

VEOs may be manipulated through five channels: suppliers, buyers, rivals, substitutes, and new entrants

175; 120; 121; 43; 122; 123; 146; 147; 154; 155; 156

General Description of the Literature:

Competition has been identified as a significant influence on the behavior of VEOs for decades. This competition has been shown to produce a complex range of outcomes, including increased violence as VEOs attempt to outbid rivals for constituent support (Bloom 2005), decreased violence as VEOs have more limited access to necessary resources (Furtado 2007, see also Enders and Sandler 2006), more specialized violence or ideological shifts as VEOs attempt to differentiate themselves from rivals (Bueno de Mesquita 2008), as well as cooption or elimination of rivals (Stern and Modi 2008). Only relatively recently have scholars begun to apply the more sophisticated theoretical frameworks of competition developed within the economics and business literatures to VEOs. One of the definitive contributions on firm competition is Michael Porter's (1980) Five Forces model in which competition is defined as an amalgamation of the relationships between a producer, producers of comparable goods, and producers of potential substitutes; the degrees of leverage the suppliers of material and buyers (constituent supporters, whose attitudes are often shaped by the media) have over the producer; and the barriers to entry for new potential producers. Although there is a rich literature on each of the individual competitive forces in isolation, a fully integrated Five Forces analysis of competition has only been applied in a qualitative analysis of the Northern Ireland Republican movement (Sawyer 2008, 2010).

Detailed Analyses

175: *VEOs may be manipulated through five channels: suppliers, buyers, rivals, substitutes, and new entrants.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: The Five Forces competitive analysis of VEO behavior draws on an exceptionally rich theoretical and empirical literature of firms in a wide range of industries. In the only direct application to VEOs, Sawyer (2010) used an in-depth qualitative analysis of competition within the Irish Republican Movement over 30 years to demonstrate that the combined effect of the Five Forces generally resulted in an increase in violence, *ceteris paribus*. Earlier studies applied these forces individually, often to mixed results.

1.) Much of the work on VEO competition has focused on the rivalry between VEOs, most notably Bloom's (2004, 2005) finding of a strong outbidding effect between Palestinian VEOs. However, subsequent attempts to replicate these findings through a statistical analysis of terrorism in all countries, and relevant subsets, between 1970 and 2004 produced weak or conflicting support for an outbidding effect resulting from increased numbers of violent competitors (Findley and Young 2010).

2.) While factionalization is a well-documented phenomenon within terrorist organizations, it is primarily studied as a means by which groups end (Gvineria 2009) or become more ideologically extreme (Bueno de Mesquita 2008). While there are no empirical studies of the impact the threat of new entrants have on VEOs, there is an extensive literature demonstrating its impact on firms (Shankar 1999; Goolsbee and Syverson 2008).

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(3.) There has also been considerable work on one dimension of the substitute threat, i.e. the increased violence of “spoilers” during peace negotiations (Stedman 1997), and more limited work on the other dimension, i.e. how political parties reduce demand for violence. The literature about both types of substitutes is primarily of a theoretical nature, although both have active empirical research programs. For example, there is an ongoing project collecting structured-focused comparative case studies on spoiler activity in order to perform empirical tests of theory (Dayton and Elman 2009). Weinberg et al. (2009) have created a quantitative dataset of linkages between terrorist groups and political parties, but do not examine the competitive relationships between them.

4.) While there is an enormous and well-developed literature establishing the agenda-setting and framing power of the media (see for example Entman 1989), which has been widely recognized within the terrorism literature (Schmid and de Graaf 1982; Dowling 1986; Cohen-Almagor 2000), relevant empirical studies have tended to focus on censorship and press freedom rather than the direct influence of editorial decisions on VEO behavior (Sandler 1995; Li 2005).

5.) Finally, the role of state sponsors, arms dealers, and financial middlemen have been highlighted as theoretically important, but there is very limited publicly available data on their direct influences on VEO behavior. Nevertheless, several excellent qualitative case studies demonstrate the restraining effect state-sponsors can have on VEOs (Byman 2005; Furtado 2007).

Empirical Support Score: 9 = Multiple empirical analyses, including at least one quantitative and one qualitative study supporting the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: Although the Five Forces model is very well established within the study of businesses and industries, scholars have applied more rudimentary models of competition to VEOs with considerable success. Thus, there is a base of empirical work on VEOs that appears to confirm the similarities between the two contexts. However, there are a number of dissimilarities between the two fields that must be considered when drawing inferences between the two, including the legal status of the producers, VEOs ability to directly attack and/or destroy rivals, and the more complex measures of demand and supply resulting from the lack of fungible currency of political support.

Applicability Score: High Confidence – Similar context: Empirical results concern a sufficiently closely related context (e.g. transnational criminal organizations) that the researcher has *high* confidence that they will also hold in the context of influencing VEOs

120: *If “buyers” (meaning the audience the organization seeks to serve) find the social and/or political change on offer by the VEO unattractive, VEOs will modify their behavior.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Within the economics literature, there is voluminous empirical evidence that firms respond to market conditions and buyer preferences, (through the mechanisms of supply and demand and organized pressure from consumer groups) by changing the amount and type of goods produced and active brand management. In the VEO context, with the possible exception of the media, “buyers” have little leverage over VEOs and primarily influence them through large aggregate changes in the amount of constituent support or opposition for the VEO (Sawyer 2010). While there is a basic assumption within rational choice models that support for rebellion and violence is linked to an individual’s utility function, there is little empirical data that demonstrates a clear correlation between specific grievances that would fuel demand and support for violence. Indeed, there is strong evidence that attitudes towards violence are not purely rational responses to objective conditions (Masters 2004). This confounds the ability to measure demand reliably and consistently, especially across cases, making it difficult to assess the causal link between demand and VEO behavior. Nevertheless, Sawyer (2010) found that Republican VEOs were largely responsive to their constituents: more violence was produced when the constituency was more widely radicalized and violence was generally curtailed when the base was critical; and Republicans

protected their brands by denying, justifying, or apologizing for actions the base might find objectionable. Similarly, in a qualitative study of the Basque conflict, Funes (1998) found organized grassroots Basque opposition was pivotal for explaining ETA's reduction of violence.

Empirical Support Score: 9 = Multiple empirical analyses, including at least one quantitative and one qualitative study supporting the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: Unlike in economics, the “buyers” for VEOs are much less defined and identifiable, most organizations within the VEO’s constituency tend to take on the role of either a substitute or a rival for the VEO, and there is no market structure through which the supply and demand curves can manifest in directly measurable ways. The smallest and most extreme VEOs are often somewhat removed from the constituency they purport to represent, which may further limit the buyers’ influence over the VEO. Nevertheless, it is apparent that VEOs cannot survive in the long-term without a reservoir of support, e.g. recruits, safe havens, etc. While the weakness of existing proxy measures of constituent support and opposition limit the strength and amount of empirical evidence for the hypothesis in the VEO context, it is likely that VEOs are at least somewhat responsive to the preferences of their purported constituents.

Applicability Score: High Confidence – Similar context: Empirical results concern a sufficiently closely related context (e.g. transnational criminal organizations) that the researcher has *high* confidence that they will also hold in the context of influencing VEOs.

121: *If “buyers” (meaning the audience the organization seeks to serve) find the social and/or political change on offer by the VEO unattractive because it is not sought, VEOs will modify their behavior.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: There is very little empirical work linking the preferences of constituents to the political platforms espoused by VEOs. Early scholars posited a link between objective grievances, such as economic deprivation, and terrorism that has generally not been substantiated in the subsequent decades (Krueger and Maleckova 2003; Kis-Katos et al. 2011; for a debate regarding the evidence of a possible inoculation effect of social welfare policies against terrorism, see Burgoon 2006 and Crenshaw et al. 2007). Indeed, a recent psychological experiment found that grievances in the form of prior and ongoing discrimination do not predict support for terrorism (Lemieux 2008). Therefore, it is extremely difficult to assess in an objective way what changes are sought by the constituency, much less determining how well VEOs’ platforms mesh with these preferences. While this generic linkage is hard to establish, Bueno de Mesquita (2008) uses formal modeling to demonstrate how restricting constituencies can lead to factionalization and increased extremism. This particular dynamic appears to have considerable support in the common finding of mutually reinforcing spirals of increased radicalization and narrowing support bases in qualitative studies of terrorist group formation (Della Porta 1992). The converse dynamic has also been observed in several qualitative studies, i.e. as VEOs attract larger constituent bases and enter mainstream politics, the amount and type of violence they produce becomes more restricted (Sawyer 2010).

Empirical Support Score: 3 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e. some in favor, some against the hypothesis), but more positive than negative findings

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: While this field is not fully developed and there has been mixed results, there is very strong applicability to VEOs in that all of the studies listed here directly examined VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

43: *If “buyers” (meaning the audience the organization seeks to serve) find the social and/or political change on offer by the VEO too costly, VEOs will modify their behavior.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Case studies of various sub-state conflicts provide considerably more evidence for the effect of war weariness leading to reduced support for violence and the desistence of individuals and groups from violence (Caselli and Della Porta 1991; Chenoweth 2007; Sawyer 2010). However, surveys in Northern Ireland found that the experience of violence tended to increase individuals’ support for violence (Hayes and McAllister 2001, 2005). Thus, the costs of violence may produce different effects at the individual and group levels, which require further examination.

Empirical Support Score: 3 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e. some in favor, some against the hypothesis), but more positive than negative findings

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: These studies directly examine the interaction between costs to constituents resulting from VEO violence, and state responses to it, and their support for violence.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

122: *If “buyers” (meaning the audience the organization seeks to serve) find the social and/or political change on offer by the VEO to be illegitimately provided, VEOs will modify their behavior*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: There is an extensive literature focused on the limitations cultural and ideological acceptability places on the use of certain types of tactics and targets by VEOs (Hoffman 1997; Jackson 2001; Mokyr 2002). This normative stricture has been especially well observed in the adoption, abandonment, and non-adoption of suicide terror tactics by various VEOs (Hafez 2006; Kalyvas and Sanchez-Cuenca 2005; Bloom and Horgan 2008). Similarly, case studies on the sudden desistence of the Armenian VEOs demonstrate that a group’s ‘illegitimate’ violence can destroy the support base for themselves and their rivals (Dugan et al. 2008).

Empirical Support Score: 5 = Multiple case studies supporting the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: These studies of the legitimacy of violent operations are directly relevant to efforts to influence VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

123: *Popular revulsion at VEO behavior in the short run may not be enough to stem violence, as the VEO will seek to “market” more effectively or “rebrand” their product.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: There is very little theoretical, much less empirical, study of this hypothesis. While there is some support for the influence of long-term opposition, short-term responses to VEO actions are not widely examined. What little evidence exists is mixed. For example, Sawyer (2010) found that the immediate, widespread revulsion from the Omagh Bombing in 1998 was critical for cementing a relatively stable peace in Northern Ireland. On the other hand, the only slightly less vocal expressions of outrage from within the Republican Movement at the use of “proxy bombs” in 1990 and the Warrington and Shankill bombings in 1993 had little apparent effect. Moreover, the Provisional IRA took no additional steps to change its brand image in the wake of these earlier public relations disasters. Thus, irrespective of engaging in efforts to rebrand, it appears

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VEOs may be able to survive short-term revulsion, but also may be severely damaged to the point of desistence by it.

Empirical Support Score: 2 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e., some in favor, some against the hypothesis) but more negative than positive findings

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: Although there is relatively little empirical evidence, it is entirely within the VEO context

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

146: *The existence of a substitute means or mechanism to achieve VEOs' goals reduces VEOs' violent activities.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: The complexities of the relationship between VEOs and non-violent organizations seeking similar goals have been explored extensively. Clearly, some VEOs form and desist because of changes in the opportunity structure to pursue their goals through non-violent means (Weinberg et al. 2009). However, Sawyer's (2010) qualitative study of Northern Irish Republicanism demonstrates that the VEO needs to buy into the substitute means for it to have a reductive effect – failure of the VEO to buy in may instead lead it to produce more violence because the substitute is seen as competition. Therefore, mere existence of opportunity structures are insufficient to reduce VEO violence; this is a finding strongly supported by the common observation of a strong correlation between democracy and terrorism (Eubank and Weinberg 1994, 2001; Li 2005; for an alternative explanation of this finding, see Drakos and Gofas 2006).

Empirical Support Score: 3 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e. some in favor, some against the hypothesis), but more positive than negative findings

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: The studies above apply concepts developed extensively in other fields of study directly to the behavior of VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

147: *Violence and nonviolence can be substitute means of achieving the same goals, therefore when a VEO pursues or engages in non-violent activities it will produce less violence.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Building in part off of Siquiera's (2005) formal modeling work on the interaction between violent and non-violent factions within a political movement, Sawyer's (2010) qualitative study of Northern Irish Republican VEOs appears to confirm this hypothesis. The Provisional IRA was drawn into a "spiral of peace," in which their increased production of non-violence reduced demand for violence. However, Weinberg et al. (2009) note that while 13% of the 203 cases of terrorist-party linkages (consisting of 47% of all terrorist groups) involve a terrorist group transitioning into a party and a further 12% founded a party, roughly 5% of the cases they examined involved groups that transitioned back into terrorism after forming a party. Thus, there is clearly a substitution between the two, but the hypothesized consequence is not universal. The continued violence produced by politically engaged VEOs, most notably Hamas, highlights the limitations of this hypothesis. Moreover, Siquiera (2005) uses formal models to make a compelling case that violent and non-violent politics are not always substitutes, and in some contexts can actually operate as complements, i.e. one increases support for the other.

Empirical Support Score: 4 = Single systematic case study supporting the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: The empirical evidence from both Sawyer (2010) and Weinberg et al. (2009) is directly drawn from the behavior of VEOs

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs

154: *The more competition (Five Forces) VEOs face for constituent support, the more violence VEOs produce (outbidding).*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Sawyer's (2010) qualitative study of Northern Irish Republicanism strongly supports the hypothesis. Bloom (2005) just focused on outbidding emanating from competition between violent rivals, as opposed to non-violent alternatives, and made a strong case for outbidding in the Palestinian case, and a less strong case the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Subsequent attempts to replicate this finding through a quantitative analysis, measuring competition as the number of rival VEOs, were unable to substantiate these findings more generally (Findley and Young 2010). However, by focusing too narrowly on one of the Five Forces, these studies provide only limited inferential traction on the hypothesis.

Empirical Support Score: 4 = Single systematic case study supporting the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: All of the studies discussed here directly study the behavior of VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

155: *Suicide terrorism is increased as the number of VEOs competing for societal support increases (outbidding).*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Bloom (2005) made a strong case for an outbidding process resulting in suicide terrorism by Palestinian groups (and a less strong case for Tamil ones). However, Findley and Young's (2010) quantitative analysis found weak or no support for the outbidding hypothesis for suicide and more general terrorism across cases. This is likely because both Bloom and Findley and Young use the number of rival VEOs as the proxy for competition, which ignores the relationship between the groups, as well as four of the other forces of competition.

Empirical Support Score: 2 = Multiple qualitative and/or quantitative studies with mixed results (i.e., some in favor, some against the hypothesis) but more negative than positive findings.

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: If suicide terrorism is the result of extreme outbidding, controlling the amount of competition VEOs face is potentially a critical means of influencing the behavior of VEOs.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

156: VEOs may engage in violence/may increase the use of violence in order to forestall formation of competitor organizations.

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: While there is very strong support for the proactive and reactive erection of barriers to entry by firms within the business literature, there is virtually no empirical evidence of this phenomenon by VEOs. Sawyer (2010) found support for increased violence being produced by VEOs shortly prior to new factions emerging and the apparent dampening effect on the threat of new entrants from massive crackdowns on rivals. However, given the limited data availability on the threat of entrants that never entered, the empirical evidence for this hypothesis is likely to remain severely limited.

Empirical Support Score: 4 = Single systematic case study supporting the hypothesis

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: While most of the literature on the creation of reactive barriers to entry is based on the behavior of firms in legitimate markets, Sawyer (2010) analyzed VEOs' creation of these barriers through violence.

Applicability Score: Direct: At least some of the empirical results directly concern the context of influencing VEOs.

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