

State tolerance of radical but nonviolent groups (NVEOs) provides a safety valve that reduces VEO recruitment.

143; 144

General Description of the Literature:

Several mechanisms have been suggested by which state tolerance of radical but nonviolent groups will reduce VEO emergence or recruitment by existing VEOs. Within political science, rational choice theorists have argued that dissidents will substitute nonviolent action for violent action when the violent action is repressed, and vice-versa (Lichbach 1987). Theorists who focus on grievance and resource mobilization perspectives have argued that allowing nonviolent expression of dissent lowers incentives for engaging in violent action (Gurr 2000, Gurr 2006). Economists have built theoretical models in which increasing the opportunity costs for terrorism and decreasing opportunity costs for nonviolent activities decreases use of terrorist violence (Frey and Luechinger 2003). However, other economists have argued that the utility of providing political space in lessening extremist violence will depend, in part, on the nature of group goals. Wintrobe (2006) argues that groups with indivisible goals may be more likely to use violence to attain those goals, regardless of factors such as the state allowing nonviolent expression of those grievances. Most studies do not look directly at recruitment but at violent activity.

Detailed Analyses

143: *State tolerance of radical but nonviolent groups (NVEOs) provides a safety valve that reduces VEO recruitment.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Testas (2002) conducts a qualitative case study of Algeria and concludes that the closure of political space was a key factor in explaining the escalation of religious violence (and the growth of Islamist VEOs) in that country. Fielding and Shortland (2010) conduct a time series analysis of the interaction between politically motivated Islamist attacks and government counter-insurgency actions. They conclude that allowing demonstrations acts as a "safety valve" and reduces the intensity of subsequent conflict. Dalacoura (2006), comparing the growth and relative strength of violent and nonviolent Islamist movements, finds mixed results. While in some cases, repression and exclusion of political Islamism are linked to the growth of VEOs, this is not so in all cases. Furthermore, while in some cases political inclusion and participation has led to the marginalization of VEOs and growth of nonviolent alternatives, in other countries repression has had the same effect.

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 empirical results include both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and look directly at how policies influence VEO behavior and/or growth. However, most look at Islamist VEOs, so findings may not apply in other cases. Furthermore, the studies only look indirectly at recruitment, using the ability of the VEO to carry out attacks as a proxy.

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

144: *Alternatively, state tolerance of NVEOs provides a transmission belt to VEOs.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Gurr (2000) presents statistical analysis that ethnic groups that have engaged in sustained protest (even when protest is not repressed by state authorities) are more likely to have segments of their population turn to violence, including sustained rebellion. This suggests that mere tolerance by the state of dissent or extremism, without some movement in terms of grievance alleviation, may not deter violence in the long run (although it does seem to deter violence in the short run). The mechanism suggested is that as individuals and/or organizations become frustrated with their inability to gain concessions via protest, they may join violent organizations (in the case of individuals) or adopt violence (in the case of organizations).

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: The single study does apply indirectly to VEOs, with the caveat that the ethnic group (which may contain VEOs) is the unit of analysis.

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

General comments:

There has been little empirical analysis at the level of analysis (individual) suggested by the hypothesis. Empirical studies of why people join extremist organizations suggest that the reasons are diverse and include affective ties in addition to ideological ties to organizations (Sageman 2004).

Bibliography:

- Dalacoura, Katerina. 2006. "Islamist Terrorism and the Middle East Democratic Deficit: Political Exclusion, Repression and the Causes of Terrorism." *Democratization* 13: 508-525.
- Fielding, David, and Anja Shortland. 2010. "'An Eye for an Eye, a Tooth for a Tooth': Political Violence and Counter-insurgency in Egypt." *Journal of Peace Research* 47: 433-448.
- Frey, Bruno S., and Simon Luechinger. 2003. "How to Fight Terrorism: Alternatives to Deterrence." *Defense and Peace Economics* 14(4): 237-249.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. 2000. *People vs. States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. 2006. "Economic Factors." In *The Roots of Terrorism*, edited by Louise Richardson, 85-102. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Lichbach, Mark Irving. 1987. "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31(2): 266-297.
- Sageman, Marc. 2004. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.



National Consortium for the
Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism

A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BASED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Testas, Abdelaziz. 2002. "The Roots of Algeria's Religious and Ethnic Violence." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 25: 161-183.

Wintrobe, Ronald. 2006. *Rational Extremism: The Political Economy of Radicalism*. London, England: Cambridge University Press.