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Who Will Tell the Story? Terrorism's Relationship with the International News Media

Katherine Eugenis

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, eugenisk@unlv.nevada.edu

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WHO WILL TELL THE STORY? TERRORISM'S RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA

By

Katherine Eugenis

Bachelor of Science in Political Science
Northern Arizona University
2011

Bachelor of Science in Journalism in Journalism
Northern Arizona University
2011

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts in Political Science

Department of Political Science
College of Liberal Arts
The Graduate College

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Department of Political Science

Tiffany Howard, Ph.D., Committee Chair

John Tuman, Ph.D., Committee Member

Dennis Pirages, Ph.D., Committee Member

Paul Traudt, Ph.D., Graduate College Representative

Tom Piechota, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Research &
Dean of the Graduate College

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Abstract

Terrorism feeds on an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. In order for a terrorist group to achieve its purpose, its activities must be known to a mass audience. Due to the often isolated nature of the conflicts in which they are involved, terrorist groups must attract and maintain the attention of the mass media, through which they access a broader audience and gain salience. This relationship begs the question: will less media attention lead to less terrorism as groups lose their audience and are forced to use legitimate means of enacting change? This thesis analyzes the pattern of media trends and terrorist attacks over the lifespan of four distinct organizations and finds that periods of low media attention are often followed by periods of increased terrorism as the group tries to regain international relevance. Should the news media then continue to ignore the conflict, the terrorist group is forced to turn to legitimate means, or slowly die off. This study has implications for the news media as freedom of the press and the public's right to know are pitted against the potential for reduced casualties should the media be prohibited from reporting on terrorist activities.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Nearly every day, Americans, and others around the globe, watch and read news articles about the destruction and horror committed by groups fighting against the status quo. While random acts of violence have a direct and immediate impact on those affected, their influence cannot spread beyond the vicinity of the attack without the assistance of news media reporting on the event. Without the news media, terrorists cannot communicate their messages to the central government or the greater population. If the goal of terrorism is to spread widespread fear and uncertainty (as the public has no knowledge of when or where the next attack will occur), then terrorists need the media to report on their activities to the general public. The terrorist organization remains salient to both the people it claims to represent and to those who live in fear only so long as the news media continue to broadcast the terrorist attacks to the public. However, as soon as the media lose interest and cease reporting on the topic, the organization loses its ability to communicate to its intended audience – whether that be the global population, those the group claims to be fighting for, the government, or the international leaders who might become involved. When random acts of violence no longer attract the attention of the media, terrorist groups are without communication to the mass public, leaving them no choice but to find either another way to obtain that necessary media attention or to search for other, perhaps legitimate, tactics in order to enact change.

Fortunately for terrorists, there is a propensity for traditional media to focus on the violent events that happen around the world. The journalistic motto, ‘if it bleeds, it

leads' has done much to inform the public of the conflict, terrorism, and other violence that occurs both close to home and in distant countries – even to the skewing of public perceptions regarding global rates of these attacks¹. However, the mass media have a short attention span and what is prominent and newsworthy one day is often irrelevant the next. Meaning that, it is one thing to attract the attention of the global news media; it is an altogether different thing to keep that attention for any length of time. Therefore notwithstanding the media's propensity to publish stories about violence and death, should other global happenings take precedence over a terrorist attack in a country that has limited strategic importance to the great powers, the news media would be less inclined to devote large amounts of space to the terrorist group's issue -- regardless of the size of the attack or the number of casualties.

This paper seeks to establish a relationship between the number of articles written regarding a terrorist organization and the amount of subsequent attacks the group commits. In this case, the independent variable is the number of news articles regarding a terrorist organization, while the dependent variable is represented by the actions of the group, as measured by a change in the number of terrorist attacks they commit against their respective targets. The hypothesized relationship between terrorism and the international mass media should hold true despite differences in the motivations and structure of the selected terrorist organizations. Therefore, religious organizations will be just as reliant on the international and domestic media as secular organizations. If the terrorist group experiences a significant decline in media coverage, followed by a decline in terrorist attacks, after which follows an observable change in the tactic of the group,

¹ This is known as Cultivation Theory in which people who are exposed to more media violence in the form of television or print news believe that the rates of global violence and crime are higher than they are in actuality (Shanahan and Morgan 1999; Ridout et al 2008).

then the theory holds that, while it may not be the only contributing factor, a lack of media coverage plays a role in the declining influence of a terrorist group.

Chapter 2

Towards a Theory of News Media – Terrorist Relations

Defining Terrorism

Although there have been many studies on the topic of terrorism spanning the motivations, psychological makeup of the individuals, methods, and differences among and between groups, there is still yet to be a consensus in the academic or policy communities as to what constitutes a terrorist organization (Conteh-Morgan 2004; Crenshaw 1987; Gibbs 2012; Jenkins 1975; Rapoport 2012). The old adage, ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’ highlights the largest debate regarding who is classified as a terrorist. Inherent in the term is a value judgment in which those who participate in the practice of terrorism are ‘wrong’ and the victims ‘right.’ ‘Terrorist’ groups rarely use that label to describe themselves, rather they would use ‘freedom fighter,’ ‘revolutionary,’ or ‘true believer’ fighting for justice against an oppressor (Dekmejian 2007; Ganor 2002; Gibbs 2012; Jackson 2008; Weinberg et al 2012). However, it is usually the victim, with the backing of the international community, who levies the term terrorist and the negative connotations associated with the label.

The obstacles in defining the term ‘terrorism’ are well documented. According to Jackson (2008), it is a political science cliché to note that at one count there were more than 200 separate and distinct definitions of the term – all of them lacking, none of them universally applied. However, this cliché illustrates one of the largest difficulties in studying the terrorism phenomenon. The term poses a problem for policy makers and academics alike because slightly different wording of the definition can change the

database of terrorist attacks. Without an accepted definition of terrorism, is the term useful in studying the phenomenon? Can one compare studies that employ different definitions and, therefore, different universes of case studies?

Scholars have largely accepted that a universal definition of the term is not forthcoming and that devoting more paper and ink to debating the topic does not advance knowledge that will be useful in studying the phenomenon (Badey 1998; Ganor 2002; Gupta 2008; Schmid 2004b). In keeping with that tradition, this paper defines terrorism as a campaign of asymmetric warfare in which violence is utilized in order to both create an atmosphere of widespread fear and uncertainty and push for a political goal. This definition is loosely based on the work of Jenkins (2003)². While his original definition was broad in order to encompass as many forms of political violence as possible, this paper utilizes a more narrow definition in which terrorism must be part of a campaign and be a form of asymmetrical warfare (Jenkins 2003).

A single attack from a group does not constitute terrorism. For example, the Ba'adi and Panthic Committee organizations implemented attacks in 1990 and 1991, respectively, which led to widespread panic, fear, and 22 total casualties but they were never labeled terrorist groups, nor was their act considered terrorism because neither group ever again utilized violence to achieve its objectives, much in the same way a single murder does not create a serial killer. The element of repetition is necessary in creating an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty in the population, and in order to communicate with a larger audience to rectify perceived grievances. The second part of the definition utilized in this paper that adds to its uniqueness is the term asymmetric

² Jenkins' definition reads: "Terrorism is violence or the threat of violence calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm – in a word, to terrorize – and thereby bring about some social or political change" (Jenkins 2003, 16).

warfare. This excludes forms of state-sponsored terrorism by suggesting that only non-state actors within the country can engage in this form of warfare against the state. While the state can and does participate in atrocities against its citizens, as the sociologist Weber (1972) notes, the state also holds the only form of legitimate violence. Meaning that, while state-sponsored terrorism, genocide, and other atrocities are undoubtedly wrong, these crimes belong in a different category of political violence than the one that holds the actions of people fighting against the state (Bloom 2005; Jones 2011; White 2008).

Procedurally, all of the data regarding the number of attacks committed by each terrorist organization came from the Global Terrorism Database. The definition they utilize in their classification reads as follows: “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation” (START 2012). In many respects this definition does not differ significantly from the one previously presented and allows for continuity in the paper. This definition is used to classify terrorist incidents, and the one previously referenced is utilized in the selection of the terrorist organizations studied in the case studies.

Theories of Terrorism

The field of terrorism is varied and diverse as scholars have tried to understand all aspects of the phenomenon from the motivating factors to the methods and organizational structures of the groups that engage in this form of asymmetric warfare. However, in order to understand terrorism, is it important to grasp why terrorists utilize violence in

order to enact change. One³ such theory for why terrorism occurs is known as the relative deprivation theory (Gurr 1970). Some claim the connection between frustration regarding perceived unequal social, economic, and political circumstances and revolution dates back to Aristotle and is crucial to his theory of revolution (Brynjar and Skjolberg 2000). More recently, the term relative deprivation was coined in 1970 in Ted Gurr's classic work, *Why Men Rebel*, and describes how groups in society may feel deprived of rights that are given to others in a country. Groups may resort to violence in order to bridge this perceived gap in treatment based on race, ethnicity, or social class (Gurr 1970). This theory has been used to explain many different movements such as terrorism, revolutions, rioting, and civil wars and is studied in many disciplines as a way to explain the link between external factors and violence (Borum 2004; Brush 1996; Crenshaw 1992; Moghaddam 2005; Muller and Weede 1994).

Relative deprivation theory is often linked to poverty or economic inequality and some scholars have claimed that it is the poor in society that are more likely to embrace terrorism. While these beliefs make for strong political rhetoric as politicians and non-governmental organizations fight for greater global equality, the truth is more complex. Recent studies reveal that terrorists themselves often come from middle class families (Moghaddam 2005) and that there is no significant statistical relationship between poverty, malnutrition, inequality, unemployment, inflation, and poor economic growth and terrorism (Krueger and Maleckova 2002; Lichbach 1990; Piazza 2006; Sprinzak 1991; Taylor and Horgan 2006). Instead, ethno-religious diversity, state repression, and the structure of party politics appear to be a predictor of terrorist activities (Piazza 2006;

³ This work eschews such theories as the “blue balls theory of terrorism” in favor of more academically rigorous and more widely cited and accepted theories (Caluya 2013).

Stewart 2008). This adds a layer of specificity to the relative deprivation hypothesis as it relates to terrorist activities. Rather than being motivated by purely economic reasons, terrorist groups are more likely to emerge if they feel politically deprived if they are being treated unfairly as a religious or ethnic group by the prevailing regime.

In a similar vein, scholars such as Crenshaw (1981, 1987, 1992) cite political and other grievances as being one of the motivators for terrorism. She specifically mentions those inequalities experienced by ethnic or religious minorities who are politically or otherwise oppressed within their host countries who use that oppression as motivation to fight for either greater autonomy within the state, or complete independence. According to these theories, it is the political oppression of an entire group of similar people, such as the Kurds, the Basques, or the Palestinians, that may lead to the formation of a violent group fighting for political change, even if the individuals in that group are not so different from those whom they fight against.

Studies on the demographics and psychological makeup of the individuals who join terrorist groups reveal that they are not unlike their counterparts in society. In fact, mental illness and psychopathy do not appear to play any role in determining who joins a terrorist group. Additionally, psychologists have yet to identify a “terrorist personality” or an accurate profile of a terrorist (Borum 2004, 3). The idea of a “terrorist personality,” much like the idea of a “conservative personality” in American politics, as argued by Joseph Lowndes (2008, 5), gives emphasis to particular factors and institutions while simultaneously ignoring the rhetorical strategies utilized by those organizations doing the recruiting. In other words, those scholars who claim there is a terrorist personality neglect to study the ways in which organizations recruit members. Terrorists generally

do not make the conscious decision to become a terrorist, but rather join groups promising solutions to aforementioned perceived inequalities where they are then gradually socialized to accept the high levels of violence promoted by the group (Borum 2004; Post 2009; Taylor and Horgan 2006).

If the individuals who join terrorist groups are no different from those in the greater population in that they are rational beings, who join out of a desire for action, a need to belong, an opportunity for improved social status, or some sort of material reward, then it is the involvement in the organization itself that molds them by indoctrinating and socializing them (Borum 2004). Terrorist organizations as a whole are largely seen as rational actors who employ consistent means in order to achieve a specific set of desires (Caplan 2006; Crenshaw 1981; Eyeman 1998; Pedahzur 2005). They thrive in cultures and areas with a historical tradition of fighting against the government and where the state apparatus is either unwilling or unable to prevent the attacks from occurring (Crenshaw 1981). As rational actors, terrorist groups use violence as a means to an end, not as the end itself, where an attack is a deliberate choice in order to achieve a specific goal (Crenshaw 2008). In the fight against the, much stronger, state, these groups view terrorism as the only means by which they have the ability to wound the government and the decision to use this means of warfare is largely seen as rational. The motivations for terrorist groups often stem from perceived inequalities in the political system, as previously mentioned, and the goal of the group is often to either enact change in the system or push for greater independence (Post 2005; Hoffman 1988; Sanchez-Cuenca 2007).

According to some scholars, terrorists participate in violent acts for the sole

purpose of gaining media attention as a way of communicating with audiences that they would otherwise not have access to in order to eventually enact desired changes in society (Jenkins 1975; Juergensmeyer 2003; Laqueur 1978; Nacos 2007). This theory of how terrorism reaches a mass audience is often called ‘Terrorism as Theater’ or ‘Terrorism as Communication’ and scholars in both the fields of political science and communications have converged to examine the ways terrorist groups use and manipulate the mass media in order to communicate messages of terror to their intended audience. Terrorists know that, if pressed, their audience will eventually influence powerful decision-makers to take action to stop the attacks, and the group will be able to achieve some of their long-term strategic goals.

It should be understood that terrorist groups have many goals, and gaining the attention of the international mass media, while a goal of the terrorist group, is largely a secondary goal in that it is a stepping stone on the way to achieving the greater aims of the group. The only way to obtain greater equality, autonomy, or international intervention is by first becoming a player on the international stage. Only after using terror to make an impression on the citizens of the globe can the group hope to put enough pressure on either their own government to make redress, or on powerful international actors to intervene. However, utilizing the media is just one of many goals, and media attention is, again, one of the many factors that determine the longevity of a terrorist group. This work looks specifically at this relationship, as one of many contributors to terrorists’ motivations, in order to demonstrate that there is a correlation between the amount of media attention a terrorist group receives and the number of attacks they commit.

Media Literature

Functioning as the most prominent link between the citizens of a country and events happening in the world, the media can profoundly influence and shape not only what the public knows about global events, but also what they think about those events and how important they perceive those events to be in the grand scheme of global affairs. The importance of the media in shaping the perceptions of the people is best expressed in the words of news anchor Roger Mudd, “We in the media can't tell you what to think, but we can tell you what to think about” (Morrison 2011). The idea that the media can set the public agenda and add salience to frequently covered issues is widely supported by communications literature (Erbring et al 1980; McCombs and Shaw 1972; McCombs and Reynolds 2002; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). Editors, producers, and others in leadership positions in the news media have the power and ability to influence what the public thinks is important by the decisions they make in what they choose to cover. Not only do they have the ability to determine what is perceived as important, but by setting the agenda for the public, the media also have the ability to influence public officials into taking action in foreign conflicts or disputes that the government might have ordinarily ignored. Most of the literature regarding agenda-setting and the media's influence on foreign affairs argues that the media can shape what people think about and the ways that people conceptualize foreign issues. This, in turn, has influence on the government as it is pressed by the public to intervene in foreign affairs.

This influence the media have over both the citizens of the country and decision makers is commonly referred to as agenda-setting (Erbring et al 1980; McCombs and

Shaw 1972; McCombs and Reynolds 2002; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). To clarify, agenda-setting is distinct from framing. Agenda-setting is primarily about saliency. If an object/issue/or other news event is given a prominent position in the media, then individuals are more likely to believe that it has importance to their individual lives, represents a humanitarian story they should care about, or is relevant to the interests of the United States. In contrast, framing refers to the ability of journalists to influence how the public perceives an issue (Ghanem 1997). Using the afore-mentioned quote by Robert Mudd, if agenda-setting tells the public what to think about, then framing tells the public how to think about it.

Walter Lippmann (1922) is largely regarded as the founder of agenda setting theory, although he wrote long before the phrase was actually coined. He suggested that the news media act as the windows, so to speak, that the average person looks through in order to view the world (McCombs and Reynolds 2002). To elaborate, even well-traveled individuals are only able to experience a limited portion of the world throughout their lifetimes and construct their opinions of the rest of the world based on what is presented by the news media. This theory, while brought to light in 1922 with the publication of Lippmann's book *Public Opinion*, was first empirically demonstrated by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. They tested whether the mass media could set the agenda of a political campaign by determining the salience of a particular issue among potential voters (McCombs and Shaw 1972). They found that in regards to the 1968 election, there was a high correlation (as high as .97 in some cases) between what the media in North Carolina focused on and what voters in the area believed to be the important issues deciding the presidential race (McCombs and Shaw 1972). This article gave credence to

Lippmann's original theory and paved the way for the work of many scholars in the future who took McCombs and Shaw's work and further expanded upon it.

Since then there have been over 200 empirical studies looking at the ways the media can determine what issues are salient to the general public both in the United States and in other countries around the globe (Ader 1995; Cook et al 1983; Erbring 1980; Iyengar and Simon 1993; McLeod et al 1974; Scheufele 2000; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007; Winter and Eyal 1981). According to McCombs and Reynolds (2002), the vast majority of the evidence in these studies confirms the original hypothesis, that the decisions journalists make in determining what to cover, and how much attention to give that particular subject, have a substantial impact on what readers determine as salient news events (McCombs and Reynolds 2002). While agenda setting theory has many implications when it comes to how politicians and the mass media interact with each other and the public, many scholars have specifically studied the impacts it can have on foreign policy.

In an experiment regarding the actual effects of agenda-setting on the American public, Wanta et al (2004) looks at the number of times a country was mentioned in the news and then analyzed how many Americans perceived that country to be vital to the interests of the United States. They find a positive correlation between the number of mentions and the perceived importance, suggesting that there is clearly a significant relationship between the prevalence of the media and what people believe to be important (Wanta et al 2004). There is also a growing amount of literature on the ways the Internet has made the media more accessible for the common individual (Althaus and Tewksbury 2000; Bennett 2003; Diddi and LaRose 2006; Reese et al 2007).

Bennett (2003) studies the ways that the Internet has made it easier for activist groups to get their message to the wider public and therefore draw attention to their organization or cause in order to enhance their support and membership base. While Bennett's (2003) study is primarily focused on activist groups, the Internet can also serve the same purposes for terrorist groups in disseminating their message. As greater numbers of people gain access to the Internet, their ability to access the 'marketplace of ideas' increases as they read more news sources and access links sent to them by friends and associates. Internet media work much in the same way as traditional media in that the more a person reads about a particular topic, whether from legitimate news sources, or from blogs, personal webpages, or sponsored sites, the more salient that topic or issue becomes to that person.

In order to confirm the widespread nature of the phenomenon, Zhu and Boroson (1997) conduct a statistical analysis in order to determine if people with different social or economic characteristics experience agenda-setting differently. In doing so they find that the effects of agenda-setting are equally felt by all populations regardless of cognitive sophistication, issue sensitivity, income, and issue obtrusiveness. The findings illustrate that the "media agenda-setting effects are not manifested in creating different levels of salience among individuals, but are evident at driving the salience of *all* individuals up and down over time" (Zhu and Boroson 1997, 82)⁴. This is significant, particularly as it relates to news coverage of terrorist organizations because it shows that all people are impacted by the emphasis the news places on a story. The agenda-setting abilities of the media do not impact solely the wealthy, the educated, or, on the flip side, those who are disproportionately uneducated or economically disadvantaged.

⁴ Emphasis in original

In an update to his previous work on the topic, McCombs (2002) claims that the priorities of the media can strongly influence the priorities of the public and in so doing influence decision-makers. In other words, the more the media report on one particular topic or event, the more important the public believes it to be and the more likely it is that the public will pressure the government to take action (McCombs 2002). This occurs even if the event in question is not directly connected to the interests of the United States. As previously mentioned, the first part of this theory, that salience in the media has a direct impact on salience to an individual, has been tested and retested by many scholars in the literature and tests have confirmed the theory (Ader 1995; Erbring 1980; McCombs 2002). While there has been less research conducted on the second half of this theory, some scholars have found evidence that suggests a connection between increased public awareness and increased pressure on government officials to act, particularly in democratic countries where the government is supposed to be responsive to the wills and wishes of the populace (Cook et al 1983; Hawkins 2002; Robinson 1999).

Just as the media coverage on an issue can make it more important to the general public, it can also influence foreign policy. Commonly called “The CNN Effect,” media scholars believe that the media can have a direct influence on foreign policy by informing the citizens of an event and providing the means by which the citizens can mobilize and pressure the government to take action (Cook et al 1983; Hawkins 2002; Robinson 1999; Soroka 2003). Soroka (2003) utilized this theory to test statistically the claim that there are connections between what events the media report on and the behavior of both the general public and policymakers in regards to a response to that particular event. For example, while some human rights violations might have once been ignored by the

government and the media due to the difficulty in sending reporters and troops into the region, new technology has made it easier for the media to report on these instances. An example of this could be the 2008 Russian dispute with Georgia. The global media were able to cover the conflict despite the relative unimportance of the country to the international, and news, agenda. The general public, taking their cue from the prevalence of this issue in the national media, can then demand that politicians take action, thus forcing policymakers to develop foreign policy strategies to address this particular issue (Soroka 2003).

Studies of this nature are not necessarily limited to the field of communications. John Zaller, a noted political scientist, conducted several studies regarding the ways in which public opinion is formed (1992). He asserts that the average citizen is highly influenced by the opinions of political elites, of which journalists are one (Zaller 1992, 6). As most people do not have time to conduct in-depth research, they rely on the shortcuts and stereotypes prevalent in respected sources. Zaller (1992, 7), although writing to a political science audience, draws heavily on Lippmann (1922) in explaining the stereotypes and shortcuts the public takes when it comes to understanding “complex and distant events.” In his study, he shows that people are susceptible to manipulation by elites and alterations in the messages can often turn into tangible changes in the way the public views an issue. Zaller cites an example of this as being the changes in opinion regarding the Vietnam War as the tone in the news coverage also shifted (Zaller 1992).

Likewise, Matthew Baum (2008) also notes that the media play a central role in influencing public opinion, foreign actors, domestic decision makers, and eventual foreign policy, because of the media’s ability to inform the public of what is occurring in

the world and how the government responds. There exists another vein of research that builds upon Baum's theory—that the news media have the ability to influence not just the thoughts and beliefs but also the actions of those who regularly consume the news. This body of literature suggests that the media can influence the behavior of politicians or decision makers (Baum 2008; Naveh 2002; Robinson 1999; Soroka 2003).

Aside from providing incentive for decision makers to act on a particular issue, the media can also serve a communicative function for the international community when traditional diplomatic channels are not open or are not moving quickly enough. Gilboa (2002) suggests that the media not only report on issues for the public, but can also transmit messages from one international leader to another. These messages can be messages of support or warning of foreign intervention if the situation escalates beyond a certain point (Gilboa 2002). In this respect, due to advancing technology, the media play a diplomatic and a communicative role between leaders of foreign nations. This method of communication, while indirect when compared to traditional wires between foreign diplomats, still transmits important messages of support and warning that leaders must take into consideration when making domestic decisions regarding high-profile events within the country, particularly if those decisions impact foreign nations or nationals.

While this thesis will not test whether the news media do, in fact, influence decision makers within government, that studies suggest they do is instrumental in explaining why terrorists use the media to communicate to the global population and political leaders. In this respect, the role that the media play in the lives of average citizens has important implications for the goals of terrorist organizations. Not only can the international media broadcast a message to many audiences, but the frequency of

those messages and the ways in which the news media present the message impacts the way citizens view global conflicts. In addition to this, evidence suggests that the messages the media broadcast influences those who can enact change, either by increasing saliency to the public who, in turn, pressure elected decision-makers, or by directly appealing to decision-makers. These roles and abilities of the media, along with the perceived newsworthiness of terrorist attacks, can explain a motive for this type of asymmetric violence when other types of discourse have failed.

Terrorism as Theater/Communication

Violent acts have the ability to inspire shock and fear among those who witness them, which is why many groups with radical objectives use this tactic as a means of influencing an audience. While acts such as bombings, suicide attacks, kidnappings, and hostage situations impact all those directly affected (either through the death of a loved one or any witnesses to the event), they are restricted to a relatively small geographical area. This limitation impedes the ability of the group utilizing terrorist methods to leave a large enough impression on the required amount of people to force a change in the status quo. By the time a group reaches the point where they feel terrorism is the best option for achieving their aims, other, more diplomatic, solutions have generally failed and intervention by a third party is usually required to resolve the differences between the state and those engaged in terrorism. As a weapon of the weak, terrorism is a method used to communicate specifics of a particular situation to the international community and to impress upon decision-makers the potential need for outside intervention. In addition, terrorism also communicates to the domestic audience that the group is willing

to utilize whatever means necessary to enact change.

In order to overcome geographical limitations, violence must be broadcast to a large group of people who, while not directly impacted, will internalize the threat and respond by demanding action from those in power. Cited by many as the first to use the ‘terrorism as theater’ metaphor in 1975, Jenkins said it most concisely when he stated, “Terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening, not a lot of people dead” (Jenkins 1975, 5). In order to garner the amount of attention needed to force change, or the consideration of the authorities, terrorists must first capture the attention of the news media. Jenkins also asserts that terrorists commit attacks specifically for the press in order to stimulate international pressure on an issue (Jenkins 1975). However, for terrorists with a political motivation, Laqueur (1978), like Jenkins (1975) and Juergensmeyer (2003), argues that the violent act itself means nothing, but rather it is the publicity that follows such an act that makes the difference between success and failure for a terrorist group (Laqueur 1978, 62).

This body of literature joins that of the ‘Terrorism as Communication’ field. While the ‘Terrorism as Theater’ literature primarily stems from the fields of political science and communications, the ‘Terrorism as Communication’ literature has a different focus and approaches the idea from a different perspective. Tuman (2010) writes on the ways in which terrorism is both a form of communication and a type of rhetoric. He elaborates on the different audiences that a terrorist group caters to and the ways in which those audiences can benefit the group in forcing political change (Tuman 2010). According to Tuman, the recipient of the attack (or the victim) is often not the primary audience as terrorists would rather communicate to the general public and have them

leverage pressure against the government to comply with the demands of the group (Tuman 2010). Tuman specifically mentions the importance of an international audience in pressuring outside nations to involve themselves in what could, essentially, be thought of as a civil conflict. In this way, the violence of terrorism can also be seen as a form of rhetoric intended to persuade the target audience to believe in the worthiness of the cause espoused by the terrorists and eventually act on those beliefs in some fashion or another (Tuman 2010, 43).

One aspect of terrorism that sets it apart from other violent acts (such as hate crimes and war), is that those who engage in these acts are expressly looking for attention from the broader public. Rather than use violence to primarily injure, destroy, or kill, these groups use violence to send a message to people and leaders who are possibly a city, a country, or a continent away. As Bruce Klopfenstein (2006, 107) states, “One cannot divorce communication from terrorism. Without communication of the terrorists' message ... the corresponding impact would be greatly reduced.” Therefore, terrorists need the mass media to spread the news of attacks, and by extension, the message motivating the acts to the greater public, thus making terrorism a form of “performance violence” (Juergensmeyer 2003, 126). Using this theory, the terrorist engages in a performance, one that he or she hopes the mass media will broadcast to the world.

This sentiment is echoed by other scholars such as Nacos (2007) who not only believes that terrorists need the media, but also outlines the four media-centered goals of terrorists. She claims that at the most basic level terrorists want the following: 1) name recognition, 2) an investigation of their motives so that the world knows why the group is choosing to engage in violence, 3) respect and sympathy from their domestic

constituents, and 4) a form of quasi-legitimate status in which the media give the terrorist group equal treatment to legitimate political entities and actors (Nacos 2007, 20).

Dowling (1986) takes a similar stance in that he believes that terrorists communicate to different audiences; however, he only differentiates between messages to insiders — those who support the terrorist group, and outsiders — or everyone else. While a terrorist group's primary goal is to garner support for their cause, fight for freedom and autonomy, or to react against an oppressive state apparatus, they also recognize that the means to accomplish that goal is rooted in attracting the coverage of the news media.

Like Juergensmeyer (2003) and Nacos (2007), Weimann and Winn (1994) believe terrorists use the mass media in order to further their political aims. The introduction to their book uses the example of the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, in which several Americans hostages were taken by Hezbollah, a radical organization based in Lebanon, and the mass media frenzy that followed. In this example, the terrorists exploited and manipulated the media by securing interviews with sympathetic reporters who would highlight their cause internationally. Those participating in the hijacking were aided in achieving their goals by a willing media, and through this resource, the terrorists had direct access to the general public. As the medium was television, the terrorists were able to express their grievances directly in the living rooms of millions of Americans. However, not only do terrorist groups use the media as a means of accessing a large public, but it has also been suggested that they actively manipulate the media by studying and understanding the way the media work so as to best time attacks to create the greatest impact.

Changes and advances in media technology in the past 60 years have made it

easier for terrorists to obtain these objectives because it is now simpler for journalists to communicate with their editors, counterparts in foreign countries, and to transmit entire stories back to headquarters to quickly disseminate to the public. In the past, professionals in the media needed to rely on slow technologies such as the telegraph and physical newspapers; now, due to the many advances in technology, journalists can engage in instant global communication. Digital video, photography, television, and instant access to the Internet allow all news stories to reach the public in almost real-time. For those scholars who believe that terrorism is a form of theater, designed to be consumed by a mass public, the instantaneous nature of current communication technology only makes it easier for terrorists to perpetuate their message to the general public and international leaders (Juergensmeyer 2003, 126).

Instead of having to wait until the next day's newspaper, or for telegraphs to transmit the details of an attack across thousands of miles, terrorists need only one witness with even the most basic of modern cell phones to take pictures and upload them to the Internet in order to begin to broadcast their message to the entire globe. Not only does the advent of so called 'citizen-journalism' serve to increase the spread of news, and the terrorists' message around the globe, but the same technology also much easier for professional journalists with superior equipment to quickly travel to a location, create the digital video, audio, photos, and story and then quickly email the entire package to editors who may be located in newsrooms thousands of miles away. Editors can then finalize the entire package and publish it on the Internet in very little time.

Television, in particular, can be used and manipulated by terrorist groups as images and pictures are more powerful transmitters of emotion and discord than the

written word. The emotional images and constant, around the clock, coverage found on many news stations lend themselves to the type of exposure extremist groups seek to further their political aims. Soriano (2008) comments that television is uniquely adaptable to terrorist methods because of the emotional impact that visual images have on the population. Ross (2007) supports this idea and suggests that the second plane to hit the Twin Towers was specifically and intentionally timed so that the reporters and camera operators had enough time to gather at the site and film the actual moment of impact rather than just the smoke of the aftermath (Ross 2007, 216). In the hours, days, and weeks following the attacks, photographs and videos of the second plane hitting the Twin Towers received the most coverage, and were repeatedly broadcast for the world to witness. It is this image that is burned into the memories of all who remember that day.

Despite all of the evidence suggesting that terrorists are able to manipulate the mass media into communicating their message to the global public, there are several studies that show the media are not always willing participants aiding terrorists in the quest for publicity. Schaffert (1992) claims that although terrorists have the ability to kill mass numbers of people at random and at will, they do not have the ability to transmit images of that destruction to a target population. He states that “it remains for the media to transmit effectively the terror of violence, [...] only that worldwide network can sufficiently penetrate the very large audiences” that are the target for terrorists (Schaffert 1992, 47). Since 1992 when this book was published, the widespread adoption of the Internet has made it easier for terrorists to skip the intermediary step and broadcast their own messages via personal or organizational webpages (Goodman et al 2007; Qin et al 2007). However, despite this advancement in technology, terrorists are still dependent on

the news media. The Internet is full of so much information that the average person is incapable of finding and analyzing all of it, regardless of the violence, shock value, or message encased within. On the other hand, as the gatekeeper of information, the news media have the capacity to distill the message of the terrorist group and present it to the target population in a way that the people will take notice and comprehend.

While Schaffert (1992) points out that terrorists are incapable of broadcasting their message in a way that they can be assured millions of viewers, Simmons (1991) makes a distinction between positive and negative coverage in the media. Dispelling the oft-quoted show-business assumption that ‘any publicity is good publicity,’ he concludes by explaining “it is unclear what relationship exists between the growth of terrorism and the media” particularly due to the number of negative labels used by the media in describing such attacks (Simmons 1991, 36). This calls into question assumptions made by those who claim large amounts of media coverage of a terrorist attack leads to more attacks as similarly oppressed groups see the success of the first attacker and seek to emulate their example (Eke and Alali 1991). In other words, if media attention on terrorist attacks functions as a contagion agent, then it can lead to increased attacks by other groups.

While theories regarding the relationship between the media and terrorism are widely studied, one of the most ardent skeptics of the terrorism as theater theory is Robert Picard (1986). In his article titled “News Coverage as the Contagion of Terrorism: Dangerous Charges backed by Dubious Science,” he argues against imposing legal restrictions on the media or encouraging the media to self-censor or adopt voluntary guidelines because the literature on the relationship between the media and terrorism is

circumstantial at best. Claiming there has been little in the way of actual scholarship using recognized quantitative or qualitative practices to study this relationship and prove its validity, he states that “what should only be hypotheses about media and terrorism have been accepted as fact” (Picard 1986, 388). While Picard criticizes scholars who accept this theory without testing it, the lack of empirical support does not make this theory completely irrelevant. Instead, scholars should devote time to studying the nuanced relationship between the media and terrorism in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the two entities (Crelinsten 1989; Stohl 2008; Wittebols 1991).

In order to reach and impact the greatest number of people, committing violent acts alone is not enough, there must be someone to witness these acts, record them, and report the images to the world. One violent act will impact those in the immediate vicinity and the families of the injured and killed, but an act widely broadcast via the media has the potential to impact millions, if not billions, of people who would otherwise have known nothing about the incident. Terrorists know this and they use the media to further accomplish their goals. The media can, and do, influence the mass public and policymakers, and terrorist groups need exposure in order to put pressure on governments and to incite fear in people. However, while much is known about the media's influence on both their audience and decision-makers, there is little known on the influence that the media have on a terrorist organization (Eke and Alali 1991). In this relationship, it is the members of the news media who have the power, as terrorist organizations need media coverage in order to communicate with people who can enact real change in their situations. While violence is easy and sensational to report on, the news media are never

at a loss for newsworthy events to fill space and does not need a terrorist attack in order to sell papers.

However, terrorists do need the media for its ability to shape agenda setting. As previously mentioned, studies show that what receives a lot of time in the press is also perceived as salient, or important, even if the issue is one of little relevance to the interests of the United States or other great powers. If the media begin devoting a lot of time to a particular issue, despite its relative unimportance, people will believe that it is of critical value and will pressure decision-makers to take action by possibly intervening in the conflict (Baum 2008; Cook et al 1983; Hawkins 2002; Naveh 2002; Robinson 1999; Soroka 2003). As Gilboa (2002) points out, the news media can serve as a liaison between international leaders without directly involving the public, although the fear of public involvement is generally in the back of the minds of democratically elected leaders. Because the media have this agenda setting function, and terrorists need to go through the channels of the news media in order to better communicate their message to the widest audience possible, the media can have a profound influence on the trajectory of a terrorist group, and on the way that other international actors interact with that group.

Without media attention, the terrorist group is unable to fulfill any of its four objectives according to Nacos (2007): 1) It cannot achieve name or cause recognition among citizens of countries who are located far away, 2) It cannot communicate with supporters, 3) It cannot communicate with members of the domestic government, and 4) It cannot portray itself as a legitimate political alternative to the current administration. Through the agenda-setting powers of the international media, if a terrorist has media saliency, it is possible that the general public will push their elected leaders to intervene

in the conflict – leading to a possible resolution or improvement in conditions. However, unless the terrorist group has the ability to communicate and broadcast its message to the greater public, it is largely irrelevant to the international community and powerful decision-makers will have no political incentive to push for a resolution of the conflict.

Drawing on these theories, this paper goes one step further and claims that without sustained media attention the public will see a terrorist group as neither salient nor relevant, which will result in the group either changing its tactics to become a legitimate political actor or slowly disappearing and disbanding. Therefore, in order to remain active, terrorist groups are forced to maintain sustained media attention by planning large attacks or marked resurgences in violence. While many scholars have studied different aspects of the relationship between terrorism and media attention, including the ways in which terrorists use the media in order to further their cause, at the time of this writing there has been little work done that specifically analyzes the ways in which the media sustain terrorist activities. Without disputing the evidence that explains how terrorist groups use the media to record and report violent acts to the greater public, this paper evaluates the relationship between terrorist groups and the media as being one where the media attention, or lack thereof, can have a profound influence on the actions of terrorist groups.

Chapter 3

A Means and A Method

Case Studies

This thesis examines the influence the media have had on four different terrorist organizations. In order, these groups are: Hamas, Hezbollah, Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA), and the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). The four case studies chosen for this work were selected because of their differences in geographical location, motivation, time periods active, notoriety, and relevance to the international media. There are also significant variations in the number of attacks each group committed, and the amount of media coverage that the groups maintain. In order for this theory to be valid, it must hold across each of these different cases. The case studies are separated by whether or not the organization is classified as religiously motivated or as a secular group. This is due to one aspect of the theory as pointed out by Spencer (2006) who claims that while secular organizations need to use the media for propaganda purposes, religious organizations do not because, after all, God is always watching (Spencer, 2006). This work contends, however, that both types of organizations need the constant attention of the media in order to communicate with the international community and remain relevant to their domestic constituency. In order to gain a better understanding of the ways that the international mass media influence the actions of a terrorist organization, the media attention given to four different terrorist organizations over the lifetime of that group through December 2011 will be studied.

Due to the aforementioned difficulties in defining terrorism and terrorist

organizations, all of the organizations used in this work are classified as terrorist organizations by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. However, that being understood, there is no consensus within the international community regarding which of these groups are terrorist organizations and which are freedom fighters or revolutionary forces. While all four of the groups are classified as terrorist organizations in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, Australia does not recognize ETA as a terrorist organization, the European Union does not recognize either ETA or Hezbollah as being terrorist organizations, and Turkey recognizes neither ETA nor Hamas (European Union 2011; Public Safety Canada 2012; Turkish National Police 2012; United Kingdom Home Office 2012; U.S. Department of State 2012; Australian Government 2012). While these disparities suggest that there are significant differences in the ways that the international community views these groups (whether as legitimate or not) the truth is that there are few, if any, terrorist organizations that are officially recognized by all of these entities.

Despite the lack of international consensus on the status of these groups, they were all chosen because of the sheer number and magnitude of the attacks committed by each organization. Additionally, while not a complete consensus, there is widespread agreement when it comes to these groups. Therefore, based upon the existing literature the acts of violence perpetrated by these groups are classified as terrorism for the purposes of conducting the analyses (European Union 2011; Gupta 2004; Public Safety Canada 2012; Tosini 2007; United Kingdom Home Office 2012; U.S. Department of State 2012).

Of the four case studies examined in this work, two of them are based in the

region around Israel, one is in Turkey, and the last is located in Spain. While Hezbollah and the PKK became active at around the same time (early 1980s) and continued attacks for roughly the same duration of time (25-30 years), Hamas did not form until 1988 and reached peak activity several years later (early-mid 1990s). In contrast, ETA was formed in the late '50s, and began utilizing violence in the early '70s -- continuing their campaign of violence and media propaganda for well over 30 years. Two of the organizations are secular (PKK and ETA), while the other two are religious (Hamas and Hezbollah). All of the groups receive varying levels of international media coverage with Hamas receiving the most articles and the PKK receiving the least throughout the lifespan of the groups.

Methods/Hypotheses

Although the theory of terrorism as a form of communication between the terrorist organization and the global audience has been widely cited and used often in both political science and communications studies by noted scholars in each field, there is a lack of scholarly support for the claims. This paper takes the assumptions made by these scholars and tests them using available data regarding the frequency of attacks and the numbers of news articles that precede and follow each attack. In order to test the theory of terrorism as a form of theater sufficiently, or that terrorists rely on the media coverage of their attacks to raise awareness of their agenda, there must be a demonstrated connection between patterns of attacks and media attention.

This work utilizes a qualitative case study approach as it looks in depth at the coverage given to the four terrorist organizations in this study. In this instance, this methodological approach allows for a more nuanced observation of the decline in

coverage that precedes a large terrorist attack. A qualitative case study approach is beneficial in that applying this level of detail to the, sometimes incremental and gradual, changes in coverage that precede an attack or an increase in the number or lethality of attacks allows for the capture of even the most miniscule changes. This method of study will be supported by the use of descriptive statistics in order to better explain the patterns and trends in the level of media coverage and number of terrorist attacks.

Data for this paper come from several sources. First, data regarding the timing and frequency of terrorist attacks are provided by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), a dataset built using records from Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service, a private security agency. The GTD is compiled and maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and the University of Maryland. This is currently the most complete dataset regarding global terrorism as it includes specifics regarding each attack that occurred during the active years for all of the case studies. The largest weakness in using this dataset is that it lacks attack data for 1993⁵; however, that being said, there are no other available sources that have terrorism data for the necessary time frame.

The news data consist of print articles that can be found online. In this case, that includes articles that originally appeared in a physical print news outlet before being transferred to either an online database or, in the case of articles published in the mid to late 2000s, simultaneously published online. Print sources are utilized because print is often the leader in the news media due to the ability of print journalists to devote time

⁵ The Global Terrorism Database states: “The original PGIS data, upon which the 1970-1997 GTD data are based, consisted of hard-copy index cards, which were subsequently coded electronically by START researchers. Unfortunately, the set of cards for 1993 was lost prior to PGIS handing the data over to START” (START 2012).

and resources to investigative reporting. It is often the case that print journalists ‘break’ a story, or introduce it, to the masses, and other news outlets follow the lead of print by repeating those stories on the television or radio.

In order to measure the international coverage of a particular terrorist attack, news archives from *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Guardian* will be analyzed. These three papers are all excellent representations of international news coverage because they are considered part of the prestige press, written in English, and widely circulated both domestically and internationally with a combined circulation exceeding 3.1 million households (not counting Internet readers and audiences reached by syndicated articles) (ABC 2012; Guardian 2012; Los Angeles Times 2012; Tal 1995).

In an effort to capture the level of domestic coverage that a terrorist group receives, the archives of *The Jerusalem Post* are analyzed to determine the number of articles devoted specifically to Hamas and Hezbollah on a monthly basis. Domestic coverage is important because terrorists do not use the media to *just* communicate to an international audience. The domestic audience is also important in distributing messages, albeit different ones. A terrorist can use the domestic media in order to communicate to their state leadership, or to communicate messages of solidarity to other oppressed people within the state.

Despite the importance of domestic media outlets and coverage to this analysis, the necessary data to analyze all of the groups in this study could not be obtained at this time. Due to the longevity of the Kurdish Workers’ Party and the ETA in Spain, local newspaper archives do not go back far enough to capture the entire life of the organization. Online news archives of *The Hurriyet Daily News*, an English speaking

paper in Turkey, only extend as far back as 1996, thereby eliminating the group's most active years. Likewise, archives of the newspaper *El Pais* in Spain only went back to the early 2000s at the time of data collection.⁶ Oftentimes, there simply is not coverage due to a government imposed media ban on the topic, as was the case in Turkey during the most active periods of the PKK. In this case, the PKK, sought the attention of the international media because the domestic media were prohibited from publishing details, or even acknowledging the attacks. Therefore, the only domestic coverage in this paper will originate from Israel's *The Jerusalem Post* and specifically involve the groups Hamas and Hezbollah because archives for *The Jerusalem Post* extend to nearly the entire life of both groups.

While these three (and in some cases, four) newspapers do not represent the entirety of all news coverage on all terrorist activities (for the four cases), they do offer a representative sample of available news coverage. For example, *The Los Angeles Times* currently has a daily circulation rate of over 1.9 million households, a Sunday circulation of over 2.9 million households, and more than 8 million unique visitors to the website on a monthly basis (Los Angeles Times 2013). In addition to the 1.9 million people in southern California who receive the paper daily, *The Los Angeles Times* is distributed in tandem with many international newspapers such as: *Asbarez* in Armenia, *Chinese Daily News*, *Korea Times*, *Korea Daily News*, *Panorama* in Russia, *The India Journal*, *The Chino Champion*, and *L.A. Sentinel* (Los Angeles Times 2012). While not all of these papers are published in English, the fact that the *Los Angeles Times* can place articles written by its journalists and correspondents in newspapers spanning the globe, along with the advent of the Internet, which recognizes no geographical boundaries, increases

⁶ News archives for *El Pais* have since been updated and now go back to 1976.

the reach of this particular newspaper in ways unmeasured by traditional circulation statistics.

The New York Times is much like the *Los Angeles Times* in that it has circulation rates well above a million, and has a powerful international reputation. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulation, *The New York Times* is the third most circulated newspaper in the United States (behind the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*) with an average circulation of 1.5 million paying readers (ABC 2012). While these numbers show the current number of people paying to read the articles, they do not take into account the actual readership or impact of the paper as there are millions of people who read the articles via their cell phones, computer tablets, and other Internet based devices without paying for a subscription. Therefore, these numbers serve as the minimum number of people who read any given article, but the actual readership is likely much greater.

The decision to use *The Guardian* is a more complex one, because, while it may not be the most widely read newspaper in the United Kingdom, its target audience is different from the other daily newspapers in the country, which is relevant to this analysis. After several years of marked decline due to global financial hardship and the increasing popularity of free Internet news, current circulation rates are just over 200,000 households as of September 2012 (Guardian 2012a). However, *The Guardian* claims to market their paper to a more internationally aware and educated segment of the population. While other newspapers will publish primarily to only those who live nearby, *The Guardian* caters to a nationwide audience of individuals who are generally wealthy, educated, and have traveled outside of the borders of the United Kingdom (Lathwaite 2012). Therefore, the demographic for *The Guardian* are considered to be internationally

aware, politically active, and affluent enough to enact change within their own country if they so choose.

The Guardian, like *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, is also syndicated around the world. While the paper does not release exact numbers or names of papers that syndicate *The Guardian*, given that articles written by journalists in Great Britain can also be read by people around the world increases the paper's ability to impact the globe and further attests to its ability to influence a vast number of people who are not reflected in its reported circulation. In fact, recent reports suggest that *The Guardian* is the world's third most read newspaper online with an estimated 30.4 million online readers as of June 2012 (The Guardian 2012b).

Similar to that of *The Guardian*, the decision to use *The Jerusalem Post* as the domestic newspaper for Hamas and Hezbollah is also a complex one, given that it is one of several regional newspapers that report in English, but it is not the one with the largest readership. However, it is still the ideal newspaper to use when measuring the domestic importance of a particular topic due to the specific audience the paper attracts. While the other papers in this study have large circulation figures measuring in the millions of households, before counting online readers and foreign distribution, *The Jerusalem Post's* circulation figures hover at the 40,000 mark for weekend circulation and 15,000 daily (Tal, 1995). This number is relatively small, but unlike papers that only attract readers who reside within a particular geographical boundary, *The Jerusalem Post* is read by the diplomatic community, journalists, and Jewish subscribers overseas (Tal, 1995). Therefore, while the number of subscribers is small, those who read this paper are likely the most interested in domestic and international news and the most influential in Israeli

politics.

Overall, the three ‘international papers’⁷ represent different segments of the English-speaking world while still having a significant and large global readership through syndicated articles. The regional paper chosen is written for the highly educated and politically influential segment of the population within that country. While it may not reach most average Israelis in the region, it does reach those who have a significant influence on politics in Israel.

Data for these four newspapers will be aggregated by month, thereby allowing for a comparison between the number of terrorist attacks committed by an organization and the total number of articles written about that same group⁸ with limited time interference. Month-long data increments are a manageable way to show the connection between the number of attacks and articles as the lifespan of an attack in the news media is generally limited to the first 48 to 72 hours immediately following the event. It is also less cumbersome when working with data that stretch in excess of twenty years.

Data from the three international newspapers come from the Proquest Historical Databases, and archives for *The Jerusalem Post* are accessible via Access World News (2013)⁹. Only news articles, and not advertisements or editorials were used in this study. Efforts were made to ensure that duplicate articles were not counted in the monthly totals. In order to maintain consistency in the search terms across the different news platforms, each case study was subject to the same search criteria in each newspaper. The exact

⁷ Hereon out the phrase ‘international papers’ refers to *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian*.

⁸ Included are all articles written about the group, not just the articles written in conjunction with, or about a terrorist attack.

⁹ Access to “Proquest Historical News: The Guardian” and “Access World News” was provided by Arizona State University.

search terms utilized are: Hamas; Hizbullah OR Hezbollah; ETA AND Basque; PKK AND Kurd*. The two spellings of Hezbollah are necessary due to the different standards of newspapers. While this work utilizes the spelling preferred by *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* uses a different standard spelling. The standard also changed in *The New York Times* in the early to mid-1990s. The use of ‘Basque’ and ‘Kurd*’ assisted in narrowing down the number of articles to only those relevant to the organizations in question without also flagging articles about government agencies.

The hypotheses tested in this paper are:

Hypothesis 1: As long as news coverage on a particular terrorist group and their issue remains consistent, then attacks will also remain consistent.

Hypothesis 2: When media coverage begins to wane regarding the issue, despite continued attacks, there will be a marked decrease in attacks for a short period of time, followed by a dramatic resurgence in violence as the group attempts to regain international attention.

Hypothesis 3: As the media continue to focus on other, more timely, events, the terrorist group will take longer breaks between violent attacks and eventually cease the practice of violence altogether due to the lack of an international audience for the issue.

Hypothesis 4: If the group can gain international media attention by using other means, they will utilize those means¹⁰.

Measurement

The use of averages is employed in this paper. It is impossible to compare the

¹⁰ There are two methods a group can utilize to obtain media attention. 1. They can engage in ceasefires and peace talks and 2. If powerful enough, they can start formal armed conflicts.

coverage received by Hamas to that received by the PKK because the differences in the levels of coverage are just too vast. Comparing coverage between the groups also tells little about the ways the groups act on the world stage. Instead, it is important to compare the peaks and valleys in the number of articles written about a group within the context of the previous media attention on that same group. In other words, if the PKK averages two articles per month, then it is important to note a stretch of time where the average falls to one, likewise if the average rises to four. However, the standards for coverage for the group Hamas are decidedly different as this group may average as many as 40 articles a month. In this instance a drop to 37 or increase to 43 is not as important; however, a drop below 25 or increase to above 60 articles a month may be significant.

As Hypothesis 4 suggests, there may be some media spikes that do not correspond with increases in terrorist activity as the organizations use other means of gaining media attention. Some of these means may include engaging in peace talks, announcing a ceasefire, members running for political office, staging public demonstrations, or starting a war. When relevant, these media spikes are pointed out and addressed within the text of the case studies as they represent a different form of communication while still highlighting the need for media attention on a particular terrorist group.

Wars, or the provocation of formal armed conflict between the terrorist organization and the military of another state, are also mentioned in this analysis because these actions are not reflected in the formal terrorism data. Once the military of another state responds to an attack and begins a series of military responses, the conflict escalates from isolated terrorist attacks into formal warfare. The declaration of formal warfare is an important escalation from the tactics of terrorism and is not one that terrorist

organizations take lightly. Wars are costly in physical, economic, and human resources, but also represent a large amount of media attention and are bound to draw the immediate attention of the media, international community, and powerful decision makers located across the globe. In this instance, war can be seen as a strategic action with the potential for large communicative value — albeit at a high cost.

As with any study, there are some design limitations. The decision to use English only sources is based upon the way terrorists use the global media to communicate with the world around them. While local coverage is important, as terrorism is a weapon of the weak that is utilized when other methods of communication have failed, it is ultimately designed to attract the attention of a broader audience, or the global public. In order to gather that attention it is important that the terrorist attack make headlines beyond just the local paper, rather it must reach the large, globally recognized news organizations such as *The Guardian*, or *The New York Times* — papers that have readership measured in the millions.

While this work does not come close to offering a detailed evaluation of every terrorist organization's relationship with the global news media, these four case studies are uniquely positioned to serve as a sample to provide generalizations regarding the relationship between terrorist organizations and the global media. These cases were specifically chosen because of their regional, ideological, and time differences. There are other types of terrorism not represented in this sample, and this thesis is constrained in that there is limited media data for Middle Eastern and Asian news sources in the time before 1990. Additionally, this thesis would be strengthened by incorporating groups

from South America or Africa; however, the same limitation regarding the availability of news sources applies to these continents as well. While the major news sources of *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Guardian* all have archives that go back to the early 1900s, there is limited archive availability for the smaller regional papers that report on South America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Oceania.

With more time and resources, more domestic sources could also be analyzed in relation to the number of terrorist attacks in order to further strengthen the arguments made in this thesis; however, in the final analysis, these sources, while contributing more data, will likely not change the final outcome of the study. Additionally, with more data a case study from South America would strengthen the analysis, as well as the inclusion of an organization that is both ideologically and religiously motivated, such as the Chechens operating in the Caucasus. Future studies on this topic will need to examine different case studies and different media sources in order to continue to establish if this relationship holds across the globe.

Chapter 4

Terrorism in God's Name: Hamas and Hezbollah

Trends in Religious Terrorism

Most modern terrorism, or terrorism perpetuated by groups emerging since the late 1980s, is generally in the form of religious terrorism (Hoffman 1999; Rapoport 2012). In what has been described as the “fourth wave” of terrorism, terrorists use religion to not only organize, but to also justify violence against others (Rapoport 2012, 51). Due to this use of religion as justification, many scholars place this type of terrorism in its own subcategory, distinct from nationalist-separatist, Marxist, and other secular branches of terrorism. While there are many characteristics inherent to religious terrorism, Schmid (2004a) best explains its rationalization by connecting terrorist acts with the religious practice of sacrifice. By viewing violence as a form of sacrifice, whether that be martyrdom or the killing of innocents for the greater cause, terrorists turn killing and violence, a practice that many religions find abhorrent, into a noble act worthy of eternal redemption and reward (Schmid 2004a). This mindset is especially dangerous as it gives the terrorist a perceived god-sanctioned right to kill anyone without reservation.

In many cases, both secular and religious terrorists have similar goals in that both groups wish to enact specific changes within the world. In the case of the secular group, those aims are generally political in nature, as with Marxist or Maoist groups wanting to impose a particular political or economic framework on the state, and nationalist-separatist groups advocating the creation of a separate state (Hoffman 1988). As Hoffman

(1988) states, these groups seek change and are motivated by the desire for political power, with terrorism being the tool used to obtain those ends. In contrast, he claims that religious groups “often view violence as an end in itself” rather than “as a means to an end” (Hoffman 1988, 3). However, as Schmid (2004a) notes there are many factors including poverty, social injustice, and state repression, which need to be present in society before religious doctrine merges with political aims in a ‘justifiable’ violent insurrection against the state. In this respect, the motivating factors that lead to the formation of religious and secular groups do not differ greatly. However, while the social issues that lead a group to pursue asymmetrical warfare may remain universal, the tactics used by the groups and the amount of violence, or the lethality of the attacks, may differ between the different types of groups.

This is partially because of the dichotomous nature of most religious teachings. Many religious texts are divided between the righteous and the wicked, the forces of good and the hordes of evil. As Schmid (2004a) and Juergensmeyer (2003) note, terrorists tend to view the world in this polarized fashion, meaning that those who are not with them must be against them and therefore, need to be eliminated. If there is no room for neutrality in the religion, then the terrorist's world-view will not account for it either. While nationalist-separatist groups such as the Irish Republican Army and ETA have well defined goals, ambitions, and select strategic targets for their attacks, most religious groups have less defined goals and seemingly kill indiscriminately (Hoffman 1999, 8). The latter was evident as early as 1988, when Hoffman explained that although the number of terrorist attacks had diminished over the course of the 1980s, the lethality of those attacks had increased — a change he placed solely on the shoulders of emerging

religious terrorist groups.

In looking at these trends, many articles have been devoted to the idea of religious terrorism being more violent and resulting in more deaths than secular terrorism (Hoffman 1988, 1999; Ranstorp, 1996). Ranstorp (1996) claims that religious terrorism around the globe is increasing in both the number of attacks and the lethality of the violence because the attackers believe their actions are mandated by god. It is true that a religious terrorist group, Hezbollah, introduced the idea of suicide bombings to the modern world in 1983¹¹; however, religious terrorist organizations are not the only groups to employ this tactic. Studies indicate that there were 286 suicide attacks between 1983 and 2000, 171 of which were committed by members of Sri Lanka's LTTE (Tamil Tigers), a secular group, and 21 by the PKK in Turkey, also secular (Weinberg et al 2003).

Additionally, in a study questioning these assumptions about the lethality and supposed increased violence of religious terrorist organizations, Piazza (2009) found that after an initial glance, the data appear as though religious groups produce more casualties per attack when compared to leftist, rightist, nationalist-separatist, and other groups with an average of 38.1 casualties per attack (Piazza 2009). However, when the data are divided between al Qaeda affiliated groups and non-al Qaeda affiliated groups, an interesting trend emerges. As it turns out, groups that are religious, but not affiliated with al Qaeda, report casualty numbers that, while still slightly elevated, are more closely aligned with those of secular groups (Piazza 2009). Thereby suggesting that the inflated levels of casualties in terrorist attacks are directly driven by al Qaeda affiliated groups

¹¹ Yet, suicide terrorism is not a new tactic. According to Pape, (2005) it was first employed in the first century AD by the Zealots, a Jewish group, against the Romans.

(Piazza 2009). Therefore, the perceived increase in the lethality of religious terrorism is primarily driven by one specific group affiliation and not all groups that claim religious justification for their attacks.

In summarizing what scholars believe to be the differences between secular and religious terrorists, Spencer (2006) points out that for secular terrorists, violence is a form of propaganda intended to communicate to a mass audience. It must be carefully targeted, managed, and manipulated so that the group does not lose legitimacy and can maintain a seat at the bargaining table with, in theory, powerful international allies behind them (Spencer 2006). In contrast, for religious terrorists, the goal is simply that of engaging in violence and creating chaos, because, as scholars claim, religious terrorists do not care if the world is watching, because God is watching. They do not need to worry about alienating a segment of the population, because the group does not want a seat at the bargaining table, instead “they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it” (Spencer 2006, 10).

Despite the assertions of some scholars who argue religious terrorists do not use the media in the same way that secular terrorists do, this work still contains two religious case studies (Hoffman 1988; Ranstorp 1996; Spencer 2006). Regardless of the ideological motivations of the groups, terrorist organization still must rely on the media to motivate their base of support and communicate to outside powers. So while religious terrorists may claim, and ultimately believe, they only require God to be watching, the reality is that without supporters, all terrorist organizations will eventually lose their relevance. Furthermore, this research suggests that ideological motivations asides, *all* terrorist organizations need the media to sustain them. Evidence for this lies in the fact

that both Hamas and Hezbollah, and many other ‘religious’ terrorist organizations, also release manifestos and charters to the world. The groups wrote these manifestos in a way that communicates the desires of the group to the world.

Hamas

Intro and History

The conflicts that have occurred since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 are well documented in both academic and non-academic literature (Abu-Amr 1993; Anderson et al 2008; Tessler 2009). Several formal armed conflicts followed the declaration of statehood in 1948, and tensions in the region have not diminished significantly since that time. According to the Middle East Monitor, “Israeli governments have been trying to make life as uncomfortable as possible for the indigenous Palestinian population” (MEMO 2010). The government has successfully done this by passing laws that are openly discriminatory towards Palestinians who were born in Israel, and are Israeli citizens, but are not given the same rights as those of Jewish descent who immigrate to Israel (MEMO 2010). Additionally, the Israeli government has passed legislation that restricts the movement of the Palestinians and increases the number of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, thereby further limiting the viable territory that that Palestinians could claim in a potential two-state solution (Al Jazeera 2012).

The first of the repressive laws passed by the Israeli government began shortly after the declaration of statehood. In 1950 the Knesset, or Israeli parliament, passed the “law of return” allowing all Jews the right to immigrate to Israel regardless of their

birthplace. This was followed shortly by the “citizenship law” in which those who choose to migrate were automatically granted full citizenship (MEMO 2010). This, coupled with increasingly repressive laws regarding the movement of people and goods in and throughout the Occupied Territories, served to further marginalize the Palestinian people as they lost their right to land on which their family had lived for hundreds of years. In this atmosphere of repression, the organization of Hamas emerged in the 1980s as the Palestinians began to express greater discontent with their inequitable relationship with the state of Israel (Abu-Amr 1993).

Historically, several radical Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, based in Egypt, and Islamic Jihad, originating in the Gaza Strip, have influenced Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Hamas, however, is a relative newcomer to the terrorist landscape as they were created during the first Intifada of 1987, during which the Palestinians rebelled after a vehicular accident involving an Israeli truck that killed several Palestinians.

Riots soon broke out and spread across the state as anti-Israeli groups incited the nationalist sentiments of the Palestinians. Due to the ideological differences between the largely secular Muslim Brotherhood and the other, more religious groups such as Islamic Jihad, the Muslim Brotherhood spawned several off-shoots, as people took the training they received in the underground organization and left to create other organizations and groups that they felt represented the unique situation of the Palestinians in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Robinson 2004).

During the first Intifada, several leaders of paramilitary groups operating in Gaza joined together to further the religious and nationalist sentiments of the general public in

their specific region as distinct from Palestinians located in the West Bank and elsewhere. Shortly thereafter, this small group of dissidents began to call themselves Hamas, *Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-ʿIslāmiyyah*, or the Islamic Resistance Movement (Abu-Amr 1993). Later, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades separated to become the military wing of Hamas. Despite having a specific and distinct name, this group still works under the auspices of Hamas leadership.

Although conflict between Israeli settlers in Israel and the Palestinians has been a concern since the turn of the century when people began calling for a Jewish homeland in the region, the 1990s saw the first progress towards meaningful peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis with the Oslo Accords of 1993 (MERIP 2011). In these Accords, the Israelis granted the Palestinians, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the right of self-government for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories during a five-year transitional period. In return, the Palestinians recognized the state of Israel as a legitimate state, something that had been contested for many years. The second Oslo Accords of 1995 extended Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; however, it did not allow for complete independence or sovereignty from Israel (MERIP 2011).

Despite having increased autonomy within the Occupied Territories, the Palestinians still faced restrictions regarding movement between the territories and Israel, limitations on economic and military freedom, and controlled access to necessities such as water, food, and medical supplies. Even after the Oslo Peace Accords of the 1990s, violence in Israel continued to increase as Palestinians felt that their rights were being infringed upon, leading to the second Intifada in the early 2000s. During this time,

Hamas cemented itself as a terrorist organization by engaging in numerous attacks against Israeli citizens. This increase in attacks led to a crackdown against the Palestinians from the Israeli government, which, in turn, led to more attacks in subsequent years as Hamas tried to bring international attention to the plight of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. In response to the realities of living in the Gaza Strip, in 2006 Palestinians in that territory elected Hamas candidates into power in what was widely considered a fair and free election (Wilson 2006).

The election of Hamas to power caused significant controversy both within Gaza and throughout the rest of the world. Hamas has openly and actively called for Israel's destruction and is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, Canada, and the European Union (European Union 2011; Public Safety Canada 2012; U.S. Department of State 2012). Many of these, and other countries, have refused to recognize this new government and ended their support for peace negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The election of Hamas also sparked conflict with the more moderate Palestinian groups, namely Fatah, who had functioned as the Palestinian leadership before the political rise of Hamas. The conflict between Fatah and Hamas eventually ended with the death of hundreds of Palestinians in the street riots following the 2006 election (BBC 2007).

By 2008, severe fuel and food shortages, along with electrical interruptions, impacted the territory, and in January, Palestinian militants used explosives to blow holes into several sections of the wall between Gaza and Egypt in order to allow for the movement of people and goods through the Egyptian border – people moving into Egypt for a better life, and food and goods moving into the Gaza Strip for the sustenance of the

1.7 million people living there (BBC 2008; CIA Factbook 2013). The violence between Israel and the Palestinians intensified in late 2008 through early 2009, when Palestinians fired more than 200 rockets from the Gaza Strip into nearby Israeli towns in the southern portion of the country in what has later been referred to as the Gaza War. Israel responded with an aerial attack that killed over a thousand Palestinians during a three-week period (BBC 2009). The bombing ended in early 2009, but Israel continued to enforce a blockade of land, air, and sea, even going so far as to turn away a boat bringing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in July 2009 (Frykberg 2009). Low intensity conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians still continue to this day, with both sides unable to come to a binding peace agreement, despite numerous efforts by the rest of the world to bring the two sides together with reasonable demands. Declaring the peace process indefinitely stalled, the Palestinians are now attempting to gain recognition through the United Nations, bypassing Israel and its ally, the United States. These attempts have, thus far, not led to independence or official recognition, although they have sparked numerous debates among the international community.

While this paper deals with Hamas primarily as a terrorist organization, it is important to further note that the military branch of Hamas is just one of three distinct branches of this organization. The organization also has a public/social sector organization which provides health care, education, and support to the people in the Gaza Strip, as well as a leadership council that leads the entire organization.

Analysis of Data

When reviewing the data regarding media coverage for the lifetime of Hamas, several things become immediately apparent. The first is that the coverage regarding Hamas in *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian* are all very similar. When one newspaper begins reporting on the aftermath of a terrorist attack, the other two papers also cover that same attack at roughly the same rate. When the frequencies of articles are graphed, the three international papers, while not exactly the same, have very similar data trends. In contrast, *The Jerusalem Post* writes significantly more articles a month regarding the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas, the group itself, and their aims. This is most likely due to the fact that those who report in *The Jerusalem Post* live and work much closer to the actual attacks. Therefore, reporters are much more likely to continue coverage on Hamas and the terrorist attacks in Israel, even after the attack, than they are anywhere else in the world.

The second important point to note is that the trends regarding the sheer number of news articles printed in relation to the number of terrorist attacks committed are unique to this case study. While already high, during the early 2000s, coverage on Hamas increased even further in the international press. While coverage increases based on the state of the peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis and the number of terrorist attacks, there are a general baseline number of articles written about the conflict per month regardless of the actions of Hamas. In order to account for this baseline number of articles, this paper will use months where the number of articles written about Hamas is above the mean in order to show that there is an increase in media interest, and

months where coverage is below the mean to show a decrease in media interest— despite the constant, high, media coverage.

Decade Averages for Hamas

Years	Attacks	Los Angeles Times	New York Times	The Guardian	Jerusalem Post
1980-1989	.083	1.375	.792	1.042	3.458
1990-1999	.769	7.192	8.392	7.917	50.883
2000-2009	1.475	20.692	27.325	30.083	131.95
2010-2011	0	11.458	16.042	26.625	167.625

Table 1

In the 1990s, the decade-long averages¹² for media coverage of Hamas are 7.19, 8.39, 7.91, and 50.88 articles per month in *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Jerusalem Post* respectively (as seen in Table 1). In comparison, at the beginning of the decade, between January 1990 and December 1991, Hamas only has an average of 1 article a month in the *Los Angeles Times*, 2 per month in the *New York Times*, 1.9 in *The Guardian*, and 19.33 in *The Jerusalem Post*. There is only one noticeable spike in news coverage during this time period, and that is during December 1990 where both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Guardian* wrote 10 articles, the *New York Times* wrote 7 articles, and *The Jerusalem Post* wrote 68 articles. This sudden spike in news articles, when the international papers only averaged one to two articles a month (in contrast, coverage in the domestic paper had been steadily rising), came during a month

¹² Decade-long average refers to the average number of articles written per month for the entire 120 months in the decade. This is the baseline for comparison in this decade.

in which there were two terrorist attacks originating from Hamas after several months of hiatus.

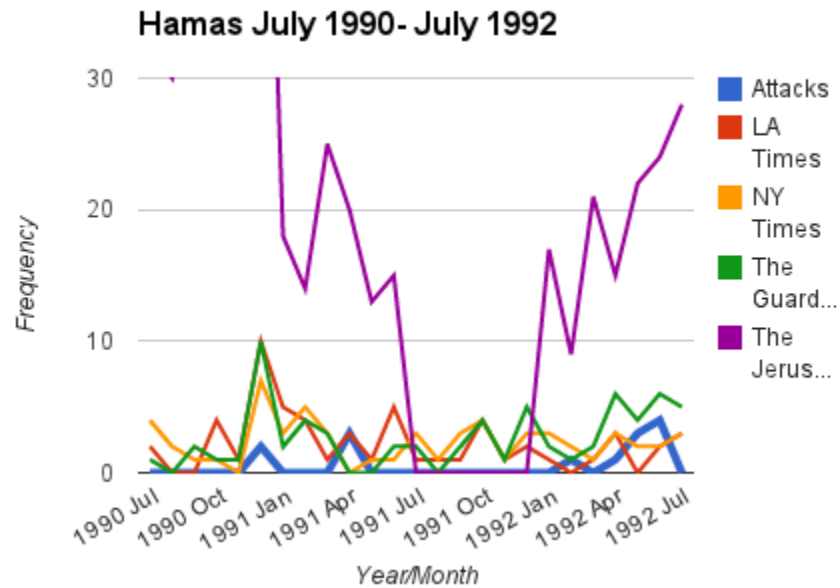


Figure 1¹³

As shown in Figure 1, this increase in news coverage only lasted until May 1991, when all of the international papers returned to reporting on the group at or below the previous average – despite a wave of three terrorist attacks in April of 1991 which garnered only three articles from the *Los Angeles Times* and zero articles from the other two international papers. Rather than maintaining domestic media interest, coverage in *The Jerusalem Post* dropped immediately to levels less than half of what the group saw even in the months before the attack. Following that lackluster media attention for the three attacks in April 1991, Hamas temporarily ceased attacks until a year later with a series of seven attacks that occurred between May and June of 1992. It is only after this

¹³ The data for *The Jerusalem Post* was cut in order to better see the relationship between the international papers and attacks by Hamas. In July 1990 the paper published 32 articles; 30 in August 1990; 50 in September 1990; 52 in October 1990; 42 in November 1990; and 68 in December 1990.

dramatic upswing in the number of attacks committed still failed to garner the desired international media attention, as over the two-month timespan the group averaged 1 article in *The Los Angeles Times*, 2 articles in *The New York Times*, 5 in *The Guardian*, and 23 in *The Jerusalem Post*, (coverage far below that of the decade average as seen in Table 1), that the group changed their terrorism strategy in 1993 in an effort to obtain more media coverage.

The first attacks Hamas committed in the early 1990s consisted of mainly armed assaults and targeted assassinations. However, in 1993, Hamas changed their strategy to include suicide car bombings—a move that dramatically increased both the number of casualties and the number of articles per attack (Levitt 2006). That year (1993) also saw the bombing of the World Trade Center in the United States, an act of domestic terrorism that increased the saliency of the issue to the American people, thereby also temporarily increasing the number of articles written about the topic to the American audience. There are no data regarding the exact number of terrorist attacks that occurred in 1993¹⁴, but in January of 1994, Hamas committed their highest recorded number of attacks up to that time, with eight attacks occurring in that month. Despite the increased number of attacks, news coverage on the group began to decline from the averages reached in 1993 as seen in Figure 2. The decline in news articles in 1994, despite a significant number of attacks, began a trend in which both attacks and articles continued to decline through 1996 — with article counts returning to the single digits for the three international papers by July 1996, and dipping below 40 articles a month in *The Jerusalem Post* (a paper that averaged 82.62 articles per month on the group from January 1993 through June 1996).

¹⁴ As the START data in the Global Terrorism Database does not have access to it.

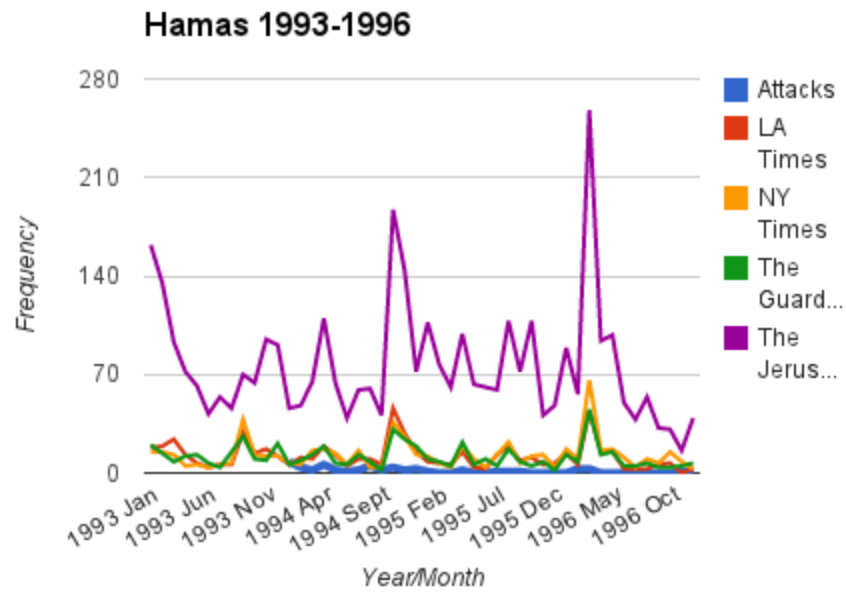


Figure 2

Despite not having a significant attack in months, on July 30, 1997 two members of Hamas bombed a large, open air market in Jerusalem. This attack, which occurred during a time of day when the market was sure to be busy, killed 15 and wounded over 170 civilians (START 2012). In response to this attack, news coverage on Hamas increased from averages of 3.92, 8.38, 6, and 38.08 between June 1996 through June 1997 to 16.6, 28.6, 24.6, and 103.3 for the three months following the July 1997 attack in the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Guardian*, and *Jerusalem Post* respectively. This is an increase of more than 250% in the number of articles written about Hamas in each of the international papers and more than 150% in *The Jerusalem Post*. This one large and deadly attack served to regain waning media interest when previous attacks had not been able to send necessary messages to the international community. However, the media interest in this large attack only lasted for the three months immediately following

the marketplace blast, and by November 1997 interest in Hamas had largely returned to levels below that which was exhibited in the months immediately before the attack.

This decline in media attention, and subsequent decline in attacks, continued with averages for the international papers falling to 2.4, 3.75, and 3.58 and the average for *The Jerusalem Post* falling to 28.67 for the year 1999. These averages are below that of the previous lull that preceded the large attack in 1997 and signify a significant move away from covering both Hamas and the issues surrounding the Palestinian and Israeli conflict as it relates to those living in the Gaza Strip. This trend continued into the new millennium and attacks completely ceased until December 2000 and coverage regarding the issue remained in the single digits in the international papers, and averaged below 35 articles a month in *The Jerusalem Post* for the first year. The one exception to the overall trend occurred in October 2000 when coverage in all news outlets spiked despite the fact that there had not been a terrorist attack. This spike in coverage without corresponding violence is due to the announcement of a ceasefire between the Palestinians and the Israelis. However, this ceasefire was short-lived as attacks continued in December of that year (2000). Yet, despite the breach of the ceasefire and the resumption of violence, media coverage continued to decline, to 7, 8, 8, and 49 in December, down from 17, 23, 39, and 66 in the previous October in *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Jerusalem Post*.

The September 11 attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon drastically changed Americans' perceptions on terrorism, its role in their lives, and international affairs. These changes in the American psyche altered the way the news media report on this issue. It also increased the saliency of the topic, not just when attacks occur in the

United States, but also in the rest of the world. For these reasons, reporting on all terrorist groups increased substantially in the months and years following September 2001. This is evident by the increase in the average number of articles written about Hamas, regardless of the number of attacks (See Table 1). July 2001 is the last time that Hamas receives single-digit coverage in the international papers. Following September 2001, monthly coverage begins to average in the double digits in the international papers for the rest of the decade, with averages ranging from 23-33 articles per month. In *The Jerusalem Post*, the average increases even higher to 149 articles per month for the remainder of the decade. However, as long as news coverage remained at or above those averages, the terrorist attacks remained consistent. Although there was a dramatic increase in the number of attacks beginning in 2001 when compared to the number of attacks made by the group in the 1990s, the number of monthly attacks remained consistent so long as news coverage also remained consistent.

However, as the hypothesis predicts, there is a relationship regarding when the media attention begins to wane on the issue and an increase in attacks. In other words, when media attention fell to levels below the baseline average mentioned above, Hamas increased attacks in an effort to regain attention. By the beginning of 2003, with media attention turning to the invasion of Iraq, both attacks and coverage on Hamas had begun to wane with averages dropping down to 17.67 articles in the international papers and 97.67 in the domestic paper in the period between October 2002 and March 2003. In response to this decline in media attention, Hamas initiated an increase in attacks in March 2003 with 10 being committed in that month, the highest number of attacks in one month up to that date (surpassing the previous record of either in June 1994). Despite the

increase in attacks, media coverage only increased to levels at or below the decade average. Rather than increase reporting in proportion to the increase in attacks, the news media only returned to the baseline decade average -- signifying that the international community was not paying attention to Hamas and their issues of Palestinian rights in the Gaza Strip due to, perhaps, other international events.

The months and years following this resurgence of violence (in March 2003) were quiet as Hamas planned how they would stay relevant to both the international audience and their domestic constituents they claim to represent in the Gaza Strip, given that their acts of terrorism were no longer allowing them access to the world's stage by garnering additional media attention. As seen in Figure 3, media attention continued to decline in mid-2005 with the international papers back to reporting in single digits in April, despite two terrorist attacks in that month, and *The Jerusalem Post* reporting an unprecedented zero articles mentioning Hamas in either May or June of 2005 – again, despite the presence of two terrorist attacks that occurred during the time period.

In 2006, coverage spiked again as Hamas won an electoral majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Hamas won 74 of the 132 seats, beating their largest rival, Fatah, who only won 45 seats (Global Security 2011). When terrorism failed to garner the sustained media attention necessary to keep the organization alive, they turned to legitimate political means in order to increase their relevance to both the international and domestic audience. This move did have the intended effect of increasing both international and domestic media coverage on Hamas and their chosen grievances as they worked within the political organization of the Palestinian Authority in order to improve the lives of those living in the Occupied Territories. Further, as mentioned, the election

also sparked a war with the rival political party, Fatah, also increasing the number of articles written about the group.

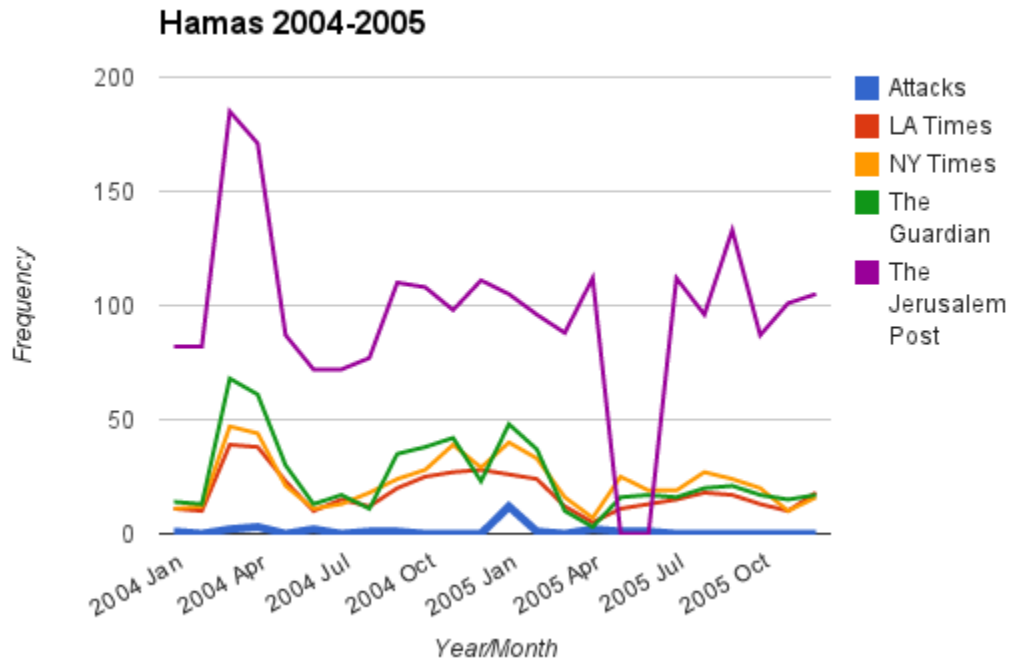


Figure 3

This increase in coverage lasted until the beginning of 2007 when the number of articles again began to wane as the fighting between the two factions ceased and Hamas took over the Palestinian Legislative Council without enacting any unduly radical laws or formally declaring war on Israel. Like other times when media coverage began to decrease, June 2007 saw a dramatic resurgence in violence originating from the group with 29 attacks attributed to the military wing of Hamas. However, despite a new record-setting 29 attacks occurring in that month, nearly triple the previous highest number of attacks in a month (January 2005), media attention, while it did increase, did not increase in a proportional amount – it merely doubled. It was also unsustainable, as media attention

only lasted for one month after that series of attacks before numbers fell to 23, 34, 31, and 166 – only slightly above the decade averages of 20.69, 27.33, 30.08, and 131.95¹⁵ (See Table 1).

On June 19, 2008, just one week after yet another round of attacks on June 12, the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel went into effect as both sides began to reopen diplomatic, legal, and political channels in an effort to curtail the violence and come to a peace agreement. After June 2008 there was a dramatic decrease in the number of terrorist attacks committed by Hamas as both sides struggled to honor the ceasefire and to seek other diplomatic solutions to the problems between the two sides. The decision to turn to political means to solve the problem can partially be attributed to the lack of media attention on the issue. Terrorism is a weapon designed for mass consumption, and when the media refuse to report on the different terrorist attacks, then the group is forced to turn to different methods, often legitimate political methods, in an effort to both bring attention to the difficulties that the people face, and to work with others to come up with a legitimate solution to resolve the violence. In this case, Hamas' continued rocket fire on Israeli communities did not produce the international coverage necessary to lead to the mobilization of the international community in support of the cause for Palestinian autonomy.

However, in this instance, as in every other instance of a potential Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation, the ceasefire – while it did last for quite some time with only minor infractions on the part of both sides – did not prevent an increase in the tensions between the two groups as small factions of Palestinians, not associated with Hamas, broke the

¹⁵ Numbers for *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Jerusalem Post*, respectively.

ceasefire and Israelis retaliated with air strikes. Eventually, the entire peace agreement and ceasefire brokered in June 2008 fell apart and Hamas returned to its previous methods of terrorism and violence in order to gain media coverage, and through that bring global attention to the Palestinian condition in the Occupied Territories.

Yet, the attacks that took place in November caused mostly property damage, only wounding five people and killing none of them. Therefore, these attacks, while they signaled a return to violence for Hamas, did not attract a large amount of media attention to the situation as there were only five news articles across the three international news platforms that mentioned any of the attacks that occurred in November 2008.

Likewise, the attacks that occurred in the first days of December 2008 went completely unmentioned in the international media. Again these attacks did not lead to the deaths of any Israelis, only property damage so the international news media did not see fit to focus a lot of attention on these attacks. Therefore, it is apparent Hamas was unable to use terrorism to generate any of the necessary media attention in order to maintain relevancy at this time. As Hamas had already tried legitimate political means to achieve their political goals, the group's options at this point were to either disappear and allow another group to rise up because it was no longer relevant to the international community nor was it accomplishing any of the goals of the Palestinian people, or to engage in a large and calculated upswing in violent actions in order to force the media to cover the atrocities occurring as a result of the violence associated with both sides in this ongoing conflict.

Rather than face obsolescence and irrelevance to both the international community and their domestic constituency, Hamas chose to stage a large resurgence in

attacks in order to gain the necessary media coverage by beginning what is now referred to as the Gaza War. All of the attacks by Hamas were in the form of rockets launched by operatives in the Gaza Strip towards settlements and villages in southern Israel. These attacks killed three people in December 2008 and continued into the New Year. These rocket attacks launched by Hamas turned into an outright war that continued until February 2009, during which thousands of people died and the media began once more to focus on the conflict between Hamas and Israel. In January 2009, the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Jerusalem Post* published 110, 121, 222, and 649 articles each — for a grand total of 1102 articles published about Hamas in a single month as seen in Figure 4.

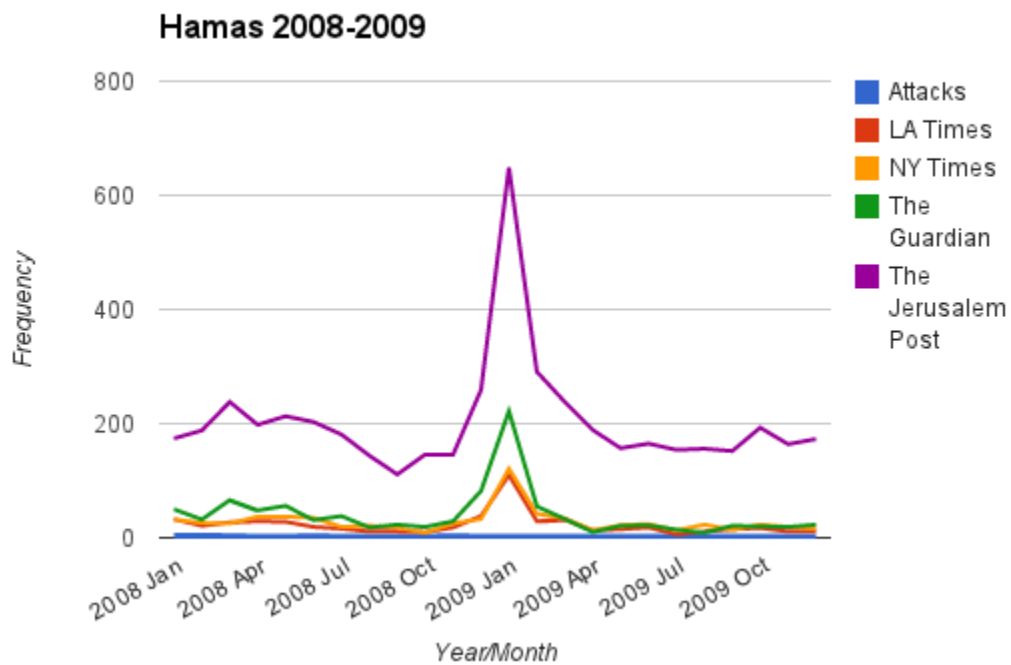


Figure 4

By making the strategic choice to increase the levels of violence, Hamas not only

initiated a war, but also dramatically increased the number of news articles written about the conflict and about the human rights violations that occurred on both sides. With these attacks, Hamas once again began to monopolize the news media, and was able to further their aims by invoking international scrutiny and criticism of Israel's behavior and actions in the Gaza War. The increase of media coverage brought global attention to the fighting, thereby succeeding where diplomatic solutions had failed, and confirming the theory of scholars such as Juergensmeyer (2003), and Weimann and Winn (1994) in stating that all terrorist groups, of which Hamas is no exception, need the constant attention of the media in order to continue to exist in a viable fashion as a terrorist organization.

Since the Gaza War in January 2008 there has been a steady decline in the number of articles written about Hamas. Between January 2010 and December 2011 the average number of articles written dropped to 11.46, 16.04, 26.63, and 167.63 in the four papers and there has not been a documented and verified terrorist attack since November 2008 (Refer to Table 1). This suggests that Hamas is undergoing an evolution from a terrorist organization into a legitimate political party, where those who now orchestrate terrorist attacks are rebellious offshoots who do not have the support of the leadership. That being said, as the governing authority in the Gaza Strip, Hamas now has the ability to declare and participate in open warfare as well as orchestrate peace talks. The Gaza War in 2008-2009 and the most recent low intensity conflict in 2012 are two such examples of the ways in which Hamas is still able to exert its influence and garner media and international attention by utilizing military means in lieu of terrorism. Yet, despite these changes in the ways Hamas attracts media attention to their cause, it still remains to be seen if the organization will completely abandon terrorism.

Hezbollah

Intro and History

Operating out of southern Lebanon, Hezbollah (also known as Hizbullah or Hizballah) is a radical Shia group that utilizes both terrorism and legitimate political tactics in order to further their agenda. Currently, it is classified as a terrorist organization by the United States, Australia, Israel, and Canada, but not Western Europe due to the fact that it does hold and maintain legitimate political power in Lebanon (Asseraf 2007). However, there have been several attempts to pass legislation in the European Union that would lead to the classification of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization despite their legitimate political ties. Much like Hamas, an organization that turned to political means when they won the 2006 election for political control over the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah is also a political party. Several of their members ran for political office during the 1992 elections and, since that time, Hezbollah has wed terror and politics with their social assistance programs in order to assist the Shia Muslims in the communities of southern Lebanon while also subverting the legitimacy of Israel (Norton 2007, 100).

Lebanon, located just north of Israel, has not been immune to the destabilization of the region that has occurred since 1948 with the official creation of Israel. Granted territorial independence just a few years prior, in 1943 by the French, Lebanon was carved out of the Ottoman province of Syria in order to reward the Maronite Christians living in that region for their loyalty to France (Norton 2007). For many years, this small country has had to deal with not only Israel's territorial ambitions, but also Syria's, and

the destabilization that comes with repeated military and political skirmishes with neighbors as well as the influx of over 150,000 Palestinian refugees from Israel (Avon and Khatchadourian 2012). In addition, Lebanon is internally divided among the Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims and, until 1989, the power division kept the three groups in unequal standing economically and politically with the Christians assured the Presidency, the Sunnis given the Prime Minister, and the Shia given the Speaker of Parliament, a position with significantly less power (Norton 2007). Yet, despite the turmoil that has challenged the state for several decades, Hezbollah as an organization did not come into being until 1982 – in response to the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon, domestic pressures such as the Lebanese Civil War, and the success of the Shia-dominated Iranian Revolution.

The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent conflicts with neighboring Arab states led to a flood of Palestinian refugees fleeing to different locations in the Arab world. Many of these Palestinians migrated to refugee camps located in southern Lebanon, near the northern border with Israel. There, Palestinian youth organized and made alliances with other radical Palestinian organizations such as the PLO and began attacking the northern border of Israel. These small, but organized, attacks eventually prompted the full invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982 as the Israeli government tried to decrease the number of militant Palestinians at the border (Fetini 2009).

However, the invasion and subsequent occupation had long-term consequences for the native Lebanese who also inhabited the region and who were not originally part of the conflict. The native locals were the ones who suffered the most from the prolonged

occupation with hundreds of thousands of people being displaced during the fighting (Deeb 2006). Tensions came to a head in September 1982 when Israeli and Lebanese troops, acting under the direction of the Israeli military, entered a refugee camp where Lebanese refugees were residing and raped, killed, and terrorized thousands (Deeb 2006). This action inflamed the passions of residents and led to the growth of small groups of young men dedicated to fighting the Israeli troops occupying Lebanon. Many of these small groups shared a common religious affiliation, Shia Islam, and were supported and trained by the newly formed Islamic government in Iran (Deeb 2006). In the early 1980s several of these groups combined into what is now known as Hezbollah, and announced their existence as a unified front to the world in what they called the “Open Letter to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and the World” on February 16, 1985 (Deeb 2006).

While some may assert that the motivation for the creation of Hezbollah stemmed solely from the conflict with Israel and relations with the different Palestinian groups living in camps along the southern border of Lebanon, the truth is much more complicated (Avon and Khatchadourian 2012; Fetini 2009; Gleis and Berti 2012; Norton 2007). In actuality, Hezbollah is as much a factor of domestic turmoil as it is of conflict between states. At the time those who practiced Shia Islam were the most persecuted and least able to defend themselves within the formal structures of Lebanese government. They also lived in the greatest concentrations in the South, where religious ideology experienced a revival with the success of the Shia-led Iranian revolution (Norton 2007). According to Norton (2007, 33), “even if Israel had not launched its invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982, the young would-be revolutionaries among the Shia would have pursued their path of emulating Iran’s Islamic revolution,” thereby suggesting that, while

the invasion was the catalyst for the creation of the group, the pieces were already in place and that it was only a matter of time before the Shia of the region began their own revolution in the footsteps of Iran.

However, far from being just a terrorist organization with one hand in politics, Hezbollah does much more for the Shia communities in southern Lebanon. Whereas some terrorist organizations merely use displays of violence in order to communicate to a mass audience or draw foreign attention to their cause, Hezbollah is also a social organization that provides for the communities it claims to represent. Born out of a time of great inequality between the Shia Muslims and their fellow citizens, the organization provides clean water, house construction for those whose homes have been destroyed, education, healthcare, and financial aid to individuals in the community (Gleis and Berti 2012). Hezbollah not only provides these services specifically to the Shia community, but also to the entire Lebanese community, at little to no cost as a way of making up for deficiencies in the government's social spending. Even before Hezbollah had a strong role in the political process, these social services served to draw supporters among the Shia community who may have initially disapproved of the group's more violent actions (Gleis and Berti 2012).

Although Hezbollah has assisted the communities of southern Lebanon, in the thirty years since their inception, the group has also engaged in over 360 terrorist incidents in Lebanon and across the globe. Most of these attacks target military forces or private citizens and property either in Lebanon or Israel; however, some attacks have taken place as far away as Tunisia, Denmark, Spain, and Argentina, as the terrorists attempt to broaden the audience for their message and to turn what is essentially a

regional dispute into a conflict deserving of intervention from the international community (START 2012). While attacks originating from the group have declined in recent years, that is not an indication that the strength of the group has also waned. Rather, their power has shifted from a reliance on the use of terror to utilizing legitimate political means in order to influence internal politics. Although it may seem like having seats in parliament is only a solution for domestic grievances, scholars have suggested Hezbollah is now strong enough to engage the entire country in an open war with Israel (or any other opponent) without the consent of the more moderate forces in the sovereign government (Council on Foreign Relations 2010; Gleis and Berti 2012; Norton 2007). Evidence for this can be seen in 2006 with the Lebanon War, when Hezbollah's forces sparked a 34 day conflict with Israel over the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers.

Analysis of Data

Overall, the media coverage of Hezbollah is very similar to that of Hamas. As both groups are based in the Middle East, both have goals that involve opposition of the state of Israel and support for the Palestinians; they both also have support from neighboring Muslim nations, and have operated during a similar time period. All of those similarities notwithstanding, Hezbollah receives less media coverage relative to that of Hamas, yet still maintains significantly more coverage, even during long periods of inactivity, than either ETA or the PKK (which are examined later in this work). Like the other terrorist organizations analyzed in this paper, Hezbollah begins by only committing a few attacks a year. The first attack occurred in March 1983, but the first news article published about the organization did not reach the international audience until October

1983 — after the fourth attack. While this was the international audience's introduction to the group, it is not known how long or what kind of coverage the domestic audience received regarding the beginning of Hezbollah¹⁶.

The first time Hezbollah obtains and maintains steady news coverage begins in March 1985, after a series of five terrorist attacks, and three attacks the previous month in February. This spurred a series of twelve articles in *The Los Angeles Times* and three in *The New York Times*. Finally able to communicate with the international community, in June 1985 Hezbollah orchestrated an attack in Athens, followed by an attack in Madrid the next month. By attacking, supposedly safe, Western Europe, Hezbollah was able to communicate messages of strength, seriousness, and intent to Israel, and, more pointedly, the rest of the world with a combined total of 87 news articles written in the months of the attacks (June/July) as seen in Figure 5. These attacks put Hezbollah on the map, so to speak, and separated them from the many other groups originating in the Middle East. Thus, it is Hezbollah's media coverage that has provided them with greater influence, legitimacy, and power when compared to lesser known groups in the region, such as Palestinian Jihad, Palestinian Liberation Front, or the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.

¹⁶ Archives of *The Jerusalem Post* only extend back to 1989. Therefore, analysis of news coverage for this group will only include the major international papers: *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian* until 1989 when data from *The Jerusalem Post* will also be analyzed in conjunction with the international papers.

Decade Averages for Hezbollah

Years	Attacks	Los Angeles Times	New York Times	The Guardian	Jerusalem Post
1983-1989	.94	6.571	1.119	4.273	12.75 ¹⁷
1990-1999	1.833	5.692	2.875	5.333	31.975
2000-2009	.242	11.3	16.383	11.25	78.1
2010-2011	0	5.167	7.667	1.25	71

Table 2

However, while these attacks did cause an immediate and dramatic increase in media coverage for the group as journalists and the international community realized that targets were no longer limited to the border between Lebanon and Israel, the media coverage did not last long. In July 1985, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* published 28 and 18 articles on Hezbollah respectively; yet, these numbers dropped to two and one for the month of August 1985 — revealing that the coverage, while serving to communicate to the international community, was not sustained over time. While *The Guardian* also saw a spike in coverage (up to 8 articles in July 1985) this does not represent as dramatic of an increase in coverage as that witnessed in the other two papers, and the following month, coverage returned to 2 articles. The two attacks committed in September 1985 also failed to attract a large amount of attention, with only six total articles being published about the attacks between the three international papers. This began a period of lower, yet steady coverage stemming from *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian* with *The New York Times* publishing articles about the group intermittently.

¹⁷ Average for The Jerusalem Post is just for 1989 due to data availability.

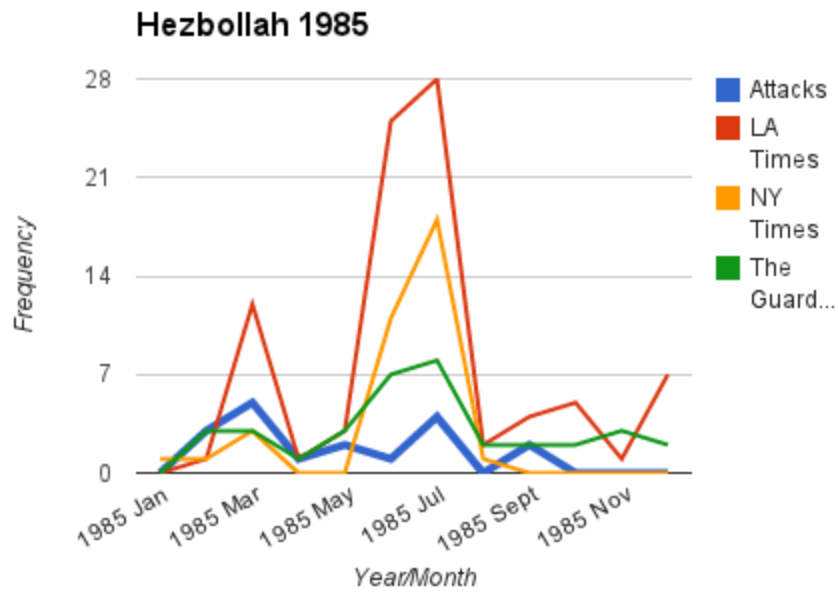


Figure 5

Interestingly enough, despite being the farthest away from the conflict, as they are on the literal opposite sides of the world, *The Los Angeles Times* published the most articles about Hezbollah with a total of 552 between January 1985 and December 1989. This is a significant amount of coverage when compared to *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, which only published 86 and 351 articles respectively in the same time period. This averages to 9.2 articles a month for *The Los Angeles Times*, 1.43 for *The New York Times*, and 5.85 for *The Guardian* during a five-year period in which Hezbollah only averaged just shy of one attack a month (.98). However, these averages do not reveal the entire picture, as the number of articles fluctuated wildly based on several factors, including the presence of an attack in that month or the number of months since an attack occurred. Hezbollah goes through several cycles of high periods of media attention, followed by several months of low, albeit steady, media attention before staging another attack.

Following the four attacks in July 1985 (two of which were in Madrid), media coverage for Hezbollah remained in the single digits until September 1986, when an attack in Istanbul killed 21 people and once again attracted the attention of the international news media. In instances such as this, it is obvious that Hezbollah is willing to use the media to make a point. It is only after several months of limited media coverage that operatives go outside of their immediate conflict area to attack regions and groups of people that they know the international media will report on. In this case, the death of 21 people led to a total of 22 articles in the three newspapers with 11 of those coming from *The Los Angeles Times*, 9 from *The Guardian*, and the remaining two coming from *The New York Times*. Yet, that media coverage did not last into the next month. Despite two additional attacks in Lebanon, international news only published 12 articles on the group, further decreasing to seven articles published by the three international papers during the third month after the attack (November 1986). Coverage again picked up to the double digits in January 1987 following the hijacking of a Saudi Arabian plane that killed over 60 people during the last days of December 1986. January 1987 also saw two attacks in Beirut that served to maintain attention. Coverage remained at high levels through August 1987 due to attacks located in Tunisia, another location far from the normal battlegrounds of the group.

However, once again, in September 1987 coverage began to wane with *The Los Angeles Times* falling from an average of 12.3 articles a month (from January through August 1987) to a mere 5.75 articles a month from September 1987 through April 1988. Likewise, coverage in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* fell from 1.63 and 9.63 to .75 and 4.88 respectively for the same time periods (Figure 6). In response to this

decline in media attention and opportunities for communication to the international community, in May 1988 Hezbollah engaged in one terrorist attack, but also began participating in peace talks, in conjunction with their ally Syria, in order to start moving in the direction of peace between Lebanon/Hezbollah and Israel over the border region between the two states. In this instance, when media attention began to wane using terrorism, the group switched tactics in order to gain even more media attention by participating in peace talks (although they ultimately failed). During the peace talks, media coverage in *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian* remained high, averaging 13.33 and 9.67 articles per month between May 1988 and January 1989.

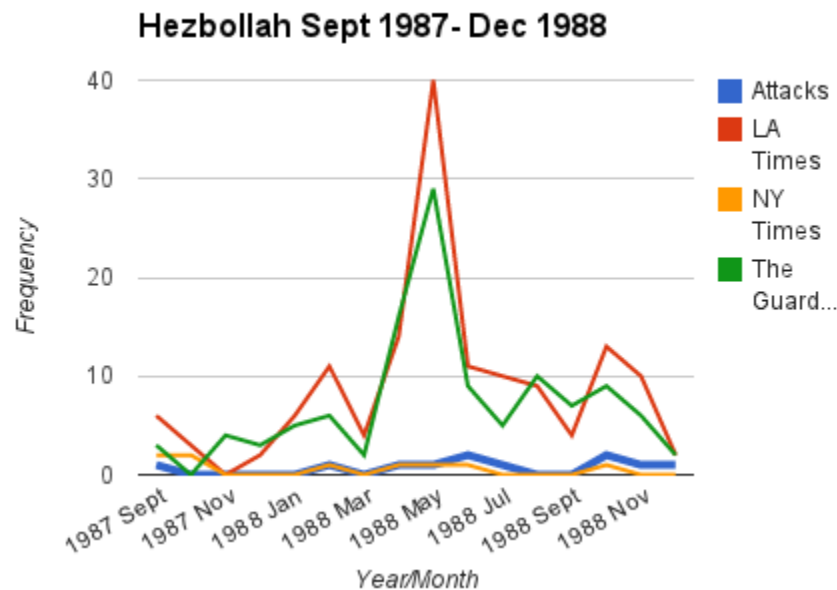


Figure 6

January 1989, though, began a six month stretch during which there was only one terrorist attack. Predictably, this period in the first half on 1989, saw a dramatic decrease in articles written about the group as media outlets focused their attention on other events unfolding in the world. The average number of articles written about Hezbollah from

February through June 1989 for *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Jerusalem Post* were: 4.2, 0.4, 5, and 0. All of this changed in July and August 1989 when there were a combined total of 4 attacks and 255 articles over the two-month timespan. The attack that occurred in Israel during August 1989, in particular, attracted a lot of media attention partially due to its location, the Galilee, and the fact that this was the first time Hezbollah had been able to engage in an attack on Israeli soil. While previous attacks crossed state lines into Turkey, Spain, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, and Tunisia, most attacks occurred against Israeli targets within Lebanon. By attacking the Galilee, and Israel proper, Hezbollah was able to attract significant media attention from inside and outside of Israel.

While this one attack led to a copious amount of media attention and opportunities for the group to communicate with the international community, coverage dropped from 74 articles to seven the following month in *The Los Angeles Times* and from 100 articles to 15 in *The Jerusalem Post*. *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* also saw reductions, with coverage of the group falling to zero and six respectively in September 1989. Therefore, while Hezbollah's acts of violence served to gain the attention of the media, the group could not maintain that attention.

These levels of coverage remain typical throughout the remainder of the decade and into the beginning of the 1990s. During the entire decade of the 1990s, the frequency of attacks remains relatively stable as well. The steady amount of media coverage, even when Hezbollah is not participating in attacks, means that when there is an attack, coverage does not increase exponentially. Therefore, fewer attacks are needed in order to keep the group's name and message in the international press and salient to the global

audience. Much like Hamas, a group that receives frequent coverage in the media, many articles, even when there are no attacks, when Hezbollah does commit an attack, the few additional articles that are written do not add much to the near constant coverage that they already receive.

During the 1990s, the decade-long average number of attacks per month was 1.82 (excluding 1993), while articles written per month average 5.6, 2.87, 5.3, and 31.97 for *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Jerusalem Post* in that order¹⁸ (See Table 2). When there are several consecutive months of news coverage where the number of articles is significantly lower than these stated averages, then, as hypothesized, Hezbollah responds by attempting to regain attention through either a large number of attacks in one month, a particularly deadly attack, or by orchestrating an attack in a distant location such as Spain, Turkey, or Greece. As previously illustrated, unlike other terrorist groups that are geographically bound to a specific region, while Hezbollah's stated goals are to help the Lebanese people, they are willing to take their fight outside of Lebanon and the disputed border region with Israel in order to gain an international audience. It is their intent that these international attacks bring greater attention to Hezbollah, and the interests of the Lebanese people, specifically, the Shia Muslims located in southern Lebanon.

The early 1990s saw monthly coverage amounts in the three international newspapers largely below the decade-long average. Therefore, while coverage for the first 18 months was low, attacks also remained low as the group made plans for a resurgence of violence. However, that changed in August 1991 when Hezbollah began

¹⁸ As before, the decade averages are the sum of the monthly article counts divided by 120. Due to the differences in coverage between the papers, they are all calculated individually.

negotiating with the United States and Israel regarding a hostage exchange that included at least one American. This generated a lot of media coverage for the group's cause that lasted for several months as in-depth articles analyzed responses to the prisoner exchange and things that could have been done differently. In order to maintain those above average levels of media attention after the exchange, attacks began to escalate. These elevated levels of attacks started in August 1991 and remained through December 1992 with a monthly average of 2.71. During this time (see Figure 7) the elevated attacks served to keep the number of published articles high as well. *The Los Angeles Times* published 27 articles in August 1991 and averaged 8.06 articles a month from August '91-December '92. Likewise, *The Guardian* averaged 8.24, well over the decade average of 1.82.

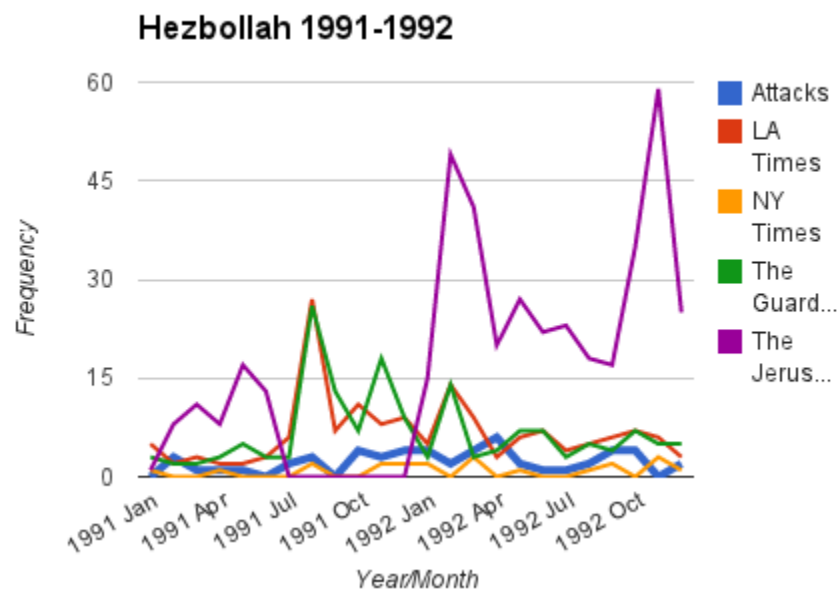


Figure 7

Strangely enough, *The Jerusalem Post* did not write any articles about Hezbollah for the six months beginning in July 1991 through December 1991. This is one of only

two time series when *The Jerusalem Post* did not write any articles about the activities of the group. This is particularly unusual given that during August 1991 Hezbollah was working with Israel on the aforementioned mutual prisoner release. However, Israel has a stated policy of not negotiating or acknowledging terrorists. While it is not known if this was the reason for the silence of *The Jerusalem Post* regarding Hezbollah during this time, it seems likely that Israeli media, whether by their own volition or through government imposed silence, did not want to reveal who the Israeli government was negotiating with, given their policy of not further legitimizing the acts of terrorists with sensational media coverage.

Media coverage spiked in July through August 1993, but began to wane again in October 1993. By January 1994, there were no reported attacks, and only one article was published mentioning Hezbollah in each of the three international papers, while 28 articles were published in *The Jerusalem Post* in comparison with the, much higher, decade averages of 2.8 – 5.7 (See Table 2). In response to this waning media attention, Hezbollah orchestrated nine individual attacks in March 1994, yet despite the high number of attacks, they still did not receive a significant response in media attention, with the international papers only publishing 2-3 articles apiece. Even *The Jerusalem Post* only published 16 articles, nearly half the decade average of 31.97 in March 1994. Later that year in another effort to regain international media attention, in October 1994, the group executed seven attacks, and while media attention did increase slightly with *The Los Angeles Times* publishing 7 articles and *The Jerusalem Post* publishing 47 articles (both above decade averages), the other international papers continued to publish at well below the average levels of 2.4-5.6 articles per month (See Table 2). Overall, these two

spikes, while they represent significant increases in terrorism activity, did not produce any substantive increases in media coverage.

Media attention continued to gradually fall until April 1996 when Hezbollah and Israeli soldiers exchanged fire across the border in a skirmish that began when Hezbollah engaged in two terrorist attacks on Israeli soil. This skirmish soon transformed into military action between the two sides, leading to a total of 338 articles in one month. As the international media averaged 2.31 articles per month (for the three papers combined) from April 1995 through March 1996 and *The Jerusalem Post* averaged 38.25 articles per month, this skirmish served to exponentially increase the level of media attention Hezbollah received. However, again, in a repeat of what occurred several times before, that coverage did not last more than two months after the border war and attacks. This skirmish occurred in April 1996, yet by May 1996 the news reports had declined to half of the number of articles published in April, and by June, media coverage was nearly back to its former levels when the group was inactive. In an attempt to once again increase media coverage, June 1996 saw the group implement six separate terrorist attacks, but it was to no avail, as levels of news coverage still continued to drop that month (Figure 8).

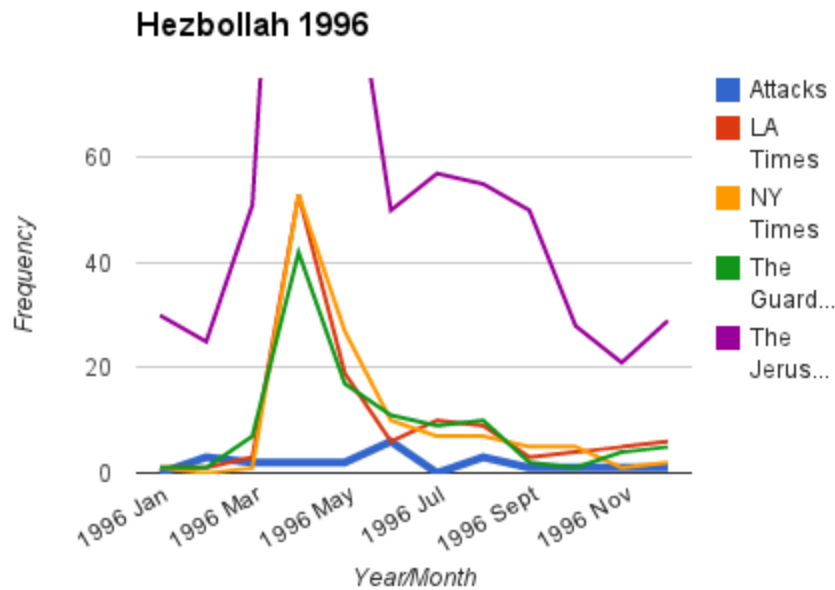


Figure 8¹⁹

The months and years following this attack, from July 1996 through April 1999, were much the same as the years in the early to mid- 1990s when attacks stayed at average levels, with no month exceeding three attacks, and media coverage remained at average levels. This pattern where both media coverage and attacks seemed to remain at a constant level supports hypothesis two, which states that so long as media coverage remains the same the amount of attacks committed will also remain the same. In this instance, the media coverage did remain at average levels for years on end without any drastic changes on a monthly basis, meaning that the level of attacks needed to maintain this amount of coverage were minimal and also remained steady. In the last eight months of the decade, as the once steady coverage began to slowly drop to levels that were well below average, Hezbollah once again increased attacks to 4-6 a month for the months of

¹⁹ *The Jerusalem Post* published 190 articles in April 1996 and 108 articles in May 1996. This data was cut off the graph in order to better see the relationship between the terrorist attacks and levels of news coverage in the international papers.

May, June, and July 1999. While these attacks, which in some cases were more than triple the decade average of 1.82 attacks per month, did serve to elevate media coverage slightly, they did not lead to any significant surges in the level of media attention.

With regards to Hezbollah, events that occurred near the beginning of the new millennium suddenly made terrorism, particularly terrorism originating in the Middle East, a more relevant and newsworthy event worldwide. The first decade of the 2000s averaged at 11.3 and 11.25 articles per month for *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian*, both of which were nearly double the decade averages of the '90s. The increase in articles for *The New York Times* was greater as well, from 2.87 articles per month in the 1990s to 16.38 articles per month during the 2000s (See Table 2). Finally, *The Jerusalem Post* averaged 78.1 articles per month, more than double the decade average of 31.97 during the 1990s. All of this despite the fact that between January 2000 and December 2009, the group participated in less than 30 attacks total.

Yet, even before the attacks of September 11, 2001 against the United States made terrorism suddenly relevant to the American public, during the first months of the new millennium news outlets reported on the peace talks between Israel, Iran, Syria, and what that would mean for Lebanon and the interests of all the players in that region.

Consistent, but relatively few attacks from Hezbollah, served as a backdrop to the increased media attention that followed the peace talks and led to even more news articles about the potential unwillingness of Hezbollah to abide by any peace treaty that might come to fruition. The Second Intifada, an uprising involving the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in October 2000, and the subsequent peace talks that followed between Israel and its neighbors led to the same result — an increase in media attention

for all of the groups in the region, including Hezbollah.

Until 2005, on average, the international papers published 11-16 articles per month on Hezbollah, but for the 12 months between April 2005 and June 2006, the international papers only averaged 4-7 articles per month. *The Jerusalem Post* also drastically reduced their coverage on the group. While the decade average is around 71 articles per month on Hezbollah, the average for this time period was less than 30 articles per month (See Table 2). As it had been 18 months since the last terrorist attack from the group (January 2005), it is possible that the media began to see the group as losing its relevancy on the international stage, or other more timely events took the place of this group in the media. Regardless, in July 2006, Hezbollah chose to engage in three acts of terrorism in Israel, sparking the Lebanon War which lasted 34 days between the forces of Hezbollah and the Israeli army.

This war, started by Hezbollah, led to a total of 2028 articles published over the two month time period (July/August 2006). Across this two month period, an average of 158.17 articles were published about Hezbollah in the international papers combined, and 539.5 articles were published across the same period in *The Jerusalem Post*. These elevated levels of coverage lasted for approximately a year before monthly coverage began, once again, to return to levels approximating the decade averages of 11-16 in the international papers and about 78 in *The Jerusalem Post*. For that entire time of elevated coverage, Hezbollah did not orchestrate any attacks. Rather, it was not until May 2008, after coverage had returned to average levels and after one month of particularly low coverage (single digit coverage in the three international papers occurring in April 2008), that Hezbollah once again sought the attention of the media by engaging in six attacks.

However, while media coverage did triple in some of the international papers (*The Los Angeles Times* ran 27 articles in May 2008, after the attack; likewise *The New York Times* ran 36 articles in May), the group did not receive the coverage witnessed in 2006 during the Lebanon War when the international papers averaged 158 articles a month (see Figure 9).

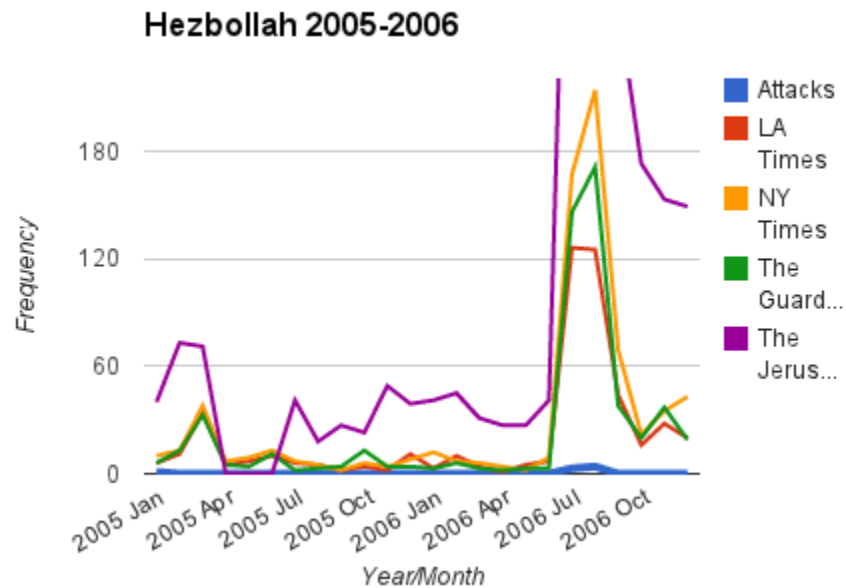


Figure 9²⁰

Since May 2008, coverage has only decreased for this group in all of the papers with the single exception occurring in January 2009. This is when the group received a slight increase in coverage across all four papers due to their involvement and support of the Gaza War between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. June 2008 also marked the last, confirmed or otherwise, terrorist attack originating from Hezbollah. It is possible that as media declined, and additional terrorist attacks were unable to re-attract the media

²⁰*The Jerusalem Post* published 467 articles about the conflict in July 2006 and 612 articles in August 2006. Again, the graph was cut in order to better view the media/terror relationship exhibited between the international papers and the group.

attention that Hezbollah has now been forced to turn to other means. Much like Hamas, Hezbollah is now working within the government of Lebanon as a legitimate political actor.

In order to assist the people living in refugee camps on the border or in cities near where Israeli soldiers once invaded, Hezbollah needed the media attention that came from violence to motivate their own government and the international community to intervene. Now much of that can be accomplished by representatives within Parliament. Hezbollah has always been more than just a terrorist organization as it provided social services such as education, medical assistance, and other services to those under its protection. Now, as then, these services are still being provided. The military wing of Hezbollah is still armed, much to the dismay of the international community and Israel; however, it would appear that due to a lack of audience for terrorist attacks, the group has turned to legitimate means in order to achieve the same ends.

Over its 30-year tenure, Hezbollah has shown its willingness to use the media by carefully timing its large attacks to occur after periods of declining media activity on the group. Some of the large attacks with the most impact happened in foreign countries after long periods of declining media attention. In a similar vein, so long as the media coverage on the group remained consistent, so too did the attacks. Yet, when media attention began to wane, whether due to other international events, or because Hezbollah began taking longer breaks between attacks, the group began orchestrating large revivals in order to regain the media attention needed in order to stay relevant. When that tactic stopped working, the group was forced to find other means to assist their people, namely, by becoming a legitimate political party and influencing the government. However, like

Hamas, although the group has been silent for nearly five years, there is still the potential for a return to violence as the territorial conflict with Israel has yet to meet a peaceful resolution.

Chapter 5

Terrorism for Nationalism

Trends in Secular Terrorism

Most analysts naturally make a distinction between religious terrorism, or those forms of terrorism gaining legitimacy from a religious source, teaching, or text, and secular terrorism (Hoffman 1988; Post 2005). In this case, secular terrorism represents all terrorist activity not related to religion. This form of terrorism can be further divided into smaller groups: nationalist-separatist terrorism, which is motivated by a group's desire to form an independent state, and ideological terrorism, which describes those groups motivated by neither nationalism nor religious motivations. The latter often describes right or left wing groups that are not specifically looking for an independent state, but rather want to force other concessions from the existing government. Both nationalist and ideological terrorism can be conceptualized as secular; however, there are differences in the tactics used by the two movements and the ways they find and maintain adherents that warrant a deeper analysis.

Secular terrorism can be divided into two categories, only one of which, nationalist-separatist, has the longevity to sustain a terror campaign. While ideological groups have the ability to gain followers motivated by Marxism, Maoism, Nazism, and other left or right wing ideals, they exist on the fringes of society and seek power or change within the country, usually by a radical disruption of the social order (Hoffman 1988). As a consequence, these groups are often short-lived and lack the mass support necessary to enact sweeping changes within the social order. The collapse of the Soviet

Union was the nail in the coffin, so to speak, for a majority of the remaining Marxist organizations. Other terrorist organizations, such as the Weather Underground, lasted only a generation before those who lived the revolutionary lifestyle wished to leave it. Therefore, while these groups are often filled with those who have a passion for change and seek the improvement of the nation, and sometimes the world, the desire to participate in these groups does not generally translate from one generation to the next. Due to these factors, ideological groups often do not have the same longevity as other types of terrorist groups, despite causing comparatively similar levels of violence and damage to society.

Similarly, nationalist-separatist terrorism has its own defining features. While Marxist and religious groups are alike in that they often have broad, ill-defined goals that are unlikely to be realized, a nationalist-separatist organization's explicit objectives make it easy for those who support the cause to join (Sanchez-Cuenca 2007, 291). Nationalist terrorist groups have the ability to motivate people to support their cause for as long as there remains a minority who view themselves as a distinct and oppressed group worthy of independence from a ruling state. In contrast to the fringe left or right wing groups that do not gain acceptance by a vast majority of society, nationalist-separatist groups generally have either overt or tacit approval of a substantial proportion of the communities in which they operate. Sanchez-Cuenca claims that nationalist groups are able to maintain a broad base of support because they have a specific and defined goal, namely complete territorial control of a specific region of land (Sanchez-Cuenca 2007). Post (2005, 451) further notes that the individuals who make up these groups are those who are still "carrying on the mission of their parents and grandparents who have been

damaged by, or are disloyal to, the regime,” which suggests that nationalist terrorism is a tradition that is passed down through generations, from parent to child, with the original revolutionary zeal intact; thereby, making this form of secular terrorism potentially as dangerous as religious terrorism due to its longevity.

Thus, regardless of the obvious divergence in the motivating rhetoric, secular and religious groups are in many ways alike and just as dangerous. What is most critical to this analysis, however, is that despite these differences, both secular and religious terrorist organizations ultimately use the media as a form of communication with the mass public and international community.

ETA

Intro and History

When one thinks of widespread terrorism, several regions of the world immediately spring to mind: the Middle East and Central Asia, which the media portray as powder kegs of conflicting religions, ethnicities, and political interests; the Caucasus, where those fighting and dying for separation from Russia reside; Sri Lanka, home to the Tamil Tigers, known to be one of the first terrorist groups to use female suicide bombers; and South America, where paramilitary guerrilla organizations fight for Marxist ideals. Typically not on that list is Western Europe, a region that is often viewed as the victim of terrorism and never as the origin of terrorist groups. However, in reality this is not the case. There are several terrorist groups that began and operate in the countries of Western Europe. One such group, located in northern Spain, is the Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA), which translates to Basque Homeland and Freedom (Bhattacharji 2012). The ETA

operated in northern Spain and southern France from 1959 through 2011 and, utilizing terrorist methods, killed 850 people over the lifetime of the group in order to further their goal of an independent state for the Basque people in that region (The Telegraph 2004).

As an ethnic group, very little is known about the origins of the Basque people, culture, or language. They are known to be descendants of one of the native populations that resisted the takeover of Roman culture in ancient times (Payne 1971). Since then, they have managed to hold on to their distinct ethnic traditions and language despite the land being ruled by several successive waves of ‘outsiders.’ To this day, the language of the Basques has not been linked to any other known language on earth, making it one of only a few unique languages (Payne 1971). While living in a modern, western European state, the Basques have managed to maintain a greater level of autonomy under Spanish rule than many other ethnically distinct groups in Europe, such as the Roma. Regardless of this relative autonomy, there still remain a faction of the population who champion for complete independence from Spain.

The Basque independence movement emerged in the early 20th century as a reaction to recent losses in autonomy among the people and an increase in Spanish immigration into Basque territory (Sanchez-Cuenca 2008). Both of these factors combined, along with the continued modernization of Spain, which is in direct conflict and contrast with the rural life that the Basques live, served to create the overall desire for an independent homeland. The first of the modern Basque separatist groups, the Basque Nationalist Party, was able to make modest gains in autonomy despite being internally divided between the moderates who wanted increased autonomy, and the radicals who wanted full independence (Sanchez-Cuenca 2008).

Regardless of the many gains in autonomy throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the Basque people lost all that they had obtained after the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) when General Franco seized power. Franco's regime, a fascist military dictatorship, emphasized a Spanish identity as one that the people should represent with pride (Muro 2005). In order to solidify this belief, all languages other than Spanish were banned and the Basque and Catalan autonomous regions were abolished (Muro 2005). Instead, all decision making for the country came from Madrid with no regard for the different ethnicities and distinct cultural groups that resided within the country. It was during this period that the vanguard of the ETA emerged from EKIN, a small student group. Despite the heavy government censorship under which they lived, this group of students utilized family libraries to create a movement keeping with the original Basque nationalist movement (Muro 2005). They called this new group, Euskadi ta Askatasuna, and began their fight by first engaging in small acts of civil disobedience and illegality including: graffiti, flying the Basque flag, and destroying nationalist Spanish propaganda. At first, authorities took this as the misbehavior of disenfranchised youth, and not as the beginnings of what would become a terrorist organization. This belief was reinforced by the group's founding charter in which "the organization defines itself as a patriotic, non-religious, non-political group with the goal of 'saving the Basque soul' and 'the self-determination of our homeland's destiny'" (Sanchez-Cuenca 2008, 5).

In its first years, the group experienced many ideological growing pains and splits as members struggled to define what they were fighting for. All knew they wanted greater Basque autonomy, but, while the charter was inspired by Marxist teachings, the average Basque citizen was not quite ready to begin a revolution. It was not until 1970 when

ETA shed its first blood and employed new tactics to fight the Spanish, that an organized and strategic terrorist campaign began that would last for the next 40 years (Sanchez-Cuenca 2008).

Although the ETA was built on many of the same principles that motivated and drove the previous Basque autonomy movements of the 1800s and onwards, it also had some very distinct differences from its predecessors. One of those differences was the willingness to use any means necessary — including violence — in order to wound the state and further the cause of Basque nationalism. The group was active for several decades, with violence occurring in waves, as some decades experienced more violence than others with the ETA reiterating its demands for an autonomous Basque homeland regardless of the constant pressure from the Spanish government to end the violence. For the past fifty years, the Spanish government has done everything in its power to find and eliminate this threat to its authority while still giving the Basque people enough autonomy to pacify them in order to prevent the bloodshed that would accompany a fight for full autonomy.

Despite working continuously for a national homeland, the ETA has experienced several swings in public opinion regarding its tactics. While the Spanish, as well as the citizens of the European Union, unilaterally disapprove of terrorism and the use of kidnappings and murder to advance political goals, there has also been some resistance to ETA by the Basques themselves at different periods in the history of the organization (Douglass and Zulaika 1990). During Franco's reign, ETA had a certain degree of legitimacy both among the Basque people, and throughout Spain, because of its success in fighting the military dictatorship. While ETA mainly fought for the Basques and their

cause, it also represented a large number of people who, while not Basque, also opposed the military dictatorship and the repressive policies that Franco enacted within the state. In fact, the group even obtained support from outside the country after Franco put several activists on trial. This trial focused the lens of the international media on the excesses of the Spanish government in dealing with dissent — publicity that ETA exploited in order to reach sympathetic audiences outside of Spain (Sanchez-Cuenca 2008).

However, following the return to a democratic system of governance after Franco's death in 1975, ETA received less support from both the Basques and the country as a whole due to their use of violent tactics and because the movement simply did not represent as diverse a group of people as it had in the past. While it could once garner support from outside of the Basque community in a united opposition against Franco, the organization now focused its aims solely on the issue of Basque independence and appealed to a much smaller segment of the population.

Although the group continued to fight for the Basques, swings in public opinion occurred when ETA was viewed as either helping the cause by motivating the Spanish government to enter into negotiations with the more moderate Basques or hindering the cause by motivating the Spanish to treat all Basques as terrorists (Douglass and Zulaika 1990). Despite the fluctuating public perception of the organization, ETA continued to employ violent methods in order to communicate its demands for autonomy and independence to the Spanish government and the European Union as a whole. After over fifty years of fighting for Basque independence, truncated by failed peace talks, ETA formally declared the latest permanent ceasefire in October 2011 (BBC 2011).

Analysis of Data

As the longest running terrorist group analyzed in this work, there is a lot that the ETA can reveal about the ways the media, specifically the international media, can influence the actions of a terrorist group. However, this case study does not have the additional support of data regarding domestic news coverage due to the unavailability of data at that level. While the other groups studied in this work all came into existence in the mid to late '80s and had largely given up the practice of terrorism a decade later, the ETA has utilized the practice of terrorism for nearly 40 years. Longevity of this nature suggests that the ETA has managed to inspire and motivate followers for several generations. Like with the other terrorist organizations, the first few years that the group was in existence were marked with few media articles and even fewer attacks until one large attack spurred consistent media coverage.

Although the organization began many years before, the first attack did not occur until December 1970. That being said, ETA received nine total articles in the time from January through November 1970 before the attack. The attack in December 1970, neither killed nor injured anyone, but it did target a government building, causing a large amount of outcry and international attention. This increased attention was partially because of the chosen target and partially due to the fact that this was the first attack originating from the Basque Fatherland and Freedom. This single attack received a total of 61 articles from the three international paper newspapers combined: 16 of those articles were written by *The Los Angeles Times*, 20 were written by *The New York Times*, and the final 25 came from *The Guardian*. However, while these articles served as the first time the group received significant amounts of coverage in the international press, the attention

did not last, with ETA only receiving an average of .07 - .83 articles per month for the following year (1971).

Nevertheless, despite the decrease in coverage in the months and years following the December 1970 attack, this marked the beginning of steady coverage regarding the group. Although coverage dropped off almost completely in *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, perhaps unsurprisingly it is *The Guardian* that continues the coverage at consistent albeit low, levels. As the newspaper located closest to the attacks in Spain, *The Guardian* provides the most coverage about the group and their motivations. While all international coverage is beneficial to the group, it is the audience reached by *The Guardian* that has the potential to press for and enact the most change in Spain and southern France. As a baseline number for future comparisons, during the first active decade of the ETA, (1970-1979), the group averaged 3.55 attacks a month, and *The Los Angeles Times* wrote an average of 1.34 articles a month, *The New York Times* wrote an average of .33 articles a month, and *The Guardian* wrote an average of 4 articles per month (See Table 3). However, these averages do not reveal the patterns of waning media attention that precedes a large number of the attacks. In this decade, the media attention given to the ETA by the American papers (*The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*) was minuscule so it was mostly the coverage, or lack thereof, from *The Guardian* that drove the attacks in this decade.

Decade Averages for ETA

Year	Attacks	Los Angeles Times	New York Times	The Guardian
1970-1979	3.55	1.342	.333	4
1980-1989	6.983	1.542	.092	4.492
1990-1999	3.065	.575	.108	3.442
2000-2009	1.142	1.517	1.425	4.808
2010-2011	0	.375	1.208	2.458

Table 3

Following the attack in 1970, the ETA did not reach double-digit levels of coverage again until December 1973, despite 10 attacks taking place in the interim time period. Each attack was preceded by several months of either no coverage, in the case of the American papers, or little coverage in the case of *The Guardian*. However, this attack in December 1973 did lead to a notable increase in international media interest with 16 articles published on the topic across the three papers. Unlike other months with terrorist attacks, levels of attention on the group remained high the following month, before dropping in February. It is at this time in 1974, that attacks began to occur more frequently. However, despite these more frequent attacks, levels of coverage in the international news media remained low with *The New York Times* not publishing any articles on ETA between January 1974 and October 1975. Perhaps in an effort to attract more media attention, in March 1975 ETA began engaging in more attacks per month, every month, rather than engaging in sporadic attacks.

Previously, from January 1970 through February 1975, the group averaged .37

attacks per month; however, between March 1975 and March 1976 the per-month average was 3.25 attacks. In response, news coverage also increased for this year of increased attacks. *The Guardian* published a total of 81 articles for an average of 6.75 articles per month for this 12-month period and *The Los Angeles Times* published an average of 2.17 articles a month on the topic. However, the increased frequency and consistency of attacks were still not enough to attract the attention of *The New York Times*, as the paper only published a total of two articles during this 12-month period on the topic despite the greater amounts of attention other news outlets were giving the group. Following this year-long period, and even nearing the end of the 12 months, media coverage in *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian* began to decline again. Attacks also began to decline during this period, but January 1977 saw five attacks, the greatest number in any single month since May 1975, without a corresponding rise in media attention as seen in Figure 10. In fact, attention continued to decline with *The Guardian* only writing two articles about the group and the American papers completely ignoring the attacks.

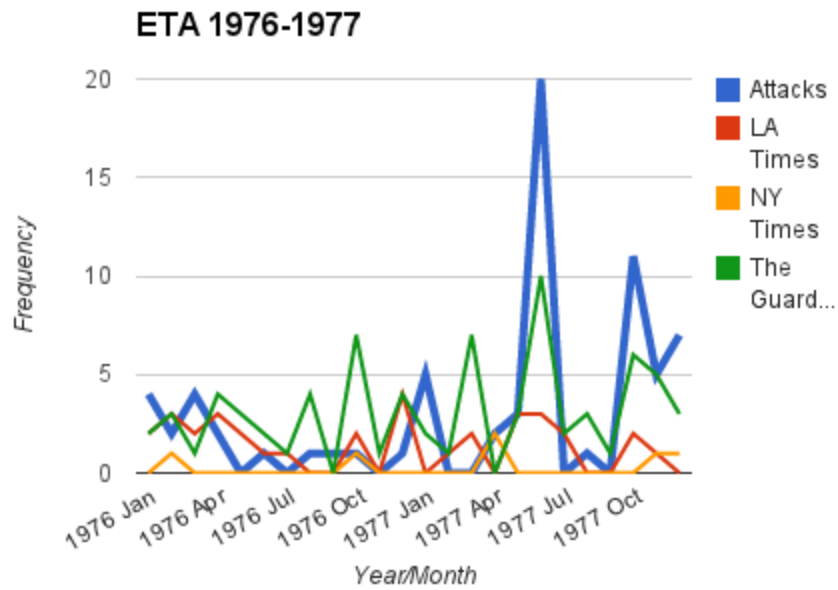


Figure 10²¹

Six months later, in June 1977, ETA attempted to regain the media attention that had all but disappeared by engaging in an unprecedented 20 attacks in a single month. While this display of violence should have prompted an international outcry as it signaled an almost indiscriminate willingness to use terrorist attacks, not just on occasion or to make a particular point, but as a near daily tactic in order to attract the attention of the Spanish government, the international community, and supporters both in the Basque territories and beyond, the news media did not devote particular attention to the topic. While articles increased across the board, they did not increase in proportion with the number of attacks. This month of 20 attacks also marked the beginning of heightened attacks for the remainder of the decade with the average number of attacks per month increasing to 11.06 from this point (June 1977) until December 1979. Some months

²¹ Coverage regarding both ETA and the PKK is much lower than that seen in either of the religious case studies. For that reason the graphs in this section have much lower y-values; thereby making it appear as though the spikes in coverage and attacks are more dramatic than they are in actuality.

during this time period had no attacks, but in the majority of months when there were attacks, particularly nearing the end of 1978 through 1979, the number of attacks per month ranged between 11 and 26. This sustained increase in attacks through the end of the decade had the effect of increasing the number of articles written about the group in both *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian*. The average number of articles written per month for the time beginning in June 1977 through December 1979 was 7.48 articles — nearly double the decade average for *The Guardian* at 4.0 (See Table 3). Likewise, a similar pattern occurs with media coverage from *The Los Angeles Times*; the decade-long average for this paper is 1.34 articles per month, and the average for this time period is 2.23 articles. The only paper that did not have a corresponding increase in media coverage was *The New York Times*, where coverage for the last 18 months of the decade was actually lower (.29 articles per month) than the average for the entire decade (.33 articles per month).

The 1980s began in much the same way that the 1970s ended, with attacks averaging 9.92 per month for the first year and coverage in *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Guardian* averaging 1.5 and 6.25 articles per month, respectively. However, beginning in 1981, both the number of articles and the number of attacks written per month began to achieve stability. The average number of attacks per month during the entire decade is 6.8; but this number also reflects the spikes in attacks committed by the group. The attacks of the entire decade can be described as a series of waves where there were periods of time where, like the year 1981, there were an average of 4.25 attacks a month, followed by a short period of heightened activity, such as June and July 1982 in which there were 34 attacks, before numbers returned to a consistent level. The

international media largely ignored the spikes in attacks that occurred in the summer of 1982 and news articles actually decreased during those months when compared to the number of articles per month written in previous months. In that instance, the increasing attacks in an effort to regain dwindling media attention did not work. Likewise, with the 19 attacks that occurred in October 1982. Despite the high number of attacks, the international press only wrote three articles about the group or the violence.

Starting at the end of 1982 through the first half of 1983, news articles continued to decline below the decade averages, prompting the group to increase their average number of attacks from 5.14 between November 1982 and May 1983 to 9.44 attacks per month between June 1983 and February 1984. However, this increase in attacks did not prompt an equal increase in media coverage until February 1984 when *The Guardian* wrote 11 articles and *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* wrote 3 and 1 articles respectively on the 15 attacks that occurred during that month (See Figure 11).

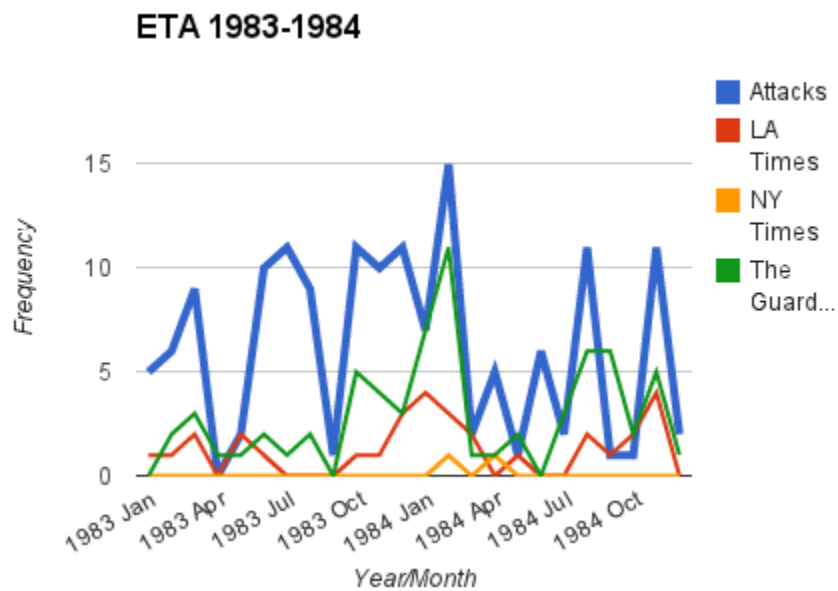


Figure 11

However, this is the last time the group received double-digit news coverage until May 1985, despite months with more than ten attacks (August 1984 and November 1984). It is not until May 1985, when the group orchestrated 27 attacks, that *The Guardian* published 12 articles in a single month. While the 27 attacks increased the presence of the group in European media, it did not serve the same purpose in American newspapers. Coverage actually decreased from two articles to one in *The Los Angeles Times* and the attacks were still not enough for *The New York Times* to publish any articles mentioning the ETA. The next month, June 1985, also had an above average number of attacks with 11 being committed in that month; however, coverage returned to below average levels with only three total articles published.

Following the decrease in media relevance, the attacks also plummeted to an average of 3.5 attacks per month between July 1985 and April 1986. During this same time *The Guardian* averaged 3.1 articles a month while *The Los Angeles Times* averaged .9 articles a month – both lower than the 4.49 and 1.54 respective averages for the decade (See Table 3). In response, from May 1986 through July 1986, the group engaged in three months of above average numbers of attacks (10 attacks in May and 18 in both June and July). This surge in violence after nearly a year of below average attacks suggests that the group was looking for attention from groups both within the country and in the greater international community. In response, *The Guardian* wrote an average of 12 articles a month between June and October 1986. The coverage in this newspaper remained at levels well above the decade average of 4.49 until April 1988. During this time, between August 1986 and April 1988, attacks remained at levels below the decade average of 6.98 as the terrorist organization was able to maintain steady levels

of media coverage and did not need to engage in a large number of terrorist attacks in order to regain media attention.

It was only after the number of articles written by *The Guardian* dropped to an average of 2.9 articles per month between May 1988 and the remainder of the decade (December 1989) that the group once again planned two months of elevated attacks. While the average number of attacks per month for the entire decade was 6.98, during the months of April and May 1989 there were 29 and 34 attacks respectively. Yet, these attacks did not have any significant communicative value. In this instance, the increase in violence did little to draw the eye of the international media back to the issues and situation of the Basques in northern Spain (See Figure 12). The group was apparently beginning to lose its relevancy to the international media. The decline of media attention at this time could be partially due to the fact that terrorism in other parts of the globe, such as Israel, was beginning to rise. Both Hamas and Hezbollah were beginning to become more active in their fight against the state of Israel. The actions of these two groups in the Middle East served to distract the international news media from the issue of Basque separatism rather than bring to light issues of terrorism as a greater systemic problem.

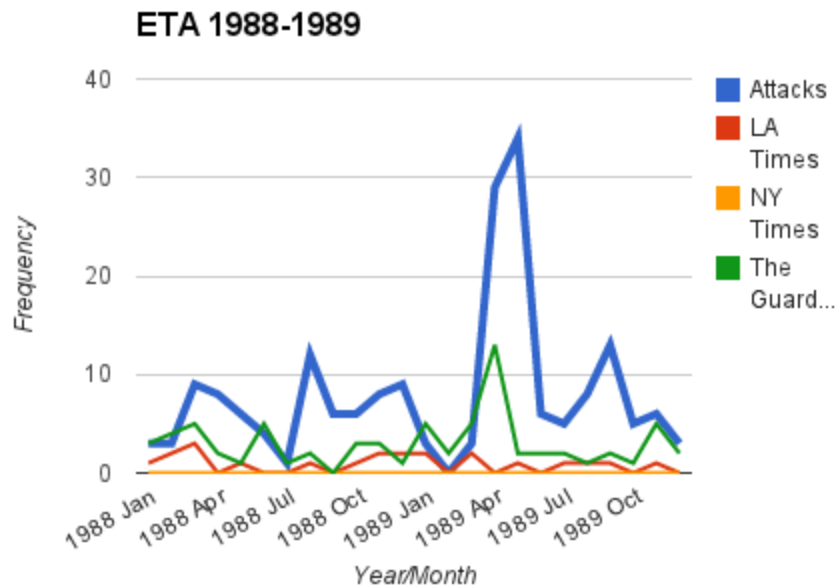


Figure 12

In many respects, the 1990s saw the continued decline of this organization that once captured the attention of the citizens of Europe. Throughout the decade, attacks continued to decline from an average of 4.31 attacks per month during the first half of the decade to 2.07 during the second half. However, despite the decline in terrorist attacks, the number of articles written about the organization, while still lower than in previous decades, did not reflect the diminishing levels of violence. Instead, *The Guardian* averaged 2.52 articles a month during the first half of the decade when the ETA participated in more terrorist attacks, but averaged 4.37 articles per month during the second half of the decade despite a sharp decline in the number of attacks. Thus, making it appear as though the ETA was able to maintain a steady media presence utilizing other means; thereby diminishing the necessity of violence as a tool of communication.

As mentioned, media coverage remained low, but steady, throughout the entire first half of the decade (January 1990 through December 1994). The number of articles

published in *The Guardian* mentioning ETA never broke double digits during this entire time period, despite months in which attacks exceeded 13; and *The Los Angeles Times*, which had previously written the most articles about the group of the two American papers, never wrote more than two articles in any given month. ETA did not receive coverage in the American papers for several months during the first half of this decade, despite engaging in multiple attacks on a monthly basis. On several occasions during this time period, the Basques had isolated months in which terrorist attacks far exceeded the normal average, yet despite these surges in violence, the group still could not gain the attention of the international news media — possibly because attention was focused elsewhere on terrorism in the Middle East or other parts of the globe.

With ETA seemingly about to lose their domestic and international relevance, as it appeared that journalists and editors were no longer interested in publishing articles regarding the plight of the Basques in northern Spain, the group began to engage in different tactics in order to regain the attention of the media during the second half of the decade. July 1996 marked the second time that decade that ETA obtained more than ten total articles in a single month (the first being in February 1996 when four attacks caused two casualties and 12 articles). Yet, as in previous waves of increased attacks, media coverage fell back to levels below average (down to two articles) the following month, despite five attacks. It was shortly after April 1997, when 14 attacks only attracted three articles, one from each of the newspapers, that the group chose to change their tactics in an effort to gain more media attention without the use of violence -- as the press had largely become disinterested in the terrorist activities of the ETA.

The Basque cause had a renaissance of relevance in the international press in July

1997 when two prisoners of the ETA were released, followed by a resurgence in targeted violence against specific members of the Spanish political system. This conflict, just another play in a game that had been going on for nearly 30 years by this point, garnered enough media attention on ETA to force the Spanish government to sit down with the group with Sinn Fein acting as mediator in 1998 in order to come to a formal agreement. These talks led to the first ever ceasefire agreed to by the ETA, and the first time this group used promises of peace as a way of garnering additional media attention after it became clear that 30 years of violence had accomplished little, if anything at all for the Basques. The ceasefire heralded a (temporary) era of peace as both sides of the conflict enjoyed the longest stretch of time without an attack since the group embraced violence in 1970. Media attention remained high, despite the complete cessation of terrorist activities, as the international papers continued to speculate on whether ETA could control young factions of the group who wished for a return to violent means.

Ultimately, the ceasefire was temporary. Media coverage increased as ETA resumed violence against the Spanish government and people. To compare, during the ceasefire (July 1998-April 2000), *The Guardian* wrote an average of 4.06 articles per month on the group; however, in the two years immediately following the resumption of violence (May 2000 through April 2002) that same newspaper averaged 7.33 articles per month. This trend also holds consistent when analyzing coverage from *The Los Angeles Times*. The paper published .67 articles per month during the ceasefire and 2.75 articles per month in the two years after the ceasefire ended. Part of the increase in articles may have been due to the changing relevance of the topic to audiences in the post-September 11 world. Whereas terrorism might have once been seen as something that only happens

to other people in other places, after September 11, 2011, terrorism suddenly became more relevant to the American audience.

However, most of the increase in articles can be attributed to a new tactic the ETA began to employ beginning in 2002. Rather than engage in consistent, monthly terrorist attacks, like the group did throughout the '70s, '80s, and '90s, they instead decided to engage in fewer attacks, and in so doing allow those fewer attacks to stand out and attract more attention. As a rarer event, the media are more likely to cover the attacks, than they are to cover violence that happens on a daily, or otherwise frequent, basis. It is during this time, (beginning in the early-2000s) that patterns of declining media influence were followed by a “reminder attack” after four to seven months of silence in order to regain media attention. In August 2002, the group engaged in three terrorist attacks, leading to the publication of 16 articles from *The Guardian* and five articles from *The Los Angeles Times*. Coverage decreased in the following months until November 2002 when neither *The Guardian* nor *The Los Angeles Times* wrote any articles on the group. The following month, in December 2002, the group staged one attack, and thereby regained media attention in these two newspapers (See Figure 13).

At the surface this does not prove a correlation. However, in this case there were three months without attacks before the group felt the need to again remind the world of their presence. The next cycle lasted six months as it took that long before media attention fell sufficiently. In July 2003, the month immediately following the one in which the group lost news coverage, the group staged two attacks. In so doing, ETA again regained the attention of the international media and kept their cause relevant to both citizens in their own territory and to those in the international community.

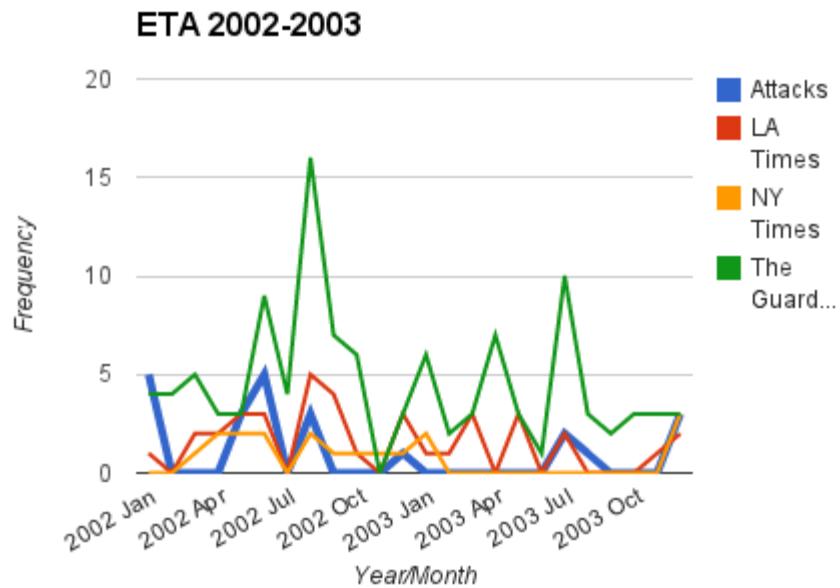


Figure 13

Ironically, the ETA received the most news coverage for a terrorist attack that they did not commit. Many suspected that the 2004 Madrid subway bombings were the work of the Basque group. While they did not have a hand in this attack, they also did not make any moves to dispel the rumors of their involvement, which allowed them to benefit from the record-setting media attention. To illustrate, during March 2004, the month of the attack, *The Guardian* wrote 54 articles about the ETA while *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* wrote 12 and 23 articles, respectively. This is in contrast to the decade averages of 1.517, 1.425, and 4.808 for international papers (See Table 3). It was not until later, when the true perpetrators of the attack were discovered, that the media buzz about the group began to diminish and the ETA was once again forced to resort to violent actions in order to maintain relevance; thereby continuing the cycles of violence.

While this cycle continued several more times near the end of the first decade of

the 2000s, the most obvious stretch occurs in 2006. In February 2006, the group engaged in 5 attacks and in the months afterward saw a moderate increase in media coverage with 14 total articles published in March 2006. However, coverage gradually began to decrease as the year wore on; so that by August 2006 only one article mentioning the group made it to the international audience. After two months of this low level of coverage, ETA responded by engaging in an attack in October 2006. Despite the violence, media outlets still did not run the story, and in November, coverage dropped to zero total articles — prompting another attack in December of that same year. Both attacks and articles began to increase again in 2007.

Another example of this behavior occurs in 2009. In February, the group engaged in a terrorist attack, but only received two total articles. As media attention continued to remain stagnant, (and eventually dropped to one total article in June 2009), the group decided to change their tactics again. In July, members of ETA used a car bomb to blow up a portion of the police barracks. This attack, using a car bomb, a weapon used primarily by Islamist militants in the Middle East, sparked national outrage and large amounts of international press (2 articles in *The Los Angeles Times*, 2 in *The New York Times*, and 10 in *The Guardian*). This was not the last attack claimed by ETA, but shortly after this attack, the group once again changed their tactics in response to both waning media interest and domestic, as well as international, pressures.

The last recorded attack by the ETA occurred in August 2009. Since that time, the group has declared several ceasefires with the first official one occurring in September 2010. This announcement was met with several articles detailing the nature of the ceasefire and the background of the group and their history. Months later, in January

2011, as media attention was beginning to wane on the group, ETA members again donned their masks and released a video statement declaring a permanent ceasefire — despite never breaking their previous ceasefire. This was thought to be the end of the ETA until 10 months later in October 2011, when the group staged a press conference in order to announce what they called “a definitive end” to the violence (The Guardian 2011). Recognizing that there has not been an attack originating from the group since 2009, these continued reminders of the peace agreement are largely ploys to attract media attention. While the ETA is no longer using violence, and is instead negotiating with the Spanish government in order to bargain for political concessions, they still stage these media shows in order to remind the international community that they are a relevant player in Spanish politics. This illustrates the fourth hypothesis; namely, if a terrorist group can obtain media attention without using violent means, and then they will use those means so long as they are effective. Continually reminding the international community of an unbroken peace agreement does nothing but keep the group in the press (See Figure 14)

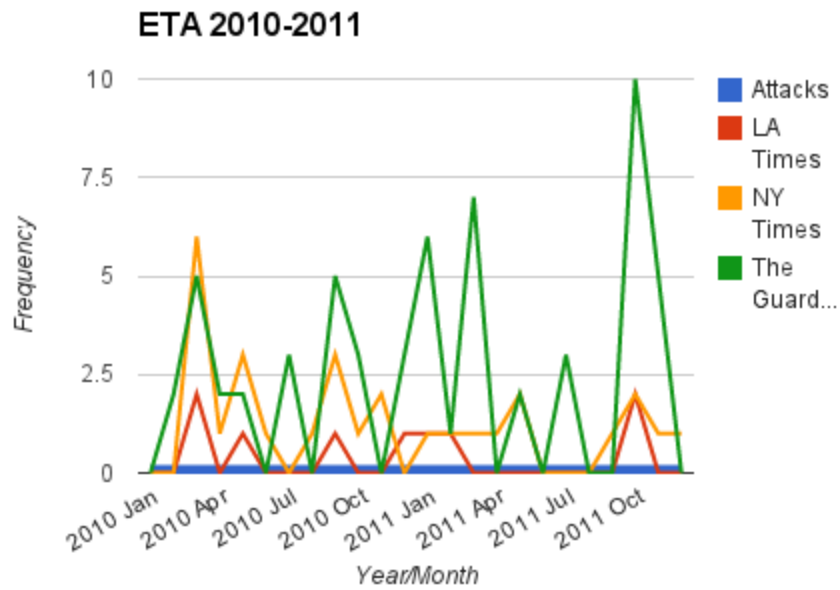


Figure 14

Currently, Spain, the European Union, and the rest of the world are operating under the pretense that the ceasefire declared by the ETA will, in fact, be permanent, despite the fact that these ceasefires have been declared and broken in the past. However, the decision to declare a ceasefire and enter into negotiation, while partially a function of the changing times and a new generation's willingness to negotiate with the prevailing powers, is also a strategic decision for maintaining media attention. After utilizing terrorist attacks and other such methods for several decades, the Basque, Spanish, and European people have apparently grown weary of the conflict, requiring ETA to change its strategies in order to maintain political relevance.

PKK

Intro and History

Much like the Palestinians, the Kurds are a stateless people. Spread across several countries in the Middle East, the majority of the Kurdish population resides where the borders of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria meet (White 2000). In this convergence zone, the Kurds, while united in national identity, are divided by political boundaries. All four of these host nations have large Kurdish populations, and all have either abused or ignored this ethnic group in their quest for complete sovereignty over their territorial boundaries. While the land that the Kurds live on is not highly contested, nor the focus of international scrutiny, it is strategically located in an area important for agriculture and livestock, providing 15 percent, 35 percent, and 30 percent of cereal production for Turkey, Iran, and Iraq respectively (McDowall 2000).

McDowall (2000) suggests that, while the people of this region are a united ethnicity going back thousands of years, they did not form a cohesive identity until the turn of the twentieth century. This adoption of a unifying identity coincides with a time of increased attention on the people and the land they inhabit. There are several theories regarding the origins of the people, with some scholars believing that the Kurds originated from the ancient Medes, some claiming that they were a branch of Turks that broke off centuries ago, and yet others positing that the modern day Kurds may have originated from many different backgrounds and came together to form a distinct cultural and linguistic group at some point in the past, despite not having a shared ancestor (White 2000). Regardless of their origin, the Kurds are now a recognized and distinct ethnic group with cultural and linguistic practices that unify them as a people. However, given

that both the land and people were under the auspices of the Ottomans for centuries, the autonomy of the Kurdish people did not become relevant until the end of World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire (McDowall 2000, 7). Instability in the region resulting from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire led to more countries devoting attention to the problem of what to do with the Kurds. The minority group did not obtain its own country after World War I due to refusal on the part of newly formed states to lose any sovereign territory. Moreover, some of the land claimed by the Kurds falls in the region of present day Iran, and thus was never under the control of the Ottoman Turks and was never subject to border instability. The plight of the Kurdish people has become increasingly relevant in modern times as this region has grown in importance due to an abundance of key oil and water resources, particularly in Iraq (McDowall 2000).

In Turkey, at first the Turks attempted, to ally with the Kurds against the Christian Armenians on the basis of their shared Muslim religious heritage. While leaders in Turkey knew of the Kurds' separatist inclinations, they still tried to unite, saying, “the two peoples form one” (McDowall 2000, 188). In a nod to the separatist leanings of the Kurds, in 1922 the Turkish Assembly tried to establish an ‘autonomous’ region within the country so the Kurds could practice limited self-governance. However, the restrictions placed on the province were such that there was no real autonomy from the national government. Eventually, this tolerant stance towards the Kurds was abandoned and a Turkish identity was imposed on all. The subsequent rebellion in 1922 was brutally put down by the government, with the arrest of 7,500 and the execution of 660 Kurds (McDowall 2000, 196).

This rebellion provided Turkey with greater incentive to erase all traces of

Kurdish identity, leading to the establishment of Turkish as the primary language taught in schools and used in government offices. Eventually, “education meant turkification” as youth realized their success in the world hinged on their ability to learn the dominant language and customs (McDowall 2000, 201). A second rebellion in the late 1920s was also brutally suppressed with Turkish armies receiving orders to kill any Kurds they could, thereby driving many across the border into Iran and Iraq. Thousands of combatants and civilians died and many more fled. Those who survived the uprising were met in 1934 with new laws authorizing the Turks to relocate entire villages, force assimilation, and send children to boarding schools in order to separate them from their culture (McDowall 2000). In 1937, a final rebellion in the city of Dersim led to the death of an estimated 40,000 Kurds (McDowall 2000, 209). The atrocities committed at Dersim attracted the attention of the international community and the League of Nations released a statement condemning the behavior of Turkish soldiers (White 2000).

Following the killing of thousands of Kurds, things remained much the same between the Kurds and the Turks. Brutal political and cultural repression spurred small groups of dissidents, and political killings increased as both sides were caught in this cycle of violence. Yet, despite these cycles of violence, by the early 1980s, the annual number of political killings began to decline dramatically; however, a new type of resistance to the Turkish state was about to emerge that the prevailing authorities neither foresaw nor anticipated (McDowall 2000, 418).

In 1974, Abd Allah Ocalan, otherwise known as Apo, gathered a small group of colleagues and created a Kurdish liberation movement that followed in the footsteps of Marxism-Leninism (McDowall 2000). A strictly secular group, this ideology merged the

ideas of Kurdish nationalism with Marx's teachings regarding class warfare and eventually became known as the Partiya Karkari Kurdistan (PKK), the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

Unlike the other organizations discussed in this work, the PKK did not begin its campaign using terrorist methods. Members spent the first few years of the organization's life formulating and distributing propaganda that would both solidify their ideology and gain followers from intellectual circles and among the poor who worked the land (White 2000; Gunter 1997). However, by 1985, the PKK was involved in orchestrating raids against Turkish soldiers, many of which resulted in Turkish fatalities. Successes in small skirmishes led to widespread fear of the PKK among Turks and Kurds alike, as no dissenters were safe. In response to the attacks, the Turkish government offered economic incentives for citizens to sign up as village guards, with the goals of protecting citizens and disrupting the PKK's access to supplies coming from Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The PKK responded to this measure by killing the guards and their families, leading to a dramatic decrease in the number of people willing to work these posts (McDowall 2000).

In response, the government turned to brutal repressive tactics, which led to increased support for the PKK among populations who had previously been ambivalent or opposed the PKK (McDowall 2000). By 1990, what had largely been a local problem became a national sensation as Kurds began publicly protesting in the thousands and the average Turkish citizen began talking about the proverbial elephant in the room — the issue of Kurdish separatism. National attention did not stop, or even decrease, the rate of attacks, as they continued throughout the decade only abating in the latter half of the

1990s. While exact numbers are not known, it is estimated that the conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK claimed the lives of 20,000 people, between 1984 and 1997 (Beriker-Atiyas 1997). However, this decline in terrorist activities was short lived as attacks spiked again following the arrest of Ocalan (Apo) in 1998. He was sentenced to death following a show trial that did much to highlight the abuses of the PKK against the state, but said nothing of the state's own corresponding abuses leveled against the Kurds (McDowall 2000).

While the localized nature of the conflict between the Kurds and the Turks suggests that only those Kurds living in the region were involved, this is, not the case. The PKK set up training camps that attracted youth and young adults from all over the world including many countries in Europe and Australia (White 2000). In these camps individuals were trained and indoctrinated in the ways of the PKK before returning home, or being reassigned to a different location where they could better serve the needs of the Kurdish people. The presence of these training camps suggests that, far from being a localized conflict, the Kurdish cause had spread as the camps provide knowledge, training, and information about the group to Kurdish diasporas and the world as a whole.

Even now, nearly 40 years after the formation of the PKK, there has still been no resolution to the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish government, nor has there been a determination made regarding a Kurdish homeland. Turks see any form of compromise with the Kurds as legitimizing separatism and an affront to the memories of those who died during the turmoil of previous decades (Beriker-Atiyas 1997). However, despite the lack of official resolution, after the capture and trial of Ocalan, terrorist activities remained low despite heavy recruitment. While the situation for the Kurds

showed no signs of improvement in the 1990s, pressure from the European Union to increase democracy and address human rights abuses has led to better living conditions for the Kurds today. Media spotlight on the PKK's activities, and Turkish reprisals, have forced the Turkish government to make concessions in order to improve its image abroad and gain favor with the international community (Clark 2008). The terrorist attacks still continue to this day, albeit at a drastically reduced rate.

Analysis of Data

Arguably, as the least well-known and the least reported on case in this work, the Kurdish Workers' Party has a greater need to use the media in order to send messages to the international community. While other groups examined here, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, have a widespread following or reside in areas that are culturally and politically relevant to the international community, the PKK do not have the luxury of being in a place of geostrategic importance to the international community. As previously mentioned, the Turkish government has shown an equal propensity for cruelty towards the PKK with their reprisals. Therefore, in order to stop the cycle of violence in which the PKK attacks, and the government retaliates, the PKK must communicate to the larger international community — in this instance the countries of Europe, the European Union, the United States, and the United Nations.

First, due to data limitations, this case study analyzes the number of times international newspapers ran articles mentioning the Kurdish Workers' Party. While using only international sources may, at the surface, appear to weaken this case, coverage in domestic papers is not particularly relevant in this instance. For much of the time the

PKK operated, the Turkish news media were prohibited from publishing materials regarding either the PKK or the Kurds. Aware of this limitation, the PKK strove to communicate with the international community to bring attention to the human rights abuses the Kurdish people faced at the hands of the Turkish government. In this instance, only the international community had the ability to exert enough pressure using sanctions, incentives, or the power of respect and standing, to force a change in the behavior of the state apparatus.

Second, it is important to note that the PKK does not garner the same level of media attention seen in the cases of Hamas and Hezbollah, or even of that given to ETA in Spain. This is largely due to the fact that Turkey has neither the strategic importance nor the emotional capital possessed by states such as Israel, nor is Turkey located in the heart of Western Europe. In many respects, the fact that an active separatist group operates in northern Spain is an anomaly in Western Europe, and is therefore of interest to the international, and particularly the European, press. The Kurds in eastern Turkey do not have these advantages. They are geographically isolated, without a powerful lobby, and are relatively unimportant to the interests of Europe and the United States. For these reasons the PKK has substantially less media coverage despite having committed as many, if not more, terrorist attacks as its counterparts in the Middle East and Spain. Nevertheless, it is still possible to draw conclusions regarding the PKK's communication with the media by looking at the average number of articles written in a given year and how they fluctuate on a monthly basis.

The PKK committed its first terrorist attack in October 1984, yet the first article was not written until March 1986. The second attack came in October 1986, with attacks

picking up slightly in the summer of 1987. Articles about the group began running with more regularity between December 1986 and July 1987, with *The New York Times* averaging 1.25 articles a month, including three written in March 1987. Likewise, over the same period, *The Guardian* averaged 1.12 articles a month, beginning with four in December. Despite this increase in international coverage and attention, *The Los Angeles Times* did not pick up the story, only writing 1 article about the group between December 1986 and July 1987. It was during this period, just before the number of attacks began to increase in the summer of 1987 (six attacks occurred between June and August), that the world began to pay attention to this newly active group originating in Turkey.

Decade Averages for the PKK

Year	Attacks	Los Angeles Times	New York Times	The Guardian
1984-1989	1.458	.083	.306	.333
1990-1999	17.507	.767	.633	2.75
2000-2009	.525	.85	.158	1.042
2010-2011	.208	.5	.208	1.125

Table 4

However, despite initial responses by international news sources when the attacks were just beginning, further violence did not produce an equal amount of press coverage. May-December 1989 saw a marked increase in attacks with an average of 9.5 per month; however, despite this unprecedented violence, the three international news outlets only ran a total of 11 articles chronicling the events. The initial terrorist attacks committed by the PKK garnered small amounts of media attention, yet it was not enough to enact

change. Additional attacks aimed at making the group more relevant to the international community did not lead to a subsequent increase in media attention equal to the magnitude of the acts. Although media coverage did not increase proportionally to the number of attacks, it did remain relatively steady for the European audience through July 1990, with *The Guardian* averaging .71 articles per month on the group. Coverage in the American papers dropped off almost completely during this time.

Throughout the 1990s (minus 1993)²², the PKK averaged 17.5 attacks per month. Despite the decade-long average for attacks being in the double-digits (17.5), the average number of articles written by the three news sources for the entire decade remained low — *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* averaged .76 and .63 articles per month respectively (See Table 4). *The Guardian*, located closer to the events, averaged 2.75 articles a month for the entire 1990s decade. In the summer of 1990, the second cycle occurs. Again, terrorist attacks rose from an average of 4.8 attacks a month for the previous eight months (from October 1989-May 1990) to an average of 17.75 attacks per month between June and September 1990. Yet, despite the increase in violence, international papers only published two articles chronicling the rising violence in the region. Attacks then dropped to an average of 1.2 per month from October 1990 until July 1991. When compared to the decade-long average of 17.5 attacks per month, the extent of these swings is revealed. Without corresponding media attention, the upswing in attacks that occurred in July 1991 was followed by a drop off until October 1991, which saw 23 attacks and 6 articles in *The Los Angeles Times*, 4 in *The New York Times*, and 9 in *The Guardian* – numbers much higher than the decade trends. Again, following October 1991, there was yet another decline in attacks until March 1992, when 85 attacks

²² The GTD does not have attack data for 1993.

occurred, the greatest number in a single month since the inception of the PKK.

The attacks of October 1991 began a period of steady news coverage for the PKK in the three international news outlets. From that point onward *The Guardian* ran at least one article mentioning the PKK in nearly every month for the rest of the decade. As news coverage remained relatively steady in the three international papers, attacks also remained steady through the rest of 1992, and spiked in 1994 at a rate of about 30 attacks per month, nearly double the decade average of 17.5 (Figure 15). Following its most active years of attacks, the PKK began to reduce the number of monthly attacks to an average of five from July 1994 through June 1995. Yet, during this time of reduced attacks, *The Guardian* still published an average of four articles a month on the group, more than their decade average. Likewise, *The Los Angeles Times* averaged 1.75 articles and *The New York Times* 1.17 during this time. This suggests that while the terrorist attacks had diminished, the group still captured the attention of the international media and did not need to continue perpetuating violence at the same rate in order to maintain attention. PKK leaders were able to communicate with the international community without shedding blood and thus there was a substantial decrease in the number of terrorist attacks. Once media attention again began to wane; however, the group staged a resurgence and committed 51 attacks in the month of July 1995.

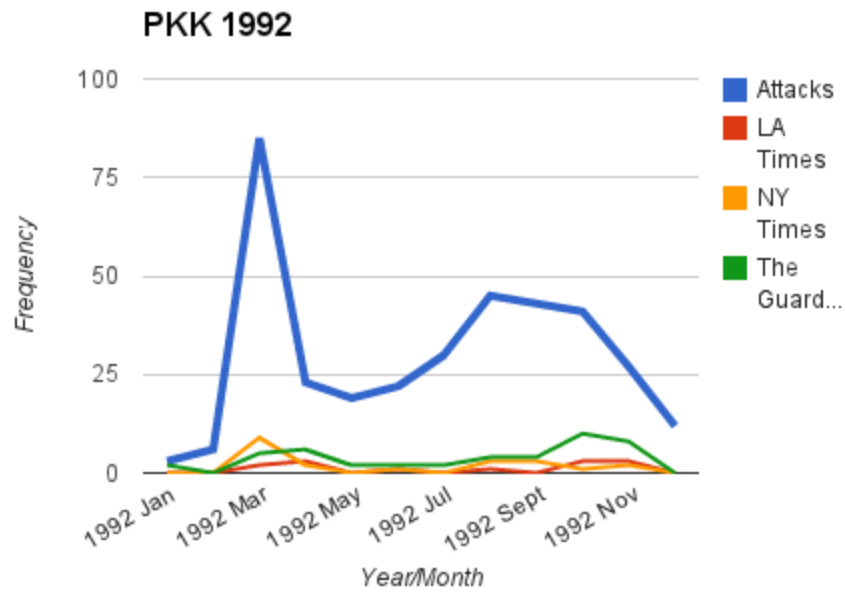


Figure 15

In the months and years following the spike in attacks seen in July 1995, the PKK only averaged 1.6 attacks per month, (a number greatly reduced from the average of the early 1990s, 25.71, and of the overall decade average, 17.5 – See Table 4). However, despite reducing the number of monthly attacks, the PKK was still able to garner media attention from *The Guardian*, if not *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, both of which quickly lost interest in the group until 1998. Despite losing coverage from the American papers, the PKK still averaged 2.75 articles per month from *The Guardian*. The most important connection this trend reveals is that the PKK continued attacks at the minimum rate necessary for maintaining the monthly average of 2.75 articles. When the average from *The Guardian* fell, then attacks increased, as seen in July 1995 (Figure 16). However, so long as *The Guardian*, continued to consistently keep both British elite and the European public as a whole aware of the group, the PKK was able to function with low levels violence and still communicate the same message to the European community.

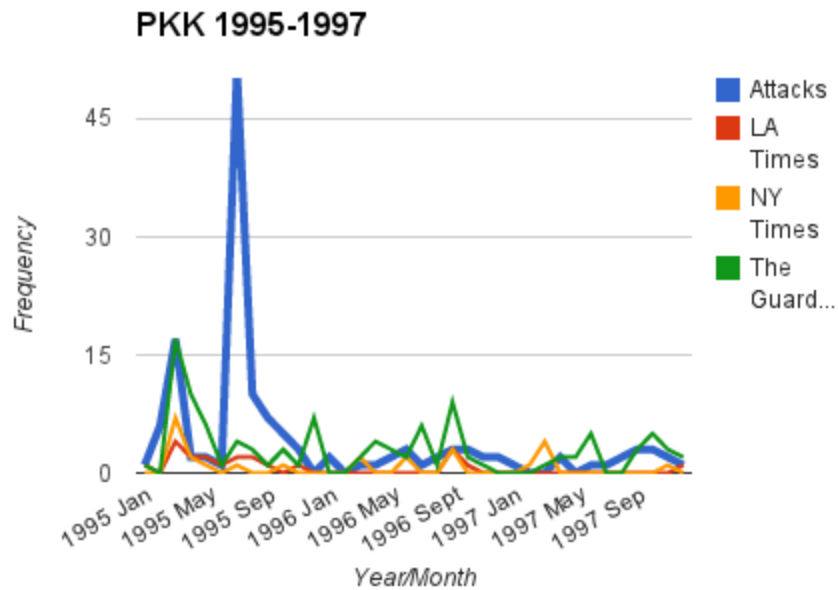


Figure 16

An important note, when compared to the large amount of media coverage that Hezbollah and Hamas receive on a monthly basis, an average of 2.75 articles a month may seem insignificant. However, even during its most active time period, during the early 1990s, the PKK only averaged about 3.6 articles a month from *The Guardian*, and less than 1.25 from both the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*. Even if they had kept up attacks in numbers far exceeding 20 per month, the responding media coverage would not have greatly increased, meaning that the organization would have needed to expend significant amounts of resources without relative gains to its cause. Because of its location, international relevancy, and a myriad of other political, economic, cultural, and geographic factors, the PKK will likely never obtain the levels of media coverage that Hamas and Hezbollah average, but even so, they are able to still communicate to the European public as well as to leaders and decision makers beyond Europe.

Attacks and coverage continue at much the same rates for the remainder of the millennium. Despite the stability of the data, there was a spike in both media coverage and attacks between 1998 and 1999 during the capture, extradition, and trial of Ocalan, the founder and leader of the PKK. Following the arrest of Ocalan, the PKK was largely left without leadership and direction in a political atmosphere vastly different from the one that gave birth to it. In the 1980s, Turkey was largely authoritarian and under constant threat of a military coup d'état. Due to Turkey's ties with the Soviet Union, the West could take no action to prevent the atrocities occurring against the Kurds. However, by 2000, a new political atmosphere existed, both domestically and internationally. The chaos surrounding the end the Cold War had largely subsided and the wars in the former Yugoslavia had ended. The European Union also emerged as a functioning entity with its own currency and the ability to, if not challenge, than at least act as a comparable authority to that of the United States.

Added to the changes in the international community, the political landscape of Turkey also changed as it modernized. Since the inception of the European Union, Turkey has been vying for membership in its ranks. However, in order to become a member, the country must first improve many things with regard to protecting human rights and promoting democracy. This incentive to join the European Union was high enough that the Turkish government was willing to reduce the government-sponsored violence against the Kurds in order to be considered for membership. However, regardless of the strides made toward a reduction in human rights abuses, the military influence in the government is one of the many reasons why the European Union has rejected Turkey as an applicant for the foreseeable future.

The first decade of the 2000s saw a drastic decrease in media attention on the PKK. There were only 63 attacks from 2000-2010 — a sharp contrast to the violence of the early 1990s (See Table 4). While the average number of articles written per month on the terrorist group also declined, with *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* only publishing .85 and .15 articles a month respectively. Even *The Guardian* significantly reduced the number of articles written about the group, dropping from 2.75 to 1.04. While much of the decade remains unremarkable in terms of the number of terrorist attacks by the PKK, and corresponding coverage, the summer of 2005 saw a resurgence in attacks. This followed a “rebranding” of sorts for the organization that occurred in 2004. In an effort to change its public perception, the PKK changed its name from the Kurdish Workers' Party to the Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan or KADEK. However, the name change had no substantive influence on the way other governments, the Kurds, and the Turkish government treated the group (Roth and Sever, 2007).

The group later changed its name back to the PKK and planned a resurgence of violence for July 2005. After a year of no attacks, July and August had a combined total of 16 attacks, with eight occurring throughout the rest of the year. Despite these attacks only 10 articles were written by the three papers combined. Even *The Guardian*, the most sympathetic of the international newspapers, only published three articles from July through December 2005. The increase in the number of attacks failed to help the PKK communicate better with Europe and therefore, did not advance the position of the Kurdish people.

In a last ditch effort to regain the attention of the international media, the PKK

staged a single large attack in October 2007 that injured 17 people. However, the Turkish response to the attack received more attention than the attack itself, with articles quoting many foreign leaders urging the government to act with restraint as they staged an offensive a few days later against suspected PKK strongholds. This attack and the Turkish response, led to 43 articles, or 17 percent of all articles written about the group during that decade (See Figure 17). Since that attack, and through the end of 2011, things have continued at much the same rate. Both media attention and attacks have remained low. Right now it would appear that the PKK is either in the process of losing their relevance to both the international community and the Kurdish people, or they are about to change their tactics to once again try to regain the attention of the media.²³

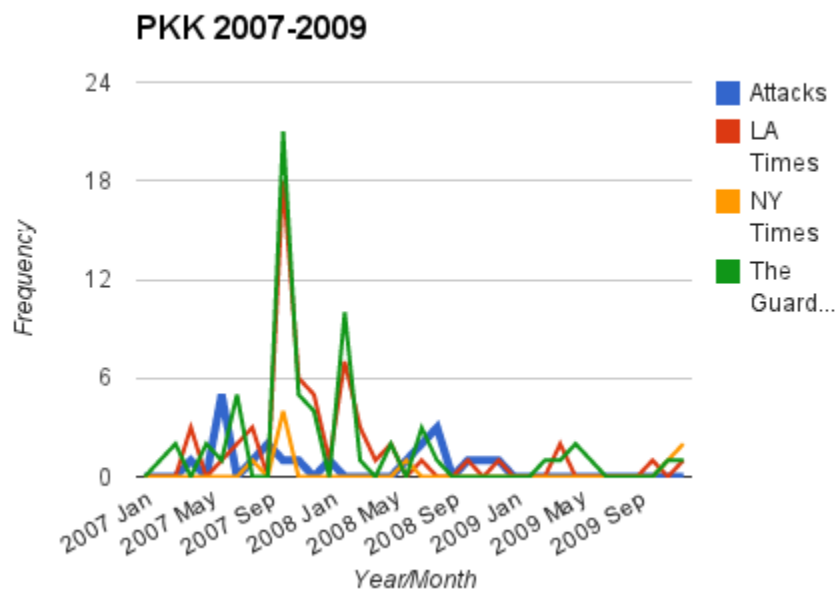


Figure 17

In this case, the PKK was careful to only engage in the minimum number of

²³ As of February 25, 2013, the incarcerated leader of the PKK, Ocalan, is working on a peace agreement with the Turkish government. Reports indicate that if he were to declare a ceasefire, it would be binding to the entire organization and definitively end the conflict (Hurriyet Daily News 2013).

attacks necessary in order to maintain the average number of articles. This behavior, while not specifically captured by one of the hypotheses does support the theory that so long as coverage is constant attacks will be constant. This was seen throughout the second half of the 1990s and through the 2000s. Hypothesis two was supported several times as the PKK went through at least three cycles of waning attention, large attacks, more attention, followed again by a period of waning attention which started the cycle over again. The third hypothesis regarding extended media distraction leading to the decline of a terrorist group despite large attacks or large numbers of attacks can also be seen in this case study. Media coverage on the PKK has gradually decreased since 1999 and since that time terrorist attacks have decreased. Unlike the other organizations in this analysis, the PKK has been unable to morph into a political or otherwise legitimate organization, and is slowly losing their relevance to the international community. It would appear that the group is unable to motivate followers and supporters and is ceasing the practice of terrorism.

While this decrease in attacks and international relevancy would appear to be a sign that the PKK could soon disband and disappear as a terrorist organization, this may not necessarily be the case. Rather, this may just be another stage in the cycle to regain media attention. In Autumn 2011, the number of attacks that are suspected, but not confirmed, to have been committed by the PKK totaled 21 — while there were only three confirmed attacks during this same period (See Figure 18). Additionally, at the time of this writing, January 2013, the PKK has been in the news because authorities in Turkey have announced that they are beginning to engage in peace talks with the incarcerated leader of the PKK, Ocalan, and other representatives from the organization in an effort to

disarm the group and begin to resolve the decades-long conflict with the Kurdish people (Uras 2013). The reports about the talks suggest that a lasting peace is likely and that the PKK is on their way to becoming a legitimate organization along the lines of either Hezbollah or Hamas. However, should these peace talks fail, it is entirely possible that the world could see yet another resurgence of violence as the Kurdish Workers' Party again attempts to regain the media's attention.

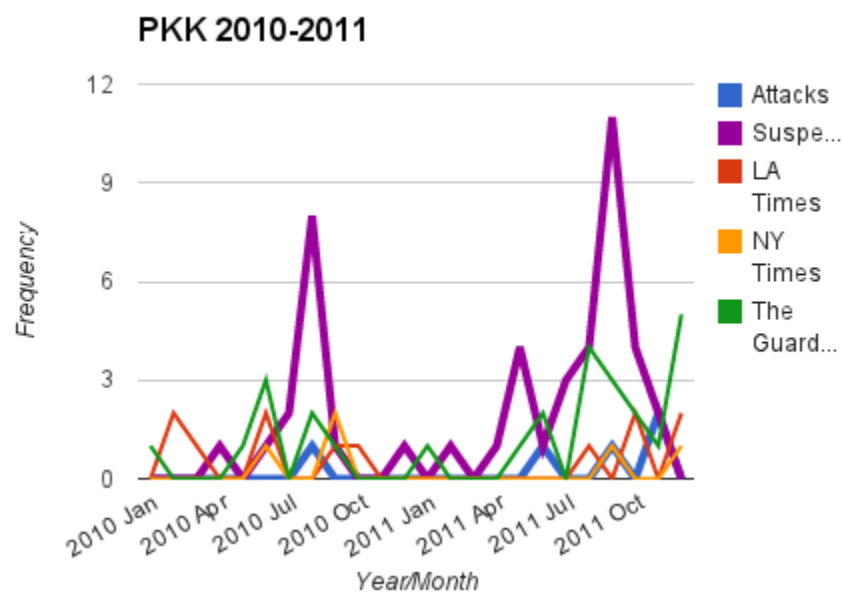


Figure 18

Chapter 6

Explanations for Variations in Media Coverage

A Media Crisis?

There is some question about the crisis of print media and what this means for a study that extends from 1970 through 2011 – periods that include the evolving nature of the crisis. In 1970, people primarily received their news from print, broadcast, or radio sources, current data suggest print news readership is declining with fewer people subscribing to physical newspapers. In the past decade, this has sparked a panic in the news industry as newspapers have been forced to shut down or lay off hundreds of journalists (Edmonds 2012). However, for those papers that have survived and embraced the technologies of the Internet, smartphone and tablet applications, and digital subscriptions, readership has increased due to ease of access, even if it has not led to an increase in advertising dollars.

In many respects, the crisis faced by the news media is one of declining revenue and not one of declining readers. Studies by ComScore, an online readership analyst, show that while print readership is declining, the numbers of people who read the news in its online format are increasing at a similar rate (Dennen 2009). Meaning that people are not giving up reading the news, they are merely changing the platform they use to access it. In fact, the Internet has made it easier for many people to read news sources from around the world, and for people around the world to read articles written by the papers analyzed in this work – resulting in readership numbers that are much higher than those that are reflected in standard circulation measurements.

Additionally, while print news is on the decline, with a mere 17 percent of Americans getting their news from the print version of a national newspaper, print is also where many news stories break. It has the power to set the news agenda for all other platforms (Purcell et al 2010; Ginsberg et al 2011). Reporters in print media are the ones who do the investigative reporting because they have more time and resources in order to pursue leads, meaning that if a story is not featured in one of the large nationwide newspapers, barring breaking news events, it is unlikely to appear on a nightly news segment on local or national television (Ginsberg et al 2011). It is for this reason that print media was chosen for the analysis of the media coverage of terrorism over television news. Journalists in print media are the ones who determine what will be covered on broadcast news, making them the most influential in setting the agenda for not only the American public and policy makers, but also for other professionals in the media.

Media Trends

When looking at the data as a whole, there are a few apparent trends. The first of which is that media coverage for all groups increases in the 2000s despite a uniform decrease in attacks from the high levels seen in the early to mid- 1990s. One explanation for this increase in attacks is given within each case study, namely that the September 11 attacks made terrorism suddenly more salient to the global, and specifically the American, audience. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon made terrorism, a phenomenon that was largely seen as happening to other people in other places, more relevant to the world as everyone suddenly felt like they could become a

target. These increases in coverage appear to have impacted religious groups more than secular groups, but all were impacted to some degree.

Another explanation for the increase of articles in the 2000s is directly connected to changes implemented in the news industry itself. Until the early 2000s, print media were confined to what could fit in in a standard newspaper. Editors needed to make decisions regarding what stories were the most important and could only run those important news items in the paper for any given day. However, the Internet has no solid space constraints like a printed newspaper. In the past, less important stories would not have run at all, now all stories can go on the website, even if they are not featured in the daily newspaper. This allows journalists more freedom in covering conflicts, such as the PKK in Turkey, which previously would have been dropped in favor of more pressing international news stories.

The data in this work include the articles that were published on the websites of the news outlets, but did not necessarily merit inclusion in the physical newspaper; thereby explaining some of the increase in media interest in groups, that had experienced years of waning media influence previous to the embracing of Internet technology by modern journalists and media conglomerates. These changes in the ways that the international news media reach their audience, and the ways that people receive their news, can be considered a surplus in media attention for terrorist organizations. They did nothing to receive additional time in the media, yet there are now more articles written about their group and cause designed to be read by the general public. On the same token, these numbers also illustrate the issue of clutter in the news marketplace. There are now so many stories about different topics, terrorist organizations, while they now

garner more media attention, now have to compete with more international happenings for readership. While an article featured in a newspaper would likely be read by a greater percentage of people who read that newspaper because it was one of a limited number of articles, news stories on the Internet may be read by a smaller percentage of the total readership (although raw readership numbers have increased) as there are more articles online to read and audiences do not read them all.

Another noticeable trend is visible when comparing the levels of media attained by different case studies to each other. While secular terrorism often commits more attacks in the way of sheer numbers, the corresponding media attention is not nearly as great as is given to the religious groups. As seen in a cursory look at this study, religious groups receive more media attention, even when they are not participating in any attacks. One possible explanation for this could lie in the differences in the types of attacks and the lethality between the two types of groups. Attacks that kill and injure more people or are more sensationalist in nature, such as the bombing of a crowded shopping mall, are designed to attract the attention of the international media; whereas the bombing of an empty government building would be seen as less noteworthy to large international news outlets.

When looking at the four case studies analyzed in this paper, and using the universe of attacks that were listed as confirmed by the Global Terrorism Database, there are clear differences in the lethality of the groups. Hamas and Hezbollah, the two groups that obtained the most news coverage, also had the highest numbers of casualties per attack on average²⁴. In contrast, despite having more attacks over their lifetimes, ETA and the PKK were not nearly as lethal (Figure 19).

²⁴ In this instance, casualty is defined as the combined total of killed and injured persons.

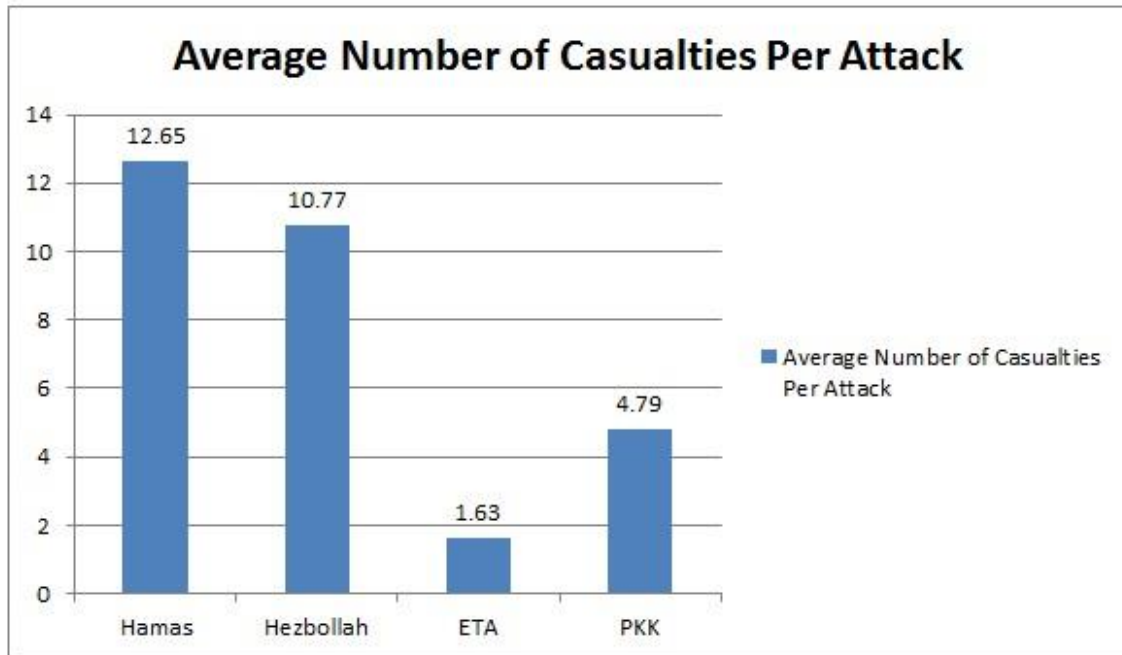


Figure 19

Differences in lethality lead to differences in the willingness of the mass media to pick up the story devote space to the issue. However, while this does explain the differences in media coverage between the groups, it does not change the underlining forces at play in looking at the way each individual group responds to media attention, or lack of attention. The patterns measured in the hypothesis look at the differences in media coverage at different times within the same group's history, and how that impacts the trajectory of attacks committed in the future. The willingness to engage in the dramatic deaths of many people leads to more news articles as the media are more likely to report on stories that strike a chord with their audiences. Yet, despite the increase in overall coverage, groups that engage in these types of attacks are just as vulnerable to the effects of waning media attention, and react in much the same way, as groups that are less lethal.

Chapter 7

Trends and Implications

Overall Themes of the Data

Thus far, the data in this work have been presented within the case studies. However, there are trends that can be seen across the case studies that suggest a correlation between levels of media coverage and patterns of attacks. These patterns directly relate to the hypotheses presented at the beginning of the work. As these themes hold steady across the different case studies, it is important to look at them as they relate to the individual hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: So long as news coverage on a particular terrorist group and their issue remains consistent, then attacks will also remain consistent.

Evidence supporting this hypothesis is seen in all four case studies. As media coverage reached a consistent point without extreme swings, attacks also began to level out as groups began engaging in the minimum number of attacks necessary to maintain that level of coverage without expending too many resources. This is particularly evident when looking at the behavior of the PKK in regards to coverage in *The Guardian*. So long as *The Guardian* kept the European public aware of events happening in Turkey, the organization, while not ceasing the practice altogether, engaged in attacks at low levels until the paper began publishing fewer articles about the group. This pattern is also seen in the number of attacks committed by Hamas in the beginning of the 2000s.

Hamas was the beneficiary of the increased media attention given to the topic of terrorism, and specifically Middle Eastern terrorism, following the 2001 attacks in the United States. In the months following the attacks, the average number of articles written about the group increased dramatically, and led to a stabilization of the number of attacks committed by Hamas each month as the group only needed to *keep* its name in the press, rather than put *its* name in the press. As journalists were primed to accept stories of terrorism originating from this area, attacks largely decreased because fewer attacks were necessary in order to maintain the same amount of media coverage. These patterns are also consistent when looking at the data for Hezbollah and the ETA with both groups showing periods of stabilization in the number of attacks so long as media coverage remained constant.

However, without the other hypotheses, this one reveals very little as there are questions regarding the direction of correlation when looking at this one relationship. This work claims that it is the amount of media that influences the number of attacks; yet if one were to just look at this hypothesis, it could easily be argued that of course the media attention remains the same so long as attacks remain the same because the media have no need to alter its coverage in response to the number of attacks. It is unclear which variable is driving the relationship until the other hypotheses are tested, specifically Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2: When media coverage begins to wane regarding the issue, despite continued attacks, there will be a marked decrease in attacks for a short period of time, followed by a dramatic resurgence in violence as the group attempts to regain

international attention.

While Hypothesis 1 shows a relationship without revealing the directionality of the factors influencing one another, Hypothesis 2 reveals what is driving the relationship. All of the case studies have periods of time, as mentioned when looking at Hypothesis 1, where both media coverage and attacks stabilize as the terrorist organization only participates in the lowest number of attacks necessary to maintain a consistent amount of media coverage. However, as shown by the spikes in attacks and coverage in the data, these periods of relative stability do not last indefinitely. It is often after a gradual decline in media attention that terrorist groups participate in either a particularly lethal attack designed to horrify a large audience, or they increase the amount of attacks for a particular month; thereby suggesting the amount of media attention given to the group that partially drives the relationship between coverage and attacks. When looking at long-term trends, consistently it is the decline in attention that precedes the increase in terrorism.

This relationship can be seen in the coverage of every terrorist group studied in this thesis. The levels of attacks committed by Hamas stabilized to the minimum number necessary in order to maintain a consistent amount of news coverage in the months following the 2001 World Trade Center attack in the United States. Both news coverage and attacks reached a plateau that lasted only until media coverage began to slowly wane in early 2003. It was only after the number of articles published per month dropped that the group increased the number of attacks. The timing of this event suggests that this tactic was utilized in order to refocus media attention back on the group. Hezbollah, perhaps, engages in this tactic the most. Every drop in media coverage is quickly

followed by an attack in subsequent months or an increase in the number of attacks, in order to maintain international relevancy.

These patterns of behavior are also seen in the secular groups, ETA and the PKK, with both of them engaging in behaviors expressly designed to attract the eye of the international media, after periods of slow media decline. In order to achieve their ultimate goal, the groups must be constantly in the media spotlight, and, while maintaining constant media attention at all times is not always possible, it is important that the groups regain the media's wandering eyes when it begins to stray.

Hypothesis 3: As the media continues to focus on other, more timely, events, the terrorist group will take longer breaks between violent attacks and eventually cease the practice of violence altogether due to the lack of an international audience for the issue.

All four of these terrorist groups, all with varying motivating ideologies, methods, means, aims, locations of origin, and other differentiating factors, have, for the most part, ceased the practice of terrorism in recent years. In each case, regardless of the number of attacks perpetrated over the lifetime of the group, eventually, all of the groups were unable to sustain high levels of media coverage using violence alone. While all tried to regain the media attention by engaging in either lethal attacks, or large numbers of attacks, which worked to some extent, there eventually came a point when even more or larger attacks were unable to redirect media attention back to the group. Now these groups are working within the legitimate political spheres of their respective governments. An example of this is Hamas, who was elected into power in the Gaza

Strip in 2006 and has maintained that political power in the years since then. Hamas has pulled the region into outright war with Israel since gaining power, but the terrorist attacks have largely diminished, and, in recent years, stopped completely as the organization is utilizing other means in order to communicate with the international community.

Hezbollah, in southern Lebanon, has also become strong enough, and attracted enough followers, in order to win seats in the Lebanese parliament. While terrorist attacks have stopped, as the group is now utilizing legitimate political means to enact change, the group still refuses to disarm. The success of these two groups in obtaining political positions is partially due to the groups' dual branches. Both Hamas and Hezbollah have utilized terrorism as a means of communicating with a broader audience; however, both also use their resources to provide social services that the governments are often unwilling or unable to provide. These social services such as health care, education, and monetary benefits to the families of those who die for the cause are part of what gave the groups sufficient popularity to become significant players in national elections.

In contrast, neither ETA nor the PKK have been able to muster the same sorts of electoral successes. While media attention and terrorist attacks have largely stopped in recent years (for both groups), there is no indication that either group is pursuing political means in order to enact change. Instead, both groups are slowly losing their relevance and may eventually disappear entirely. Conditions have improved for both people, the Basques and the Kurds, and it may be possible that the groups will abandon their original lofty goals of state independence, and accept the tangible progress that has been made in

achieving greater autonomy and socio-political rights. Accepting current gains could mean that these groups have served their purpose and are no longer necessary for the continued advancement of their domestic constituencies.

Hypothesis 4: If the group can gain international media attention by using other, non-violent means, they will utilize those means.

While this final hypothesis is the logical conclusion to this line of reasoning should terrorist organizations specifically seek media attention, this behavior is not exhibited by all of the groups during the time periods studied. It is most prominently displayed by ETA in the past several years. Recognizing that the group gets a large amount of media coverage after every declaration of a ceasefire, leaders have declared, and reaffirmed, the ceasefire several times — despite the absence of violence. In each case, September 2010, January 2011, and October 2011, representatives of the group have issued a formal statement, orchestrated a press conference, and received several articles in media coverage without needing to use violence. In this way the groups can manipulate the media and keep their name and cause in the press without resorting to potentially unpopular forms of violence.

ETA also maintained media coverage in the mid-2000s due to media confusion regarding the 2004 Madrid subway bombing. While ETA ultimately did not participate in the bombing, for several weeks it was not known who the perpetrators were, and ETA did not deny their involvement, suggesting that the news articles hypothesizing about their motives, detailing the history of the group, profiling members, were all useful to the

group in maintaining a public presence. While the media coverage dropped after authorities discovered the true attackers, the fact that news about ETA saturated the international media for a short while must have benefited the group in communicating with the general public and powerful decision-makers in other governments.

However, the ETA is not the only group that uses this tactic. It can be argued that the numerous, doomed, peace talks and ceasefires entered into by Hamas and the Israeli government are also an effort to maintain media attention; although, unlike ETA, the talks do not always necessarily occur in conjunction with periods of low media attention. Instead, the peace talks and ceasefires can be thought of as another tactic, used with the regularity of terrorism that also serves the purpose of generating media attention for the group. When the ceasefire lasted long enough that media attention on the group begins to wane, then the truce is broken, and violence begins again.

The second path a terrorist organization can take in order to maintain media coverage is to start a formal armed conflict. Both Hamas and Hezbollah have used their political power and armed forces in order to start wars with the state of Israel. Examples of this include the 2006 Lebanon War and the 2008-2009 Gaza War. No longer classified as 'terrorism,' these wars also serve to redirect the attention of the international media to the ongoing conflicts that these groups have with Israel and the Palestinian cause. When terrorism ceased working, as both wars were preceded by several months of low media coverage, the war reminded the public and influential decision-makers that there was still work to be done to bring lasting peace to this region.

Implications

The aim of this paper is not to say that the international news coverage is the *only* factor in determining the actions of a terrorist organization. There are other concerns such as political climate, means, public perception and support, as well as the international factors that an organization must consider before deciding to engage in an act of terrorism. However, this paper shows that the news media are one factor in determining the timing and magnitude of an attack; therefore, the implications of this study on the news media are profound.

First, it is important to highlight what this study does not reveal. As of yet, it is impossible to predict the frequency, severity, or number of attacks in the next wave of terrorism. However, it does reveal a relationship between an organization and the news media in which the organization needs a certain amount of coverage in order to maintain international and domestic relevance. The evidence also suggests that after prolonged periods of media neglect, certain behaviors are more likely than others. Namely, that the terrorist organization will attempt to regain media attention by orchestrating larger and more deadly attacks, and if that fails to attract sufficient attention, they will either turn to legitimate political means in order to resolve their grievances or gradually disappear. In some cases, those political means are not necessarily non-violent — as political representatives, former terrorist groups have the authority to declare war. Nevertheless, while military action does not represent a peaceful reduction in hostilities, it does reveal a marked departure from terrorism.

Knowing that a relationship exists between the international news media and a terrorist group raises interesting implications about how the media should address a

terrorist event. Media coverage of a terrorist attack only adds fuel to the fire in that it plays into the desires of the terrorist. If the news media cover an event, not only can the terrorists broadcast their message, but they also can foment fear in the population. The logical solution to this problem is to forbid journalists from reporting on terrorist attacks. In this way, the effects of the attack are limited to those who witnessed and experienced the attack and their families. While people will tell others about their experience, spreading fear and panic, the impact will be less than if the mass media broadcast the story and the accompanying images of violence around the world.

However, herein represents the conundrum when looking at the implications of this research. Many Western countries, the United States included, and perhaps most especially, regard a free and open press as one of the fundamental rights of a functioning democracy. Restricting the rights of the press would be seen as the first step to totalitarianism and would spark uprising among journalists and citizens alike. The belief that the public has the right to know is so ingrained in many democratic societies that legally restricting the media from reporting on certain activities, even with the argument that it would prevent more deaths in the long-run, would be viewed as a dishonest move on the part of the government.

Another viable solution would be to rely on the news media to “self-censor.” In this case, the government would not legislate the content published in the pages of the major news outlets, but rather editors and publishers would make those decisions in-house and simply prevent those stories from running, or if they must still run, prevent them from receiving undue attention. However, again, those in the news industry are both protective of their right to publish anything they deem newsworthy, and they are in

the business to make money and cannot risk being “scooped” by another paper that may not self-censor as rigorously.

Therefore, governments are at an impasse on this issue. The evidence suggests that less media coverage would lead to less terrorism in the long-run as terrorists lose their ability to both instill fear in a large group of people and communicate their message to the international community. There are surges in violence as the organization tries to maintain international coverage and relevance, however, when this fails, individual terrorist attacks overwhelmingly decrease as the terrorist organization must search for another means of capturing media attention. However, in many democracies, governments are currently unwilling or unable to legislate the media due to the rights of the free press and cannot rely on the media to regulate themselves, even if it means saving more lives.

A few countries in Western Europe, realizing that media coverage is “international terrorism’s heartbeat” have taken actions that, while they do not go so far as to ban the coverage of terrorist events in the media, do restrict the ways in which journalists can treat political violence in news stories (Nacos 1994, 154). Examples of these restrictions include Germany’s prohibition of anything that “glorifies” terrorist violence. Additionally, in Greece it is illegal to publish direct communications from terrorists in any form (Nacos 1994). In a similar vein, many news organizations have adopted practices in which they no longer interview terrorists either on the television, radio, or put their direct quotations in print. In a version of the Greek ban on direct communications, many news organizations have taken it upon themselves to limit the publication of propaganda materials in an effort to make sure that any media attention that the terrorist

does obtain is not on their terms.

Even in the United States, where there are limited legal restrictions on the news media, many journalists have adopted similar standards as their European counterparts in order to prevent terrorists from using the media as a personal vehicle to the outside world. No longer can masked terrorists be interviewed on live television, have their explicit demands broadcasted, or expect to have carte blanche reign in the press. In this respect the news media are not the unwilling pawns of terrorist organizations.

Future Research

As stated earlier, this work would be improved by different case studies. As it stands, characteristics that appeared at the surface. to add variation to the cases, did not significantly change the results. In the future, case studies such as Al Qaeda, a group without separatist inclinations, and the Chechen separatists, who began with purely secular motivations and later embraced a religious ideology. Additional case studies from groups originating in South America and Asia would have also strengthened the analysis. Future research should also involve more international news sources, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation,²⁵ and wire services such as Reuters and the Associated Press.

More domestic sources, in as much as they are available, should also be included. If possible data from more than one domestic paper per case study would reveal the larger trends regarding domestic coverage. In the case of ETA, differences in coverage in papers that operate in the Basque regions when compared to papers whose readership include the entire country may reveal different trends in the ways both types of papers report on the topic. The differences in these two types of domestic sources, when

²⁵ Archives will not be completely available until 2022.

coupled with the trends revealed in the international sources have the ability to show more about the ways different organizations use the media.

If done again, additional data and the use of more statistical methods would strengthen the initial findings suggested here and allow for continued expansion of these hypotheses and conclusions. While the qualitative methods utilized in this study allow for a detailed analysis of a few case studies, statistical methods and large-n studies have the ability to make generalizations regarding the behaviors of all terrorist groups as they relate to coverage in the news media.

Chapter 8:

Conclusions

In all aspects of his or her relationship with the world, the terrorist is powerless. It is a lack of power, opportunity, or openness in the political system, which motivates the terrorist to begin to seek change within the system through asymmetrical warfare. This form of asymmetrical warfare gives the illusion of power to the terrorist as the public lives in fear of the next attack. The element of shock, horror, and terror makes it appear as though the terrorist group holds the government hostage to its demands; however, even in this environment the terrorist is powerless as they are dependent on the attention of the news media to broadcast their performance to a larger audience. While large acts of violence are designed to attract the attention of the news media, and are often successful, this attention is fleeting — resulting in the need for more and grander acts of violence.

Eventually, even these grand acts of violence will not be enough to sustain the attention of the news media, and terrorists will need to turn to other means of generating media attention. That can be through staged press conferences announcing, or reaffirming, ceasefires, or the group will need to find another way to broadcast their message to the international community. Sometimes those means are political in nature with terrorist organizations getting elected to political office and using legitimate means in order to affect political change.

As one of the first studies on this topic, further research on the direct effects of the media's influence on the behavior of terrorist organizations is, of course, necessary in order to further validate these theories that have long been accepted without empirical

evidence. To rectify the accusations levied against the field for employing what Picard (1986) called “dubious science,” the fields of political science and communications must work together in order to achieve a greater understanding of this relationship. This initial study confirms the theories presented by scholars regarding the ways that terrorists need the media; however, far from being the last word on this topic, this is, in fact, one of the first.

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Katherine Eugenis

Email- keugenis@gmail.com Curriculum Vitae

Education:

- 2011-2013: M.A. University of Nevada - Las Vegas; Las Vegas, Nevada
Political Science: International Relations; Comparative Politics
4.0 GPA
- 2007-2011 B.S. Northern Arizona University; Flagstaff, Arizona
Political Science, with minors in Sociology and International Relations
Summa Cum Laude 3.95 GPA
- 2007-2011 B.S.J. Northern Arizona University; Flagstaff, Arizona
Journalism, with an emphasis in News Editorial
Summa Cum Laude 3.95 GPA

Honors & Awards:

- 2011 Summa Cum Laude, Northern Arizona University
- 2007-2011 Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards Scholarship – Arizona Board of Regents
- 2007-2011 Dean’s List
- 2011 Charles W. Barnes Excellence in Honors Award
- 2011 Ina Langstaff Award for Outstanding Student in International Affairs
- 2010 Phi Kappa Phi

Presentations:

- 2013 Eugenis, Kate. “A Machine Fueled by the Past: Terrorism’s Relationship with the Global Media” Western Political Science Association Conference, Hollywood, CA
- 2011 Eugenis, Kate. “I Can See the Fear in Your Eyes: Terrorism in Russia” 9th Annual Honors Symposium, A Celebration of Ideas, Flagstaff, AZ
- 2011 Eugenis, Kate. “Miracles Don't Happen Here: Israel, the Security Wall, and the Gaza Strip” Intellectual Intersections: A Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, Flagstaff, AZ
- 2010 Eugenis, Kate. “Though We Share So Many Secrets, There are Some We Never Tell” 8th Annual Honors Symposium, A Celebration of Ideas, Flagstaff, AZ

Teaching Experience:*Teaching Assistant*

- Spring 2013 *Political Systems of Western Europe* (with Dr. Christian Jensen)
 Introduction to American Politics (with Dr. Cathy Hanks)
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Fall 2012 *Introduction to Comparative Politics* (with Dr. Christian Jensen)
 Introduction to American Politics (with Dr. Cathy Hanks)
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Spring 2012 *Introduction to Comparative Politics* (with Dr. Michele Kuenzi)
 Introduction to American Politics (with Dr. Cathy Hanks)
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Fall 2011 *Introduction to Comparative Politics* (with Dr. Michele Kuenzi)
 Introduction to American Politics (with Dr. Cathy Hanks)
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Spring 2011 *Introduction to Journalism* (with Dr. Peter Friederici)
 Northern Arizona University
- Fall 2008- *Seminar in Critical Reading/Writing* (with Robyn Slayton-Martin)
 Fall 2010 Northern Arizona University

Research Interests:

Media	Revolution
Terrorism	Post-Soviet States
Democratization	Middle East

Other Experience:

- 2013- Present Writing Assistant, College of Southern Nevada; Las Vegas, Nevada
- 2011- Present Graduate Assistant, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Las Vegas, Nevada
- 2011 Teaching Assistant, Department of Communications, Northern Arizona University; Flagstaff, Arizona
- 2008-2011 Writing Tutor, Honors Program, Northern Arizona University; Flagstaff, Arizona
- 2008-2010 Guide to University Retention and Undergraduate Success, Honors Program, Northern Arizona University; Flagstaff, Arizona