventing this threat. As Dennis B. McGilvray and Mirak Raheem (2007, 43) acknowledge, “Ultimately, if mainstream Muslim politicians fail to deliver a workable solution in the northeast, the emergence of Muslim militancy may not be unthinkable, but as of now, moderate Muslim politics

dominates at a macro level and appears to have isolated and contained local militancy of either the ethnic separatist or the Islamist religious type.”

#### **4.4 Comparing the Cases**

What factors explain why terrorism erupted in full force from the Tamil community but not from among the Muslims? The motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) framework provides a useful way to analyze variation in terrorism between the two communities. Ultimately, the degree of terrorism corresponds with levels of human security violations (motive), sponsorship (means), and the occasion for dominance of the ethno-political space (opportunity).

##### **4.4.1 Motive: Human Security Violations**

An important factor in explaining LTTE terrorism, particularly in its initial wave, is the high level of human security violations that the Tamil community had endured for decades. Shortly after Sri Lanka achieved independence in 1948, Sinhalese nationalism, advanced by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and Buddhist monks (bhikkus), sidelined the Tamils. The 1956 Sinhala Only Act promulgated Sinhalese as the state’s official language and in the process essentially relegated the Tamils to second-class status, as many Tamils could not function in a Sinhalese-language public sector. Riots ensued in 1956 and 1958 over language policy, sharpening the divide between the two ethnic groups. Furthermore, Sirimavo Bandaranaike’s policies of the early 1960s and the 1972 constitution reinforced Sinhalese and Buddhism as the country’s preferred language and religion. As one interviewee (2012) argues, “the 1972 constitution consolidated Tamil grievances from 1956.”<sup>44</sup> Finally, the most immediate impetus to widespread Tamil terrorism was the July 1983 riots, which affected thousands of Tamils. The exact nature of the government’s involvement in the riots is

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<sup>44</sup> Author interview with Respondent 17. March 2012.



unknown, but in any event it at least passively allowed the violence to continue, as police officers did not stop the riots.<sup>45</sup> Neil DeVotta (2004, 167) argues that these factors coalesced to encourage Tamil militarism. S.J. Tambiah (1986, 17) adds, “the Sinhalese majority have since 1956 persistently discriminated against the Tamils, especially in the fields of education and job recruitment, and Tamil objections to these injustices have sporadically been rewarded with violence.” Conciliatory policies introduced in the late 1970s did not satisfy Tamil elites. As Asoka Bandarage (2009, 93) notes, “The Tamil secessionists’ interest did not lie in integrating themselves into the Sri Lankan polity but in separating from it. The language recognition, university admissions, fundamental rights, and equality they had sought were now available to them, but they were not satisfied.” For many, it was too little, too late. The practice of discrimination established the grievances necessary to launch the terrorist campaign.

It is critical to note that another motive for the LTTE’s terrorist campaign was Prabhakaran’s unwavering desire for independence. Indeed, his constant use of terrorism and decision to abrogate peace on at least three separate occasions are attributed to the quest for independence. However, the overarching desire for independence is an extension of the persistent abuse of the Tamils’ human security rights. As Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam (1994, 177) argues, “the justification for the right of self-determination of the Tamils is explained very effectively by narrating the history of suppression and oppression of the Tamils by the Sinhalese during the past 40 years.” Shri D.R. Kaarthikeyan (2005, 131) concurs, “The Tamils in Sri Lanka wanted an end to their discrimination. The [LTTE’s] answer to their plea was a separate homeland.” Discrimination against the community spurred on the independence movement. For diehard nationalists, the only way to secure the protection of the Tamil community was to escape Sinhalese domination by completely separating from the state. In Sri Lanka, the push from Tamil nationalists for autonomy

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<sup>45</sup> Author interview with Respondent 16. March 2012.

to weak separatism to intransigent independence corresponds with increasing human security violations. The Tamil nationalist movement became more separatist and inflexible only after the introduction of increasingly discriminatory government policies, such as those set out in the 1956 Sinhala Only Act, 1972 constitution, and 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act. If policy had accommodated Tamil interests from the beginning, the desire for independence would have been much weaker and certainly much less violent. The case of the Tamils suggests that the development of ethnic terrorism is an initial response to human security violations, rather than a sudden and insatiable thirst for independence.

In contrast to the Tamils, the Muslims did not face much discrimination from the central government; thus, the motivation for terrorism has been low. Since independence, Muslim elites have achieved their goals through partnerships with various administrations, which have centered mainly on the protection of their religion and advancement of their economic and education interests. As K.D. de Silva (1998, 259) argues, “All governments respected the ethnic identity of the Muslims and have, in fact, helped to protect and foster this.” Asoka Bandarage (2009, 59) adds that “Sinhala politicians who saw Tamil demands as ‘imperious’ were more amenable to allowing concessions to Muslims, who were seen as a more accommodating and ‘less threatening’ minority.” Therefore, Muslim elites have elected to follow a collaborative strategy with Sinhalese-majority parties. Even the Sinhala Only Act, which mandated Muslims to learn Sinhalese to avail themselves of public provisions, did not seem to inconvenience them, as they did not embrace the Tamil language as a key component of their identity. The government did not violate Muslim interests but actually sought to preserve them. Thus, the Muslims have never felt motivated to stage a large-scale terrorist campaign against the government. The threats to Muslim security that did occur emanated primarily from the LTTE. In part, this motivated the Muslims to establish a nationalist agenda and accounted for the occurrence of some Muslim violence. However, as noted earlier this movement

was much more collaborative than the Tamils' unyielding position, and the violence was strikingly minimal. On the whole, the Muslims have never felt the motivation to carry out terrorism against the state.

#### **4.4.2 Means: Sponsorship**

In addition to the established motive, a mix of willing and forcibly extracted sponsorship from various actors also explains the rise in LTTE terrorism. Early Tamil militant youths were affectionately referred to as the “boys,” as they were seen as warding off Sinhalese encroachment and “rebelled against some of the established norms of traditional Sri Lankan Tamil society” (Rajanayagam 1994, 170). The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) also originally supported the militants, if in no other capacity than to condone their activities. The memberships of the LTTE and other Tamil groups swelled after the 1983 riots, as the Tamils became victims of Sinhalese brutality. The diaspora community supported the LTTE.<sup>46</sup> Diaspora community members in India and elsewhere (many of whom had been targets of the riots) contributed their support in a number of ways but especially by providing funding. Indeed, many Tamils in the developed world resolutely financed the organization throughout the duration of its campaign.<sup>47</sup> At least initially, Tamil support for the LTTE emerged in response to human security violations. Moreover, the Indian government passively allowed militants to take sanctuary in Tamil Nadu throughout the 1980s, and its Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) actively trained them at camps in the country (Marks 2007, 491-492). Supporting the LTTE and other groups was domestically popular for Indian politicians. “Indeed, without the support of politicians in neighboring Tamil Nadu and the policies of the Indian central government, the Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka could not have emerged, let alone prospered” (Bandarage 2009, 66). As one interviewee (2012) observes, “India facilitated the

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<sup>46</sup> Author interview with Respondent 11. December 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Author interview with Respondent 13. February 2012.

problem and then tried to remedy it. It tried to defeat what it had created.”<sup>48</sup> The LTTE benefited significantly from willing and active sponsorship. As Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam (1994, 201) claims, “The LTTE has not only the military strength to carry on the fight, it has also the understanding and sympathy of the population which continues to support it in spite of its harsh and often brutal treatment of its own people.”

At the same time, the LTTE forcibly extracted support from the Tamils who otherwise would not have given it. It demanded financial contributions from the Tamil population, domestic and abroad, in order to fund its activities, and brutally conscripted people, including children, into the organization. Neil DeVotta (2004, 172) argues, “The contributions the diaspora collected to support Tamil *eelam* were initially voluntary, but they were just as likely to be extorted” (*italics in original*). Asoka Bandarage (2009, 155) adds, “In the final analysis, the LTTE’s image as the Tamil liberator fighting the oppressive Sinhalese was built not only on the powerlessness of ordinary Tamils, but also the silence and complicity of the Tamil diaspora, intelligentsia, churchmen, and external supports of Tamil separatism.” The LTTE achieved this silence by vowing to take revenge against those who spoke out against its activities (Wriggins 1995, 44). Dissidents were regularly killed. Force, intimidation, manipulative propaganda, and revenge killings were all instruments used against the Tamil community to bolster the campaign. One interviewee (2012) argues that there was no other choice for the Tamils, given the LTTE’s coercive tax system and conscription policies.<sup>49</sup> The LTTE in large part was able to conduct its activities by forcibly extracting support.

In stark contrast, Muslim support for terrorism has been virtually non-existent. This is due in large part to Sinhalese collaboration with, rather than discrimination against, the Muslims. Although some Muslims joined violent Tamil organizations in the 1980s, their numbers were few.

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<sup>48</sup> Author interview with Respondent 12. February 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Author interview with Respondent 12. February 2012.

Others retaliated against the Tamils in the early 1990s for the LTTE's assault on the Muslims, but the Muslim community did not actively support these activities for fear of LTTE retaliation. Thus, these small armed factions have been ineffective at the national level.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the Muslims have sought to achieve their goals through political channels and not through terrorism. Unlike the TULF in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the SLMC has not condoned terrorism. For example, one interviewee (2012) maintains that after the 1990 mosque attacks, the SLMC leader M.H.M. Ashraff was vocal about advocating moderation and continuing to pursue nonviolent means.<sup>51</sup> The International Crisis Group (2007, 7) claims that Muslim leaders called for calm and agreed to a Muslim home guard establishment "for fear of more radical groups taking up arms against the LTTE." Moreover, the Muslims in Colombo have strikingly different interests than the Muslims in the east, and their support for terrorism, as well as self-determination, has been minimal. Thus far, no segment of the Muslim community has sustained a terrorist campaign to repel human security violations or to advance a Muslim separatist or jihadist agenda. Muslim terrorism has not become normalized in the country due to the lack of sponsorship, active and passive, from Sri Lankan Muslims, making efforts by a small number of actors to establish terrorism in the region ineffective and powerless.

#### **4.4.3 Opportunity: Occasion for Dominance of the Ethno-Political Agenda**

In addition to the motive to reject human security violations and the means of sponsorship, the opportunity for dominance found in the ethno-political space contributed to the LTTE's terrorist campaign. A power vacuum left in Tamil political space allowed the LTTE's campaign to reach an extreme level of violence. Until the early 1980s, the TULF was the dominant force in

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<sup>50</sup> Author correspondence with Respondent 10 (via e-mail). June 2010.

<sup>51</sup> Author interview with Respondent 16. March 2012.

Tamil politics. However, over the course of the next decade, the LTTE assumed this role. Interestingly, this is the result of the evolution of the TULF from tolerating (if not outright supporting) early Tamil terrorist activity to fading away from the Tamil political space after the introduction of the Sixth Amendment in 1983 to becoming a target of LTTE terrorism. The TULF did not challenge early Tamil militancy because it was more interested in achieving independence than ensuring nonviolence. When the TULF's leaders decided to abandon the political process, the LTTE capitalized on their departure and all too eagerly assumed their role as the representative of the Tamils. "As the TULF gave up working within the Sri Lankan polity, the armed Tamil groups began to fill the power vacuum and to monopolize the Tamil political agenda" (Bandarage 2009, 111). K.M. de Silva (1998, 138-139) adds, "By the early 1980s, the parliamentarians of the TULF seem to have ceded to them, or were compelled to cede to them, the principal leadership role in the separatist movement." As one interviewee (2012) notes, "the TULF was a puppet of the LTTE."<sup>52</sup> Its leaders were increasingly irrelevant and marginalized (Bose 2002, 637).

After establishing a sound footing within the Tamil community, not least because of the support generated in the aftermath of the 1983 riots, the LTTE secured the opportunity to lead the struggle by attacking enemies, rivals, moderates, and allies. Similar to Mia Bloom's (2004) observation of the Palestinian case, ethnic outbidding and elite competition in the Tamil space help to designate the particularly brutal period. In his ruthlessness and brutality, Prabhakaran did not spare any group, fearing the supremacy of another entity or individual. Of course, the national government and military had been targets of the LTTE from the outset, but the rise of the LTTE is also attributed to the expansion of the range of targets with the Tamil community, as Prabhakaran saw these actors as competitors. TULF leaders, rival terrorist organizations, IPKF forces, and ethnic Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslim civilians all became victims of the LTTE's violence. Writing before

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<sup>52</sup> Author interview with Respondent 12. February 2012.

the demise of the organization, Neil DeVotta (2004, 173) asserts, “The LTTE refuses to be marginalized and it has consequently intimidated and assassinated opponents to ensure it alone represents the Tamils.” Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam (1994, 171) further observes that the LTTE has “succeeded in virtually eliminating all other groups which have aspired to share power, or even to replace the LTTE as the most dominant and influential group in the Tamil community.”

The brutality with which the organization attacked critics and bullied moderates ensured its survival. “By 1986-1987 . . . the LTTE . . . had . . . clearly emerged as the dominant Tamil fighting force, partly because of its superior dedication, organization, leadership, and tactical skills, and partly because of its ruthless proficiency in killing members of rival guerrilla groups” (Bose 2002, 634). Prabhakaran’s quest for independence and for personal and organizational power made his campaign especially brutal. Thus, the initial opportunity for LTTE domination not only allowed the organization to hijack the nationalist agenda but also put it on a path to an especially brutal terrorist campaign.

The LTTE’s domination over the Tamil ethno-political space continued up to the end of the war. In fact, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), a political coalition formed in 2001 and originally comprising of the TULF, Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), publicly recognized the LTTE as the lone Tamil entity with the right to negotiate with the Sri Lankan government on Tamil interests. Asoka Bandarage (2009, 176-177) argues:

The LTTE had brutally and systematically eliminated the leaders of the TULF, EPRLF, TELO, over the years. But, out of fear and opportunism, the ‘moderate’ groups comprising the TNA now accepted the LTTE as ‘sole representatives of Tamils’, becoming what critics have called ‘mindless and soulless puppets’ of the LTTE.

In essence, the political leadership deferred to the Tamil militant groups, among which the LTTE emerged as the leader. This helps to explain the organization’s ability to maintain a large-scale

terrorist campaign until its military defeat. Dominating Tamil space throughout the course of the war enabled the organization to perpetuate violence.

The LTTE's domination of the Tamil ethno-political space contributed to its terrorist activity in three specific ways. First, as it rose to preeminence by marginalizing and eliminating rivals, it attracted the support of those Tamils who might have otherwise supported the TULF or competing political organizations. Thus, some Tamils backed the LTTE because viable alternatives were at first weak and then altogether absent. It is likely that had the TULF, for example, been committed to working within the democratic process in the mid-1980s, many Tamils would have rallied behind its leaders and pursued nonviolence rather than encourage an armed struggle. However, the TULF condoned LTTE's violence, in essence giving the organization more support than it otherwise would have received. The LTTE also benefited from support because of its steadfast commitment to fighting Sinhalese encroachment and the Indian Peace Keeping Force. For many, the LTTE was the defender of Tamil interests and avenger for Tamil harm. Many Tamils wanted to support the entity that had achieved desired outcomes in the past and exhibited the most promise in achieving objectives in the future. They found this entity in the LTTE. Through this support, the LTTE benefited from additional funds, recruits, intelligence, and the ability to move freely throughout Tamil areas, which allowed it to carry out its terrorist campaign. Thus, the opportunity and means to dominate were mutually reinforcing.

Second, by emerging as the dominant actor in Tamil ethno-political space, the LTTE secured the status of being the sole force with which the government had to contend and negotiate. The government's recognition of Prabhakaran and the LTTE leadership as the sole Tamil agent legitimized the organization in the country and the international community. This further incentivized terrorism. The logic was that if terrorism propelled the organization to become the overriding Tamil force, more terrorism would surely propel it to achieve its goal of Tamil Eelam.



Recognition validated its actions. The three sets of peace negotiations directly between the government and LTTE served dual purposes for the latter. They simultaneously preserved the organization's status as the sole Tamil representative and indirectly perpetuated violence, as the LTTE used ceasefires to regroup and rearm.

Third, capturing Tamil space ensured the LTTE's organizational survival and advancement. Its terroristic conduct entrenched the organization deep into the Tamil community and broadcasted its objectives to the state and international community. It believed it had to continue its terrorist campaign to uphold this position. The organization's rise to power came by marginalizing and eliminating rival Tamil groups. At the same time, maintaining power came by expanding the scope of targets to include the Indians and Muslims. It eliminated groups that it believed threatened its survival and the prospect for independence. Indeed, Prabhakaran believed he was in the process of constructing a state which he would govern. Thus, the LTTE justified its continued violence to ensure its viability and prospect for statehood.

In contrast, the Muslims have opted to take the political route.<sup>53</sup> No Muslim terrorists have been able to squeeze out the SLMC in order to dominate Muslim ethno-political space. SLMC leaders have not condoned terrorist activity by others, as the TULF did, but rather advocated nonviolent political means to achieve Muslim goals. Nor has the SLMC adopted terrorism itself, like the LTTE. This is due to the utility its leaders have seen in working with national officials, as well as its more compromising nationalist position – seeking autonomy rather than independence. Even if the motive and means were established within the Muslim community, most likely in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the wake of LTTE violence, potential terrorists would have found it extremely difficult to marginalize M.H.M. Ashraff and the other SLMC leaders, not least because of their desire to represent the Muslims. “Muslims created ethnic/nationalist political parties (especially the

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<sup>53</sup> Author correspondence with Respondent 10 (via e-mail). June 2010.

SLMC) to protect their interests and at the same time to rally Sri Lankan Muslims under a common banner. This appears to have forestalled the development of militant Muslim movements” (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 50). In a critical point in Muslim politics, the SLMC – committed to working with the government – filled the political void, emerging as the “major new political force for Muslims” (McGilvray and Raheem 2007, 19).

My interviews in Sri Lanka largely support the argument that the LTTE took advantage of a power vacuum left by political leaders, while no void materialized in similar fashion within the Muslim community. To ensure that terrorism does not erupt from the Muslim community, it is essential that Muslim political and cultural institutions stomp out terrorism in its early stage.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The cases of the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka have been illustrative in explaining why large-scale terrorism erupts from some ethnic communities but not others. From the Tamil community, the LTTE managed to stage a brutal campaign. Despite some similarities with the Tamils, the Muslims have not witnessed a comparable terrorist movement. Severe human security violations account for the initial motive for terrorist activity in the Tamil case, and this violence was especially brutal and long-lasting. In contrast, Muslim violence was noticeably low due to the lack of such state-perpetrated violations. Moreover, variation in terrorist levels can also be attributed to the means of sponsorship and opportunity for organizational dominance of the ethno-political space. The reality is that the LTTE benefited from a wide range of support – domestically and from abroad, active and passive, and willing and unwilling – which centered on the call for terrorism initiated as a result of discriminatory and repressive measures and furthered by the quest for independence. Muslim terrorism did not receive support, in large part due to its less nationalistic desire, the absence of discrimination from the government, and continuance of political partnership

with the Sinhalese-majority national parties. A power vacuum in the Tamil ethno-political space enabled the LTTE to gain control of the Tamil agenda. The organization solidified its preeminence by eliminating rivals and moderates of all kinds through elite competition and in line with Prabhakaran's charismatic yet ruthless mission for independence and power. In contrast, the SLMC firmly led the Muslim nationalist agenda and sought to protect and pursue Muslim interests through nonviolent channels. Lacking motive and means for terrorism, the SLMC embodied Ashraff's politically collaborative position. In brief, I argue that the combination of these three factors (motive, means, and opportunity) accounts for the varying degrees of terrorism between the Tamil and Muslim communities in Sri Lanka, and these cases lend substantial support to the theory that I have posited in Chapter 2.

## **Chapter 5. The Basques and Catalans in Spain**

### **5.1 Introduction**

To address the central research question of what leads to ethnic terrorist violence, the previous chapter applied the motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) framework to the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka. Chapter 4 showed that this framework was useful for identifying the salient factors which led to widespread terrorism emanating from the Tamil community but not the Muslim population. This chapter assesses and compares the Basques and Catalans in Spain as a way to further probe the conditions under which the MMO framework holds true. The comparison controls for some state-level and geographic conditions – as the wider regions of the Basque Country and Catalonia exist within Spain but also span into neighboring France – and accounts for some minority-majority relationship commonalities, such as the ways in which the groups are distinguished from other Spaniards in terms of their language, culture, and history. Despite these similarities, however, the two groups have experienced remarkably different levels of terrorism. During and since the Francisco Franco (1939-1975) period, the Basques have encountered widespread violence carried out primarily by the organization Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA or Basque Fatherland and Freedom). In contrast, although some terrorist activity has developed from the Catalan community, its level has been low. No organization in Catalonia has reached the level of violence that ETA did in the Basque Country. Does the MMO framework provide as much analytical leverage in these cases as it did in the considerably different cases from Sri Lanka?

If the thesis in Chapter 2 is valid, severe human security violations, substantial terrorism support, and the presence of the opportunity for terrorist organizations to dominate the ethno-political space should lead to widespread terrorism.

In brief, I find that the argument holds. Franco's violations of Basque and Catalan human security rights serve as the *motive* for the emergence and rise of ETA in the Basque Country and terrorist organizations in Catalonia. Whereas ETA carried out a lengthy and particularly bloody terrorist campaign in initial response to these violations, none of the Catalan organizations endured as long or were nearly as active or deadly. This suggests that human security violations are necessary for large-scale terrorism but not sufficient. Moreover, variation in the *means* of sponsorship corresponds with the disparity in terrorism levels across the two groups. During the Franco era, ETA received substantial support of all types from the Basque community, as well as passive assistance from the French government. In contrast, the activities of the Catalan terrorist organizations did not garner much attention from the wider community and were not carried out with competence. As a result, members of these organizations succumbed to counterterrorist efforts or shifted to nonviolent political vehicles. Finally, the occasion for dominance of the ethno-political agenda serves as an important *opportunity*. These cases reveal that the degree to which this occasion is found accounts for the variation in levels of terrorism. In the Basque case, ETA exploited a vacuum in the Basque political sphere, created when the traditional engine of Basque nationalism – the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV or Basque Nationalist Party) – became passive in the midst of Franco's repression. In contrast, in the Catalan case, terrorist organizations were squeezed out of the political and cultural space due to the prevalence and activism of political and civil society actors. The interplay of these three factors explains the variation in terrorism between the Basque and Catalan communities.

This chapter begins with an overview of the Basque experience with terrorist violence, with particular focus on ETA as it embodies the vast majority of Basque terrorism, and then reviews the Catalans and their encounter with terrorism. Important events throughout the history of the two groups and factors that contribute to the difference in terrorism levels are highlighted throughout

these sections. The chapter ends with a direct comparison between the two communities and an explanation for the varying levels of violence in accordance with the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 2.

## **5.2 The Basques and Terrorist Violence**

### **5.2.1 Overview of the Basque Country**

The wider Basque Country, known as Euskal Herria in the Basque language, is a region that spans north-central Spain and southwestern France. It is not a legal administrative entity but is based on a common cultural and linguistic identity. The Basque Country consists of Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and Alava – three Spanish provinces that collectively make up the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country; Navarre – formally, the Chartered Community of Navarre, also a Spanish province and autonomous community; and Lower Navarre, Labourd, and Soule – three French provinces that constitute the majority of the French department of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques.<sup>54</sup> The Spanish Basque region is known as Hegoalde (Southern Basque Country) and the French Basque region is known as Iparralde (Northern Basque Country). In all, the area covers nearly 21,000 km<sup>2</sup>, which is slightly smaller than the state of New Jersey. The population is approximately three million, of which roughly 90 percent resides in Spain. The population of the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre is approximately six percent of Spain's total population. With 350,000 inhabitants, Bilbao is the largest city in the Basque Country.

The Basques are different ethnically and historically from the Castilian-speaking Spaniards and Francophone French. These distinctions have led some Basques, especially in Spain, to regard Euskal Herria as a separate nation deserving independence. The Franco regime suppressed Basque

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<sup>54</sup> The Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and the Chartered Community of Navarre were designated as such in 1979 and 1982 respectively as part of the Spanish Constitution's Statute of Autonomy provision. The Basses-Pyrénées was one of France's original departments and was renamed Pyrénées-Atlantiques in 1969.

nationalism – which provoked the rise of militant organizations – but this suppression ended after the transition to democracy, at which time Basque regions received autonomy and Basque culture became protected. Although hardline nationalists continue to fight for full independence, demographics complicate the nationalist program. Many Basques live outside of the Basque Country, especially in Latin America, and the population of the region is not made up strictly of ethnic Basques. The Basques also have their own language, called Euskera, which is the most observable component of their ethnic differentiation (Conversi 1997, 66), but roughly three-fifths of the population in the wider Basque region cannot speak it, as it is quite difficult to learn. Despite complications in the nationalist agenda, ETA members and their supporters have continued to demand full independence, which has been the primary source of conflict between the Basque Country and the Spanish government.

### **5.2.2 Overview of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)**

Since the 1960s, the Basque Country has been rife with political violence as a result of the struggle primarily between ETA and the Spanish state. ETA has been the most militant actor in the Basque National Liberation Movement and is the prototype of an organization that has routinely carried out ethnic terrorist attacks. Throughout its campaign, it has used premeditated violence against civilians to produce an atmosphere of fear in order to influence political interests on behalf of the Basque community, whose support for its goals and operations has varied across members and over time. In addition to terrorist tactics, it has used other violent methods, as well as negotiations and political concessions.

Founded in 1959 during the Franco era, ETA has carried out at least 1,600 attacks resulting in over 800 deaths and thousands of injuries in an effort to establish an independent Basque state that would consist of all seven provinces in the wider Basque Country (Council on Foreign Relations

2008). ETA's targets have been Spaniards and those Basques who, according to ETA leaders, have betrayed the independence movement, including various businessmen and politicians. ETA has launched attacks principally in Spain but also in neighboring France and other countries. The organization has targeted Spanish security personnel, such as members of the Civil Guard, National Police Corps, Spanish Army, Ertzaintza (the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country's police force), municipal police, and Mossos d'Esquadra (the Autonomous Community of Catalonia's police force), as well as the French National Gendarmerie. It has also killed over 300 civilians (*The Economist* 2009), some of whom were specifically targeted for assassination, such as wealthy Basque industrialists, while others, ETA leaders have claimed, were inadvertently killed, such as the victims of the infamous Hipercor bombing attack in 1987.

ETA emerged in 1959 in response to Franco's repressive policies. It grew in strength throughout the 1960s and started to carry out high-profile attacks in the early 1970s, such as the assassination of Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco. Its violence became most intense during Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy beginning in 1975. Due to the fog of the country's political future and acting on an immediate history of repression, ETA leaders believed that increased violence would force the new democratic regime to liberate the Basque people. To curb the organization's continued violence, between 1983 and 1987, the Spanish government secretly funded Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL or Antiterrorist Liberation Groups), which were active mainly on the French side of the Basque Country, as the core of ETA's leadership has traditionally operated from there. Throughout the 1990s, ETA's violence decreased due to a renewed Spanish-French counterterrorist strategy, a key component of which was that the French government would not passively continue to allow ETA members to take sanctuary in the French Basque Country. The organization's violence continued to decline after 2003 when the Spanish government banned Batasuna, ETA's political arm. Due to this loss of support, in 2006, ETA



announced a permanent ceasefire. However, ETA broke this ceasefire with another terrorist event (the Madrid-Barajas airport bombing), and as a consequence, the organization further lost support. Since its ceasefire in January 2011 and declaration of cessation of armed activities in October 2011, the organization has not carried out any further attacks (as of the time of this writing).

### **5.2.3 The Origins of ETA: Ekin**

To identify the initial goals and ideology of ETA's terrorist violence and to trace the Basque Country's trajectory to violence, it is important to consider Ekin, the organization from which ETA emerged. Ekin, which means "to do" in Euskera, was founded in 1952, consisting of a small group of students at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Biscay. Some of the founding members of Ekin, such as José Luis Alvarez Enparantza (nom de guerre Txillardegui) and Iulen de Madariaga, had been active in another nationalist student organization called Euzko Ikasle Alkartasuna (EIA or Society of Basque Students) (Watson 2007, 186). EIA clandestinely published and distributed Basque magazines in an effort to preserve Basque language and culture; however, in 1950, the Franco regime arrested the majority of its leaders and sent them either to jail or into exile for these activities (Clark 1984, 25). Ekin continued in the tradition of EIA, organizing in opposition to Franco's repressive rule over the Basque people with the initial intent of raising its own political awareness of Basque history, politics, and culture and the later objective of promoting Basque nationalism. Cameron J. Watson (2007, 192) summarizes the group's ideology: "Its first intention was to educate its members in Euskara, Basque history and culture, contemporary intellectual developments, and political strategy. Secondly, it was supposed to create the basis of a truly clandestine Basque nationalist movement." The organization was clandestine but notably nonviolent in nature.

Franco's repressive tactics spurred on Ekin's formation. Upon rising to power during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) by defeating the Popular Front and the Republicans, Franco began to

suppress the Basques since many of them supported his opposition during the war. Under the Law of Political Responsibilities of 1939, Franco could prosecute anyone who had supported the Republican administration during the war (Rigby 2000, 23). For Franco, repression served two purposes: 1) punishment against those groups that fought against him during the war, such as Biscayan and Gipuzkoan Basques, and 2) an effort to eliminate ethnic differences and consolidate the state under one Spanish national identity.<sup>55</sup> Franco assassinated and imprisoned Basque nationalists, confiscated property, denounced and replaced clergymen, and banned Euskera and the Basque flag (Clark 1984, 21; Lecours 2007, 72). His forces executed as many as 200,000 Basques and imprisoned approximately 400,000 more (Watson 2007, 167).

While Franco carried out his program of human security violations, Ekin members felt that the primary engine of Basque nationalism and culture – the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV or Basque Nationalist Party) – remained passive. According to Cameron J. Watson (2007, 188), “The common goal of this new group [Ekin] was a desire for real political change at the root level through direct activism or action – something that, in its opinion, had been lost in the existing Basque nationalist movement.” Stanley G. Payne (1975, 242) concurs, stating that the PNV defined itself within the Spanish context and strived to obtain autonomy rather than full independence, which, he argues, led to the party being outflanked by Ekin’s successor, ETA. The PNV, like many Basques, had hoped that the WWII Allies would defeat the fascist-leaning Franco, especially since a contingent of Basques fought along their side during the war. Thus, after WWII, the PNV, whose leadership was in exile in France at the time, waited out Franco’s tyranny with the expectation that the West would remove him from power and reinstate the political system that was in place in Spain prior to the civil war – the Republic. Meanwhile, in 1951, Franco’s forces arrested more than 2,000

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<sup>55</sup> Alava and Navarre did not fight against Franco during the war as these regions have traditionally been less nationalistic than Biscay and Gipuzkoa. As one interviewee (2011) notes, “Navarre is Basque culturally but not politically” (author interview with Respondent 5, February 2011).

people after Basque workers in Bilbao and other cities in the region went on strike (Clark 1979, 118). For Ekin, this event represented the “continuing failure” of the PNV to influence the Basques and “unify them in their hatred of the Spanish” (Clark 1979, 156). Moreover, it became evident in 1953 that the United States would not rescue the Basques when it signed a military base agreement with the Franco regime due to its new preoccupation with containing Soviet expansion.

The PNV and Ekin, although equally interested in preserving Basque culture, differed on important issues. The PNV expected a reinstatement of the political autonomy that the Basques had enjoyed before the war, believing that full independence was idealistic and that designating Euskera as the sole language of the Basques was impractical since many Basques did not speak it. Thus, the party sought some degree of cooperation with the state. Moreover, as Cameron J. Watson (2007, 182) notes, “By the 1950s, the PNV was unable to adapt its general policy to such changing times, instead stagnating in the face of the significant social and economic changes now affecting the Basque Country.” In contrast, Ekin’s objective evolved to advocating an independent state in which the Basque people would speak Euskera. Its members were young and were not directly associated with the Republic that was in place prior to Franco; thus, they believed that resolution could not come about by cooperating with the state (Lecours 2007, 75). Ekin’s position also increasingly favored outright independence as it began to equate the PNV’s more moderate stance with submissiveness. Despite these differences, when Ekin did emerge, the PNV aspired for the group to become incorporated into its youth section, Euzko Gaztedi Indarra (EGI or Basque Youth Force). Thus, between 1954 and 1957, Ekin and the PNV negotiated a merger. Negotiations initially resulted in Ekin joining the party, but the organization soon broke away, again accusing the party of inertia. As a result, the Ekin members of the EGI formed a new organization called ETA.

To summarize, in Ekin’s view, the PNV that had been the vanguard of Basque nationalism since the late nineteenth century, and especially through the Spanish Civil War, remained passive

when the Basques needed the party the most – in the face of Franco’s repression. Thus, some university students, including Txillardegui and Madariaga, formed Ekin in order to fill the void that they felt the PNV had created, dedicating themselves initially to raising their own political consciousness by learning about Basque history and politics and then to reenergizing the nationalist movement. However, as Ekin evolved into ETA, it became clear that the leaders of the fledgling organization felt they would need to adopt violent methods in the absence of alternative political channels to attain their separatist objectives.

#### **5.2.4 The Ideological Inspiration for Ekin and ETA: Early Basque Nationalism**

Ekin’s ideological platform was based on early Basque nationalism, and particularly on the thinking of Sabino Arana, which Ekin leaders believed better reflected the interests of the Basque people than the PNV’s accommodative position of the 1950s. Cameron J. Watson (2007, 188) explains that Ekin:

gradually conceived . . . a specific vision of nationalism that saw outright independence as the natural and moral outcome of Basque destiny, a policy, that, the group believed, was more faithful to the original conception of Basque nationalism by [Sabino] Arana, compared with the vaguer insistence at the time (on the part of the PNV) on self-determination.

Indeed, early Basque nationalism was inherently anti-Spain and pro-independence, which accounts for Ekin’s (and later ETA’s) intransigent position.

Basque nationalism surfaced primarily for two reasons. First, in 1876, Spain abolished the provincial law system, known as the *fueros*, which had granted the Basque provinces considerable powers of self-government since the early sixteenth century. The *fueros* had exempted the Basque provinces from military service and taxation and granted the provincial governments the right to veto royal decrees (Conversi 1997, 45). The year 1876 marked the end of the Third Carlist War,

during which the Basques had supported the Carlists against the Spanish monarchy.<sup>56</sup> Upon defeating the Carlists, and implicitly the Basque resistance, the regime ended the *fueros*. With this loss came new thinking among some Basques about the nature of the relationship between their homeland and Spain. As Daniele Conversi (1997, 47) puts it, “The abolition of the *fueros*, which were both symbols and instruments of economic autonomy, marked a watershed in relations between the Basques and Madrid.”

Second, fast-growing industrialization in the Basque Country after the abolition of the *fueros* attracted immigrants from other regions in Spain, provoking racist attitudes toward these poor immigrants. The Biscayan bourgeoisie began exporting iron ore, leading to the industrialization of the Basque Country; meanwhile, the bourgeoisie displaced the rural overlords and started dictating policy through the provincial government (Corcuera 2006, 43). Thus, in Biscay, economic elites filled the political void that the removal of the *fueros* had left. Economic growth in the region, which attracted immigrants, generated widespread resentment of non-Basques, a type of racism known as *anti-maketismo* (“anti-non-Basques”). As non-Basques formed the basis of the working class throughout the Basque Country, traditional Basque culture clashed with the mores of these immigrants, changing the “demographic composition and social and cultural structures of a traditional, religious, rural and conservative society” (Llera 2000, 102). Immigrants were quickly identified as the “oppressor’s stooges” (Conversi 1997, 48). It was in this economic climate that *anti-maketismo* and protection of Basque culture prospered.

Stanley G. Payne (1975, 64) states, “In a general way, nationalism is born of the intersecting of traditionalism and modernization, and of the need to adjust to and achieve the latter while preserving as much as possible of the former.” This was the case with Basque nationalism. At the

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<sup>56</sup> The Third Carlist War (1872-1876) is sometimes referred to as the Second Carlist War, since the actual Second Carlist War (1847-1849) had been politically inconsequential.

end of the nineteenth century, traditional Basque culture confronted changes that political transformation, industrialization, and modernization had produced. Spain's abolition of the Basque *fueros* and increased immigration to the Basque Country created the political, economic, and social environment in which Sabino Arana founded Biscayan nationalism – and later Basque nationalism and the PNV.<sup>57</sup> To be sure, elements of Basque nationalist ideology predated his beliefs; however, Arana tied these sentiments into a political philosophy that over time motivated the nationalist movement among the Basque people. Daniele Conversi (1997, 53) explains, “Arana single-handedly formulated its [Basque nationalism's] first political programme, coined its name, defined its geographical extent, founded its first political organization, wrote its anthem and designed its flag.”

Arana's book *Bizkaya por su independencia* (*Biscay through Its Independence*) is the basis for Basque nationalism (Corcuera 2006, 125). Essentially, it portrays the history of Biscay as having pitted Basques against Spaniards in a series of epic battles. As Cameron J. Watson (2007, 54) argues, “Throughout the text, an explicit dichotomy is drawn between the Basques (as represented by Bizkaia [Biscay]) and the Spanish (Castile/León), the resultant message being that throughout their history, Basques had been ready to fight and die in order to preserve their independence.” Arana argued that the Basque people of Biscay had nothing in common with the Spanish, that Biscay was not a part of Spain but was “a republic that had voluntarily associated itself with the Castilian crown while retaining absolute autonomy and institutional and ethnic purity” (Payne 1975, 66). Thus, Arana believed that the Basque Country, as an independent nation, could separate from Spain whenever it chose.

Arana also believed that the arrival of immigrants from the rest of Spain was corrupting the purity of the Basque race. Javier Corcuera Atienza (2006, 223) argues, “His cause was not only one

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<sup>57</sup> Arana's platform initially advocated Biscayan nationalism but later expanded to Basque nationalism, centering on a common Basque identity among all seven provinces. See Javier Corcuera Atienza (2006, 216-220) for details about the shift from Biscayan to Basque nationalism.

of defending Catholicism and traditionalism, but also the defense of the Catholicism and tradition inherent in the Basque race and endangered by contact with outsiders, whatever their faith.” In particular, Arana wanted to revive the use of Euskera, which he believed was threatened by the arrival of immigrants. For Arana, Euskera served as a linguistic boundary between Basques and non-Basques, and it was a boundary that he did not want *maketos* to cross by learning the language (Conversi 1997, 60). Thus, independence was necessary in order to preserve Euskera and other elements of Basque culture. In turn, Euskera would become a dividing line between Basques and non-Basques.

Most importantly, Arana’s independentist stance stemmed from his devotion to Catholicism. He believed that independence was necessary so that Biscay (and the Basque Country) could better serve God. Biscay “had to be independent to serve God, given that the contagion of Spain prevented it from being ‘Catholic in practice’” (Corcuera 2006, 224). In Arana’s own words, “My patriotism is rooted . . . in my love for God, and its aim is to connect God to my blood relatives, to my great family, the Basque country” (Conversi 1997, 63). Moreover, he believed that the liberalization of the Basque Country, as brought about by the *maketos*, prevented Basques from practicing their religion. This explains the first part of his motto: “Jaungoikua eta Lagizarra” (God and the Old Law). Thus, Arana’s nationalism was inherently anti-Spain and independentist from the outset. Politically, he believed that Spain did not have the right to “extinguish” the laws that the Basque Country had enjoyed for centuries since the Basque Country, in his view, was independent. Economically and socially, he resented the “corruption” of Basque traditions, religion, and values by the “invasion” of *maketos*; thus, independence would secure Basque culture. Religiously, he believed that the Basque Country could more effectively serve God by separating from Spain, which was inherently liberal in nature. For these reasons, Basque nationalism was always anti-Spanish.

In sum, Ekin's (and later ETA's) platform initiated in response to Franco's imperialism was inherently anti-Spain and pro-independence because it was based on Arana's intransigent nationalism. As André Lecours (2007, 75) states, "From Arana, ETA took a belligerent attitude toward the Spanish state." However, ETA abandoned the principles of this nationalism that it felt were inapplicable to the current situation or altogether archaic, such as racism (anti-*maketismo*) and Catholicism. This was because Basque nationalism evolved from being based on race and blood to being based on language (Conversi 1990, 63) and because it converged with revolutionary socialist ideology, taking form across the world, rather than identifying with religious principles.

#### **5.2.5 ETA during the Franco Regime**

When Ekin transformed into ETA in 1959, it was initially nonviolent, like Ekin had been and in line with the nonviolent stance of Arana's nationalist ideology. Members of ETA discussed Basque politics, circulated propaganda and pamphlets, painted their initials on walls, and displayed the Basque flag (Clark 1979, 157; Clark 1984, 35; Sullivan 1986, 34). However, police raids against EGI cells elicited information about ETA, and the subsequent pursuit of the organization's members caused the organization to become more clandestine, radical, and violent (Clark 1979, 157).

As a result, in 1961, ETA carried out its first terrorist incident. On July 18, 1961, several trains were carrying Franco supporters to San Sebastian (in Gipuzkoa) to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the military coup that started the Spanish Civil War. ETA attempted to derail one of these trains heading to the celebration, although the organization was so careful to avoid harming anyone that the attack failed. Franco's response was fierce. His forces arrested, tortured, and imprisoned more than 100 etarras (ETA members) and exiled another group of similar size to France (Clark 1984, 35). The backlash from the attack almost obliterated the organization.



However, while exiled in France, ETA leaders began to reform the group and plan for future attacks. Iulen de Madariaga, José María Benito del Valle, Ignacio Irigaray, and José Luis Alvarez Enparantza (Txillardegui), as the organization's leaders, established themselves as the Executive Committee of the organization and divided responsibilities among four fronts – political, economic, military, and cultural. The organization defined itself as a “revolutionary Basque movement for national liberation” that rejected political discrimination (Clark 1984, 37).

ETA's choice of strategy was the action-repression-action approach. According to this strategy, ETA would conduct attacks against the state in the hopes that Franco would indiscriminately repress the wider Basque community. This repression, in turn, would provoke the Basque people to support ETA's struggle. For Frederico Krutwig, the primary advocate of this strategy, “it was . . . not necessary to topple the dictatorship, but only to drive it out of the Basque Country” (Lecours 2007, 78).

In May 1962, ETA held its First Assembly, which would become the first of many to deliberate on the organization's ideology and strategy. Robert P. Clark (1984, 32-35) discusses the three predominant ideological camps at that time: the culturalists, the socialists, and the third-worldists. The culturalists focused on language and saw ETA as a vehicle to achieve an independent Basque Country in which Euskera would be spoken. For them, ethnicity mattered more than class. The socialists, on the other hand, focused on class and advocated the liberation of not only the Basque but also the Spanish working classes. The socialists did not generally value Euskera or Basque culture and saw Basque and Spanish industrialists – equally – as the enemy. As André Lecours (2007, 78) notes, “From this Marxist angle, Basque nationalism was really an epiphenomenon of a larger movement for the emancipation of workers.” Furthermore, the third-worldists, who were very much influenced by decolonization events happening around the world at the time, saw Spain as a colonizer of the Basque Country and advocated a national revolution against

Spain as well as those Basques who would not cooperate in the struggle. Thus, the third-worldists defined the situation in terms of both ethnicity and class. Ethnic outbidding of these factions solidified the continuation of violence, since at least one faction would commit to extremist nationalist ideology in order to differentiate itself from the others.

Conflict between these three factions occurred multiple times during the organization's assemblies of the 1960s and early 1970s. In fact, the first decisive split in ETA resulted from ideology. In December 1966, during the first meeting of the Fifth Assembly, ETA expelled the key socialists, accusing them of *españolismo* since they supported ties with Spanish political groups. The expelled socialists formed a group that became known as ETA-Berri ("New ETA"), while the core ETA group became known as ETA-Zarra ("Old ETA"). ETA-Berri eventually became *Komunistak* and later the Spanish Communist Movement, at which time ETA-Zarra simply became known as ETA. Thus, after 1966, the organization lost its diehard socialist component. Not long after the leaders of ETA expelled the socialists, however, they turned against each another for ultimate control over the organization (Clark 1984, 45). In March 1967, during the second meeting of the Fifth Assembly, the third-worldists dominated over the culturalists, reaffirming that both Spain and capitalism were the true enemies of the Basques. As Robert P. Clark (1984, 45) notes, "The revolutionary nationalists [third-worldists] were intent on making the Fifth Assembly the point of departure for their own 'great leap forward.'" Effectively ostracized from the organization, the culturalists resigned a month later. Thus, by mid-1967, ETA consisted primarily of third-worldists who equally advocated ethnic nationalism and revolutionary socialism. This widened the organization's scope of targets to include both ethnic and class "others." With the ideological debate temporarily resolved, ETA moved forward into a phase of violent activity in order to propagandize its platform and raise funds (Clark 1984, 47).

In June 1968, ETA killed its first victim and promulgated its first martyr. When the Civil Guard stopped a car carrying etarras Txabi Etxebarrieta and Iñaki Sarasqueta in a roadblock, a policeman named José Pardines was killed in the subsequent fight, and as the militants were trying to flee, the police stopped their car again in another roadblock, at which point a policeman shot and killed Etxebarrieta (Clark 1984, 48). Since Etxebarrieta was a leading member of the third-worldist faction, his death resonated significantly within the Basque community. Two months later, in August, the organization assassinated a police commissioner named Melitón Manzanás at his home in Irún, Gipuzkoa in response to the Etxebarrieta killing. Manzanás had a reputation for being especially brutal against the Basques. The Franco regime responded severely, imposing a state of exception – in which all constitutional guarantees were suspended – in the province of Gipuzkoa. In 1969, the government extended the state of exception to cover all of Spain. The arrests made after the Manzanás killing almost destroyed ETA. As most leaders on the Spanish side of the border were apprehended, the leaders in France had to carry on the organization.

During this period of violence, and immediately after the assassination of Manzanás, members of ETA engaged in another bitter dispute over the ideological orientation and political-military structure of the organization. Indeed, the debates that reached some resolution during the Fifth Assembly resurfaced in the early 1970s. Again, conflict arose between those members who emphasized socialism (and thus thought it necessary to engage with the Spanish working class) and those who stressed Basque nationalism and independence. The Executive Committee of ETA at that time was more socialist, as was a faction of the organization known as the Células Rojas (Red Cells). In contrast, those members emphasizing nationalism included: 1) a group of older members of ETA's leadership, including two members from the Ekin era; 2) a group of members from the Military Front (one of the organizational fronts created during the Fifth Assembly) known as the "milis"; and 3) a group of third-worldists who refused to reject socialism completely (Clark 1984,

53). ETA held its Sixth Assembly in August 1970, and the principal participants included the Executive Committee and Red Cells; thus, the assembly consisted primarily of socialist members. Nonetheless, these two factions disputed over organizational control, which ultimately led to the resignation of the Red Cells. Robert P. Clark (1984, 54) observes, “ETA had now been reduced in essence to the Executive Committee, since the committee had expelled several previous generations of leaders then in exile, and those who were not expelled had resigned in disgust.”

After the Sixth Assembly, five members of the Biltzar Txikia – a body that was created during the Fifth Assembly to monitor the Executive Committee – issued a letter expelling all participants of the Sixth Assembly (which in effect was the Executive Committee since the Red Cells faction had resigned) on the grounds that the Executive Committee did not have the authority to call an assembly, since this was a function of the Biltzar Txikia and because the participants ignored Basque nationalism and engaged in *españolismo* (Clark 1984, 54) – criticisms similar to those that the group that became ETA-Berri after the Fifth Assembly faced. Essentially, the five members of the Biltzar Txikia were the representatives of the three nationalist factions that did not attend the Sixth Assembly. They were trying to reduce the socialist stronghold on the organization.

It was during this ideological dispute that the sixteen accused of killing Manzananas (AKA “the Burgos 16”) came to trial. On December 3-9, 1970, the “Burgos trial” took place.<sup>58</sup> The court case was one of the most momentous events in ETA’s history, as it highlighted Franco’s brutality in the Basque Country and brought the Basque struggle to the attention of the world. As Stanley G. Payne (1975, 247) asserts, “The ‘Burgos trial’ quickly mushroomed into the nearest thing to a political crisis that the Franco regime had seen since the 1940s.” Basques went on strike and protested in the streets, prompting the Franco regime to declare a three-month state of exception in Gipuzkoa. Many across Spain protested the trial. In European countries, people attacked Spanish embassies

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<sup>58</sup> Crimes committed in the Sixth Military Region, which included the four Basque provinces, were tried in Burgos.

and pressured their governments to break relations with Madrid, and some governments retracted their ambassadors (Clark 1984, 54). The fifteen accused (one had been acquitted) admitted to being members of ETA but denied committing the Manzanas murder. All but one were found guilty, but Franco commuted the six who received death penalties to long-term imprisonment as part of the Beihl agreement.<sup>59</sup> As John Sullivan (1986, 95) observes, “The Burgos trial was the best opportunity which the organization had ever had to expound its ideas to the public.”

In the aftermath of the Burgos trial, ETA officially divided along ideological lines that had manifested during the Sixth Assembly. The group that remained intact after the Sixth Assembly (essentially the Executive Committee and its followers) became known as ETA-VI. The group that disputed the Sixth Assembly (essentially the five leaders of the nationalist cause and their followers) became known as ETA-V, owing their name to the belief that ETA should continue on from the Fifth Assembly and denying the credibility of the Sixth Assembly. Initially, ETA-VI had more backing, including support from the majority of the rank-and-file members as well as from the Burgos prisoners. However, after making a series of blunders, including emphasizing socialism to the exclusion of nationalism and remaining relatively inactive after the Burgos trial, it lost the majority of its support and in 1973 joined the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR or Revolutionary Communist League). Thus, after the merger between ETA-VI and LCR, the surviving faction, ETA-V, became known simply as ETA. Robert P. Clark (1984, 61-62) writes:

Based solely on the slight personal and institutional following of the five authors of the August 1970 letter denouncing the Sixth Assembly, ETA-V in early 1971 had few members, scant resources, and no reputation to speak of, and was strongly opposed by the Burgos prisoners. By 1972, however, ETA-V had become the stronger of the two groups.

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<sup>59</sup> According to the agreement, ETA would release the West German consul Eugen Beihl, whom the organization had kidnapped, in exchange for Franco’s promise to commute any death sentences given by the military tribunal to imprisonment.

In addition to ETA-VI's demise, another factor that contributed to the growth of ETA-V was its merger with EGI-Batasuna (a faction within the PNV's youth group EGI). ETA then consisted of the Military Front, the Labor Front, and the Cultural Front as a result of this expansion.

ETA's violence increased significantly in the early 1970s, due in part to the publicity and support from the Burgos trial and in part due to intra-organizational rivalry and outbidding. Violence culminated in 1973 with the assassination of Spanish Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco, who was one of Franco's closest advisors and heir apparent to the dictatorship. The assassination, called Operación Ogro by ETA, remains the most astonishing act of violence in ETA's history. In 1972, ETA discovered that Carrero Blanco had a routine of attending Catholic mass in Madrid and that his protection en route to the church was minimal. As such, ETA began to make plans that initially called for his kidnapping but later dictated his assassination by planting a bomb under the street that Carrero Blanco passed over on the way to and from mass. A cell of four ETA members observed Carrero Blanco's routine, rented a basement apartment near where the bombing would take place, tunneled to a location under the street on which Carrero Blanco's car traveled to and from church, and placed a bomb under the street. On December 20, 1973, as Carrero Blanco, his driver, and his bodyguard passed over the bomb spot, the etarras detonated the explosives, projecting the car over a five-story-high wall of the church and into the courtyard. All three died.

The attack and the subsequent crackdown led to more divisions within ETA. Unlike previous divisions, however, this split was due to differences in strategy instead of ideology. Although the Military Front was responsible for the militant activity within ETA, including the assassination of Carrero Blanco, the subsequent counterterrorist efforts targeted not only the Military Front but also the Cultural and Labor Fronts. Thus, in 1975, most of the Cultural Front became Euskal Herriko Alderdi Sozialista (EHAS or Basque Popular Socialist Party). Around the same time, many in the Labor Front became Langille Abertzale Iraultzalean Alderdia (LAIA or

Patriotic Revolutionary Workers Party). The EHAS and the LAIA would go on to become core parties within Herri Batasuna (HB or Unity of the People) in the late 1970s. Nonetheless, some members of the Labor Front remained within ETA. In 1974, an official division between the Military Front and the Labor Front materialized. ETA-militar (ETA-m) emerged from the Military Front and advocated armed struggle over political strategies. Conversely, ETA-político-militar (ETA-pm) favored a strategy combining both military and political approaches. Yet as Goldie Shabad and Francisco José Llera Ramo (1995, 431) note, “Despite these differences, both organizations had the same political objectives (independence, monolingualism for the Basque Country, and socialism) and the same basic strategy of popular revolution.”

Both factions of ETA increased their violence when Franco became ill, sensing that Francoism was coming to an end. Robert P. Clark (1984, 81) acknowledges, “Both ETA(m) and ETA(p-m) were still uncertain about their strategies and ideologies for the post-Franco period, and the disorder of Franco’s last year provided an unstable setting within which to develop them.” ETA’s attacks were met with counterattacks and widespread repression of rights in Biscay and Gipuzkoa. Franco issued one state of exception in April 1975 and another in August 1975. His counterterrorist measures outraged Basque public opinion, leading to more strikes. The overall state of chaos provided the opportunity for the organizations to increase their violence. On November 20, 1975, Franco died from natural causes, which ushered in a new era for Spain – one that would be marked by democracy rather than authoritarian rule but not by an end to ETA.

In sum, Ekin, a nonviolent group that emerged to stand against Franco’s discrimination and promote independence, evolved into ETA, a terrorist organization striving to obtain these goals. This transition occurred due not only to the perceived ineffectiveness of nonviolence but also to ethnic elite outbidding occurring between the PNV and Ekin/ETA members. For ETA to differentiate itself from the PNV, its leaders felt that they must adopt violence. Outbidding and

competition also continued within ETA's campaign, resulting in at least one faction maintaining violence in an effort to secure the Basque people's support. This follows Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter's (2006, 51) logic that "Groups engaged in outbidding use violence to convince the public that the terrorists have greater resolve to fight the enemy than rival groups, and therefore are worthy of support."

Moreover, ETA faced challenges to its survival. Franco's forces were quite effective in arresting members after their attacks, and internal disputes over ideology and strategy weakened the overall cohesiveness of the organization. Nonetheless, ETA found a way to survive as the result of several factors. It took advantage of the French Basque Country to regroup and revise its strategies, especially after Franco's severe counterattacks. The Burgos trial, an event that drew support from the region and the state, justified ETA's violence, at least in the minds of its members and supporters. The multitude of Franco's states of exception garnered more sympathy for the organization as they affected the wider Basque community and not just terrorists.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, ETA truly affected the course of Francoism through the assassination of Carrero Blanco, rationalizing its continued use of violence even through Spain's transition to democracy.

#### **5.2.6 ETA after the Franco Regime**

King Juan Carlos I succeeded Franco upon his death in 1975 and oversaw the country's transition from authoritarianism to parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. During the transition, several economic and political reforms took place in a relatively short amount of time. In 1976, new legislation removed barriers to forming labor unions and engaging in strikes, and political parties in the country became legal for the first time since Franco had risen to power. In

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<sup>60</sup> Franco declared 12 states of exception between 1956 and 1975; five affected all of Spain, one affected Asturias, and six affected Gipuzkoa, Biscay or both (and Asturias in one instance) (Shabad and Llera 1995, 419).



1977, the country elected its first parliament, which was tasked principally with managing the creation of a new constitution. Also in 1977, the national court was established, which would deal with terrorism cases rather than the military tribunal system in place under Franco. In 1978, the constitution was created and ratified. By and large, Spain's transition remains a model of successful democratization.

The Basque Country underwent its own changes. The PNV became legal again in 1977 and went on to become the dominant political party in the region. In 1979, Basques approved the Statute of Autonomy, which established the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (including the provinces of Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and Alava), the public administrative structure that is in place today.<sup>61</sup> In 1980, they elected their first parliament and lehendakari (president of the Basque Country) in democratic Spain. The PNV fared the best with 41 percent of the vote (Clark 1984, 117). Also in 1980, two other important reforms occurred. The *concierto económico* that Franco had banned in 1937 was reinstated, allowing the Basque government to negotiate its tax remittances with Madrid. Moreover, the Ertzaintza (the Basque police force) was introduced, which meant that the Basques would join the fight against ETA.

Despite these democratic reforms, however, the Basques still held grievances over other issues. Robert P. Clark (1984, 90) discusses these objections. First, although the Spanish government eventually granted full amnesty to all political prisoners in October 1977, the process leading to this action was riddled with complications and setbacks. Indeed, several prisoners anxiously awaited a full pardon that never seemed forthcoming. Second, although many political parties became legal, some were still proscribed through the 1977 elections. Third, police force against strikes and other demonstrations continued to be harsh, as many members of the National

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<sup>61</sup> The constitution provides for autonomous communities to maintain their own political arrangements. In all, 17 autonomous communities exist throughout the country. See Robert P. Clark (1992) for an account explaining why this form of decentralization in Spain has failed to resolve ethnic conflict in the Basque Country.

Police Corps and Civil Guard had been trained under the Franco regime. Finally, whether or not the Basque Country would ever receive independence, which many Basques supported, remained a pressing concern. In short, Basques impatiently waited to see if democracy would improve their relation with the state.

In 1978, Herri Batasuna emerged as a coalition representing leftist/nationalist political groups, including ETA, and aiming to resolve what its leaders felt were political injustices against the Basque people. The coalition encouraged Basques to vote against the referendum on the Spanish constitution on the grounds that it did not give the Basque Country the right to self-determination.<sup>62</sup> It also opposed the Basque Autonomy Statute for the same reason. Rather than seeing democratic reform as achieving more, hardline nationalists viewed it as not delivering enough. Although the PNV claimed the most votes in the 1980 election, Herri Batasuna made a strong showing, demonstrating that a solid core of Basques were not content with the political changes thus far. Because it did not recognize the legitimacy of the Spanish constitution or the Basque Autonomy Statute, however, the party refused to occupy its seats. The most defining characteristic of Herri Batasuna, however, is that it has become the political face of ETA.

ETA most vehemently rejected reforms that occurred during the transition and stated that it would only acquiesce to disarmament if the government would meet its basic demands. Set out in the KAS Alternative in 1978, ETA demanded: 1) total amnesty for all political prisoners; 2) legalization of all political parties; 3) withdrawal of Spanish police forces from the Basque Country; 4) improvement in the living and working conditions of the working class; and 5) recognition of the Basque Country's national sovereignty and of Euskera as the official language of the Basque Country

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<sup>62</sup> Only 31 percent of Basques voted for the constitution, compared with the national average of 59 percent (Shabad and Llera 1995, 452). However, it is difficult to assess whether or not this signifies that the Basques ultimately rejected the constitution since only 46 percent of Basques voted, compared with the national average of 68 percent (Shabad and Llera 1995, 452).

(Clark 1990, 82). Until these demands were met, ETA stated that it would increase its terrorism. The Spanish government, of course, did not give in, especially to the recognition of the Basque Country as an independent state.

Why did ETA's demands remain so intransigent, given the end of Francoism and establishment of democracy? First, it is important to stress the lasting effect that Franco's policies had on ETA's position. Police brutality, political and cultural repression, threats, and marginalization reinforced ETA's independentist goal, and the organization unwaveringly refused to scale back its violence until it had realized this goal. At a critical point, ETA's objective evolved from countering Franco's brutality to demanding independence; once this transition took place, ETA began to see Spain and the Spanish government as the enemy and not just the Franco regime. Second, ETA leaders believed they could force the new democratic regime into giving in to their demands. This was due to the uncertainty that permeated the political atmosphere at the time and the belief that a democratic regime would either be as brutal as the Franco regime or more likely to break down in the face of increased terrorist violence. As one interviewee (2011) observes, "for ETA, it was now or never."<sup>63</sup>

Jack Snyder (2000) argues that political violence increases during democratization as elites promote nationalism for popular support. This was certainly the case during Spain's transition. ETA's violence skyrocketed in the late 1970s, as the organization tried to maintain its base support. Francisco J. Llera (2000, 107) argues, "Indeed, during the final years of Franco's dictatorship, violence was no longer simply a political strategy or just one more ingredient in the rhetoric of Basque resistance, but rather had become the central point of reference in daily Basque life."

Throughout the 1980s, Herri Batasuna and ETA-m maintained that Spanish democracy was Francoism in disguise. ETA-pm, however, disbanded in 1981, as its militant members joined ETA-

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<sup>63</sup> Author interview with Respondent 6. February 2011.

m, while its political members joined the political party Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE or Basque Country Left). ETA-m then became known as ETA. It was about this time that the so-called “Dirty War” began to develop.<sup>64</sup> Between 1983 and 1987, the Spanish Ministry of the Interior funded groups called Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL or Antiterrorist Liberation Groups), which acted as death squads against ETA members and supporters, although these groups also killed people unconnected to ETA or political violence. As the French Basque Country has traditionally served as a home base for ETA, these groups were most active in France, killing those that the Spanish government could not target on its own territory. The GAL killed 27 people altogether, and eight were not the intended targets (Selsky 1996). After the GAL period, France dramatically increased its commitment to working with Spain in eliminating ETA. “While Paris was initially quite reluctant to become involved in the anti-ETA effort, as time went on French policies became increasingly repressive, leading eventually to widespread arrests, deportation, and extradition of suspected ETA members” (Clark 1990, 36).

In the late 1980s, ETA committed two acts of terrorism that reflected a drastic change in the nature of its violence. In 1986, it assassinated former *etarra* María Dolores González Cataráin. Cataráin, codename “Yoyes,” had been the leader of ETA’s political office in the late 1970s. After her arrest in 1978, and as ETA’s violence became increasingly more ruthless, she left the organization and went into exile in Mexico, vowing to fight for an independent Basque Country only through political means. In the mid-1980s, she took advantage of a social reinsertion program and moved back to Spain. However, as she was viewed as a traitor by ETA, three members of the organization shot her in the head in front of her three-year-old son in her hometown of Ordizia (in Gipuzkoa). The message was clear: “Nobody walks away from ETA” (Ceberio and Altozano 2011).

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<sup>64</sup> See Paddy Woodworth (2001) and James E. Jacob (1994, Chapter 7) for a comprehensive review of ETA and the GAL.

The other event was the bombing of the Hipercor shopping center. In 1987, ETA exploded a car bomb at a store in Barcelona, resulting in 21 deaths and 45 injuries ([Aizpeolea 2012](#)). ETA had alerted the police about the bomb before it exploded, but the store was not evacuated. Although the organization admits to planting the bomb, it claims it did not want to kill people. As Robert P. Clark (1990, 190) points out, “The revulsion and condemnation of this atrocity were almost universal. Even some members of Herri Batasuna were compelled to condemn the attack.” It was after these two attacks that ETA lost a significant amount of support from the Basque people.

ETA’s violence also prompted the Spanish government’s first serious attempt to negotiate. The “Algerian Connection” negotiations took place between 1986 and 1989 but failed to produce a lasting solution. ETA increased its violence during negotiations in an attempt to pressure Madrid to give in to its demands and to avoid what it felt would be a position of weakness in negotiating. It also did not want to acquiesce to Madrid’s demand that all violence must cease as a precondition for negotiations, believing that the “cessation of violence was the *objective* of negotiations, not a *precondition* as Madrid insisted” (Clark 1990, 231, italics in original). In 1988, all Basque political parties, except Herri Batasuna, signed the Ajuria-Enea Pact (1988-1998) condemning the use of violence in bringing about change (Llera 2000, 110), which in addition to the particularly brutal attacks at the time, further weakened support for ETA.

Despite its increasing loss of support, ETA’s activities continued. In 1995, the organization attempted to assassinate José María Aznar, a politician who would go on to serve as prime minister of the country from 1996 to 2004. In 1997, ETA carried out an attack that had an especially significant consequence. It kidnapped and executed Miguel Ángel Blanco, a member of the Partido Popular (PP or People’s Party), when the Spanish government refused to transfer Basque political prisoners to the Basque Country. People across Spain vehemently criticized the attack in a stance of solidarity. Rogelio Alonso (2004, 705) observes, “The massive demonstrations and expressions of

outrage were followed by internal dissent in the organization when important activists demanded the end of the ‘armed struggle’ acknowledging ETA’s lack of support and ineffectiveness.” It was in this political climate that a new round of ceasefire negotiations began, heavily influenced by the Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland. Again, however, the talks collapsed and ETA continued its campaign.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to improved cooperation between France and Spain on counterterrorist strategies, another significant blow to ETA came when the Spanish government outlawed Batasuna, the successor organization of Herri Batasuna, in 2003. A court ruling officially declared that Batasuna was financing ETA with public funds and subsequently banned the party. With Batasuna’s accounts frozen, a valuable source of income for ETA essentially came to an end (Alonso 2008, 207). Moreover, the jihadist attacks on September 11, 2001 in New York and March 11, 2004 in Madrid have further weakened support for terrorism in general, including ETA.

In March 2006, ETA declared another ceasefire but broke it the following December when it set off a van bomb at the Madrid Barajas Airport, killing two (Council on Foreign Relations 2008). In September 2010, it declared yet another ceasefire. In January 2011, it renewed this commitment and in October 2011, it announced a complete termination of armed activity. Successor organizations to Batasuna, such as Sortu and Bildu, have denounced ETA’s violence in unprecedented declarations.

To summarize, ETA entered into Spain’s democratic transition without relinquishing its commitment to independence or violence. In fact, its terrorist campaign increased, as it attempted to pressure the fledgling democracy into giving in, especially in the new environment of political ambiguity. Since the transition, ETA’s terrorism has decreased on the whole, with significant decreases in the 1990s and 2000s. This has been the result of the majority of the Basque people’s

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<sup>65</sup> See Rogelio Alonso (2004) for reasons why these talks broke down.

decision to reject the use of violence, especially in a democracy. It has also occurred because other organizations, including political parties, have emerged to promote Basque interests since the transition. Finally, it has been the result of increased cooperation between France and Spain in fighting the organization.

## **5.3 The Catalans and Terrorist Violence**

### **5.3.1 Overview of Catalonia**

As seen in the above section, the term “Basque Country” can refer to the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country in Spain or to Euskal Herria – the wider Basque region that spans Spain and France. Similarly, the term “Catalonia” can refer to the Autonomous Community of Catalonia (including the provinces of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona) in Spain or to the Països Catalans (Catalan Countries) – the wider Catalan-speaking world.<sup>66</sup> The Països Catalans cover roughly 68,000 km<sup>2</sup>, which makes this area more than three times larger than the wider Basque region and a little larger than the state of West Virginia. The vast majority of the region falls within Spain’s borders, and its total population is 10.5 million, of which roughly 95 percent resides in Spain. The Autonomous Community of Catalonia’s population is approximately 16 percent of Spain’s total population. Barcelona is its largest city, with a population of around 1.6 million, making it more than four times larger than the Basque Country’s largest city, Bilbao.

Like the Basques, the Catalans have experienced varying degrees of autonomy throughout their history and have played a central role in Spain’s economic development. A fundamental

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<sup>66</sup> The Països Catalans include eastern Spain, southeastern France, Andorra (a small country located between Spain and France), and Alghero, a city on the Italian island of Sardinia. In Spain, this region includes the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, which comprises the provinces of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona; the eastern part of the Autonomous Community of Aragon known as La Franja (The Strip); most of the Autonomous Community of Valencia; Carche, a small territory in the Autonomous Community of Murcia; and the Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands. The Catalan region in France is known as Northern Catalonia, French Catalonia, or Roussillon, and it corresponds roughly with the French department of Pyrénées-Orientales.

difference, however, is that Catalans speak their language, Catalan, to a much greater extent than the Basques speak Euskera. In fact, most Catalans in the Països Catalans speak both Catalan and Spanish, and roughly half of the population speaks Catalan as its native language (BBC). Catalan is a Romance language that is not fundamentally different from French or Spanish, which explains why Catalans speak it more than Basques speak Euskera. In Spain, Catalan serves as the primary ethnic marker between Catalonia and the rest of the country. As John Hargreaves (2000, 34) argues, “[Catalonia’s] claim to the status of a historic nation and its opposition to the host state are rooted in the existence of a culturally distinct community with a very strong sense of its national identity, which coheres, above all, around the Catalan language.”

### 5.3.2 Early Catalan Identity and Nationalism

Catalanism has historically advocated regionalism within a Spanish federalist framework rather than outright independence. This has made it strikingly distinct from early Basque nationalism. During and shortly after the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), Philip V implemented the Nueva Planta Decrees, a number of rulings put into place between 1707 and 1716. These decrees banned the *fueros* (institutions and privileges) of nearly all of the areas that formerly belonged to the Crown of Aragon, including Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands, as these regions sided against Philip during the war. These regions, which included the wider Catalan area, had enjoyed their *fueros* for centuries, and the decrees stripped Catalans of their long-standing autonomy. In contrast, the Basque Country and Navarre were able to keep their *fueros* since they had pledged their support to Philip. Thus, while the Catalans lost their *fueros* in the early eighteenth century, the Basques kept theirs – at least until the end of the Third Carlist War (1876), when they too were retracted.



It was not until over a century later that Catalanism would be revived, although this renaissance focused initially on culture rather than politics. In the wake of the Romantic Movement sweeping across Europe at the time, Catalan music, art, and literature flourished in a period known as the *Renaixença* (1840s-1870s). The drive to restore the Catalan language, in particular, was one of the most significant moves of this time. In 1859, Catalan poets, historians, and literati revived the Floral Games, which were poetry contests and history pageants from the fourteenth century, in an effort to reestablish the prestigious standing of Catalan (Conversi 1997, 14). The cultural awakening provided the platform upon which Catalan political nationalism would eventually form.

Influenced by the revival of Catalan culture, the Catalan political program began with Valentí Almirall's *Lo Catalanisme*, published in 1886. In this work, Almirall delineated the transition from regionalism to nationalism within a federalist political structure (Conversi 1997, 17). Almirall's agenda intended to merge the cultural and political components of Catalanism, unite its traditionalist and modernist features, defend Catalan economic interests, and promote the Catalan language (Conversi 1997, 17-19). It was the first major effort to articulate a nationalist agenda for the Catalan region. In 1891, Catalan interests were organized under an overarching body known as the *Unió Catalanista* (Catalan Union), which put forth a stronger nationalist position than Almirall's articulation had previously dictated. It demanded political autonomy within the Spanish state, the securing of public positions for Catalans, and the establishment of Catalan as the only official language in the region (Conversi 1997, 21). From the *Unió Catalanista* came the first fully-formed Catalan nationalist party, the *Lliga Regionalista* (Regionalist League), founded in 1901, which would go on to dominate Catalan politics until the Spanish Civil War.

A prominent figure in both the *Unió Catalanista* and the *Lliga Regionalista* was Enric Prat de la Riba. Prat's *La nacionalitat catalana*, published in 1906, is seen as the seminal work in the development of Catalan nationalism, and interestingly it makes no reference to outright separation.

Prat's work influenced the development of the Lliga Regionalista party and later the Solidaritat Catalana coalition. Prat himself became the president of Barcelona's provincial government in 1907 and helped to establish the Mancomunitat of Catalunya (Commonwealth of Catalonia) in 1914, which served as the administrative body of the four Catalan provincial governments (Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona). In many respects, Prat was to Catalan nationalism what Sabino Arana was to Basque nationalism.

The momentum of the Catalan cultural and political nationalist movement ended when Miguel Primo de Rivera declared his dictatorship of Spain in 1923. Indeed, Primo de Rivera nearly eradicated all nationalist gains. As Daniele Conversi (1997, 36) observes:

At the beginning, most Catalanists hoped that it [the dictatorship] would bring back some stability in a region plagued by social conflicts, but within only a few days a royal decree banished the Catalan flag and language and had all offences against the unity of the country placed under the jurisdiction of military courts. Catalanist organisations were dissolved, meetings were prohibited or monitored by Madrid's agents, and political leaders were arrested on trivial pretexts. A royal decree also imposed the national syllabus on all Spanish schools, with a ban on teaching any subject not included in it. When Primo de Rivera realised that Catalanist leaders could never accept his policies, he first deposed the President of the Mancomunitat and then suppressed it altogether in 1925.

Expressions of Catalan identity were proscribed for the sake of establishing a single Spanish character, much like Franco would go on to champion.

In the midst of economic stagnation and inflation in the late 1920s, Primo de Rivera lost the support of King Alfonso XIII and the military. His subsequent resignation brought about the Second Republic (1931-1939), during which time several changes occurred in Catalonia. In 1931, the Catalans approved the Statute of Autonomy, which established the Generalitat (the successor of the Mancomunitat), the Catalan Parliament, and Catalan Presidency. In the election for the Catalan Parliament, a new party known as the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC or Catalan Republican Left) won the most votes, and Francesc Macià i Llussà became president. The ERC's rival, the Lliga Regionalista, had lost support due to its cooperation with the Spanish state. The

ERC had wanted to establish a Catalan Republic that would be federated with Spain but instead accepted Catalan autonomy within a Spanish federation.

Yet just as the gains of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Catalanism were crushed by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the rebirth of Catalan nationalism during the Second Republic ended when Franco rose to power in the late 1930s. Despite the loss of the *fueros* in 1716 and the suppression of Catalanism in the 1920s, Catalan nationalism mostly remained a movement advocating autonomy or regionalism within a Spanish framework rather than outright independence. Nationalists at the time especially believed that Catalan economic interests would best be served in this type of political structure (Díez 1995, 3; Beramendi 2000, 82). André Lecours (2007, 59) observes, “Catalan nationalism was constructed as a liberal and procapitalist movement favoring autonomy for Cataluña but without seeking independence from Spain with which it felt a sense of solidarity.” Moreover, Catalan political nationalism emerged from a revival in Catalan culture, so the emphasis was on celebrating and preserving Catalan identity rather than espousing an ideology that was fundamentally anti-Spanish. This is the essential difference from Arana’s nationalism, which advocated a hatred for Spain and independence for the Basque Country from the outset as a result of the loss of Basque *fueros* and anti-*maketismo*. The pro-Catalonia but not anti-Spain character of the traditional Catalan nationalist agenda also explains why the Catalans did not support violent independentist vehicles, such as various terrorist organizations operating in the region.

### **5.3.3 Catalan Terrorist Violence during the Franco Regime**

Franco not only suppressed Basque nationalism but also attempted to eradicate Catalanism in his effort to create a single Spanish nationalism. His brutality was as fierce in Catalonia as it was in the Basque Country. The regime killed, imprisoned, or forced into exile thousands of Catalans; abolished the Generalitat, the region’s autonomous form of government; and banned the Catalan

language and other key symbols of Catalan identity and nationhood, such as the flag, national hymn, and national dance (Hargreaves 2000, 28). Franco killed or evicted Catalan nationalists and banned political institutions and cultural symbols just as he had done in the Basque Country.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the Catalan region did experience terrorist activity aimed at crippling the Franco regime, although this violence was insignificant in comparison to that of the Basque Country. One terrorist organization that appeared in 1969 was the Front d'Alliberament Català (FAC or Catalan Liberation Front). FAC included members of previous Catalan separatist groups, such as the Consell Nacional de Catalunya (CNC or Catalan National Council) and Estat Català (Catalan State) (Díez 1995, 163). Between 1969 and 1971, FAC committed over 100 acts of violence, but none of these incidents resulted in any deaths (Díez 1995, 163) due most likely to disorganization and incompetence.<sup>67</sup> The organization conducted 26 terrorist attacks between 1971 and 1979 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism's Global Terrorism Database), but only one of these attacks resulted in death – in 1979, the organization killed two policemen in Barcelona (Schmid and Jongman 2008, 660). By and large, however, the public overlooked FAC's activities, and as a result the organization did not emerge as a legitimate actor in the Catalan resistance (Díez 1995, 163). Between 1976 and 1977, much of FAC evolved into the Moviment de Resistència de Catalunya (MRC or Catalan Resistance Movement), but lacking support from Catalan society and exerting little influence over Catalan politics, both FAC and MRC dissolved in the late 1970s (Díez 1995, 168).

Another Catalan terrorist organization emerged in 1974. It was known as the Partit Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional dels Països Catalans – provisional (PSAN-p or Socialist Party of National Liberation for the Catalan Countries - provisional). The “provisional” description was borrowed from the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). Having splintered from the Catalan

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<sup>67</sup> START's Global Terrorism Database, which begins in 1970, does not list FAC's terrorist activity until 1971.

separatist party PSAN, which itself had split from the Front Nacional de Catalunya (FNC or Catalan National Front) in 1969, the group advocated independence of the Catalan Countries and terrorism in emulation of ETA. Similarly to how ETA emerged in response to the PNV's inability to initiate a Basque independentist movement, PSAN-p formed out of frustration with the PSAN's inability to lead a Catalan independentist movement. However, the terrorist activity of PSAN-p was extremely low and like FAC did not garner much public attention (Díez 1995, 163).<sup>68</sup> In 1979, PSAN-p merged with the Organització Socialista d'Alliberament Nacional (OSAN or Socialist Organization of National Liberation) to form the Independentistes dels Països Catalans (IPC or Independence of the Catalan Countries), a nonviolent separatist political group.

In sum, Catalonia did experience terrorism during the Franco regime, but unlike in the Basque Country, this violence was fairly insignificant and did not receive much attention from Catalans. Lacking a clear vision of their goals, coherent strategies, support from the wider Catalan community, and a historic nationalism that favored independence, Catalan terrorist organizations did not achieve success or longevity. As Montserrat Guibernau (2004, 55) states, “*Armed struggle* did not take root among the anti-Franco opposition in Catalonia, which preferred using non-violent tactics” (italics in original).

#### **5.3.4 Catalan Terrorist Violence after the Franco Regime**

The political changes that Spain underwent in the late 1970s have been described above. In many respects, the transformations that Catalonia experienced were similar to those in the Basque Country. In 1977, the Generalitat de Catalunya, consisting of the Catalan Parliament, Presidency, and Executive Council, was restored after nearly forty years of suspension. Like the Basques, the Catalans approved their Statute of Autonomy in 1979, which established the Autonomous

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<sup>68</sup> START's Global Terrorism Database has no record of PSAN-p's terrorist activity.

Community of Catalonia. The Statute defined the community to include the provinces of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona. In 1980, Catalans elected their first parliament and president under Spanish democracy. The Catalan nationalist party *Convergència i Unió* (CiU or Convergence and Union) won the most seats and went on to dominate regional elections. Also in 1980, Catalonia's police force, the *Mossos d'Esquadra*, which is similar to the Basque Country's *Ertzaintza*, passed to the control of the *Generalitat*. For the most part, the adoption of the Statute and other political changes in Catalonia during the transition received support from Catalan parties.

Despite public support for Catalan autonomy within a decentralized Spain, a terrorist group known as *Terra Lliure* (ILL or Free Land) emerged during the transition in an effort to dictate Catalan politics in the post-Franco era. Officially founded in 1978, this organization espoused a separatist, leftist ideology with the end goal of full unification and independence of the *Països Catalans*. Like ETA, *Terra Lliure* did not want regional autonomy but instead fought for total independence. Diehard members of other militant groups, such as FAC and PSAN-p, coalesced into *Terra Lliure* beginning in 1980. *Terra Lliure* held meetings throughout the 1980s, resembling ETA's assemblies in the 1960s and 1970s, to decide doctrine and strategy. The organization committed 62 acts of terrorism between 1981 and 1992, which led to one death and 47 injuries (START's Global Terrorism Database).

Among all of its terrorist attacks, two stand out. In 1981, the organization kidnapped popular political commentator Federico Jiménez Losantos and shot him in the leg for promoting the use of the Spanish language over Catalan in the region. He was later set free. In 1987, a bomb attack in the province of Lleida killed one person. This was the organization's only attack that led to a loss of life. *Terra Lliure* also cooperated with another ethnic terrorist organization called the *Exèrcit Roig Català d'Alliberament* (ERCA or Catalan Red Liberation Army) in attacking U.S. interests. ERCA detonated a car bomb in Barcelona in 1987, which killed one member of the

Spanish Civil Guard and injured fifteen others (Schmid and Jongman 2008, 660), and also claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack against a United Services Organization (USO) club in 1987 that resulted in one death and nine injuries (Delaney 1987).<sup>69</sup> ERCA did not commit any other attacks. In 1991, Terra Lliure announced a ceasefire and stated that some of its members would join the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC or Catalan Republican Left) to fight for an independent Catalonia through nonviolent political means. Nonetheless, some terrorists continued to carry out attacks in the name of the organization. A 1992 initiative by Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón, who had been active in fighting ETA, led to the arrests of several Terra Lliure members, further weakening the organization. This coincided with the Olympic Games that were being held in Barcelona at the time. In 1995, the group officially announced its dissolution. Throughout its existence, Terra Lliure was never able to establish a political wing, which stands in contrast to ETA.

In sum, Catalonia has had a history of terrorism, but its encounter with violence has been negligible in comparison with the Basque Country. The vast majority of Catalan people never supported terrorism in the region either during or after the Franco regime. Activities of the FAC, PSAN-p, and other organizations in Catalonia in the 1960s and 1970s received little attention. Moreover, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism's Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPs) site argues that Terra Lliure "never garnered broad support from the Catalan people and by July 1991, it was clear to even the militant members of Terra Lliure that their terrorist campaign would not be successful in creating a Catalonian state." Although Terra Lliure had repeatedly tried to foment a movement against Spain to bring about a Catalan state, it "was unsuccessful, owing to a lack of organization and visibility and a penchant for sheer ineptitude" (Díez 1995, 169). Without the support of the wider Catalan community, Catalan

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<sup>69</sup> Terra Lliure also claimed responsibility for the attack (Delaney 1987). START's Global Terrorism Database lists the perpetrator of this attack as unknown.

terrorist organizations could not secure members with what Michael Kenney (2010) calls a “talent for tradecraft,” eventually leading to their apprehension by law enforcement officials.

## **5.4 Comparing the Cases**

Why was the level of terrorism so much higher in the Basque Country than in Catalonia? The motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) structure offers a comprehensive way to understand terrorism in Spain. Ultimately, the egregious degree of violence in the Basque Country can be attributed to severe human security violations, significant sponsorship, and the opportunity for ETA’s domination provided by the passivity of nationalist political leaders. Human security violations also contributed to the development of Catalan terrorist organizations, but the inconsequence of their activities can be attributed to low levels of sponsorship and the absence of the opportunity for organizational dominance of the ethno-political space.

### **5.4.1 Motive: Human Security Violations**

Franco’s brutality spurred terrorist violence in both the Basque Country and Catalonia. What Goldie Shabad and Francisco José Llera Ramo (1995, 465) call the “culture of violence” that persisted in the Basque Country during the Franco regime was a result of Franco’s human security violations. ETA derived its existence from Franco’s policies of political and cultural repression carried out against the Basques. The Basques had neither freedom from want in the form of political and cultural representation nor freedom from fear in the form of security and protection. My interviews support the claim that discrimination and oppression led to ETA’s development. André Lecours (2007, 72) further explains that authoritarianism and political repression led Basques to oppose not only the Franco dictatorship but also the Spanish state. Having developed an ideology based on a nationalism that was inherently anti-Spain and pro-independence, ETA equated



Spain with discrimination, which explains in part why the organization continued even after Franco's death.

ETA struggled with its ideological identity throughout the Franco regime. Members fought over whether or not the organization should be socialist, nationalist, or a combination of the two. However, the nationalist argument always won out, indicating that Franco's discrimination mattered more than the perceived exploitation of the working class by capitalist forces (Shabad and Llera 1995, 436). In fact, socialists who tried to hijack ETA from the nationalist cause were evicted from the organization. This fits the profile that Martha Crenshaw (2007, 14) ascribes to ethnic terrorist organizations, in that they take on a "Marxist-Leninist veneer" when it is "ideologically fashionable." ETA operated to fight Franco because he violated the Basque right to communal security.

It is also important to observe that the Basque nationalist movement became particularly independentist and intransigent only after Franco's repeated violations of the community's security rights. ETA consistently fought for separation, but its predecessor, Ekin, originally emerged to protect Basque identity and rebuff Franco's discrimination. It was Franco's continued repression of the Basques that ignited the quest for independence. The fact is that the PNV – the mouthpiece of Basque nationalism – had long sought political accommodation rather than independence. In giving rise to ETA through its repressive and discriminatory public policies, the Franco regime brought about a diehard quest for independence. Had Franco's policies been favorable to the Basques, Basque terrorism would have likely been much lower. The case of the Basques, much like the case of the Tamils, suggests that in identifying ethnic terrorist organizations' original motivations, emphasis should be placed on the advent of human security violations rather than on unappeasable desires for independence.

Like the Basques, the Catalans too experienced violations of their communal security. Franco proscribed political institutions and cultural expressions and killed or sent into exile Catalan

nationalists. Franco's military tribunals sentenced 3,800 people in Catalonia to death between 1938 and 1953 – most of whom were minor party and union officials who had not believed that their lives were in danger and therefore had not fled into exile like others (Balcells 1996, 127). This repression led to the formation of terrorist organizations and an opposition to the dictatorship that was distinctly violent, much as it had in the Basque Country. In contrast to that region, however, the degree of violence was minor.

Thus, the cases of the Basques and Catalans offer two important qualifications to this dissertation's overall argument. First, although human security violations may cause terrorist activity in general, they are a necessary but insufficient condition for extreme, widespread terrorist violence. Second, the Catalan case in particular highlights that the intensity of terrorist violence is dictated by the interplay between the motive, means, and opportunity. For example, the lack of opportunity and therefore means in the Catalan case thwarted the motivational drive for terrorist rebellion.

#### **5.4.2 Means: Sponsorship**

Available evidence suggests that support for ETA and its terrorist activity were substantial enough to sustain the organization's operations and altogether much higher than Catalan support for terrorism. The Burgos trial of 1970 – the event that exposed Franco's brutal treatment of the Basques to the international community – generated a significant amount of support and sympathy for ETA's struggle. Laura Desfor Edles (1998, 128) states, "While ETA had been decimated organizationally by the arrests and flight of its members in the wake of the Manzananas killing [which brought about the Burgos trial], ETA gained new members, popular support, and legitimacy as a result of the trial." John Sullivan (1986, 93) further explains, "For a majority of the Basque people, the sixteen prisoners were legitimate successors to those who had fought for Euskadi in the Civil War." One interviewee (2011) likewise concurs that sympathy garnered during the Burgos trial

empowered the organization to increase its violence.<sup>70</sup> The trial became an invaluable source of support for ETA. Moreover, the organization secured additional support from the Basque community three years later when it assassinated Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco (Gómez-Céspedes 2006, 5), since many Basques started to believe that the organization might be able to bring an end to the Franco regime.

In addition to these observations, Robert P. Clark (1984, 170-176) finds that a core group enabled ETA's activities. He finds that between 1975 and 1982, three to six percent of adult Basques in the region (between 56,900 and 97,000 people) supported violence to achieve Basque independence. Moreover, he finds that roughly half of the population (between three-quarters of a million and a million people) wanted the Spanish government to accept ETA's demands or negotiate with them if this would end the violence. Based on this research, he concludes that five to ten percent of the Basque population justified the organization's violence to obtain Basque independence. This base support helped sustain the organization's activities during this timeframe.

Another source of support during the Franco era was the French government's passive willingness for ETA to exploit the French Basque Country as an operational base. During the Franco dictatorship, the French government saw ETA as a Spanish problem. Indeed, successive French presidents had little interest in helping Franco and to some extent welcomed ETA's violence against the dictatorship. France believed that cracking down on the organization might provoke it to conduct a terrorist campaign within French borders. After the assassination of Carrero Blanco in 1973, France did slowly begin to change its policies by banning separatist organizations, toughening procedures to obtain resident status, and initiating a policy of preventive detention (Shabad and Llera 1995, 444), but ETA effectively continued to exploit the region. This explains why despite ETA's rhetoric in fighting for a united Basque Country – which would include the Basque region in

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<sup>70</sup> Author interview with Respondent 5. February 2011.

France – it never directly fought the French state in achieving this aim. There was an implicit understanding between the French government and ETA to stay out of each other's affairs. Much to Spain's disapproval, the result of this arrangement was that ETA's command structure managed to survive in France, at least until the 1980s. Thus, the Basque Country faced large-scale violence in part due to the French government's passive support of ETA.

What level of support did ETA maintain after the country's transition to democracy? The University of the Basque Country's Department of Political Science conducts the Euskobarómetro, which is a sociological statistical survey that captures Basque opinions on a range of issues (University of the Basque Country 2010). The survey indicates that support for ETA was substantial in 1978 but has since decreased. In 1978, 13 percent of Basques felt that ETA members were "patriots," but by 2007 this number dropped to only four percent. In 1978, only 11 percent believed that ETA members were "crazy" or "terrorists," but by 2007 this figure increased to 36 percent. Finally, in 1978, seven percent thought that members were "criminals" or "assassins," but by 2007 this grew to 18 percent. Altogether, then, in 1978, only 18 percent of Basques felt that ETA members were crazy, terrorists, criminals, or assassins, but 54 percent did by 2007. Support for ETA has likely decreased due to the political benefits that democracy has brought, as well as the particularly brutal cast that ETA's campaign took on in the 1980s. Dwindling support for ETA since the transition corresponds with the decrease in the organization's operational strength.

Interestingly, the changing image of ETA since the transition does not correspond with a transformation in the desire for Basque independence. In fact, the Euskobarómetro reports that in 1979, 36 percent of Basques wanted independence and in 2010 33 percent wanted independence (University of the Basque Country 2010), a relatively minor change in opinion. This suggests that support for ETA has not dwindled because of a decreasing interest in Basque independence. It may be that support for independence in the 1970s corresponded with support for ETA at that time, but

nationalists began to channel their support into alternative independence-seeking outlets when they became available after the shift to democracy.

ETA also lost support due to increased cooperation between Spain and France after the Franco era. When France actively increased its counterterrorist efforts beginning in the 1980s, it “severely constrained ETA’s ability to carry out frequent actions” and “exacerbated internal organizational problems of coordination and communication” (Shabad and Llera 1995, 444). For Fernando Reinares (2011), “ETA’s impairment could have been much more rapid had French cooperation started sooner and in a more determined manner.” France played a dominant role in allowing ETA to continue its campaign by granting it sanctuary in the French Basque Country, but when the government toughened its position, the organization lost the insulation of its leadership, leading to a decrease in organizational capacity and terrorist violence. As one interviewee (2011) mentions, increased cooperation between France and Spain has led to a more effective counterterrorist strategy.<sup>71</sup>

Two political developments further weakened ETA. First, in 1988, all Basque political parties except Herri Batasuna signed the Ajuria-Enea Pact (1988-1998), which in a united stand condemned the use of terrorism in fomenting political change (Llera 2000, 110). Then, in the late 1990s, ceasefire negotiations took place between the government and ETA. Although the talks broke down, one interviewee (2011) points out that this produced a nonviolent pro-independence movement in which ETA was seen as an obstacle.<sup>72</sup> Second, in 2003, the Spanish government banned Batasuna, ETA’s political arm. Rogelio Alonso and Fernando Reinares (2005, 270) assert, “contrary to what nationalist politicians had foreseen, the illegalization of the party has not resulted in an increase of violence but has contributed to the gradual weakening of ETA.” This is because

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<sup>71</sup> Author interview with Respondent 6. February 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Author interview with Respondent 6. February 2011.

the ban has severely threatened the organization's financial viability. Dawn Brancati (2006, 660) states, "Batasuna has supported ETA financially by collecting the proceeds of ETA's 'revolutionary tax,' a local tax that businesses must pay if they do not want ETA to attack them. The weakened ability to exact this tax has been especially crippling for ETA since the organization has consistently relied on blackmailing as a key source of support."<sup>73</sup> Batasuna also uses the Basque media to support ETA and its goals and even uses its offices to store guns and ammunition for ETA." Thus, the proscription of Batasuna has eliminated an important source of ETA's survivability and has likewise diminished the organization's ability to use coercive means to guarantee support that would otherwise not be given.

In contrast to the Basque case, support for terrorism in Catalonia has always been quite low, even during the Franco era. This is in large part due to disinterest in the use of terrorist violence to effect political change by the Catalan community. For example, the Catalans did not rally behind FAC members when they fought the Franco regime. Nor did they defend these militants when they were captured and tried during military tribunals. Their trials did not bring widespread endorsement of their activities as the Burgos trial had in the Basque Country. Juan Díez Medrano (1995, 185) asks rhetorically, "who remembers the military trials of FAC's militants in September 1972?" Moreover, in 1988, only one percent of Catalans rated their support for Terra Lliure above five on a 1-10 scale (Díez 1995, 174). This lends credence to Fernando Reinares' (2005, 124) argument that mainstream Catalan parties reacted quickly against Terra Lliure's kidnappings and bombings in order to prevent terrorism from becoming normalized in the region. In short, the Catalans' disregard for terrorism resulted in the inability of organizations such as FAC, PSAN-p, and Terra Lliure to secure a steady flow of recruits and financial commitments, placing terrorism on the periphery of the Catalan nationalist movement.

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<sup>73</sup> Author interview with Respondent 5. February 2011.

Why did Catalans reject terrorism? As one interviewee (2011) notes, the political climate and level of terrorism in the Catalan and Basque regions are quite distinct.<sup>74</sup> One reason may be their historical positions on independence. Although support for independence does not necessarily translate to sponsorship of nationalist terrorism (which has independence as its goal), those who support nationalist terrorism almost always support independence. In 1976, nine percent of Basques supported independence, while zero percent of Catalans did (Díez 1995, 176). ETA drew much of its support from this nine percent, while Catalan terrorist organizations obviously struggled to find support from a population that in general did not favor independence. Catalan terrorism has been low because support for independence in general, at least until the 1990s, has been low, in line with the original goals of early Catalan nationalist ideology, which aimed to promote Catalan culture, identity, and language and greater autonomy within the Spanish framework. Stanley G. Payne (1975, 250) argues, “Catalanism was always more collaborationist and less extreme in its demands, and after the frustrations of exaggerated ultra-Catalanism between 1934 and 1937 many Catalanists no longer have such interest in the extremes of political self-assertion.” As one interviewee (2010) notes, Catalonia was more dedicated to peace.<sup>75</sup> In contrast, the original articulation of Arana’s Basque nationalism advocated independence from the outset, which may explain why many Basques desired independence and supported ETA, at least during the Franco regime. Thus, the Catalan community’s traditional disinterest in independence likely accounts for its rejection of terrorism to achieve independence.

Furthermore, Catalan terrorist organizations did not effectively exploit French Catalonia as a sanctuary for their leaders or a base for their operations, as ETA did. Given its indifference toward ETA militants, the French government would have also likely permitted Catalan terrorists to operate

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<sup>74</sup> Author interview with Respondent 9. July 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Author interview with Respondent 1. July 2010.

from within its borders and regroup after Franco's counterattacks. The fact that Catalan terrorist organizations did not use French territory is undoubtedly a consequence of their inability to secure widespread support or carry out their operations with skill and success. For instance, in 1972, the Franco government captured, tortured, and exiled several members of FAC after the organization had carried out a series of violent acts. Some of those exiled went to French Catalonia, but instead of planning to launch further terrorist activities from there, as ETA members had repeatedly done in the French Basque Country, they modified their ideology and formed the Communist Party of Catalonia. Thus, where ETA's use of France ensured its survival, Catalan terrorist organizations did not make use of the country in the same way.

#### **5.4.3 Opportunity: Occasion for Dominance of the Ethno-Political Agenda**

The variation in terrorist violence between the Basque and Catalan communities is also a result of the extent of the occasion for terrorist organizations' dominance of the ethno-political agenda. In the Basque Country, a vacuum emerged when nationalist leaders essentially resigned to Franco's oppression. One interviewee (2011) discusses the passivity of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV),<sup>76</sup> which implicitly acquiesced to Franco's rule, especially when it became clear that the Western allies would not topple his regime after WWII. The PNV argued at the time that the Basque community should cooperate with the Franco regime and that Basque parties should join with Spanish political parties for practical purposes. John Sullivan (1986, 28) goes as far as to say that some PNV supporters prospered under Franco: "Such people retained a cultural identification with the national movement, although they had long abandoned any kind of struggle against the Franco regime." The PNV came across as passive, incompetent, and without strong leadership after José Antonio Aguirre, president of the Basque community, died in 1960 (Lecours 2007, 75).

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<sup>76</sup> Author interview with Respondent 8. July 2011.



Moreover, economic elites also avoided open resistance. Juan Díez Medrano (1995, 182) explains, “Because of their economic dependence on the Spanish-oriented capitalist elite, members of the Basque bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who held nationalist ideas faced great political and economic risks when expressing these ideas or mobilizing in support of nationalist organizations.”

For Ekin and later ETA, as well as many in the wider Basque community, these positions were unacceptable. ETA filled the void that PNV and economic leaders left, and took on many of the functions that they should have carried out. This opportunity invigorated ETA’s trajectory. ETA was not just another nationalist organization; after the mid-1960s and especially after the Burgos trial in 1970, Basques perceived it as the only real resistance to Franco’s repression. By the 1970s, “ETA came to be at the forefront of the resistance movement against the authoritarian regime” (Shabad and Llera 1995, 430). Marianne Heiberg (1979, 107) further claims, “Open criticism of ETA was judged as open support for the regime.”

From the 1960s until the transition to democracy in the late 1970s, ETA was the dominant force in Basque politics. It gained support not only from those who wanted to use terrorism against the state but also from those who desired to contribute to the nationalist movement (without necessarily wanting to support terrorism) and lacked viable alternatives. Many Basques channeled their frustrations through ETA because it was perceived to be the only outlet to stand against discrimination. Nevertheless, ETA’s competition increased dramatically during and after the transition, as various political parties and civil society organizations emerged. This helps to explain the gradual decrease in support for the organization since the late 1970s. With the introduction of democracy, the organization had to compete against a multitude of Basque actors to sustain its supremacy, a task it found quite difficult to achieve. Democracy and the institutionalization of Basque parties produced a less favorable climate for ETA’s violence to be maintained (Shabad and Llera 1995, 455).

In brief, ETA emerged out of an ethno-political vacuum in the Basque Country that was created as a result of the inability of the PNV (and other groups) to foment a resistance against human security violations. Once the organization was in place, it strived to dictate the future of Basque affairs, at which it succeeded, unimpeded, because it did not face much competition from other actors – at least until the Franco regime came to an end in the mid-1970s.

This stands in contrast to the Catalan case. Juan Díez Medrano (1995, 157-167) cites several Catalan actors that united to confront Franco's regime. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, a period of time that corresponds roughly with ETA's initial phase, political parties, Catholic organizations, the university, and the Catalan Assembly were active in promoting Catalanism and, as one interviewee (2010) observes, dedicated to peaceful solutions.<sup>77</sup> The Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC or United Socialist Party of Catalonia) established the largest Catalan union in the 1960s, and helped to create a student organization called the Associació Democràtica d'Estudiants de Catalunya (ADEC or Democratic Student Association of Catalonia) at the University of Barcelona (Díez 1995, 158). In this way, the party was involved in promoting labor and education rights in the region. Moreover, Catholic organizations strived to preserve Catalan identity and culture (Díez 1995, 159). Juan Díez Medrano (1995, 159-160) observes that "some of the most important acts of defiance against the Franco regime in Catalonia were organized under the auspices of the Church." Jordi Pujol, arguably the most active nationalist during this time and future president of Catalonia, became a leading member in a Christian Catalan group called Crist Catalunya (CC or Catalonia Christ).<sup>78</sup> The Catholic Church publicly defended Catalan culture and language against Franco's repression (Hargreaves 2000, 25). Montserrat Guibernau (2004, 58) notes, "The

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<sup>77</sup> Author interview with Respondent 1. July 2010.

<sup>78</sup> There is some dispute over the exact name of the organization. CC may also stand for Catòlics Catalans or Catalans Cristians.

Catalan church played a remarkable role in preserving Catalan, not just through its use in sermons and religious education, but also as an instrument of culture and communication.”

Furthermore, students at the University of Barcelona, with help from other nationalists, mobilized in an effort to form the *Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants de la Universitat de Barcelona* (SDEUB or Democratic Students' Union of the University of Barcelona) in 1966 (Guibernau 2004, 60). The union demanded freedom of expression, association, and research, and “defended the cultural and linguistic pluralism of Spain” (Guibernau 2004, 61). When police surrounded the meeting to establish the SDEUB in February 1965, “various sectors of Catalan society joined in solidarity to condemn the episode” (Guibernau 2004, 62). Finally, in 1971, nationalists who had been active in previous organizations formed the Catalan Assembly, which would go on to become the largest organization opposing Franco in Catalonia in the 1970s (Díez 1995, 165). The Catalan Assembly demanded amnesty, autonomy, and protection of the Catalan language. Juan Díez Medrano (1995, 157-167) concludes that these groups in Catalan society were much more active than their counterparts in the Basque Country. Terrorist organizations in Catalonia did not dominate because, unlike in the Basque Country, they faced strong competition from other nationalist actors.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to determine why the Basque Country has experienced large-scale terrorist violence while Catalonia has not. Human security violations provide the motive for terrorist violence in both regions, suggesting that they are a necessary condition, but sponsorship and the occasion for dominance account for variation in terrorism across the communities.

In the Basque Country, a core of the public supported ETA during the Franco era which allowed the organization to flourish. The French government also passively allowed the

organization to remain in the French Basque Country. These factors account for the intensity of the terrorist campaign before and during the country's transition. However, Basque support for ETA has gradually dwindled since the introduction of democracy, and increased counterterrorism cooperation between France and Spain has effectively denied the organization the luxury of continuing to exploit French territory for planning operations and evading Spain's law enforcement officials. Along with political rejections of terrorism and the proscription of Batasuna, these factors explain the gradual decrease in terrorist violence in the Basque Country. In Catalonia, support for terrorism has never been high, which has left terrorist organizations active in the region scrambling to secure recruits and finances – a task they found insurmountable in the long run – and unable to use French territory as effectively as ETA did. Such militants had no option but to succumb to law enforcement officials or transition to nonviolent political outlets. Catalans' disinterest in independentist violence most likely stems from the long-held belief that Catalonia can exist within a Spanish federalist framework. Thus, terrorism in Catalonia has been minimal.

Finally, the occasion for terrorist organization's dominance of the ethno-political landscape also explains the varying levels of terrorism. In the Basque Country, ETA filled a vacuum created by the inaction of the PNV and other nationalist actors during the Franco regime. ETA exploited this vacuum to dominate, and many Basques began to feel that the organization was the only real option in challenging repression. However, the transition to democracy reinstated previously banned political parties and brought about new ones, which began to crowd ETA out of the political space, leading to a gradual decrease in terrorism. In Catalonia, however, a range of actors stood against Franco's repression, so Catalans could channel their frustrations into these actors. As Juan Díez Medrano (1995, 184) puts it, "the only political organization that clearly opposed Franco in the Basque Country was ETA; thus ETA was able to appeal to a larger and ideologically more heterogeneous group of democrats and nationalists than did similar Catalan political organizations."

The interaction of human security violations, sponsorship, and occasion for dominance of the ethno-political agenda accounts for the difference in terrorism violence across the Basque and Catalan communities, and the cases of the Basques and Catalans in Spain lend support to the theoretical framework posited in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 6. A Statistical Assessment of Ethnic Terrorism

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter uses a different methodology than the previous two to examine the motive, means, and opportunity (MMO) of ethnic terrorism. In Chapters 4 and 5, I conduct comparative case study analyses between positive and negative cases in two countries. Specifically, I compare the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka in Chapter 4 and the Basques and Catalans in Spain in Chapter 5. These cases have revealed a wealth of information about why large-scale terrorism develops among some ethnic communities but not others. However, case study research cannot reveal the extent to which findings are applicable to the broader world. Are factors that explain variation in terrorist violence in these cases applicable to the wider domain of ethnic terrorism, or are they idiosyncratic? In this chapter, I carry out statistical analyses to see whether or not the explanations identified in the theoretical framework and case study analyses have broad relevance. Only a handful of research studies assess ethnic terrorism as a specific phenomenon (Volkan and Harris 1995; Byman 1998; Akcam and Asal 2005), and to my knowledge none does so statistically at the level of the ethnic group.

In sum, I find a good deal of generalizability. The models show that human security violations are a general *motive* for large-scale ethnic terrorism. Proxies for these violations, such as political discrimination, are positively and significantly correlated with terrorism. Moreover, the models reveal interesting facets of the sponsorship *means*. Some proxies are important explanatory factors. Terrorism benefits from coercively forced support among the local population as well as military support from diaspora communities. However, other proxies for sponsorship are not generalizable, such as the degree of the group's geographic concentration and proximity of diaspora communities. One explanation is that these factors may only be relevant in explaining terrorism

once the motive for terrorism has been established. Furthermore, the occasion for dominance of the ethno-political agenda as an important *opportunity* for terrorism has general support from the models. Groups in which terrorist organizations maintain a dominant role are more likely to experience large-scale terrorist activity than other groups, suggesting that terrorist organizations must achieve dominance for terrorist activity to be severe. Additionally, the models suggest that ethnic outbidding and elite competition contribute to terrorism, as they show a positive correlation between the number of group representatives and terrorist incidents. Finally, control variables, such as democracy level, economic factors, and degree of separatism, show some noteworthy but at times inconclusive results.

Based on an ethnic terrorism dataset (ETD) created by the merger of publicly available data (and described in Chapter 3 on research design), I first explore the location of ethnic terrorist incidents, casualties, and organizations in Section II, and then assess relationships between group-level characteristics and terrorist incidents through inferential statistics in Section III. I conclude this chapter with a reiteration of key findings in Section IV.

## **6.2 The Location of Ethnic Terrorism**

What can the ethnic terrorism dataset (ETD) tell us about the location of ethnic terrorism? This section highlights the regions, countries, and groups serving as the key origins of ethnic terrorism (incidents and casualties) and having the most active and most violent ethnic terrorist organizations. Table 2 offers information about total figures in the ETD. Between 1985 and 2008, 10,370 incidents of ethnic terrorism took place throughout the world, and 73,335 casualties (deaths

and injuries) resulted from these incidents. In total, 329 ethnic terrorist organizations (ETOs) were active in this timeframe.<sup>79</sup>

**Table 2: Total Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, Casualties, and Organizations, 1985-2008**

Ethnic Terrorist Incidents	10,370
Casualties from Ethnic Terrorism	73,335
Ethnic Terrorist Organizations	329

Table 3 breaks down the total number of incidents, casualties, and organizations by source region.<sup>80</sup> Terrorist incidents have been carried out on behalf of ethnic groups in all regions of the globe but conducted to advance political interests in South Asia more than any other region. This is in large part due to the activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka and various organizations in India, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Western Europe is the second highest source of incidents but only the sixth highest in terms of casualties. Organizations like the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) were extremely active in the region over the timeframe, but their attacks resulted in relatively few casualties. The Middle East and North Africa region ranks third in ethnic terrorist incidents and second in overall casualties. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) alone account for over half of these incidents (53%) and casualties (60%). As the table

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<sup>79</sup> The vast majority of these incidents can be attributed to these ethnic terrorist organizations. Other incidents are attributed to perpetrators that are ethnic in nature but not actual organizations. Here, I differentiate between perpetrators that are actual known organizations and those that are ethnic in nature but not actual organizations. Although all incidents of and casualties from ethnic terrorism are included in Tables 2-5, 8, and 9 regardless of whether or not the perpetrator was an actual organization, the ETO counts in Tables 2, 3, 6, and 7 only include actual known organizations.

<sup>80</sup> The majority of ethnic terrorist attacks occur locally. However, ethnic terrorist organizations sometimes carry out attacks abroad. Transnational terrorist incidents can be examined by source and target (Blomberg and Hess 2008). This dissertation is focused on the *development* of ethnic terrorism; thus, I categorize terrorist incidents by source rather than target when the two are indeed different. Incidents and casualties that occurred outside of a region but are attributed to an organization (or other perpetrator) within a given region are attributed to that region in an effort to highlight the source of terrorist activity.



shows, more ETOs have been operating in South Asia than in any other region. Of the 90 organizations in the region, 72 are in India alone. Although they are active throughout all parts of India, several exist in Kashmir and the Seven Sister States in the northeast region of the country.

**Table 3: Total Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, Casualties, and Organizations by Source Region, 1985-2008**

Region	Incidents	Casualties	ETOs
South Asia	2,809	35,006	90
Western Europe	2,628	3,421	33
Middle East and North Africa	2,438	13,873	81
Sub-Saharan Africa	969	9,262	62
Southeast Asia	764	5,382	25
Russia and Newly Independent States	339	5,293	10
Eastern Europe	134	523	6
Central America & Caribbean	106	33	3
East Asia	63	346	4
North America	60	103	10
South America	35	21	3
Australasia and Oceania	25	72	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,370</b>	<b>73,335</b>	<b>329</b>

Tables 4-6 show the leading source countries of incidents, casualties, and organizations, and Figure 2 shows a map of these countries.<sup>81</sup> Over 1,000 incidents occurred to advance the goals of ethnic groups in India and Israel. India and Sri Lanka had the most casualties. India also has the highest number of ETOs, and Israel has the second highest. Interestingly, India's organizations span a multitude of ethnic groups, including the Assamese, Bodos, Kashmiris, Muslims, Nagas, Scheduled Tribes, Sikhs, and Tripuras, but organizations in Israel are united in one aim – the liberation of Palestine. As this table illustrates, countries in all regions of the globe and with all types of regimes are vulnerable to ethnic terrorism.

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<sup>81</sup> See above footnote. Incidents and casualties that occurred outside of a country but are attributed to an organization (or other perpetrator) within a given country are attributed to that country.

**Table 4: Source Countries with Highest Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**

Country	Incidents
India	1,592
Israel	1,242
Spain	952
Turkey	951
United Kingdom	920
Sri Lanka	912
France	743
South Africa	450
Philippines	384
Russia	320

**Figure 2: Source Countries with Highest Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**



**Table 5: Source Countries with Highest Number of Casualties from Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**

Country	Casualties
India	17,209
Sri Lanka	16,110
Israel	8,179
Russia	5,130
Turkey	3,436
Philippines	3,417
Burundi	2,766
United Kingdom	2,050
South Africa	1,770
Rwanda	1,750

**Table 6: Countries with Highest Number of Ethnic Terrorist Organizations, 1985-2008**

Country	ETOs
India	72
Israel	38
France	15
Iraq	14
South Africa	12
Lebanon	10
Nigeria	10
Turkey	9
United Kingdom	9
Burma	9
Ethiopia	9

Table 7 lists the ethnic groups that have the most organizations operating to defend their interests. The Palestinians and Kashmiris have the first and second most respectively, numbering over 30 each. The Scheduled Tribes in India have the third most, representing several peoples, such as the Garos, Dimasas, and Meiteis. Table 8 lists the source ethnic groups ranking the highest in terms of incidents carried out by organizations and other perpetrators. As the table indicates, the Palestinians, Kurds, and Catholics in Northern Ireland have supported or suffered from the most terrorist activity. Table 9 provides information about the number of casualties by ethnic group. More casualties have occurred during the course of the Tamil conflict than any other.

**Table 7: Ethnic Groups with Highest Number of Ethnic Terrorist Organizations, 1985-2008**

Ethnic Group	Country	ETOs
Palestinians	Israel	38
Kashmiris	India	34
Scheduled Tribes	India	18
Corsicans	France	12
Kurds	Turkey	9
Tamils	Sri Lanka	8
Chechens	Russia	8
Catholics in Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	8

**Table 8: Source Ethnic Groups with Highest Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**

Ethnic Group	Country	Incidents
Palestinians	Israel	1,240
Kurds	Turkey	951
Catholics in Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	915
Tamils	Sri Lanka	912
Basques	Spain	897
Sikhs	India	674
Corsicans	France	673
Kashmiris	India	458
Blacks	South Africa	404
Moros	Philippines	383

**Table 9: Source Ethnic Groups with Highest Number of Casualties from Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**

Ethnic Group	Country	Casualties
Tamils	Sri Lanka	16,110
Palestinians	Israel	8,172
Sikhs	India	6,608
Kashmiris	India	5,869
Chechens	Russia	5,130
Kurds	Turkey	3,436
Moros	Philippines	3,417
Hutus	Burundi	2,056
Catholics in N. Ireland	United Kingdom	2,048
Assamese	India	2,048

Tables 10 and 11 specify the most active and most violent ETOs. ETA and the PKK have been the most active in terms of the number of attacks carried out, with over 800 each. However, the organization causing the most casualties is the LTTE, with over four times as many casualties as the next group, Hamas. LTTE attacks have been especially brutal. Moreover, five of the top ten most violent organizations are ethno-Islamist groups, including Hamas, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which is consistent with Victor Asal and Karl Rethemeyer's (2008) observation that ethno-religious organizations are particularly deadly.

**Table 10: Ethnic Terrorist Organizations by Highest Number of Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**

Ethnic Terrorist Organization	Incidents
Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA)	891
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	860
Irish Republican Army (IRA)	799
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	755
African National Congress (ANC)	381
Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC)	336
Hamas	250
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	190
United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)	182
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	179

**Table 11: Ethnic Terrorist Organizations by Highest Number of Casualties from Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2008**

Ethnic Terrorist Organization	Casualties
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	14,546
Hamas	3,352
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	3,158
Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)	2,216
United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)	2,048
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	1,759
Irish Republican Army (IRA)	1,682
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	1,658
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	1,366
Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA)	1,257

### 6.3 Generalizability of the MMO of Ethnic Terrorism

The previous section offers a general description of ethnic terrorist incidents, casualties, and organizations. In this section, I explore the generalizability of the motive, means, and opportunity (MMO) framework of ethnic terrorism through regression analyses. The models are constructed in accordance with theoretical insights identified in Chapter 2 as well as case study findings from

Chapters 4 and 5. Descriptive statistics for all variables are available in Appendix 4.<sup>82</sup> The analysis and variable constructs are described before the empirical results are highlighted and discussed.<sup>83</sup>

### 6.3.1 Analysis and Variable Constructs

#### 6.3.1.1 *Dependent Variable: Terrorism*

The dependent variable is the number of terrorist incidents per ethnic group per year. Unlike a binary variable measuring the presence or absence of terrorism, a count measure captures the intensity of terrorist activity. These data come from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and are matched with ethnic groups from the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset according to the coding methodology described in Chapter 3. In Model 12, I substitute MAR's group rebellion variable for the terrorist incident count to determine if the results are robust to a different operationalization of terrorism. Although terrorism and group rebellion are not the same type of political violence, the assumption here is that terrorist activity occurs more frequently with extreme levels of rebellion. As Nicholas Sambanis (2008, 174) notes, "civil wars create opportune environments for terror and terrorists." The rebellion variable ranges from 0 (no rebellion) to 7 (protracted civil war). The correlation between the number of terrorist incidents and group rebellion is 27%, indicating a positive relationship.

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<sup>82</sup> For more information about the nature of these variables, please see the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) codebook at: <<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>> (last downloaded on April 8, 2011); the Minorities at Risk (MAR) codebooks at: <[http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/margene/mar-codebook\\_040903.pdf](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/margene/mar-codebook_040903.pdf)> and <[http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/data/mar\\_codebook\\_Feb09.pdf](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/data/mar_codebook_Feb09.pdf)> (last downloaded on May 7, 2012); and the Polity IV Project codebook at: <<http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm>> (last downloaded on May 7, 2012).

<sup>83</sup> Please see Chapter 3 on research design for additional details on coding, time frames, methods, data sources, data limitations, and robustness checks.

### *6.3.1.2 Independent Variables*

#### *6.3.1.2.1 Motive: Human Security Violations*

Theoretical observations that human security violations are an important driver of terrorist activity (Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens 2006; Walsh and Piazza 2010) are reinforced by the cases of the Tamils and Basques. Similarly, the absence of repressive public policies against the Muslim community corresponds with the community's low level of terrorist activity. The Catalan case, however, stands in contrast to the other three cases, as severe violations did not cause widespread terrorism in the area. Thus, the models should help to reveal whether or not this case is an exception. The primary proxy to measure human security violations in the models is a political discrimination index (Models 1, 2, and 7-12). The index measures the extent to which the government discriminates against groups, and is an ordinal variable ranging from 0 (no discrimination) to 4 (exclusion/repressive policy). For Models 3-6, I substitute different aspects of human security violations as robustness checks. These include restrictions on movement (Model 3), restrictions on cultural movements (Model 4), restrictions on language use (Model 5), and government force against protestors (Model 6). Like the political discrimination index, these four variables are ordinal, with higher values indicating more severe restriction or force.

In Models 13-18, I use the 2004-2006 data to perform robustness checks on the findings elicited from the 1985-2003 data. In these models, human security violations are measured with a variable on government repression of civilians – specifically those civilians who do not engage in political activities. It is an ordinal variable ranging from 0 (no repression reported) to 5 (violent coercion and killing). Although the 2004-2006 dataset includes a political discrimination index, it is constructed differently than the one used in the 1985-2003 dataset. Specifically, the “4” category does not include extreme repression against groups when these groups are openly rebelling against the state (Minorities at Risk Project 2007, 11). Since the interplay between repression (even when

groups are indeed rebelling) and terrorism is critical to this dissertation, and given the nature of the political discrimination index in this dataset, I do not use this index as the measure of human security violations, as its inclusion might lead to a Type II error.<sup>84</sup>

#### *6.3.1.2.2 Means: Sponsorship*

As theoretical explanations and case study findings assert, sponsorship should be associated with terrorist activity. The primary proxy to measure sponsorship in the models is group spatial distribution (Models 1-6 and 9-14). It is an ordinal variable ranging from 0 (the group is widely dispersed) to 3 (the group is highly concentrated in one region).

The cases show conflicting results about the relationship between group concentration and terrorism. Group proximity has power in explaining the positive cases (the Tamils and Basques), as it facilitated the process of generating support – including active, passive, willing, and unwilling – for the LTTE and ETA. However, it does not explain the negative cases (the Muslims and Catalans), since these groups are also relatively concentrated but did not encounter much terrorism. Nonetheless, Nils B. Weidmann (2009) finds that concentration generally increases the propensity for ethnic conflict by facilitating coordination for collective action. Similarly, Monica Duffy Toft (2003) asserts that groups engage in violence when they are geographically concentrated, as this leads to the view that their homeland is indivisible and worth defending. Thus, the models should help to clarify whether or not group concentration is associated with widespread terrorism.

In Model 7, I substitute a variable to capture the phenomenon that terrorist (and non-terrorist) organizations can forcibly secure local support from their communities in order to maintain their operations.<sup>85</sup> Group members can sponsor terrorist organizations both willingly and

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<sup>84</sup> A Type II error occurs when one fails to reject the null hypothesis when it is indeed false.

<sup>85</sup> I create this variable from MAR's ORG1ST8, ORG2ST8, and ORG3ST8 variables in the Phases I-IV version.



unwillingly. Some members of the group may voluntarily support terrorism; however, when members are not willing, they may be forced to support the movement against their will (Byman 1998; Kaufman 1996). The cases suggest that terrorist organizations manage to sustain their campaigns in large part due to the exploitation and manipulation of their ethnic brethren. For example, ETA levied revolutionary taxes on the Basque people, and the LTTE forcibly recruited child soldiers from Tamil areas. Neither the Catalan terrorist organizations nor Sri Lanka Muslim actors were effectively able to force support from their constituents. This helps to explain why their efforts failed. Thus, the prevalence of forced support should be correlated with higher levels of terrorism. The variable is binary: 1 indicates that at least one of the top three dominant organizations representing group interests uses force as a strategy to obtain local support and 0 indicates otherwise.

In Model 8, I substitute a variable on the proximity of kindred groups. Ethnic groups that are in close proximity to diaspora communities may be more likely to experience terrorism, as these communities can easily support the terrorist movement. Although the case of the Catalans contradicts this, as it shows that the presence of a neighboring diaspora community does not automatically lead to intense terrorist campaigns, the extent to which the LTTE and ETA benefited from neighboring kindred communities – respectively, Tamil Nadu and the French Basque Country – suggests that the relationship should at least be explored in a model. Moreover, Nicholas Sambanis (2001, 275) empirically finds that countries bordering other countries which are at war are more likely to experience ethnic war, and offers a theoretical rationale that this could be the result of diffusion effects, as information influences patterns of mobilization and violent conflict in neighboring states. The variable ranges from 1 (no close kindred across an international border) to 5 (close kindred in more than one country which adjoins the group's regional base).

Models 13-18 – the models utilizing the 2004-2006 data – grant further insight on the sponsorship means. In Models 13 and 14, I maintain the group spatial distribution variable as a robustness check on findings elicited from the 1985-2003 dataset. In Models 15-18, I examine relationships that are of theoretical interest but cannot be assessed in Models 1-12 (because such information does not exist in the 1985-2003 dataset). Specifically, I further examine the association between the diaspora community and terrorism. A more appropriate way to assess diaspora sponsorship for terrorism may be to examine the nature of the diaspora community's support rather than the proximity of the diaspora community to the ethnic group. Thus, I consider overall kindred group support as a predictor of terrorism in Model 15 and then investigate support by type, such as kindred group *political* support in Model 16; kindred group *material* support in Model 17; and kindred group *military* support in Model 18. Each of these variables is dichotomous: 1 indicates that the group receives the specified type of support and 0 indicates otherwise.

#### *6.3.1.2.3 Opportunity: Occasion for Dominance of the Ethno-Political Agenda*

A key finding from the case studies is that terrorism levels are higher when terrorist organizations exploit an occasion to dominate their ethnic communities than when they are on the fringes of the nationalist movement. This occurs for two reasons. First, terrorist organizations in a dominant position can better carry out their activities in an effort to force the state to capitulate (as the LTTE and ETA tried to do). Second, they rely on terrorist methods to continue their dominance, attacking rivals and even allies at times (as the LTTE most notably did). Increased terrorism should be an outcome associated with the presence of dominant organizations that use terrorism as a strategy. This is intuitive but falsifiable. The idea is that groups in which terrorist organizations dominate should experience more terrorist activity than groups that: 1) do not maintain terrorist organizations (but perhaps have individual terrorists) or 2) are affected by terrorist

organizations (but these organizations are not in dominant positions, much like the Catalans experienced). This terrorist organizational dominance variable is dichotomous: 1 indicates that at least one of the top three dominant organizations representing group interests maintains a terrorist campaign and 0 indicates otherwise.<sup>86</sup> To put it differently, 1 represents the presence of at least one terrorist organization that dominates the community. This variable is included in Models 1-8, 11, and 12.

A counterargument might be that a terrorist organization must be the *primary* dominant organization representing group interests in order for terrorism levels to be particularly high. In other words, terrorism levels may not be as elevated if such organizations are present but not primary actors in the community (e.g. the primary actor is a political party). Therefore, in Model 9, I substitute the primary terrorist organizational dominance variable.<sup>87</sup> 1 indicates that the primary organization representing group interests maintains a terrorist campaign (e.g. the primary organization is a terrorist organization) and 0 indicates otherwise.

In Model 10, I substitute the number of organizations representing group interests – a continuous variable with higher numbers indicating more organizations – as a robustness check on terrorist organizational dominance. There may be “too many cooks in the kitchen”: when more organizations compete to represent group interests, more terrorism may follow (Reinares 2005; Kaufman 1996). This is due to ethnic outbidding and elite competition. Intra-group rivalries often lead to the adoption of violence by at least one actor in a bid for differentiation. The Tamil case is illustrative. The LTTE carried out a campaign of violence against rival terrorist organizations as well as the nationalist political party in its effort to become the sole representative of the Tamil community. Similarly, intra-organizational rivalries can lead to the continuance of violence. The

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<sup>86</sup> I create this variable from MAR’s ORG1ST9, ORG2ST9, and ORG3ST9 variables in the Phases I-IV version.

<sup>87</sup> I create this variable from MAR’s ORG1ST9 variable in the Phases I-IV version.

Basques' experience with ETA suggests that terrorist activity can continue due to factional splintering. One faction of ETA always maintained violence as an instrumental component of its strategy in order to distinguish itself from other members. For the most part, aggressive ethnic outbidding seemed largely absent in the cases of the Muslims and Catalans. Furthermore, the example of Palestinian terrorism is instructive. It is not surprising that the Palestinians, in maintaining a higher number of terrorist organizations than any other ethnic group (Table 7), endure the highest number of ethnic terrorist incidents (Table 8). Thus, the higher the number of organizations representing group interests, the more likely it is that terrorism arises.

In Models 13-18, the 2004-2006 data models, I account for the occasion for dominance with a variable on the nature of group representation. This variable is ordinal ranging from 0 (no political organizations representing group interests) to 5 (only militant organizations promoting group interests). Higher values should correspond with more terrorism. This variable provides a robustness check on the occasion for dominance variables examined in the 1985-2003 dataset.

#### *6.3.1.3 Control Variables*

Control variables are included in the models. In Model 2, I include a measure accounting for a recent history of terrorism. This is to ensure that the findings from Model 1 (the baseline model) are not influenced by the failure to recognize the path dependence of terrorist activity. 1 indicates that the group experienced at least one terrorist incident in the previous year and 0 indicates otherwise. Although lagged dependent variables are often used in linear models to account for temporal dependence, they are inappropriate in maximum likelihood estimations (Wood 2010, 609).

In all models, I control for democracy level. The relationship between a country's democracy level and terrorism is complex. In one view, non-democracies are more likely than democracies to experience terrorism (Blomberg and Hess 2008; Li 2005). One explanation is that

repressive authoritarian regimes provide the motivation for organizations to emerge and employ terrorist strategies since dissidents are not afforded the opportunity to express grievances through democratic channels. In another view, democracies are more likely to suffer from terrorism (Eubank and Weinberg 1994; Weinberg and Eubank 1998). William Eubank and Leonard Weinberg (2001, 163) offer one explanation: “Democracy makes it possible for dissident groups of all sizes and shapes to wage campaigns of terrorist violence on behalf of whatever goals they seek to achieve.” It may be particularly difficult for a democratic state to execute an effective counterterrorism campaign without harming or marginalizing non-combatants. Thus, they proceed in ways that minimize the harm done to civilians but that do not prevent or remove the terrorism problem. Another explanation is offered by Burcu Savun and Brian Phillips (2009). They suggest that democracies tend to be more active in international politics, and argue that states with more active foreign policies attract more resentment from abroad. A third explanation that cannot be ruled out is a limitation of the data. Terrorism incidents tend to be underreported in non-democracies, which would push the correlation between democracy and terrorism toward being positive. In any event, the relationship between terrorism and regime type should be taken into consideration. To measure democracy level, I use the revised combined polity score from the Polity IV Project. It ranges from -10 to 10, with higher levels representing more democratic principles.

It is also important to recognize the potential effects of economic factors. The relationship between poverty and terrorism has been the focus of debate in the terrorism literature. Although many studies find that economic underdevelopment is not correlated with terrorist violence (Abadie 2004; Piazza 2006; Krueger 2007), James Piazza (2011) has found that minority economic discrimination explains domestic terrorism. Thus, I control for economic differential in Models 1-10 and 12. It is an ordinal variable ranging from -2 (the group benefits from major economic advantages) to 4 (the group suffers from severe economic disadvantages). These disadvantages need

not be the result of discriminatory policy,<sup>88</sup> so in Model 11, I substitute an economic discrimination index (which follows the same scale as the political discrimination index variable) to account for economic discrimination perpetrated by the state. This index is also included in Models 13-18.

Finally, I account for separatism in all models. Separatist groups may be more prone to resort to terrorism than non-separatist groups (Muller and Weede 1990), given that the goals of such groups are incompatible with the state's imperative of protecting its territorial integrity. This coincides with Toft's (2003) observation that the indivisibility of territory, leading to separatism, involves violence. It is an ordinal variable ranging from 0 (no separatism) to 3 (active separatism).

**Table 12: Regression Results from 1985-2003 Dataset**

Variables	DV = Number of Terrorist Incidents											DV = Rebellion
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Motives</i>												
Political Discrimination Index	0.552*** (0.0914)	0.358*** (0.0956)					0.575*** (0.0944)	0.574*** (0.0933)	0.452*** (0.0924)	0.357*** (0.107)	0.436*** (0.140)	0.233*** (0.0899)
Restrictions on Movement			1.533*** (0.282)									
Restrictions on Cultural Movements				0.987*** (0.141)								
Restrictions on Language Use					1.019*** (0.184)							
Government Force against Protestors						0.499* (0.286)						
<i>Means</i>												
Group Spatial Distribution	-0.290 (0.274)	-0.201 (0.137)	-0.168 (0.261)	-0.521* (0.293)	-0.423 (0.288)	-0.226 (0.290)			-0.302 (0.260)	0.707** (0.292)	-0.339 (0.233)	0.148 (0.138)
Dominant Organizational Forced Support							1.698*** (0.537)					
Proximity of Kindred Groups								-0.123 (0.139)				
<i>Opportunities</i>												
Terrorist Organizational Dominance	1.982*** (0.457)	0.714** (0.304)	1.880*** (0.414)	2.370*** (0.446)	2.714*** (0.498)	1.532** (0.639)	1.028** (0.523)	1.970*** (0.494)			1.923*** (0.424)	1.196*** (0.294)
Primary Terrorist Organizational Dominance									1.358*** (0.457)			
Number of Group Representatives										0.386*** (0.0847)		
<i>Controls</i>												
Recent History of Terrorism		3.441*** (0.303)										
Democracy Level	0.113*** (0.0290)	0.0541** (0.0232)	0.0917*** (0.0281)	0.0666** (0.0311)	0.0745** (0.0319)	0.0754** (0.0367)	0.0993*** (0.0296)	0.0966*** (0.0333)	0.124*** (0.0274)	0.119*** (0.0303)	0.124*** (0.0281)	-0.0265 (0.0210)
Economic Differentials Index	0.0448 (0.110)	0.0143 (0.0988)	-0.0386 (0.125)	-0.0292 (0.128)	0.00771 (0.131)	0.141 (0.138)	-0.0333 (0.105)	0.0119 (0.109)	-0.0143 (0.103)	-0.176 (0.117)		0.0723 (0.0800)
Economic Discrimination Index											0.261 (0.173)	
Separatism Index	0.229 (0.222)	0.315** (0.126)	0.369* (0.211)	0.228 (0.226)	0.0726 (0.246)	0.629*** (0.230)	0.249 (0.196)	0.231 (0.173)	0.474** (0.198)	0.426* (0.240)	0.281 (0.180)	0.440*** (0.118)
Constant	-1.802*** (0.500)	-2.769*** (0.397)	-1.610*** (0.564)	-0.566 (0.618)	-0.638 (0.619)	-1.532* (0.800)	-2.441*** (0.470)	-1.928*** (0.572)	-1.405*** (0.514)	-5.499*** (0.739)	-2.029*** (0.519)	2.791*** (0.487)
Observations	2,241	2,241	1,633	1,620	1,620	1,059	2,241	2,200	2,210	1,312	2,381	2,226
Wald X <sup>2</sup>	101.04	300.71	87.38	110.97	100.61	61.98	95.86	104.13	86.99	93.05	115.79	84.19
Prob > X <sup>2</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Log Pseudolikelihood	-1921.9889	-1747.5671	-1280.3296	-1269.0674	-1276.3877	-858.8323	-1906.3327	-1920.5861	-1931.9263	-691.1988	-2007.6853	-2255.1104
<i>Years: 1985-2003</i>												
<i>All independent variables are lagged one year</i>												
<i>Robust standard errors clustered by ethnic group in parentheses</i>												
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1												

<sup>88</sup> See the Minorities at Risk codebook for Phases I-IV, pp. 30-31.

**Table 13: Regression Results from 2004-2006 Dataset**

Variables	DV = Number of Terrorist Incidents					
	13	14	15	16	17	18
<i>Motives</i>						
Government Repression of Civilians	0.380*** (0.121)	0.274*** (0.0943)	0.399*** (0.120)	0.381*** (0.121)	0.384*** (0.124)	0.412*** (0.115)
<i>Means</i>						
Group Spatial Contribution	0.126 (0.275)	0.170 (0.209)				
Kindred Group Support			0.565 (0.588)			
Kindred Group Political Support				0.0366 (0.754)		
Kindred Group Material Support					0.134 (0.595)	
Kindred Group Military Support						1.644** (0.744)
<i>Opportunities</i>						
Nature of Group Representation	2.097*** (0.246)	1.586*** (0.228)	2.019*** (0.224)	2.094*** (0.246)	2.093*** (0.245)	1.978*** (0.229)
<i>Controls</i>						
Recent History of Terrorism		3.032*** (0.404)				
Democracy Level	0.168*** (0.0489)	0.0959*** (0.0342)	0.159*** (0.0516)	0.169*** (0.0490)	0.166*** (0.0497)	0.150*** (0.0517)
Economic Discrimination Index	-0.0607 (0.200)	-0.209 (0.133)	-0.0765 (0.181)	-0.0852 (0.210)	-0.0978 (0.204)	-0.0442 (0.170)
Sepatism Index	0.532** (0.226)	0.229 (0.204)	0.561*** (0.181)	0.578*** (0.183)	0.580*** (0.179)	0.507*** (0.180)
Constant	-9.971*** (1.026)	-8.384*** (0.779)	-9.598*** (1.086)	-9.751*** (1.080)	-9.726*** (1.082)	-9.435*** (1.065)
Observations	783	783	770	783	773	775
Wald X <sup>2</sup>	102.81	231.46	89.72	89.71	89.54	95.71
Prob > X <sup>2</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Log Pseudolikelihood	-382.6614	-343.6049	-366.6548	-382.8576	-374.6166	-362.0664

*Years: 2004-2006*

*All independent variables are lagged one year*

*Robust standard errors clustered by ethnic group in parentheses*

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

## 6.3.2 Model Results and Discussion

### 6.3.2.1 Motive: Human Security Violations

See Tables 12 and 13 for the model results. In accordance with theoretical insights and case study findings, the models reveal that human security violations are associated with terrorist activity. The political discrimination index variable is positive and significant (Models 1-2, 7-11). Ethnic

groups facing more severe exclusive and discriminatory policies are more likely to experience terrorism than groups that do not face such policies. This overall finding is robust to different iterations of human security violations (Models 3-6, 13-18) and terrorism (Model 12). This corresponds with the cases of the Tamils, Basques, and Sri Lankan Muslims but not that of the Catalans, which appears to be an exception to the rule, as violations did not translate to major terrorist operations.

What is the size of the impact that political discrimination has on ethnic terrorism? As this is difficult to determine from the regression models, I calculate post-estimation substantive effects with CLARIFY software (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) and present these results in Table 14. Groups suffering from extreme political discrimination (POLDIS = 4) experience approximately two more attacks, on average, per year, than groups facing no discrimination (POLDIS = 0), holding all other model variables at their means.

**Table 14: Substantive Effects, Key Independent Variables and Ethnic Terrorist Incidents, 1985-2003**

Variable	Change	Effects on Ethnic Terrorist Incidents	95% Confidence Interval
Political Discrimination Index (Model 1)	0 to 4	+2.3104	[1.1391 - 4.1685]
Dominant Organizational Forced Support (Model 7)	0 to 1	+3.3700	[1.1187 - 7.6488]
Terrorist Organizational Dominance (Model 1)	0 to 1	+2.7494	[0.6856 - 6.9767]
Substantive effects produced via Monte Carlo simulations using CLARIFY (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003).			
All other model variables are held at their mean.			

### 6.3.2.2 Means: Sponsorship

The models show that the relationship between sponsorship and terrorism is less straightforward. The direction of the correlation between group spatial distribution and terrorism differs across models, and is not significant in any of the models except Models 4 and 10. The non-significance finding is robust to the rebellion dependent variable (Model 12) and to the 2004-2006

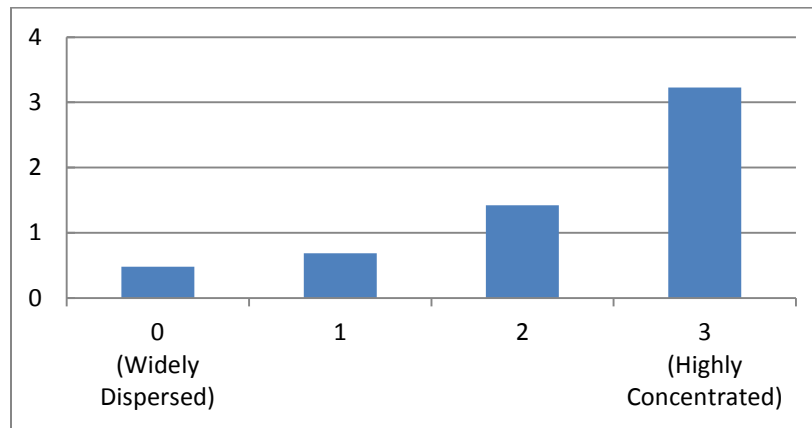


data (Models 13-14). On the whole, it appears that concentrated groups are no more or less likely to experience widespread terrorism than dispersed groups. Despite empirical observations elsewhere, this non-significance is in agreement with the case findings of this dissertation. All four ethnic communities in the case study analyses are concentrated, but only two experienced large-scale terrorist campaigns. At the least, group closeness is not a sufficient cause for terrorism.

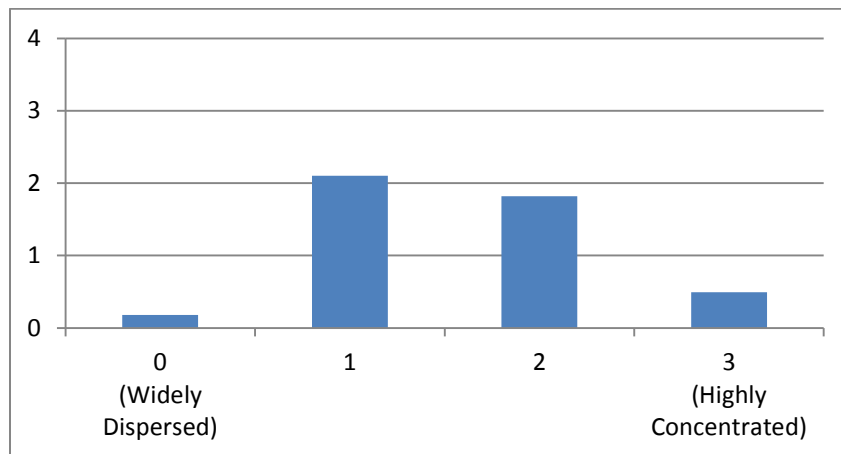
Nonetheless, concentration may matter in explaining the intensity of terrorist activity once motivation for such activity has been established. For example, when a government represses along ethnic lines, highly concentrated groups should be able to offer more support to terrorist organizations in terms of recruitment, funding, and sanctuary than widely dispersed groups. As the adage has it, “where there is a will, there is a way” – not “where there is a way, there is a will.” In other words, motivation should be a necessary precondition for means.

Figures 3 and 4 provide support for this assertion. Figure 3 shows that among groups facing high political discrimination (political discrimination index = 3 or 4), ethnic terrorism is higher when groups are highly concentrated (group spatial distribution = 3) than when they are less concentrated (group spatial distribution = 0, 1, or 2). The average number of attacks per year that highly concentrated groups experience is 3, while less concentrated groups experience fewer incidents. Figure 4 shows a more inconclusive picture of the effect of concentration on ethnic terrorism when political discrimination is low (POLDIS = 0, 1, or 2). Surprisingly, the average number of incidents per year is highest (2) when groups are only somewhat concentrated (GROUPCON = 1 or 2). Given these patterns, one possibility for the non-significance of the relationship between group spatial distribution and terrorist incidents in the majority of the regression models is that, for concentration to matter, political discrimination must first be in effect. Figures 3 and 4 show that when discrimination is high, group concentration can help explain the intensity of terrorist violence.

**Figure 3: Average Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents When Political Discrimination Is High (POLDIS = 3 or 4) by Geographic Concentration across All Ethnic Groups, 1985-2003**



**Figure 4: Average Number of Ethnic Terrorist Incidents When Political Discrimination Is Low (POLDIS = 0, 1, or 2) by Geographic Concentration across All Ethnic Groups, 1985-2003**



This trend explains the cases of the Tamils and Basques, as high discrimination and concentration sustained the LTTE and ETA campaigns, as well as the case of the Muslims in Sri Lanka, as a degree of proximity among the Muslims did not serve as a means of widespread terrorist activity because state discrimination was low. Again, however, the Catalan case seems to be an exception, as high discrimination and concentration did not lead to an extensive terrorist campaign, pointing to the necessity of the interplay between the three factors.

The correlation between kindred group proximity and terrorism is also non-significant (Model 8). Groups that have kindred neighbors are no more or less likely to experience terrorism than groups that do not. Again, the establishment of motivation may also be relevant. Groups without sufficient motivation to resort to terrorism will likely not benefit from neighboring kindred groups, while groups with sufficient motivation will. The cases of the Tamils, Basques, and Muslims (but not the Catalans) reiterate this point. Moreover, although groups that benefit from general support (Model 15), political support (Model 16), or material support (Model 17) from kindred groups are no more or less likely to experience terrorism than those groups that do not, groups receiving military support (Model 18) are more likely to experience terrorism. The model shows that military support from kindred groups intensifies terrorist campaigns, and all four cases support this finding.

Model 7 shows a positive correlation between dominant organizational forced support and terrorism, in agreement with the case findings. When dominant ethnic organizations forcibly secure local support for their cause, groups are more likely to experience terrorism. Thus, forced support seems to be an important means of terrorism. Table 14 shows the substantive effects of dominant organizational forced support on ethnic terrorism. Groups that are subjected to force by a dominating organization suffer from approximately three more attacks, on average, per year than groups that do not, holding all other variables at their means.

In general, the models show that group concentration, kindred group proximity, and non-military diaspora support are not good predictors of terrorism. However, these factors likely matter once the motive for terrorism has been established, as shown with group concentration. Moreover, the models highlight that large-scale terrorist campaigns benefit from military support from the diaspora community and forced support from the local ethnic populace. Inherent in these factors, by contrast, is the assumption that the motive for terrorism has been realized.

#### 6.3.2.3 *Opportunity: Occasion for Dominance of the Ethno-Political Agenda*

The relationship between organizational dominance and terrorism is as expected. Models 1-8 show that when at least one of the dominant three organizations representing group interests uses terrorism as part of its organizational strategy, groups are more likely to experience large-scale terrorist violence. This finding holds when the *primary* dominant organization uses a terrorist strategy (Model 9). Table 14 shows that groups encountering at least one terrorist organization that has managed to reach a dominant position experience approximately three more attacks, on average, per year than other groups, holding all other variables at their means.

Model 10 shows a positive correlation between the number of group representatives and terrorism. Groups represented by several organizations are more likely to experience terrorism than groups represented by fewer organizations. Thus, the models support theoretical and case observations about ethnic outbidding and elite competition. Moreover, Models 13-18 reveal that groups represented by militant organizations are more likely to experience terrorism than other groups. Thus, when group representation is left to militants, severe terrorist campaigns follow. In short, it appears that terrorist organizations that manage to dominate the group's ethno-political agenda subject their ethnic groups to widespread terrorism.

#### 6.3.2.4 *Control Variables*

The relationships between the control variables and terrorism are interesting, but some require further research in order to reach a more complete and conclusive picture. In all models, except Model 12, democracy is positively associated with terrorism. Model 12 is the one in which group rebellion is substituted for terrorism; thus it may highlight a difference between rebellion and terrorism with regards to democracy. On the one hand, democracies, more than autocracies, may give terrorism the opportunity to escalate into full-scale rebellion, such as civil war. On the other

hand, democracies can obviate the rationale for civil war and convince the base population not to pledge their allegiance to rebels. The literature on the relationship between democracy and civil war is divided. For example, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2001, 10) find that repression (more likely found in non-democracies) increases conflict risk. In contrast, Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis (2002) contend that democracy is a significant determinant of civil war prevalence. Clearly, more work needs to be done on the relationship between democracy and rebellion.

Do economic differences matter in explaining terrorism? The association between economic differential (and economic discrimination in Models 11 and 13-18) and terrorism is not significant, in accordance with a large body of literature on the relationship between poverty and terrorism.

Finally, the association between separatism and terrorism is unclear. In Models 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 15-18, the correlation is positive and significant. These models suggest that separatist groups are more likely than non-separatist groups to use terrorism. However, in Models 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, and 14, the relationship is not significant. Thus, while it is intuitive to believe that separatist campaigns embrace terrorism to achieve their goal of independence – and some models support this pattern – what likely matters is the relationship between the group and the government. Separatist groups that benefit from state-given concessions and autonomous status are in a better position to reject terrorism. In any case, undoubtedly more research is needed to examine the conditions under which separatist campaigns embrace terrorist violence.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has investigated and discussed the broader world of ethnic terrorism. Ethnic terrorism is a severe problem, as organizations and perpetrators terrorize all regions and many countries in the world, albeit to different degrees. Some of the most troubled areas in terms of casualties are South Asia and the Middle East/North Africa region. Yet Western Europe ranks

second for ethnic terrorist incidents. ETA is the most active organization in terms of incidents, while the LTTE is the most violent in terms of casualties.

Moreover, the motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) framework explicated in Chapter 2 and investigated with case studies in Chapters 4 and 5 seems to have overall application to the wider world of ethnic terrorism. Human security violations are significant predictors of terrorism. Sponsorship, to the extent that it could be accurately captured in the models, also matters. When organizations forcibly obtain support from local constituents and when diaspora communities contribute militarily to group struggles, widespread terrorism follows. Other measures, such as group concentration and kindred group proximity, most likely matter once the motive to launch a campaign is established. Finally, the occasion for dominance of the ethno-political agenda is important in explaining terrorist activity. Terrorist organizations that can hijack and dominate the ethno-political space are in a better position to carry out their activities than other organizations.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Ethnic terrorism is a deadly challenge affecting localities throughout the world. It is a phenomenon that has not received as much attention from the academic community as other forms of political violence, such as jihadist terrorism and civil war. When it is considered, it is usually juxtaposed with other types of ideologies in terrorism studies, thus receiving somewhat superficial treatment, or relegated to the periphery in the field of ethnic conflict. Given its pervasiveness, this omission seems undeserved. This dissertation has aimed to reduce this gap with an agenda centered on the following research question: why do some ethnic groups experience large-scale terrorist violence while other groups do not? In other words, what explains the development of ethnic terrorism? Members of ethnic groups often experience terrorism through multiple channels, such as contributing to and suffering from it, but this recognition differs from the common assumption in scholarship that groups act as homogenous actors in conflict or peace with states and other ethnic groups. Moreover, the terrorism experience differs across ethnic groups, and this dissertation has endeavored to explicate this variation. This concluding chapter begins with a summary of empirical findings, then highlights the academic contributions of the dissertation, and finally offers some implications for policy.

### **7.2 Summary of Empirical Findings**

Borrowed from the field of criminal law and informed by the literature on terrorism and ethnic conflict, the motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) framework has sought to elucidate the factors behind widespread ethnic terrorist activity. In short, this dissertation's argument has been that state-committed human security violations against ethnic groups provide the *motive* for the

emergence of terrorist action; group and other types of sponsorship offer the *means* for organizations to launch their campaigns; and the occasion for terrorist organizations' dominance of the ethno-political agenda delivers the *opportunity* for large-scale terrorist violence.

The case and statistical findings have supported my assertions. Appendix 5 highlights key findings from the dissertation's empirical sections. For the case studies, the table reiterates the values on the dependent and independent variables, reasons why the variables take on the values that they do, and levels of support for the hypothesized association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. For the statistical analysis, the table shows the degree of support for the generalizability of the arguments derived from theoretical insights and case findings.

In the case of the Tamils, human security violations included the subjugation of the Tamil language and culture as a result of the supremacy of Sinhalese and Buddhism promulgated in the 1956 Sinhala Only Act and 1972 constitution. Violations also included the deaths, injuries, and displacement of countless Tamils in the wake of the 1983 riots – an act that the Sri Lankan government did not respond to effectively and perhaps even instigated. The means for LTTE terrorism came from a range of sources, including the Indian government, Tamil Nadu, the TULF, the Tamil public and diaspora, and the LTTE itself, as it was proactive in securing willing and unwilling support from its constituents. Finally, the opportunity came when TULF leaders temporarily forfeited their place in the Tamil nationalist movement after the passage of the Sixth Amendment, leaving a void which several militant actors, but the LTTE most aggressively, pursued to fill. The ferocity with which Prabhakaran pursued Eelam and the guarantee that the LTTE would maintain support, even if in no other way than to demand it, subjected the Tamil community to an especially bloody campaign.

The case of the Basques follows a similar (but less violent) trajectory. Human security violations included repeated subjection to oppressive and discriminatory acts carried out in



accordance with Francisco Franco's policies, accounting for the intensity and longevity of the ETA campaign. Like the LTTE, ETA secured domestic and foreign, active and passive, and willing and unwilling support. The major contributors included the French government, the French Basque Country, Batasuna, the Basque public, and ETA itself, as it propagandized the independentist movement and levied revolutionary taxes on its constituents. As the TULF resigned its position, the PNV also became passive in the wave of political and cultural oppression, creating an opportunity for the rise of ETA. Unlike in the Tamil case, where the LTTE secured support over the long run, at times through particularly brutal and coercive strategies, support for terrorism in the Basque Country dwindled over time, most notably after Spain's transition to democracy when nonviolent political channels became available. The variation in level of support procurement accounts for the different ways in which these organizations ended – brute military force over the LTTE and capitulation by ETA (although at the time of this writing, it is difficult to assure the finality of either organization).

Unlike the cases of the Tamils and Basques, the case of the Sri Lankan Muslims is an example of little terrorist activity emanating from within a community. What accounts for this? First, the Muslims did not experience much oppression from the Sri Lankan government and in fact often partnered with the Sinhalese-majority parties to advance their interests. Thus, the motive was obviated. The violations that they did face came largely from the LTTE, prompting a nationalist agenda aimed at protecting Muslim identity and seeking a degree of autonomy, and resulting in some retaliatory violence, although this was markedly low due to fear of LTTE reprisal. In general, collaborative efforts between the national government and the Muslim community precluded the desire for terrorism. Muslim militants who were active in the community did not benefit from much sponsorship and could not avail themselves of an opportunity to dominate, given the presence and activity of the SLMC. Thus, the factors which take on high values in the cases of the Tamils and

Basques, leading to terrorism, take on low values in the case of the Sri Lankan Muslims, accounting for the relatively inconsequential amount of terrorist activity within the community.

The case of the Catalans, however, offers important qualifications to these overall observations. Franco's oppression did not spur on a widespread terrorist campaign as it did in the Basque Country. Thus, in one view, it can be considered an exception to the rule, as the other empirical findings suggest a strong causal association between human security violations and severe terrorism. However, in another view, the Catalan case highlights the interactive effect of the motive, means, and opportunity of ethnic terrorism. Although the motive for terrorism had been established, Catalan society did not afford the opportunity – and as a result was not compelled to offer the means – to terrorist actors. In accordance with Juan Díez Medrano's (1995) argument, Catalan political and societal actors precluded the opportunity for terrorist organizations to dominate Catalan space, and because these actors were working to protect their culture, members of the community sponsored them more than terrorist groups. Of course it is difficult to say with certainty, but had nonviolent Catalan actors disappeared from the Catalan nationalist movement, terrorist organizations would have probably filled this void and support would have likely followed, empowering these organizations to the point where they would have been a formidable threat to Spain in general and Catalonia in particular.

The statistical findings offer a degree of generalizability of the motive, means, and opportunity argument. In the models, human security violations and terrorist organizational dominance are associated with large-scale terrorist activity, providing support for the generalizability of the motive and opportunity factors. However, the degree of generalizability of the sponsorship means is moderate. Some measures of sponsorship appear important, such as forced support from the local populace and military support from the diaspora community. These factors inherently presuppose motivation for terrorism, as some reason for forcing support and contributing military

means would first need to be established. However, other proxies for sponsorship, like group concentration and proximity of kindred groups, are not significant in the models. In contrast to forced and military support, these factors do not assume the initial establishment of motivation – they are mere geographic conditions. Thus, the models suggest that a necessary precondition for means is motivation. For example, group concentration as a source of means likely only matters when the motivation for terrorism has been established (as Figures 3 and 4 have illustrated). Otherwise, it remains an unneeded but potential source of support until such time as the motivation may arise.

The positive cases have suggested that large-scale ethnic terrorism occurs as a result of human security violations, sponsorship, and the occasion for dominance. That is, these factors appear individually necessary. Furthermore, all of the empirical findings from the case studies suggest that when these three factors coincide, large-scale terrorism follows. Thus, I would qualify Martha Crenshaw's (1981, 383) observation that the existence of a dissatisfied minority is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause of terrorism. Although the cases suggest that discrimination is not independently sufficient for terrorism, it does appear necessary, at least with regards to ethnic terrorism. A ripe area for further research would be to continue to investigate the necessity and sufficiency of these explanatory factors.

Is there a temporal order to the motive, means, and opportunity of ethnic terrorism? In other words, does one factor serve as a precondition for another? Timing varies across groups experiencing terrorism, but the four cases under study in this dissertation offer some observations. In all cases, the motive for terrorism came first. In the cases of the Tamils and Basques, the means and opportunity appear to have initially coincided, but as the LTTE and ETA filled their political vacuums and edged out rivals, support followed. In the case of the Catalans, the denial of the opportunity for terrorists to dominate appears to have precluded their ability to garner necessary

means. As for the case of the Sri Lankan Muslims, it is nearly impossible to assess the interplay of the means and opportunity, given that the motivation to launch a terrorist campaign against the government was never formally realized. However, one speculation is that even with the establishment of motivation, terrorist actors would have found it difficult to override the SLMC and dominate the community.

### **7.3 Academic Contributions**

This dissertation contributes to the conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and empirical study of ethnic terrorism in particular and of terrorism and ethnic conflict more generally. Conceptually, I argue that ethnic terrorism can be viewed as the intersection of terrorism and ethnic conflict. Terrorism can (and often does) take on an ethnic cast, and ethnic conflict at times involves terrorist violence. I also caution against interchanging seemingly identical terms, such as ethnic terrorism, nationalist terrorism, ethno-nationalist terrorism, and separatist terrorism. These types of terrorism are indeed different. For example, nationalist terrorism may or may not be ethnic in nature, as it could take on a civic character (Reinares 2005, 123), and ethnic terrorism usually does not instantaneously become separatist terrorism.

Theoretically, I argue that: 1) ethnicity emboldens terrorist campaigns in ways that other ideologies do not; 2) the motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) framework is a comprehensive lens through which to view the development of ethnic terrorism; and 3) my thesis offers important contributions to the broader literature. With regards to the first point, although all types of identity groups (e.g. ethnic, socialist, environmental) may have grievances, potentially leading to terrorism, ethnic grievances can devolve into intransigent demands for independence, making ethnic terrorist movements particularly long-lasting and violent. Unlike other groups, ethnic terrorist organizations can also mobilize resources from abroad by tapping into diaspora communities, which, because of

ethnic and familial ties, are willing to finance (and thus sustain) their campaigns. In addition, states that willingly violate groups' communal rights often ban separatist platforms on the grounds that they challenge the territorial integrity of the state. This often prompts separatist parties (e.g. the PNV, TULF) that are unable or unwilling to use violence to vacate the nationalist space. In turn, this leaves a vacuum which terrorist organizations all too willingly fill. Thus, ethnicity alters terrorist campaigns in ways that other ideologies do not.

With regard to the second point, the MMO framework borrows from the literature on ethnic terrorism, terrorism, and ethnic conflict to offer an argument comprising of three perspectives on ethnic terrorism (see the above section). The critical difference from a similar framework, the opportunity and willingness model, is that the MMO lens encourages the analytic separation of means and opportunity. If means are considered in the opportunity and willingness model, this factor is usually lumped together with opportunity. I argue that this is misleading and that opportunity, such as political structures, and means, such as resources, are theoretically distinct.

With regards to the third point, each strand of the MMO argument contributes to our understanding of violent political processes. First, human security violations appear to be a more compelling motive for conflict (or at least ethnic terrorism) than ancient hatreds (Kaplan 1993), the opportunism granted to non-ideological marauders by security personnel (Mueller 2000), indivisibility of territory measured by geographic concentration (Toft 2003), or economic factors (see Piazza 2011 concerning terrorism and Collier and Hoeffler 2001 concerning civil war). Second, conceptualizing sponsorship as a series of dichotomous alternatives (domestic vs. diaspora, active vs. passive, and willing vs. unwilling) is a useful exercise. Bruce Hoffman (2007) recognizes the role that diaspora communities play in supporting terrorism, and Daniel Byman (2005-2006) discusses the importance of passive sponsorship of terrorism. However, the dichotomy between willing and unwilling support has been largely overlooked. My research shows that when support is not offered

willingly from the ethnic group or its diaspora, terrorist organizations will demand support through coercive and violent methods. Finally, this research contends that terrorist organizations rise to dominate their ethnic groups when they are given the opportunity to do so. The opportunity takes the form of a political vacuum created by the departure of nonviolent nationalist leaders or the outright abetment and encouragement by such leaders. Thus, I argue that it is necessary to look at the opportunity within the ethnic group, rather than only considering the opportunity (or lack thereof) for terrorism afforded by the state (Crenshaw 1981). This has been especially important in understanding the Spain cases, and my analysis in particular concurs with Juan Díez Medrano's (1995) argument centered on political structures more than Daniele Conversi's (1997) emphasis on repression in the Basque Country (as it equally occurred in Catalonia) or David Laitin's (1999) focus on random events in the Basque case and tactical triumphs by ETA (which are both underscored by more support for ETA from Basques than for Catalan terrorism from Catalans).

Methodologically, I contend that both qualitative and quantitative methods are useful tools to explain the processes leading to ethnic terrorism and that each type of method can help compensate for the weakness of the other. Paired comparisons offer context and depth to empirical findings, while the series of regression models show the extent to which theoretical and case findings are generalizable. Paired comparisons specifically between positive and negative cases reveal causes of variation in the dependent variable rather than factors leading to a given outcome (which may or may not be present in the opposite outcome).

Empirically, I have generated new data on ethnic terrorism by interviewing individuals with first-hand knowledge of the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Spain. I have also created the first statistical dataset solely on ethnic terrorism. The dataset is the result of a merger of publicly available data from the Minorities at Risk (MAR) Project, Global Terrorism Database (GTD), and Polity IV

Project at the ethnic group-year unit of analysis. These new forms of data offer a holistic way to understand ethnic terrorism.

#### **7.4 Policy Implications**

How can states evade the plague of ethnic terrorism? The most obvious recommendation is for national governments to avoid committing human security violations against their ethnic minority groups. These violations not only provide the impetus for retaliatory action, including the adoption of violence by at least some members of the ethnic group, but also contribute to the means and opportunity of terrorism. They justify members' decisions to contribute to terrorism actively through participating in and funding the movements, as well as passively through taking no action to report militant activities. It is incredibly difficult, if not completely impossible, to choke off support for terrorist campaigns if groups and foreign actors can justify supporting them. Moreover, if oppressive and discriminatory practices are harsh enough, they will lead to the decision by nationalist leaders to relinquish their willingness to work within current political structures, leading to the opportunity for terrorist organizations to take over their agendas and dominate the groups. More directly, these practices can provoke leaders to sponsor terrorism outright.

Avoiding human security violations implies abandoning efforts to consolidate state nationalism, as it often comes at the expense of minority nationalisms. Even slight and soft signs of preferential treatment for one group can breed bitter resentment, which terrorist organizations will manipulate in order to validate the call for separatism. Indeed, human security violations make the quest for independence much more intransigent. Nationalist movements, in their infancy, tend to teeter between protecting and preserving their culture while pursuing some degree of autonomy on the one hand, and demanding outright independence on the other hand. Human security violations push these movements toward the latter course, compounding the problem. Terrorists who rise to

dominate the nationalist agenda will almost never willingly settle for something short of independence. It is misleading to assume that terrorist grievances can be removed (Horgan 2005, 45; Kaarthikeyan 2005, 131).

Unfortunately, options for states already experiencing ethnic terrorism are limited. Ending oppression and discrimination, reinstating political and cultural rights, and taking other steps to accommodate minority groups do not guarantee an end to violence. Both the cases of the Tamils and especially the Basques illustrate this point. For Sri Lanka, the government came to the tough and controversial decision to eradicate the LTTE with particularly harsh military force after previous conciliatory efforts did not bring peace. For Spain, the transition to democracy and reinstatement of Basque political parties did not shut down ETA as expected, at least initially, and in the end the government maneuvered to reduce the organization's support with the hope that it would eventually dissipate. Although the organization eventually laid down its arms (at least as of October 2011), the process leading to this action was a long time in coming. Defeating ethnic terrorism militarily and waiting it out come with great costs. The former arrives with heavy casualties and without guaranteed success, while the latter indefinitely subjects the country to continued fear and violence.

One option is to foster in-group policing (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Byman 1998), as the Spanish government did with the Basques, reinstating the Ertzaintza – the Basque police force. Essentially, this approach advocates handing over counterterrorist efforts to the ethnic group. An important assumption of this strategy that is often violated, however, is that groups are able and willing to police terrorism. Groups strongly committed to ending terrorism can achieve success in eradicating violence, but many times they do not have a strong desire to do so – perhaps because grievances are still real – or are unable to do so because the strength of the terrorist organization is too great (as the Tamil case reflects). It is not a panacea, but avoiding or ending human security violations is a necessary prerequisite if the state wants to secure the cooperation of the ethnic group.



In the final analysis, ending ethnic terrorism already in place requires states to pursue a multi-pronged approach that strikes a delicate balance between soft and hard power. This includes the instatement (or reinstatement) of basic security, political, and cultural provisions; continuous correspondence with groups in an effort to understand their expectations in the polity; action geared toward securing the conviction by ethnic group members that terrorist violence is almost always ineffectual and harms the group as much as the state; international assistance; and discriminant police counterterrorist efforts.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

Ethnic terrorism has affected the lives and livelihoods of people in a wide variety of locations. Terrorist violence comes in full force from some ethnic groups and not others, and the literature on terrorism and ethnic conflict in general and on ethnic terrorism in particular has not comprehensively addressed why this is the case. The motives, means, and opportunities (MMO) argument, supported by the findings from two sets of comparative case studies and quantitative analyses, states that the interplay of human security violations, sponsorship, and the occasion for dominance of the ethno-political agenda accounts for large-scale ethnic terrorism. The unfortunate reality is that ethnic terrorism has threatened security at the local, state, transnational, and international levels and remains a threat in today's world. This dissertation has endeavored to contribute to understanding of the development of ethnic terrorism and to offer some suggestions on how to avoid it.

## **Appendix 1. Case Study Protocol**

### **On the Ethnic Group and Its Narrative History**

- 1) What is the name of the ethnic group?
- 2) Where is the group located?
- 3) How large is the group?
- 4) How geographically concentrated is the group?
- 5) What is the nature of the group's ethnicity, and how is it different from the majority group?
- 6) How can the modern historical overview of the ethnic group be characterized?

### **On the Terrorist Violence (Dependent Variable)**

- 7) How long and how intense has the group's experience with terrorism been?
- 8) Which organization or set of actors is responsible for the group's experience with terrorist violence?
- 9) What are the origins of this terrorist organization or set of actors?
- 10) Who are the leaders of this organization?
- 11) Have there been defining episodes in the terrorist campaign?
- 12) What have been the triggering events of the terrorist violence?
- 13) What have been the ideological inspirations for the terrorist violence?
- 14) What has been the role of the group's nationalist and identity agenda in the violence?

### **On the Explanatory Variables**

- 15) Has the group experienced human security violations? If so, how, by whom, and to what extent?
- 16) Has the national government, in particular, violated the group's human security?
- 17) What has been the role of human security violations, if any, in the terrorist campaign?
- 18) How have political transitions impacted the relationship between the government and the ethnic group?
- 19) Has the ethnic group supported the terrorist campaign? If so, which segments and in what capacities?
- 20) Have terrorist actors demanded support from the ethnic community?
- 21) What have been the roles of the diaspora community and foreign governments in offering support to the group's terrorism?
- 22) Has the terrorist organization or have the terrorist actors been able to secure a dominating position within the ethnic community? If so, through what process?
- 23) What has been the relationship between nationalist political parties – and other civil society actors – and the terrorist organization or actors?
- 24) Is there a sense that nationalist leaders abandoned the ethnic agenda, leaving a void that the terrorist actors filled?

## Appendix 2. Interview Details

Respondent Number	Relevant Case	Professional Field	Interview Location	Interview Date
1	Basques	Education	Spain	July 19, 2010
2	Basques	Education/Public Service	Spain	July 21, 2010
3	Basques	Library Services	Spain	July 23, 2010
4	Basques	Academia	Spain	July 2010
5	Basques	Academia	USA	February 15, 2011
6	Basques	Journalism/Academia	USA	February 16, 2011
7	Basques	Academia	USA	February 17, 2011
8	Basques	Foundation Work	Spain	July 18, 2011
9	Catalans	Library Services/Education	Spain	July 27, 2011
10	Tamils/Muslims	Development Work	Northern Ireland	June 2010
			E-mail	June 22, 2010
			Sri Lanka	March 15, 2012
11	Tamils/Muslims	Academia	USA	December 19, 2011
12	Tamils/Muslims	Religious Work	USA	February 16, 2012
13	Tamils	Community Activism	USA	February 21, 2012
14	Tamils	Research (Research Center)	Sri Lanka	March 6, 2012
15	Tamils/Muslims	Research (Research Center)	Sri Lanka	March 6, 2012
16	Muslims	Public Service/Community Activism	Sri Lanka	March 7, 2012
17	Tamils/Muslims	Public (Foreign) Service	Sri Lanka	March 9, 2012
18	Tamils/Muslims	Research (Research & Policy Center)	Sri Lanka	March 13, 2012
19	Tamils/Muslims	Public (Foreign) Service	Sri Lanka	March 14, 2012
20	Tamils/ Muslims	Academia	Sri Lanka	March 14, 2012

### **Appendix 3. Interview Protocol**

NOTE: The interviews were semi-structured with a great deal of latitude allowing respondents to provide information on their areas of expertise. Thus, not all questions were asked of each respondent.

#### **On Nature of Violence**

1. How would you characterize the nature of the organization's violence?

#### **On Emergence and Initial Motivations**

2. What were the organization's reasons for emerging?
3. Did the ethnic community from which the organization emerged face discrimination? If so, in what ways and to what extent?
4. What has been the role of nationalism, if any?

#### **On Ethnic Support**

5. What level of support did the ethnic community give to the organization?
6. Did this support continue indefinitely?
7. From which geographic bases did the organization acquire the most support?
8. What have been the roles of the diaspora community and foreign governments in supporting the organization?
9. Where did the organization acquire funding?

#### **On Organizational Dominance**

10. Did the organization rise to become an influential actor? If so, how?
11. How would you characterize the relationship between the organization and the primary nationalist political party or parties?

#### **On the Roles of International Actors**

12. What has been the role of international actors?
13. How have international actors contributed to the conflict?
14. How have they attempted to resolve the conflict?

#### **On Government Responses**

15. What were the government's responses to the formation of the organization and its activities?
16. What attempts has the government made to bring the violence to an end?

#### **On the Current Situation**

17. How would you characterize the current situation?

#### **On Additional Information**

18. Where can I find additional information?

#### Appendix 4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables						
Variable	Dataset	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Number of Terrorist Incidents	1985-2003	5,771	1.524	9.847	0	259
Rebellion	1985-2003	4,697	0.903	1.876	0	7
Number of Terrorist Incidents	2004-2006	852	1.020	5.912	0	98

Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables						
Variable	Dataset	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Political Discrimination Index	1985-2003	4,095	1.834	1.544	0	4
Restrictions on Movement	1985-2003	3,080	0.304	0.613	0	3
Restrictions on Cultural Movements	1985-2003	3,052	0.313	0.748	0	3
Restrictions on Language Use	1985-2003	3,062	0.305	0.694	0	3
Government Force against Protestors	1985-2003	2,289	0.069	0.353	0	3
Group Spatial Distribution	1985-2003	5,808	2.111	1.106	0	3
Dominant Organizational Forced Support	1985-2003	3,397	0.139	0.346	0	1
Proximity of Kindred Groups	1985-2003	4,738	2.989	1.508	1	5
Terrorist Organizational Dominance	1985-2003	3,397	0.218	0.413	0	1
Primary Terrorist Organizational Dominance	1985-2003	3,356	0.103	0.304	0	1
Number of Group Representatives	1985-2003	1,417	3.925	2.953	0	16
Recent History of Terrorism	1985-2003	5,809	0.106	0.308	0	1
Democracy Level	1985-2003	5,674	1.102	6.741	-10	10
Economic Differentials Index	1985-2003	5,422	1.737	1.954	-2	4
Economic Discrimination Index	1985-2003	4,090	1.648	1.428	0	4
Separatism Index	1985-2003	5,808	1.240	1.322	0	3
Government Repression of Civilians	2004-2006	830	1.064	1.778	0	5
Group Spatial Distribution	2004-2006	852	2.137	1.078	0	3
Kindred Group Support	2004-2006	839	0.116	0.320	0	1
Kindred Group Political Support	2004-2006	852	0.045	0.207	0	1
Kindred Group Material Support	2004-2006	842	0.053	0.225	0	1
Kindred Group Militant Support	2004-2006	844	0.028	0.166	0	1
Nature of Group Representation	2004-2006	852	2.344	0.995	0	5
Recent History of Terrorism	2004-2006	852	0.094	0.292	0	1
Democracy Level	2004-2006	817	3.781	6.109	-10	10
Economic Discrimination Index	2004-2006	849	1.653	1.403	0	4
Separatism Index	2004-2006	843	1.544	1.432	0	3

## Appendix 5. Summary of Argument

### The Motive, Means, and Opportunity of Ethnic Terrorism

Comparative Case Study Analysis Findings														Statistical Findings
Variables	Sri Lanka						Spain							
	Tamils			Muslims			Basques			Catalans				
	Variable Value	Reason(s) for Variable Value	Support for Association	Variable Value	Reason(s) for Variable Value	Support for Association	Variable Value	Reason(s) for Variable Value	Support for Association	Variable Value	Reason(s) for Variable Value	Support for Association		
Dependent Variable														Support for Generalizability
Terrorist Violence	High	*Success of LTTE campaign		Low	*Inefficacy of Muslim militants		High	*Success of ETA campaign		Low	*Inefficacy of Catalan terrorists			
Independent Variables														
Motive:														
Human Security Violations	High	*1956 Sinhala Only Act *1972 Constitution *1983 riots	Strong	Low	*Historic partnership between Sri Lankan government and the Muslims	Strong	High	*Franco's repressive actions and discriminatory policies in Spain (1939-1975)	Strong	High	*Franco's repressive actions and discriminatory policies in Spain (1939-1975)	Weak		Strong
Means:														
Sponsorship	High	*Indian regime; Tamil Nadu *TULF; Tamil public, diaspora *LTTE forced support	Strong	Low	*Lack of support from Muslim community, foreign actors	Strong	High	*French regime; Iparralde *Basque public; Batasuna *ETA forced support	Strong	Low	*Lack of support from Catalan community, foreign actors	Strong		Moderate
Opportunity:														
Occasion for Dominance of the Ethno-Political Agenda	High	*TULF leaders' support of LTTE *TULF leaders' resignation after 1983 Sixth Amendment	Strong	Low	*Strength and moderation of SLMC leadership	Strong	High	*PNV passivity and inertia during Franco era	Strong	Low	*Activities of PSUC, Catalan Assembly, Catholic church, student groups	Strong		Strong

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