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Alexander Moss April 6, 2025

Transformative Goals, Violent Methods, and International Opponents: How Revolutionary Ideology Affects Terrorism

by

Alexander Moss

David Davis
Adviser

Political Science

David Davis

Adviser

Courtney Freer

Committee Member

Renard Sexton

Committee Member

2025

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David Davis
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Abstract

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Does ideology affect rebel violence against civilians? I argue that revolutionary ideology's goal of significant political transformation, identification of violence as the sole or primary method for that transformation, and identification of the international order as opponents make rebel groups which have revolutionary ideology more likely to commit terrorism and to target transnationally in terrorist attacks. Following prevailing arguments regarding nationalist ideology's dampening effect on terrorism use, I also expect nationalist revolutionary groups to be less likely to commit terrorism and target transnationally than non-nationalist revolutionary groups but more likely than non-revolutionary groups. Using a dataset I created for this project which qualitatively measures the presence of revolutionary ideology among Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) rebel groups, I empirically test the concept of revolutionary ideology for the first time. I conduct a large-n analysis using a rare events logistic regression to calculate the revolutionary groups' likelihood to commit terrorism. I find that both non-nationalist and nationalist revolutionary groups are more likely to commit terrorism and target transnationally than non-revolutionary groups, and I find that nationalist revolutionary groups, though slightly less likely than non-nationalists to commit attacks and target transnationally, are closer than initially expected. Ultimately, this research demonstrates the importance of considering ideology in explanations for rebel behavior, especially ideology's identification of methods and opponents.

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Introduction

Does ideology affect rebel violence against civilians? The Algerian Civil War (1992-2002) offers a puzzling illustration of this question. The "Black Decade," as it came to be known, had its origins in 1989 when the National Liberation Front (FLN) which had ruled Algeria since independence in 1962 allowed other political parties to legally operate. The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a Sunni Islamist[1] party advocating for conservative social policies, competed electorally against the secular FLN and quickly surged in popularity. The FIS decisively won the 1990 local elections and was poised to win the second round of national elections in 1992 when the Algerian military intervened, cancelling elections and imprisoning party members *en masse*. Many of those not arrested took up arms.

But the FIS was not the only Islamist actor involved in the war. The two preeminent rebel actors during the war were the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), the armed wing of the FIS, and its rival the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Important to the question above, they differed markedly in their treatment of civilians during the Algerian Civil War despite similar situational factors (civil war against the same hostile government) and promoting relatively similar programs for the creation of an "Islamic state." While the AIS focused its militancy against the secular Algerian government and did not engage in one-sided violence against civilians,[2] the GIA—in addition to fighting both the government and the AIS—was responsible for widespread and brutal massacres

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[1] The term Islamist here and throughout the paper refers to a broad program of political ideologies which seek to incorporate Islam into politics in some way. Because this paper focuses on political violence, violent Islamists like jihadists will be referred to most frequently with this term, but Islamist/Islamism does not exclusively refer to jihadists or Salafis and the reader should not assume a group is jihadist or Salafi simply for use of the term.

[2] The UCDP does not record any year in which the AIS was responsible for killing 25 or more civilians, and in their actor narrative explain, the "AIS has…not been involved in the third category of violence, one-sided, violence directed toward civilians" (UCDP actor 537, n.d.)

of Algerians that shocked even Osama bin Laden.[3] In these massacres and several transnational terrorist attacks in France, the GIA killed an estimated 1,465 civilians across 11 years (UCDP actor 538, n.d.).

The question raised is why did these two groups' strategy regarding civilians differ so markedly when they experienced similar conflict dynamics and *prima facie* appear so similar in programmatic ideology? Hafez (2020) argues that the "fratricidal" massacres which dominate most of the civilian death toll can be explained by the GIA's relative extremity compared to the AIS. He explains that certain irreconcilable differences over conflict framing, conflict objectives, and targeting policies alongside competition over the same constituency led the relatively extreme GIA to fratricidally massacre AIS supporters and potential AIS supporters. His argument is very helpful to understanding conflict dynamics between groups competing over the same constituency, and he explores what makes a group comparatively "extreme" or "moderate." But it does not explain everything. The argument accounts for the massacres but not the GIA's transnational terrorism like its 1995 bombing in France that killed 10 and injured over 200 (United Nations 2022), and the argument does not fully investigate how the conflict framing, conflict objectives, and targeting policies of "extreme" groups underpin violence against civilians more generally. I argue that the beliefs Hafez identifies as "extreme" constitute a revolutionary ideology which itself acts as a major causal mechanism for rebel violence against domestic and, especially, international civilians through its identification of violence as a primary

[3] Lawrence Wright (2006) explains: "Even bin Laden recoiled—if not from the violence [committed by the GIA] itself, then from the international revulsion directed at the Islamist project" (190).

tool for political change, its rejection of the international order, and the relative extremity of its goals.

In this paper, I examine how revolutionary ideology affects rebel violence against civilians and transnational targeting using a large-n analysis. Drawing on existing descriptive frameworks and definitions of revolutionary ideology, I created a new dataset qualitatively measuring revolutionary ideology in order to operationalize the concept for the first time. These results highlight the salience of ideology's identification of methods and opponents as an explanatory factor for rebel behavior, and this analysis answers calls to consider variation within discrete programmatic categories of the "Big-isms" like Marxism, Islamism, and nationalism (Schubinger and Zelina 2017, Valbjørn et al. 2024). These results also more generally highlight areas of interest for reducing violence against civilians.

Conceptualizing Ideology and its Impact on Rebel Behavior

Although there has been significant research over decades investigating the relationship between ideology and rebel behavior,[4] a common meaning for the term "ideology" has eluded scholars.[5] While most definitions explain ideology as being some set of organized ideas with defined goals and plans of action, there is still variance on exact terminology. For example, Walter (2017) offers a broad definition for ideology as "a set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved" (15). While this definition certainly applies to how this

[4] A non-exhaustive list: Crenshaw 1972, Drake 1998, Sanín and Wood 2014, Walter 2017, Ahmed 2018a, Ahmed 2018b, Thaler 2018, Leader Maynard 2019, Schmidt-Feuerheed 2023, Dixon and Lawson 2022, Belgioioso and Thurber 2024, Joyce and Fortna 2024

[5] See Gerring (1997) for a rather extensive definitional framework for the term and Leader Maynard (2019) for a more recent, though less thorough, exploration of definitions.

paper analyzes ideology, especially its motivating and instructive aspects, it lacks specificity in which beliefs compose ideology, making it difficult to identify where ideological variations may lie. Alternatively, Drake (1998) defines ideology as "the beliefs, values, principles, and objectives—however ill-defined or tenuous—by which a group defines its distinctive political identity and aims…[and] provides a motive and framework for action" (55). Drake's definition certainly expands on Walter's, and includes the important point that ideologies form political identities, but it still lacks specificity in regard to which "beliefs, values, principles, and objectives" compose ideology. Sanín and Wood (2014) offer this specificity by defining ideology as "a more or less systematic set of ideas that includes the identification of a referent group (a class, ethnic, or other social group), an enunciation the grievances or challenges that the group confronts, the identification of objectives on behalf of that group…, and a (perhaps vaguely defined) program of action" (215). This paper uses Sanín and Wood's definition for ideology because of this specificity but will also keep in mind Drake's point on how ideology helps groups define their "distinctive political identity."

Through its articulation of a referent group, grievances on behalf of that group, objectives to address those grievances, and a program of action to achieve those objectives, ideology has important influences on rebel behavior. As Leader Maynard (2019) explains, "Ideologies are not simply idealistic political programs pursued with a blind disregard for strategic interests, but shape actors' understandings of security, strategy, and power politics" (637). He identifies four pathways through which ideology shapes these understandings and affects rebel behavior: commitment, adoption, conformity, and instrumentalization. These pathways account for both

sincere actions derived from internalized beliefs (commitment and adoption)[6] as well as actions derived from structural factors which are nonetheless in accordance with the group's ideology (conformity and instrumentalization).[7] In this way, "contrary to the assumptions of many ideology-sceptics, large numbers of fervent 'true believers' are not necessary for ideology to matter" in determining rebel behavior (643). Or as Ahmed (2018b) explains, "*group's* actions are guided and instructed by ideological beliefs," even if individual combatants are not (380).

At the group level, ideology has been used to explain variations in rebel targeting (Drake 1997, Ahmed 2018b), selection of tactics (Ahmed 2018a), use of terrorism (Belgioioso and Thurber 2024, Joyce and Fortna 2024), and the use of violence more generally (Schmidt-Feuerheed 2023). What makes ideology especially important is its ability to explain variations between rebels experiencing the same or similar conditions. For example, Schmidt-Feuerheerd (2023) demonstrates how the founding ideologies of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and the Islamic Group created path dependencies toward their respective use of non-violent or violent strategies, despite all groups experiencing the same state crackdowns and political liberalization. Similarly, Drake (1997) demonstrates how ideology identifies targets of

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[6] The distinction between the two pathways is the amount of personal devotion to the actual ideology. The commitment pathway covers those rebels who are intrinsically motivated by the ideology. These are the "true believers." The adoption pathway covers those who "sincerely accept ideological positions even though they do not feel any intrinsic commitment to the ideas involved" (Leader Maynard 2019, 640). The adoption pathway often operates through a rebel's personal identification with the "identities or organizational roles they feel genuinely committed to" (Ibid). Still, both pathways involve internalized and sincerely acted beliefs. See pages 639-640.

[7] Conformity covers actions taken that are in accordance with the ideology but which are not internalized by the fighter. Conformity can occur vertically (e.g., coercion by leadership) or horizontally (e.g., peer pressure). Instrumentalization covers the "top-down" use of ideology to motivate otherwise non-committed audiences to violence (e.g., violence entrepreneurs), the "bottom-up" use of ideology by followers for personal advancement (e.g., careerism), and the adoption of ideology in solicitation of support/sponsorship. In all of these cases, actors are limited by the costs of deviating from the instrumentalized ideology. See Leader Maynard 2019 pages 641-642.

violence through his exploration of Northern Irish Republican and Unionist violence during The Troubles.

Revolutionary Ideology

Having established a definition of ideology and understanding some of its impacts, the concept of revolutionary ideology can be explored. In the context of "revolutionary terrorism," Crenshaw (1972) defines revolution as a principally violent "attempt to seize political power from the established regime of a state, if successful causing fundamental political and social change" (384). Lawson (2019) offers a similar definition of revolution, describing it as "collective mobilization that attempts to quickly and forcibly overthrow an existing regime in order to transform political, economic, and symbolic relations" (5). He further highlights how this definition emphasizes collective mobilization, excluding "elite-driven change" from consideration; speed in contrast to long-term evolutionary reform processes; force and "the importance of conflict, compulsion, and transgression to revolutions"; "extra-constitutional[ity]"; and the truly systemic nature of revolutionary transformation (Ibid). This paper will use Lawson's definition for revolution because of its greater specificity while also bearing in mind the importance of violence and, especially, terrorism highlighted by Crenshaw.

Scholars have identified both Marxist[8] and Islamist actors as revolutionaries.[9] For example, Sánchez-Cuenca (2019) identifies leftist militant groups such as the Red Brigades in

[8] The term "Marxist" here and in the paper overall refer to a broad umbrella of far-left socialist and/or communist ideologies including, but not limited to, Marxism-Leninism, Maoism, and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. This usage follows standard terminology when studying political violence (Schubinger and Zelina 2017).
[9] While I do not conceptually exclude groups which are not Marxist or Islamist from being revolutionary, given the time frame of the analysis (1989-2017) and datasets being used, they constitute all of the groups which will be

Italy and the Red Army Faction in West Germany as revolutionaries according to Crenshaw's concepts. Likewise, Hegghammer (2014) notes revolutionary aspects among certain Islamist actors in his typology of Islamist groups. The typology separates groups according to five rationales[10] (state oriented, nation oriented, *Ummah*[11] oriented, morality oriented, and sectarian oriented) and two manifestations (non-violent and violent). According to this typology "socio-revolutionaries" are those Islamists like the GIA of the Algerian Civil War or Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) who seek to violently topple and transform the state in which they are based. Notably, Hegghammer's typology excludes "violent irrendists," such as Hamas, and violent *Ummah* oriented organizations like al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) from this classification. This typology assumes a certain mutual exclusivity between these aspects which, as will be discussed later, too rigidly separates ideological objectives. Nonetheless, Hegghammer's identification of some, but not all, Islamists as revolutionary actors is important. While he does not explicitly define "revolutionary ideology," Kalyvas (2018) also highlights common "revolutionary" characteristics between Marxist and Islamist insurgencies. Specifically, he points to their transnational support networks, strong beliefs about a new political order in opposition to liberal capitalism, and endorsement of violence as the primary method for establishing this order. He argues that these beliefs created highly motivated cadres, leading the insurgencies toward "more far-reaching consequences than would otherwise be possible" (43).

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defined as such. For this reason, the study will remain primarily focused on revolutionary ideology within these two "Big -isms."

[10] He describes these rationales as "mid-term political aims and strategy" (258). Thus, his rationales compose a portion of ideology.

[11] *Ummah* is an Islamic term describing the entire global community of Muslims

Dixon and Lawson's (2022) typology of terrorism also provides a useful framework for the conceptualization of revolutionary ideology. Using Lawson's (2019) definition of revolution mentioned previously, they identify "revolutionary terrorism" as being inherent to "movements that aim to capture and hold territory, and that see themselves as part of a wider movement where the goal is to transform international as well as domestic orders" (2121). The authors also align rebel groups which use terrorism along two continuums: maximalism/minimalism and order-maintaining/order-transforming. Maximalists are groups which aim to assume state control or to govern territory whereas minimalists do not. Order-maintaining groups aim to enforce changes within only one state while order-transforming groups "see themselves as part of a global insurgency in which local conflicts are enmeshed in a broader goal: overturning the international state system and replacing it with a new order" (2124).[12] In other words, order-transforming groups seek transnational transformation. These continuums create four group types: Minimalist and order-maintaining "single-issue terrorists" (e.g., anti-abortion terrorists), maximalist and order-maintaining "national revolutionary terrorists" (e.g., Provisional Irish Republican army), minimalist and order transforming "Anti-systemic terrorists" (e.g., Red Army Faction, Earth Liberation Front), and maximalist and order-transforming "transnational revolutionary terrorists" (e.g., Islamic State, AQAP) (2125). Additionally, the authors note fluidity among these categories. For example, "maximalist cross-over groups," including Hamas and the Taliban, are those groups who "may claim to pose no threat to international order" but whose "high-profile positions within transnational movements set an example, even a template, that others seek to emulate" (Ibid).

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[12] For a visual aid and examples of such groups, see Dixon and Lawson (2022: 2125)

Synthesizing the above definitions, this paper defines revolutionary ideology as an ideology which seeks to control the state in order to fundamentally transform social, political, and economic relations in service of a broader transnational movement, and which identifies violence as a key instrument in accomplishing this task. In terms of the aspects of ideology identified by Sanín and Wood (2014), revolutionary ideology can have variable referent groups (e.g., the international proletariat, the *Ummah*) but the ideology commonly identifies the existing international order as responsible for the grievances faced by this referent group. In response, it prescribes destructive violence aimed at overthrowing the international system—rather than just a single state—as its program of action and objective. Importantly, this aim of overthrowing the international system does not preclude a focus on establishing power or authority in a single state as a mid-term objective. Examples of such a strategy include revolutionary Islamism's fight against "the near enemy."[13]

In the terms of Dixon and Lawson's typology, all order-transforming maximalists, maximalist cross-over groups, and some order-transforming minimalists have revolutionary ideology. The critical aspect that makes cross-over groups revolutionary despite their local focus is the way they enmesh themselves in the transnational ideological struggle. To illustrate, the large number of "near enemy" focused violent Islamist groups who answered Abdullah Azzam's call to "join the caravan" and wage *jihad* against the Soviet Union demonstrated and reinforced a transnational outlook in their ideology (Gerges 2009). Some order-transforming minimalists are

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[13] For many decades, revolutionary Islamism was primarily focused on overthrowing local Arab regimes (the "near enemy") rather than the United States or other foreign powers (the "far enemy"). Gerges (2009) notes that this was primarily out of "material capability and necessity" rather than ideological (50). For example, Ayman al-Zawahiri, at the time leader of EIJ, argued "that the road to Arab Jerusalem must pass through Cairo," and that "'Jerusalem will not be liberated until the battle for Egypt and Algeria is won'" (Ibid). Zawahiri would later become second in-command and eventually leader of al-Qaeda.

also considered revolutionary despite their supposed lack of interest in state control. The critical factor here is how a "bottom-up attempt to foment a revolutionary situation, leading to international transformation" fits into the larger plans (Dixon and Lawson 2022, 2127). For example, the Red Army Faction, identified in the typology as order-transforming minimalist, would be considered revolutionary for its interest in agitating the masses to overthrow the West German government as part of a global revolution because this ideology still demonstrates a clear interest in the transformation of the global political system and state organization. On the other hand, the Earth Liberation Front, also identified as order-transforming minimalist, would not be considered revolutionary, as its ideology lacks significant interest in state control.

Importantly, revolutionary ideology is not the sole ideology of rebel groups. It describes a part of ideology that works in tandem with some of the "Big-ism" programmatic ideologies like Marxism, Islamism, and nationalism. As the connections of Marxism and Islamism to revolutionary of ideology have already been explored, it is important to consider how nationalism interacts, especially since there is not a scholarly consensus on how to approach the question. As discussed previously, Hegghammer (2014) identifies Hamas as a "violent irredentist" group—rather than a "socio-revolutionary" group—but Dixon and Lawson (2022) identify it as a "maximalist cross-over" group. Hegghammer strongly emphasizes the nationalist aspect of Hamas' Islamism whereas Dixon and Lawson strongly emphasize the ideological role Hamas' nationalism plays in international militant Islamism. A number of Marxist groups face similar definitional difficulties. For example, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) has often been described as a predominantly nationalist group (UCDP actor 205, n.d.)

with a Marxist-Leninist ideology, missing its transnational revolutionary characteristics and strong interest in building Marxist-Leninist institutions (PFLP 1970, 50-51).[14]

However, not all nationalist groups are revolutionary according to this paper's definition. Dixon and Lawson explain that there are some rebels who are solely interested in their local, domestic struggle. These "order-maintaining maximalists" aim for "recognition *by* the international system, *within* the international system" and "leverage the language of, and strengthen the norms around sovereignty, statehood and self-determination" (2123). They may have limited transnational connections, as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA) maintained, but their focus is domestic, and "if they are defeated, they cannot relocate and take up the struggle elsewhere" as al-Qaeda notably did several times (2124). These groups may even engage in some terrorism beyond their immediate borders like the PIRA's 1979 attack on a British Army barracks in Brussels; however, as Dixon and Lawson emphasize, their focus remains on attacking domestic enemies. In other words, "the main aim of *international* terrorism is to weaken *domestic* regimes" (Ibid.).

What is Terrorism and Why is it Used?

Terrorism, like ideology, has attracted a variety of definitions.[15] For example, Enders and Sandler (2000) define terrorism as "the premeditated use or threat of violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate victims" (309). While such a definition may be useful for

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[14] The PFLP was also notable for its transitional relationships with a number of Marxist-Leninist militant groups. For example, it hijacked Lufthansa Flight 181 on behalf of the West German Red Army Faction in 1977.
[15] Differing definitions the author found include Crenshaw (1972), Drake (1998), Enders and Sandler (2000), Kydd and Walter (2006), Richardson (2006b), Fazal (2018), Fortna et al. (2018), Dixon and Lawson (2022).

very broad studies of clandestine, asymmetric violence, this definition is so broad as to include the targeting of security forces and infrastructure (Ahmed 2018b) which is neither the focuses of this paper nor commonly considered terrorist violence. Nonetheless, it does importantly highlight that terrorist violence aims to provoke some response and influence a broader audience. Fortna et al. (2018) define terrorism "as the systematic use of intentionally indiscriminate violence against public civilian targets to influence a wider audience" (783). As the authors argue, this definition restricts terrorism to acts of violence against civilians while also remaining sufficiently broad to not "draw a mutually exclusive distinction between terrorism and guerrilla warfare or insurgency" (Ibid.). Avoiding arbitrary separation between the two is important because the vast majority of terrorism happens in conflict regions during civil wars (Findley and Young 2012); however, this definition intentionally excludes discriminate violence against civilians like intimidation terrorism (Kydd and Walter 2006, elaborated in next section) which limits its usefulness in this paper's analysis. Thus, this paper uses Kydd and Walter's (2006) definition of terrorism "as the use of violence against civilians by nonstate actors to attain political goals" (52) because this definition restricts terrorism to deliberate acts of violence against civilians while not excluding discriminate violence. As elaborated in the next section, this paper also strongly bears in mind Enders and Sandler's point of the wide audience terrorism seeks to influence as well as Fortna et al.'s point that terrorist tactics can be used as part of guerrilla warfare and insurgency.

The Logics of Terrorism

As the above definition implies, terrorism is not committed irrationally. Instead, it is deliberately planned and executed according to rational strategies with certain goals in mind. The five main logics of terrorism identified by Kydd and Walter (2006) are attrition, intimidation,

provocation, spoiling, and outbidding. Hafez (2020) also adds the logic of "fratricidal" terrorism. Table 1 arranges these six logics by whom they target and what effect they intend to elicit. Intimidation and fratricidal terrorism target a rebel group's own population, what I will refer to as its "constituent population." These civilians are supporters or potential supporters and include the civilian population living under rebel governance or areas of rebel activity. Intimidation terrorism aims to coerce the constituent population into supporting the rebel group, and fratricidal terrorism aims to eliminate competing "proxidistant" factions.[16]

Terrorism logics which target rebels' opponents—typically regime supporters—include attrition, provocation, spoiling, and outbidding. Attrition intends to wear down the regime into capitulating to rebel demands; provocation to earn constituent support by provoking the regime into a heady-handed response; spoiling to derail peace negotiations by decreasing trust between rebels and the regime;[17] and outbidding to demonstrate greater resolve to constituents and earn their support. Terrorist attacks may also serve multiple logics. For example, attacks seeking to spoil peace negotiations may also attempt to outbid negotiating rebel factions (Pearlman 2009).

Ideology can affect the salience of these logics. For example, groups which follow extremist ideologies,[18] are more likely to commit provocation and outbidding terrorism because of the unpopularity of their ideology (Joyce and Fortna 2024). Due to the extremity of their demands, these groups are also more likely to commit spoiling terrorism in order to

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[16] Hafez (2020) identifies proxidistancy as occurring when groups from the "same family tree (e.g., communists, nationalists, or fundamentalists)" split along moderate and extremist lines on conflict issues (605). Elaborated more in this section.
[17] See also Kydd and Walter (2002).
[18] Defined by Joyce and Fortna (2024) as relative to the *status quo*. For example, a rebel group which seeks to transform the system instead of reform the system or to secede instead of receive autonomy is "extreme." This definition is also context specific.

Type of Terrorism	Target	Logic
Intimidation	Constituent Population	Coerce constituents into supporting rebels
Fratricide	Constituent Population	Eliminate competing rebel faction
Attrition	Opponents	Wear down opponents and force them to capitulate to rebel demands
Provocation	Opponents	Earn constituent support by provoking opponents into heavy-handed response
Spoiling	Opponents	Prevent moderate factions from negotiating peace with opponents
Outbidding	Opponents	Earn constituent support by demonstrating greater resolve than other rebel factions

Table 1: Types of terrorism, their targets, and logic for use

prevent compromise between rebel moderates and opponents (Ibid). Relative extremity also plays a significant role in fratricidal terrorism. Hafez (2020) identifies that only groups which are "proxidistant," meaning groups with the same or a very similar programmatic ideology but starkly different positions on conflict framing, conflict objectives, and targeting, will experience fratricide. He argues that this similar programmatic ideology forces groups to compete over the same constituency and that their differing positions on conflict framing, conflict objectives, and targeting leads them to "perceive their irreconcilable ideological divides as a major threat of factional survival" (605). Fratricide is not these groups only option, however. Proxidistant factions may also pursue balancing, spoiling, outbidding, and defecting behaviors to compete. In fact, only the relative extremists, those groups who engage in "out-group homogenization" and "out-group demonization," engage in "total war for system transformation," hold "Manichean" views, and are "expansive and indiscriminate" in their targeting portfolios, are able to internally

justify and actually conduct fratricide (610). Notably, the characteristics of Hafez's "extremist" groups bear a strong resemblance to the definition of revolutionary ideology used in this paper.

Ideology can also limit the use of terrorism. As Fazal (2017, 2018) has argued, groups which follow a nationalist separatist ideology commit less terrorism because they ideologically aim to establish their own state and, therefore, need recognition from the international community.[19] In other words, nationalist separatist ideology disincentivizes terrorism use because the perceived costs of losing international support are amplified. In their exploration of extremists, Joyce and Fortna (2024) had findings consistent with this argument. Despite meeting the definition of extremist, separatist groups had no statistically significant relationship with terrorism use when compared against other groups fighting over territory.

However, this relationship appears to change when certain ideological programs exist alongside nationalist separatism. Ahmed (2018b) found both religious and leftist nationalist separatist ideology made groups more likely to commit acts of terrorism against a variety of civilian targets. However, she separates target types across multiple categories, making it difficult to ascertain whether religious and leftist nationalist separatist groups are less likely to commit terrorist attacks compared to their non-nationalist counterparts. For example, religious nationalist separatists were found *more* likely to commit terrorism against a broad category of "civilian targets" than non-nationalist religious groups, but leftist nationalist separatists were less likely to commit terrorism against "civilian targets" and "business targets" (which include indiscriminate attacks against public businesses like cafés) than non-nationalist leftists.

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[19] Fazal (2017) defines the international community "as the set of actors committed to the principles embodied in the UN charter" (72)

	NON-NATIONALIST	NATIONALIST
REVOLUTIONARY	al-Qaeda; Armed Islamic Group (GIA); Communist Party of the Philippines	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Abu Sayyaf Group
NON-REVOLUTIONARY	Lord's Resistance Army; Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)	Provisional Irish Republican Army; National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad

Table 2: A sample of groups according to revolutionary/non-revolutionary and nationalist/non-nationalist ideologies

As mentioned previously, some revolutionary groups also have nationalist separatist components to their ideologies. A small sample of examples are listed in Table 2. Nationalist revolutionary groups have territorial ambitions to separate from— or in the case of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict eliminate—a rival ethnicity's state in order to not only create a separate homeland for their ethnicity but to also fundamentally transform social, political, and economic relations in this new homeland in the name of a global movement. Because revolutionary ideology identifies violence as the sole/primary method of political change and identifies the international order as an opponent (the exact audience nationalist separatists supposedly court), how nationalist ideology mixes with revolutionary ideology is unclear. In light of the incomplete findings regarding nationalism's effect on terrorism, this paper also seeks to answer how nationalist ideology affects terrorism use among revolutionary groups, if at all.

Though a sample of non-revolutionary nationalist groups are included in Table 2, they are not part of this paper's investigation. The relative extremity of their secessionist goals has no relationship to their use of terrorism (Joyce and Fortna 2024) and they necessarily lack one of the qualifying aspects of revolutionary ideology (see Appendix A) which are the key mechanisms of this paper's theory (see next section). As a result, their inclusion would expand this paper's scope too far beyond its focus on revolutionary ideology.

Theory and Hypotheses:

This paper argues that revolutionary ideology leads rebel groups to engage in greater violence against civilians in two ways. First, revolutionary ideology's identification of violence as the primary tool for political transformation (Crenshaw 1972) internally legitimizes terrorism, thereby reducing the perceived costs of its use. In other words, the identification of violence as the primary method of political action permits—and perhaps even necessitates—its use to push the enemy toward capitulation (attrition), to enforce constituent support for the survival of the group (intimidation), and/or to prevent negotiations from ending a "revolutionary moment" (spoiling).

Second, as extremists relative to the *status quo*, revolutionary groups will be more likely to commit acts of terrorism because of a need to attract support via provocation, perpetuate the struggle to achieve their extreme aims (spoiling), and/or to outbid moderate opposition (Joyce and Fortna 2024). Additionally, as extremists, revolutionary groups will be more likely to commit fratricidal terrorism in situations of proxidistancy (Hafez 2020). From this theoretical argument can be derived the following hypothesis:

> ***H1:*** *Rebel groups which follow a revolutionary ideology are more likely to engage in terrorism than groups which do not follow a revolutionary ideology*

As demonstrated in Figure 1, these two mechanisms and the terrorism logics which they engender have implications on the types of civilians targeted. Intervening in this system are revolutionary ideology's grievances against the existing international order and identification of the international order as an opponent. Thus, revolutionary groups view

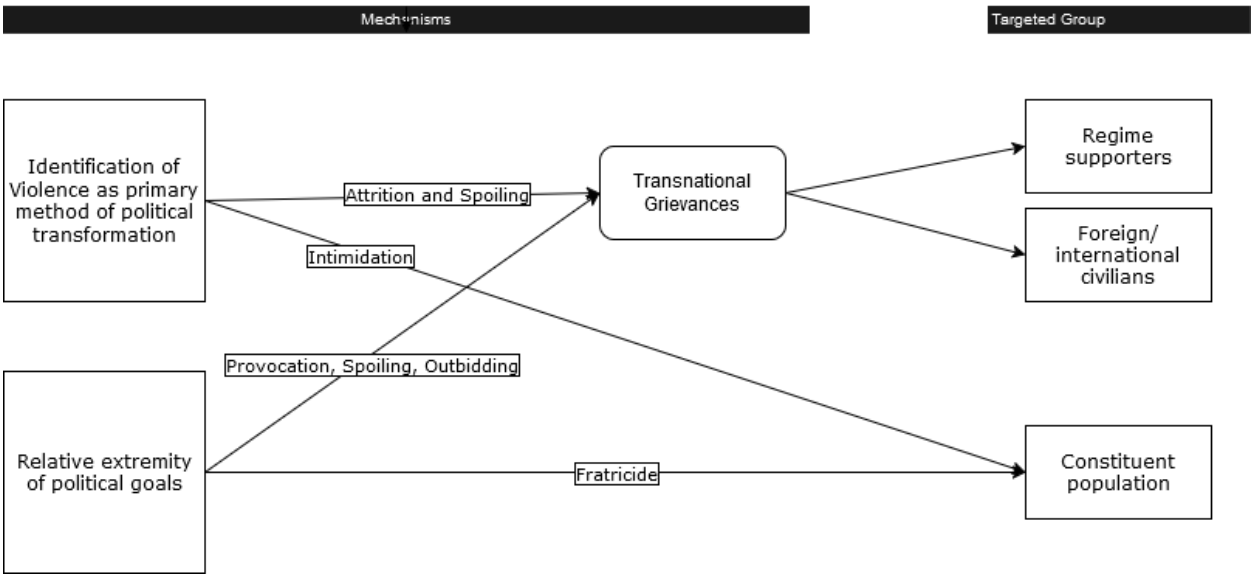

Figure 1: Relationship between revolutionary ideology, terrorism, and targeting

attacks on foreign citizens, international agencies, or otherwise transnational targets as symbolically similar to attacks on the regime and regime supporters. As these transnational grievances are a key and generally unique component of revolutionary ideology, other rebels will not consider transnational targets symbolically similar to the regime in the same way. Thus, a second hypothesis regarding targeting behaviors can be derived:

> ***H2:*** *Rebel groups which follow a revolutionary ideology are more likely to commit terrorist attacks against foreign citizens, international agencies, or otherwise transnational targets than non-revolutionary groups*

Because nationalist separatist ideology aims for international recognition, revolutionary groups which are also nationalist[20] should not be able to fully reject the international system in the same way that non-nationalist revolutionary groups can. The perceived costs of terrorism, especially

[20] Defined here as meaning groups which claim to represent a national, ethnic, and/or religious minority and seek to separate that minority from the state.

transnational terrorism, are higher for nationalist revolutionary groups than for non-nationalist revolutionary groups for the same reason. Thus,

> ***H3:*** *Rebel groups whose ideology is both revolutionary and nationalist are less likely to engage in terrorism than non-nationalist revolutionary groups*
>
> ***H4:*** *Rebel groups whose ideology is both revolutionary and nationalist are less likely to commit terrorist attack against foreign citizens, foreign agencies, or otherwise transnational targets than non-nationalist revolutionary groups.*

However, revolutionary ideology still causes revolutionary groups to reject the international system in ways that non-revolutionary groups cannot. Therefore,

> ***H5:*** *Rebel groups whose ideology is both nationalist and revolutionary are more likely to engage in terrorism than groups whose ideology is not revolutionary.*

Research Design

This paper investigates these hypotheses through the analysis of non-state armed groups fighting civil wars at the group-year level using three categorical variables (non-revolutionary, non-nationalist revolutionary, nationalist revolutionary) and terrorism events data.[21] The population examined in this study is gathered from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) Conflict Issues Dataset (Brosché and Sundberg 2023) which includes nearly all armed non-state

[21] The group-year rather than the group level is used because of UCDP umbrella designations for certain conflicts (e.g., "Kashmir insurgents") and because a small handful of groups do change ideology over time (see independent variable section and/or coding notes). Additionally, the group-year level allows for a greater number of observations in the analysis.

actors since 1989 involved in conflicts with at least 25 battle deaths in one year.[22] The Conflict Issues Dataset, sources cited in the data, UCDP and Mapping Militants Project narratives, other research narratives from think tanks or governments, and rebel statements and documents were used to code the independent variable (revolutionary ideology). The dependent variable, likelihood of terrorism events and of international/transnational terrorist events, was examined principally via the Global Terrorism Dataset (GTD) (START 2022), using the Terrorism in Armed Conflict dataset (Fortna et al. 2022) to connect GTD events to UCDP actor ID's. The UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) (Sundberg and Melander 2013, Davies et al. 2024) was also used to generate a list of UCDP events of one-sided violence as a robustness test for several hypotheses.

Dependent Variable

Two dependent variables are measured: the likelihood of a group committing any terrorist attack and the likelihood of a group committing an international/transnational terrorist attack. Both variables are measured by likelihood, that is, the probability that the number of either deaths or number of international/transnational attacks, respectively, is >0. In order to remain consistent with this paper's definition of terrorism, GTD events covering attacks against non-civilian targets (e.g., military, police, other non-state actors, violent political parties, infrastructure) were removed from analysis. However, attacks which targeted civilian members

[22] Some actors have been given umbrella titles such as "Kashmir Insurgents." While individual actor profiles for groups underneath those umbrella terms exist, they were not included in the Conflict Issues Dataset. Because the Conflict Issues Dataset was used as a major tool to code groups as revolutionary, only those groups in the Conflict Issues Dataset are examined.

of a government (e.g., civil servants, politicians, diplomats) are included in this measurement. Although these victims are part of governments likely opposed to the goals of the group, they are included because assassinations are an irregular form of violence outside of combat zones that groups seeking to violently transform political society may use. Additionally, to ensure only events with civilian deaths were counted in the dependent variable, I created a new variable in the GTD dataset which takes the absolute value of the difference between the total number of people killed and number of perpetrators killed. [23] For the robustness test, the UCDP GED's (Sundberg and Melander 2013, Davies et al. 2024) events of one-sided violence fatalities were used. Because analysis takes place at a group-year level, the total number of deaths from events throughout the year are aggregated into a per-year fatality count.

The likelihood of international terrorist attacks is calculated using the GTD's "international ideological" variable which compares the nationality[24] of the perpetrator group with the nationality of the victim group (multinational perpetrators or victims are automatically international in this variable).[25] The "international miscellaneous" variable which compares the location of an attack to the nationality of the victims is used as a robustness check because it does not require information about the perpetrator. This is to ensure that cases of multinational

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[23] Strangely, there are 2 observations in this analysis' condensed version of the GTD set where the number of perpetrator fatalities is greater than the total fatalities. This should not be possible since the total fatalities is supposed to include perpetrator fatalities, hence the creation of this variable in the first place. Because it was only 2 observations among thousands, I used an absolute value to prevent negative values in the variable from interfering with analysis.

[24] It is my understanding that the GTD means nation-state of origin by this term, based on how they describe their coding. Their codebook does not explicitly state their definition of the term, and the nationality data that created this variable is not available for distribution.

[25] According to the GTD codebook, "in cases where perpetrator groups represent non-contiguous contested territory (e.g., Puerto Rico, Corsica, Northern Ireland) or a secure border (e.g., West Bank and Gaza Strip) the nationality of the perpetrator group is coded as the parent country and attacks against the parent country are coded as ideologically domestic" (57). This, importantly, prevents nationalist terrorist attacks from being coded as international.

perpetrator groups are not driving the results, especially because revolutionary groups, as discussed previously, have a transnational outlook and often fight in each other's wars (Kalyvas 2018). Once again, because the unit of analysis is group-year, the number of international attacks in a year are aggregated into a per-year attack count.

Independent Variable

The explanatory mechanism of this analysis is group ideology. The types of ideology considered for this analysis are non-nationalist revolutionary, nationalist revolutionary, and non-revolutionary. Groups are assigned into these categories based upon the extent of political transformation they seek to enact, if their ideology challenges the international order, if they identify violence as the sole or primary method of political transformation, whether they identify the international order as their opponent, and if they identify nationalist separatist goals in their ideology. Selection on the first category, extent of political transformation, is measured by the presence of the conflict goal "change political system" in the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset. The second criterion, whether the ideology challenges the international order, is selected by including only those "change political system" groups which seek to establish a socialist or Islamist state. The remaining categories of the "change political system" variable—democracy and other—are not included because changes to democracy do not challenge the existing international order in the time-frame studied (1989-2017) and because other does not include enough information to confidently indicate a challenge to the international order. These variables were not coded in the dataset as mutually exclusive, so this limitation should not cause a significant number of groups that should be coded revolutionary to be lost. One such exception is the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) which was only ever coded as wanting to

change toward democracy. Thus, as a confidence measure, organizations belonging to the change to democracy or change to other variables were still be consulted to ensure accuracy. Any addition via this process was added to the coding notes.

To evaluate the criterion of identifying violence as the sole or primary method of political transformation and the criterion of identifying the international order as an opponent, actor narratives from the UCDP and the Mapping Militants Project (MMP), other scholarly works, and rebel documents and statements were referenced. For example, the UCDP's description of the Communist Party of India – Marxist-Leninist: Peoples' War Group as having the "expressed goal of creating a communist state through the use of armed force" would meet the violence criterion (UCDP actor 193, n.d.). Similarly, the later iteration of this group, Communist Party of India – Maoist, would also meet the criterion because it "completely rejects partaking in the parliamentary processes in India" (UCDP actor 195, n.d.). The Armed Islamic Group (GIA) meets the criterion of identifying the international order as an opponent because of its interest in "the establishment of a world-wide theocracy" as a "long-term objective" (UCDP actor 538, n.d.). The Communist Party of the Philippines also meets this criterion, as it "viewed itself as part of the global communist revolution" (UCDP actor 169, n.d.). In the absence of explicit statements, transnational connections may also suffice for this criterion, such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's relationship with al-Qaeda and origin in "Afghan training camps in the mid-1980s" (UCDP actor 276, n.d.). However, transnational connections to other rebel groups, and especially states, do not automatically meet this criterion. The depth and nature of the connection and to which actor a group is connected are evaluated for meeting this criterion. When narratives did not contain sufficient information or contained conflicting information, rebel documents and statements, particularly those cited in the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset, were referenced.

The nationalist criterion is measured by the presence of the territorial conflict goals "separatism" or "irredentism" in the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset and the indication of a nationalist ideology in actor narratives. For example, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) meets this criterion because it has the goal of "independence" coded (Brosché and Sundberg 2024) and seeks to represent Moro (Filipino Muslim) interests (UCDP actor 276; Mapping Militant Organizations 2019b). Though goals of separatism appear to move particularly fluidly between separatism and autonomy, the presence of a separatist goal in any year of the group's existence suffices for this criterion for two reasons. First, Joyce and Fortna (2024) found no difference in likelihood to commit terrorism between separatist and autonomist groups, so there should not be major changes between years when independence or autonomy were sought. And secondly, whether a group is separatist or autonomist in a particular year is mostly irrelevant for this part of analysis, as the main interest is in how nationalism's desire for international recognition (Fazal 2017, 2018) interacts with revolutionary ideology. This paper assumes that if a group at one-point desires separatism, then separatism is its ideal goal. Thus, Fazal's argument should still apply. For example, the MILF formally dropped its demand for full independence in 2010 (Mapping Militant Organizations 2019b); however, the group has also "made it clear that independence was their preference" while also "consider[ing] versions of autonomy that are not 'limited'" (UCDP actor 276). Of the nationalist revolutionary groups coded the only group whose ideology appears to have significantly shifted to warrant a challenge to this assumption was the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) whose ideological shifts in other areas are already accounted for.

Regarding revolutionary ideology more generally, this paper assumes that ideology remains approximately the same through the lifespan of a group and generally codes ideology as

constant across group years. This follows Schmidt-Feuerheerd's (2023) findings that ideological-organizational equilibriums form early in a group's development and that these equilibriums are highly durable and capable of withstanding significant structural and contextual shifts. By reading and using narratives from the UCDP and Mapping Militants which cover the groups' full life-span, I ensured that major shocks did not disrupt these equilibriums and that ideology remained generally the same. While one could argue that some groups may have only identified the international order as opponents after receiving support from or courting transnational actors like al-Qaeda or the Islamic State (IS), I argue that only groups which already have an at least latent sense of the international order as an opponent would associate with such actors, as doing so would significantly isolate the group from other sources of international support. In accordance with this argument, no group was identified as having shifted from refusing to identify the international order as opponents to suddenly seeking support from al-Qaeda or IS.[26]

Within the time period studied, only three groups had major ideological shifts. These were the PKK whose ideology significantly shifted after the surprise arrest of their leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999 combined with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria which after the death of leader Dzhokar Dudaev in 1996 became increasingly Islamist and jihadist until the jihadists broke away and formed the Caucasus Emirate in 2007, and the Kashmir Insurgents who shifted in 1991 due to being an umbrella actor, as Islamist and jihadist

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[26] Hizbul Islam is the only group that could potentially qualify for these conditions. The Mapping Militants Project identified the group as focusing "almost exclusively on jihad in Somalia rather than assuming an international jihadist orientation," and the group argued that "Al Qaeda should not interfere with Somali affairs (2019a). The group also later pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, but its leadership, importantly, also had pre-existing connections to al-Qaeda from leading previous rebel groups. The final coding decision identified this seemingly contradictory position as an attempt to differentiate itself from al-Shabaab which wanted to more immediately wage an international jihad rather than an indication that the group suddenly did and then did not oppose al-Qaeda. See coding notes for more details.

groups began to rise in prominence and power compared to the generally secular Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front which was the primary actor until that point.[27] To reflect these shifts, the groups had their non-revolutionary/non-nationalist revolutionary/nationalist revolutionary designation change according to the year(s) indicated in the coding process. The *Mojahedin-e-Khalq* and the Patani Insurgents were also found to have experienced ideological shifts; however, these shifts occurred before their appearance in the dataset and, thus, did not require changes to their ideology designation.

Lastly, to ensure the coding process could be replicated using the same coding rules, a coding consistency check using two additional coders was performed. Their coding decisions matched each other and mine own, and their feedback regarding the clarity of some coding rules was implemented. The coding rubric is available in Appendix A, and Appendix B contains a list of the evaluated groups and their coding.

Controls

The analysis uses a number of control variables to account for conflict dynamics, rebel group information, and country-level context. Beginning first with conflict dynamics, the intensity of the conflict, distinguished between minor (25-999 deaths in a year) and major (1,000+ deaths in a year), is included as a control variable following Joyce and Fortna's (2024) argument that "levels of terrorist violence may be higher in more intense conflicts simply because all forms of violence are more prevalent" (10). Additionally, this analysis follows Joyce

[27] See coding notes for further details.

and Fortna's argument that competition between multiple rebel groups in a conflict may lead groups to adopt more "extreme"—for this analysis, revolutionary—positions and that this competition may drive group to commit more outbidding terrorism (Kydd and Walter 2006). Following Joyce and Fortna's practice, this analysis includes a binary dummy variable for whether multiple rebel groups are engaged in the same conflict. Salehyan, Siroky, Wood (2014) have also demonstrated that foreign sponsorship of rebel groups increases one-sided violence against civilians. For this reason, a binary variable of whether or not a group received external support in a given year is also included in the analysis.

As Ahmed (2018a) argues, ideology is a driving force in rebel group behavior; however, an ideology's instructions are mitigated by group capability. She argues, and includes as controls in her model, that existence for one year and existence for five years are significant markers of a group's capability. Notably, her modeling of programmatic ideologies' relationship to violent targeting practices demonstrated these controls' statistically significant relationships with violent targeting practices, including against civilians (Ahmed2018b). For this reason, the same control variables are included in this analysis.

There are also two contextual factors at the country-level which may also affect the selection of the ideologies studied, the use of terrorism, or both. The first of these controls is the level of democracy within the state a rebel group is operating. As Joyce and Fortna (2024) argue, regime type is not only a "predictor of terrorism," but democratic regimes also "allow for accommodation of a wider set of preferences and compromise among differing groups," potentially resulting in "civil wars where the regime's opponents hold extreme views" (10). To account for this, a binary dummy variable for democracy using Polity scores (Center for Systemic Peace, n.d.) above +6, defined as the threshold for "democracy" by Polity, is included.

The second contextual factor at the country level is its ethno-linguistic fractionalization. Countries with greater ethno-linguistic diversity may be more likely to produce nationalist separatist groups simply due to the greater ethno-linguistic diversity of the country, and conflicts in ethno-linguistically fractionalized states may prove even more polarized than a typical civil war, meaning the legitimacy costs associated with acts of terrorism may be lower (Joyce and Fortna 2024). For this reason, ethno-linguistic fractionalization of the country in conflict is included as a control as well.

Model Selection

Because this analysis uses terrorism events data, the dependent variables suffer from both overdispersion and zero inflation, meaning there are far more zeroes (no event) than there are positive integers (events). To account for this and to calculate the likelihood to commit terrorism for the revolutionary ideological categories, this paper uses a rare events logistic regression. The rare events logistic regression calculates the likelihood for an event to occur, producing coefficients measuring the natural log of the odds ratio. This means positive coefficients indicate that the variable increases the likelihood of the event occurring and negative coefficients indicate that the variable decreases the likelihood.

The Data

As seen in Table 3, 41 groups were identified as non-nationalist revolutionaries, 18 groups were identified as nationalist revolutionaries, and 266 did not meet the revolutionary criteria and were coded as non-revolutionary.[28] The comparatively smaller amount of Marxist groups in each category (especially nationalist revolutionary) is the result of temporal limitations of the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset and other UCDP datasets which only begin measurement in 1989 shortly before the fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War. Ideally, earlier data from at least the late 1960's or 1970's would have been used, but this unfortunately was not possible. Regardless, programmatic ideology is only of interest to this paper in so far as its identification of significant political transformation. Thus, this difference in count should not have effects on the results. Table 4 shows the number of group-years when at least one dependent variable event occurred and the prevalence (mean) of the binary dependent variable according to group types. The similar number of years with at least one event across the group types despite the smaller number of revolutionary groups and higher prevalence suggests that these groups may in fact be perpetrating attacks at a higher rate.

GROUP TYPE	NUMBER TOTAL	NUMBER MARXIST	NUMBER ISLAMIST
NON-NATIONALIST REVOLUIONARY	41	14	27
NATIONALIST REVOLUIONARY	18	2	16
NON-REVOLUIONARY	266	-	-

Table 3: Count of revolutionary and non-revolutionary groups

[28] The three groups that did ideologically shift, the PKK, Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, and Kashmir Insurgents, appear in this list of groups twice: once under the revolutionary nationalist category and once under the non-revolutionary category.

	NKILL SUM	NKILL MEAN	DEATHS CIVILIANS SUM	DEATHS CIVILIANS MEAN	INT IDEO SUM	INT IDEO MEAN	INT MISC SUM	INT MISC MEAN
NON-NATIONALIST REVOLUTIONARY	238	.555	217	.506	168	.392	161	.375
NATIONALIST REVOLUTIONARY	128	.634	127	.629	77	.381	56	.277
NON-REVOLUTIONARY	277	.170	291	.179	182	.112	141	.087

Table 4: Sums and means of the dependent variables across group types. Sum indicates number of years in which a group of that type committed at least one dependent variable event. Dependent variables are binary.

Table 5 indicates the prevalence of several of the control variables across the different group types. Calculating the mean value of the binary foreign support variable reveals that non-revolutionaries (.542) and non-nationalist revolutionaries (.520) have about the same prevalence of receiving international support, but nationalist revolutionaries have a higher prevalence (.775). The reason for the higher prevalence among nationalist revolutionaries may be from the added territorial aspect of their conflicts. Foreign states may be interested in supporting these actors to territorially weaken their adversaries in addition to the transnational non-state actor support expected from revolutionary relationships (Kalyvas 2018). One example from the data is Pakistan's support for the Kashmir Insurgents alongside some Kashmir Insurgents' connections to al-Qaeda.

The mean ethno-linguistic fractionalization across the different group types is highest for nationalist revolutionary groups (.642) and lowest for non-nationalist revolutionary groups (.571). Revolutionary groups tended also to be involved in conflicts with more than one group. Calculating the mean of the binary control variable for multiparty conflicts reveals non-nationalist revolutionaries (.670) had a slightly higher prevalence than non-revolutionaries (.659), and nationalist revolutionaries (.760) had a considerably higher prevalence. Calculating the mean of the binary democracy variable indicates that both non-nationalist revolutionaries (.577) and nationalist revolutionaries (.829) were far more commonly fighting a democracy than non-revolutionaries (.221). This reflects Joyce and Fortna's (2024) argument that violent opponents to democracy tend to be more extreme.

Group Type	External Support	ELF	Multiple Groups	Democracy
Non-nationalist Revolutionary	.542	.571	.670	.577
Nationalist Revolutionary	.775	.642	.760	.829
Non-Revolutionary	.520	.607	.659	.221

Table 5: Mean of control variables across group types. External support, Multiple Groups, and Democracy are binary variables. ELF=Ethno-Linguistic Fractionalization and is a value between 0 and 1.

Results and Analysis

Table 6: Rare Events Logit Results

	MODEL 1 (GTD ANY EVENT)	MODEL 2 (UCDP ANY EVENT)	MODEL 3 (INT. IDEO)	MODEL 4 (INT. MISC)
NON-NATIONALIST REVOUTIONARY	1.56*** (.416)	1.53*** (.402)	1.21*** (.346)	1.46*** (.325)
NATIONALIST REVOLUTIONARY	1.32** (.420)	1.33** (.411)	1.21* (.546)	1.02* (.500)
INTENSITY LEVEL	.839* (.383)	1.31*** (.356)	1.27*** (.341)	1.43*** (.338)
MULTIPLE GROUPS	-.702** (.244)	-.501 (.268)	-.460 (.257)	-.560* (.262)
EXTERNAL SUPPORT	.343 (.274)	.693** (.243)	.517* (.248)	.267 (.273)
ONE YEAR ACTIVITY	.973*** (.247)	.526** (.203)	.735** (.247)	.788** (.269)
FIVE YEAR ACTIVITY	.520** (.248)	.791*** (.240)	.160 (.264)	-.019 (.258)
ELF	-.498 (.587)	1.11 (.601)	-.553 (.631)	-.757 (.565)
DEMOCRACY	1.19*** (.300)	.314 (.300)	.594* (.247)	.610* (.247)
YEAR	.000 (.018)	-.002 (.018)	.002 (.016)	.003 (.016)
INTERCEPT	-2.96 (35.6)	.755 (35.3)	-7.71 (31.9)	-9.40 (32.3)

*Note: ELF=ethno-linguistic fractionalization. Robust standard errors (clustered on UCDP side b ID). Rounded to three significant figures. N=2256. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001*

Table 6 shows the results of the rare-events logistic regression. Model 1 examines the likelihood of groups committing terrorist attacks using data from the Global Terrorism Dataset. The results indicate that H1 and H5 are correct, evidenced by the positive and statistically significant coefficients for non-nationalist and nationalist revolutionary ideology, and that H3 is correct due to the difference between the non-nationalist and nationalist categories.

Non-nationalist revolutionaries are 4.75 times ($p<.001$) as likely and nationalist revolutionaries are 3.75 times ($p<.01$) as likely to commit at least one act of terrorism in a year. Both revolutionary group types are more likely to commit terrorism, and non-nationalist revolutionary ideology has a greater effect than nationalist revolutionary ideology. However, it should be noted that this difference in likelihood between non-nationalists and nationalists is relatively small, suggesting that nationalist separatist ideology's order appeasing tendencies are less potent in revolutionary groups. Model 2 uses the UCDP's measure of civilian deaths from their GED event dataset and produces extremely similar results. Non-nationalist revolutionary groups are 4.64 times ($p<.001$) and nationalist revolutionary groups are 3.79 times ($p<.01$) more likely than non-revolutionaries to commit a terrorist attack in a year. These results in both significance and effect are extremely similar, raising confidence in revolutionary ideology's effect upon the use of terrorism.

Models 3 and 4 measure the likelihood of groups committing ideologically international and miscellaneously international terrorist attacks, respectively. Results from these analyses are consistent with H2 and H4. In the international ideological model (Model 3), non-nationalist revolutionary groups are 3.37 times more likely ($p<.001$) and nationalist revolutionary groups are

3.34 times more likely ($p<.05$) to commit an ideologically international attack in a given year.[29] In other words, both revolutionary group types are more likely to have committed an attack against a different nationality or to have, as a multinational group, perpetrated an attack. To ensure that this latter option, a multinational group, is not driving results, Model 4 uses the international miscellaneous variable. In Model 4, non-nationalist revolutionaries are 4.32 times ($p<.001$) and nationalist revolutionaries are 2.76 times ($p<.05$) more likely to have committed a miscellaneously international attack than non-revolutionaries. This means that even when dropping consideration of the perpetrating group's nationality, both revolutionary group types are still more likely to target transnationally/internationally than non-revolutionary groups.

The difference between these two likelihoods can be explained when considering the differing measurement practices for the dependent variables. First, the decrease in effect for nationalist revolutionary groups between ideologically and miscellaneously international attacks can be explained by the nationalist component of their ideology. The ideologically international variable includes attacks across internationally recognized nation-state borders, as long as the targets are of a differing nationality from the perpetrating group. This means that attacks committed across nation-state borders on behalf of co-ethnics (e.g., a Somali Islamist group conducting an attack in Kenya or Ethiopia) are considered ideologically international. Because the victims of such an attack would be in their own country, this attack would *not* be coded as miscellaneously international. The lower number of miscellaneous attacks in in Table 4 supports this explanation. Since nationalist groups have an incentive to conduct such an attack for reasons other than their revolutionary ideology, the effect and type of revolutionary transnational

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[29] Calculated in R using the full coefficient value, not the rounded value displayed in the table. Hence, the slight difference in calculated odds ratio compared to what is shown in the table.

targeting[30] is likely closer to the results of Model 4. Nonetheless, results from both models indicate that nationalist revolutionary groups target foreign citizens, international institutions, or other transnational/international targets at a higher rate than non-revolutionary groups.

The reason behind the higher rate for non-nationalist revolutionaries in the miscellaneous international variable is similarly due to the difference in measurement; however, the reason for this variation between measurements is not as clear. Like the nationalist revolutionaries, non-nationalist revolutionaries had fewer internationally miscellaneous events than international ideological events, though the decline was much slighter. The non-revolutionary count of miscellaneous events fell much more by proportion and magnitude than the non-nationalist revolutionaries which explains the rare event logit's results. However, what mechanism may have caused this fall is not as immediately apparent as it was for the nationalist revolutionaries. Nonetheless, the likelihood of international/transnational targeting among non-nationalist revolutionaries is somewhere between the results of Model 3 and 4.

Regardless, these findings are consistent with H2 and may be consistent with H4. In both models, both group types have a greater likelihood of perpetrating an attack than non-revolutionary groups, but the potency of nationalist ideology's order-appeasing tendencies in contrast to revolutionary ideology's order-opposing tendencies is not as clear as in Models 1 and 2. In Model 3, the effect of each revolutionary ideology type is not meaningfully different, but in Model 4 the effect of non-nationalists is meaningfully greater than nationalists. When using the lower value for nationalist revolutionaries (which I believe to be the more accurate for measuring

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[30] That is, targeting transnationally due to seeing the international system as an opponent rather than only attacking local opponents. See section in this paper on Revolutionary Ideology and Dixon and Lawson (2022).

revolutionary transnational targeting) but the same value ideologically internationalist value for non-nationalists, non-nationalist ideology's effect is only 22% stronger which is extremely similar to Models 1 (27%) and 2 (22%). This indicates that revolutionary ideology is similarly potent in the international order appeasing-opposing tension and that nationalist goals, while present, are generally overshadowed by revolutionary methods and opponent identification.

Conclusion

Does ideology affect violence against civilians? The results of this analysis indicate that revolutionary ideology—an ideology which seeks to control the state in order to fundamentally transform social, political, and economic relations in service of a broader transnational movement and which identifies violence as a key instrument in accomplishing this task—does indeed affect the likelihood that a group will use terrorism and target transnationally. In fact, results indicate that revolutionary ideology, though not powerful enough to completely overcome international-order appeasing tendencies of nationalist ideology (Fazal 2017, 2018), blunts nationalist ideology's expected effect of less violence against civilians. These results demonstrate a need to consider ideology beyond simple programmatic understandings and to instead, or at least simultaneously, engage with ideology's methodological and grievance identifying aspects.

In investigating this question, I have developed a definition for revolutionary ideology by drawing on a variety of definitions from the literature. I theorize that revolutionary ideology permits and perhaps necessitates terrorism use through its relative extremity compared to other ideologies (Hafez 2020, Joyce and Fortna 2024), its identification of violence as the sole or primary method of political transformation, and its rejection of the international order, resulting

in a hypothesis that revolutionary groups will commit terrorism more frequently. Through this rejection of the international order, I hypothesized that revolutionary ideology will also lead rebel groups to more frequently target transnationally in their terrorist attacks. Following the arguments of Fazal (2017, 2018), I also hypothesize that nationalist ideology would place constraints on nationalist revolutionary groups, reducing their frequency of terrorism use and transnational targeting below non-nationalist revolutionaries but above non-revolutionaries.

To test these hypotheses, I created a new dataset on revolutionary ideology, the first to measure the concept. Using the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset (Brosché and Sundberg 2023) as a baseline, I read a variety of UCDP, Mapping Militants Project, and other scholarly narratives as well as rebel statements and documents to investigate the presence of each aspect of revolutionary ideology among groups in the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset and code them as non-revolutionary, non-nationalist revolutionary, or nationalist revolutionary. I found that groups which have a revolutionary ideology, regardless of whether they are also nationalist, have a higher likelihood of committing at least one act of terrorism each year and have a higher likelihood of committing at least one act of transnational terrorism each year. Non-nationalist revolutionaries had a higher likelihood than nationalist revolutionaries in every case, but their likelihoods were closer than prevailing ideas of nationalist ideology's influence upon terrorism suggested. The similar values across nationalist and non-nationalist categories indicates that revolutionary ideology's international order-opposing tendencies hold greater salience than nationalist ideology's international-appeasing tendencies in nationalist revolutionary groups.

Future research should investigate how the aspects of revolutionary ideology may affect the severity of terrorist violence and how the international order-opposing/international order-appeasing tensions within nationalist revolutionary groups, specifically, may affect the severity

of violence. Given the quasi-state nature many revolutionary groups take on during civil wars (Kalyvas 2018), future research may also consider how revolutionary ideology's emphasis on violence as the sole or primary tool for political transformation affects violence against civilians in rebel-controlled territory, especially in light of Aponte González et al.'s (2024) findings that civilians become highly victimized in rebel-controlled territory through "governing violence" (635). Future research may also consider how revolutionary ideology affects other aspects of rebel behavior not related to violence against civilians such as the development and maintenance of transnational inter-rebel relationships, when and how revolutionary ideology demobilizes or "fizzles out" in negotiated peace, or how revolutionary ideology influences groups' relationships with foreign state actors.

The central contribution of this study is pushing forward the growing interest in how ideology affects political violence and, especially, answering calls to look beyond broad programmatic categories when studying ideology (Schubinger and Zelina 2017, Valbjørn et al. 2024). Considering only broad categories of end goals or even broad categories of methods like "violent" or "non-violent" do not show the whole picture. As this study illustrates, ideology, especially in the methods and opponents it identifies, has prescriptive effects on rebel behavior. It influences how often they target civilians and which civilians they target. Researchers must use this fuller picture of ideology, that which comprises the worldview of rebel groups, in our efforts to understand rebel behavior.

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Appendix A: Revolutionary Coding Rules

Please contact the author for more information or for the coding notes

Extent of political change

Revolutionary ideology seeks to fundamentally transform political, social, and economic relations of the state/society in question. Merely ousting the executive/legislature or seeking reforms does not meet this criterion

Evaluate by:

Being listed with a "2100" (transform political system) variable in at least one year on the UCDP Conflict Issues Dataset.

Political change challenging the international order

The political change revolutionary ideology seeks to enact does not conform to the international order. It does not seek to integrate into the international order but rather to overturn it.

Evaluate by:

Groups must be listed with either "2102" (transform to a socialist state) or "2103" (transform to Islamic state) variables.

Read narratives and documents, looking for an international order challenging identity. Examples include: Marxist-Leninist or Maoist ideologies or Salafi interpretations of Islamic law. Groups which seek to establish democratic rule do not meet this criterion because democracies seek to integrate into the international order in the timeframe studied (1979-2017). Note that some groups, particularly socialist groups, emphasize commitment toward democracy. For the

purposes of coding, commitment to a Marxist-Leninist, Maoist, etc. ideology supersedes this emphasis because these groups' understanding of democracy is inherently linked to their Marxist-Leninist, Maoist, etc. ideology and differs from liberal democratic norms.

Violence as sole or primary method of political change

Revolutionary ideology identifies violence as the sole or primary method of political change. Political agitation, outreach, and/or education may also play a part of achieving their desired programs, but these actions are undertaken in service of preparing or executing a violent overthrow of the state.

Evaluate by:

Reading narratives and documents for evidence of identifying violence as the sole or primary method of political change. For example, an Islamist group which believes that jihad is an obligation upon every Muslim would mee this criterion. For Marxist groups, a continued emphasis on the importance of "revolution" or a "people's war" may meet this criterion alongside other supporting evidence. Rejecting non-violent politics like participation in elections meets this criterion. Intermittent participation in elections or non-violent politics do not automatically disqualify a group from this criterion, but this participation should be weighed against other statements and evidence of violence. Negotiation with the government does not disqualify a group from this criterion.

Identification of the international order as an opponent

Revolutionary ideology not only challenges the international order, but it also identifies the international order as an opponent. Though most rebel groups fight only one state, revolutionary ideology identifies this fight with a global struggle. Revolutionary ideology views this fight against the state as one arena of struggle against the international order.

Evaluate by:

Reading narratives and documents for evidence of grievances with the international order. Goals of transnational political change like establishing a global caliphate meet this criterion. Statements or narrative descriptions of groups viewing themselves as part of a global struggle meet this criterion. Stated grievances and opposition to global powers such as the United States, Western European powers, the Soviet Union, and/or the People's Republic of China can also meet this criterion, but attention should be paid to the language used. Simply calling for reform or for a more equitable international relationship with these powers does not suffice.

Connections to certain transnational organizations like al-Qaeda or the Islamic State may also meet this criterion, but the extent and nature of these connections must be evaluated. Formal affiliation, pledges of allegiance, or significant ties over a long-period meet this criterion. Groups which were formed primarily from veterans of a transnational conflict (e.g., the "Afghan Arabs") may also support this criterion; however, participation in transnational conflicts should be evaluated by the ideological context. For example, participating in a nationalist/separatist conflict that crosses borders does not meet this criterion.

Transnational attacks or attacks against international targets should not be evaluated for this criterion, as transnational attacks are being evaluated as a dependent variable.

Nationalist Separatism

Groups that claim to represent a national, ethnic, and/or religious minority and seek to separate that community from their current state either by establishing an independent state or unifying with another are considered nationalist separatists.

Evaluate by:

Check for the presence of "1101" (independence) or "1102" (irredentism) coding for the group in the Conflict Issues Dataset. Confirm by evaluating narratives and statements for indication of the group claiming to represent a specific national, ethnic, and/or religious minority and their goal to territorial separate that minority from the state. Because territorial issues can be especially fluid regarding the question of full independence or autonomy within a state, the presence of autonomy goals does not disqualify a group from this criterion. In these cases, it is assumed that full independence or joining another state are the group's ideal goals, and the need to earn the support of the international community still influences group decision making.

Ideological Shifts

In some cases, ideology does change or shift overtime. Some groups may become or stop being revolutionary during the course of their existence.

Evaluate by:

Consult UCDP and/or Mapping Militants narratives to investigate significant shifts in ideology during the group's existence. Confirm by consulting rebel statements or other narratives and establish a year in which this shift can be identified. For example, the PKK explicitly identified

1999, the year that Abdullah Öcalan was arrested, as the year their ideology shifted from a focus on an independent Kurdish nation-state to a democratic confederalist ideology. If ideology does shift significantly enough for the group to become or stop being revolutionary, make note of the year and reasons why.

Ensuring Groups are not Arbitrarily Excluded

Because the first two criteria rely heavily upon the coding work of the UCDP Conflict Issues dataset, the list of groups in the Conflict Issues Dataset identified as ideological socialists or Islamists should also be consulted to ensure accuracy.

Evaluate by:

Read narratives for indications that the group meets the four criteria (significant political transformation, internationally challenging political transformation, violence as the sole or primary method of transformation, and the identification of the international order as an opponent). If narratives indicate the group may be revolutionary, include the group in the dataset and proceed with the remainder of coding, making note that the group was manually added.

Appendix B: Groups evaluated and their coding

Please contact the author for more information or for the coding notes

Revolutionary non-nationalist	Identified Programmatic Ideology
Communist Party of the Philippines	Marxist
Communist Party of India People's War Group	Marxist
Communist Party of India – Maoist	Marxist
Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)	Marxist
National Liberation Army (ELN)	Marxist
Popular Liberation Army (EPL)	Marxist
Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso)	Marxist
Revolutionary Movement Túpac Amaru (MRTA)	Marxist
Khmer Rouge	Marxist
People's Liberation Front (JVP)	Marxist
Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C)	Marxist
Maoist Communist Party (MKP)	Marxist
Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR)	Marxist
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP)	Marxist
al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	Islamist
Ansar al-Islam	Islamist
Islamic State	Islamist
Reform and Jihad Front (RJF)	Islamist
Jamaatu Ahlis Sunna Liddaawati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram)	Islamist
Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement: Abu Suhail faction (EIJM – AS)	Islamist
Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan	Islamist

Taleban	Islamist
al-Shabaab	Islamist
Hizbul Islam	Islamist
Takfir wa'l Hijra	Islamist
Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	Islamist
al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	Islamist
al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group)	Islamist
Taleban Movement of Pakistan (TTP)	Islamist
Wahhabi movement of Buinaksk district	Islamist
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)	Islamist
al-Qaida	Islamist
Hezbollah	Islamist
Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)	Islamist
Ansar Dine	Islamist
Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis	Islamist
al-Murabitun	Islamist
Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	Islamist
Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM)	Islamist
Signed-in-Blood-Battalion	Islamist
Jama'at Ansar al-Islam	Islamist
Nationalist Revolutionary	**Identified Programmatic Ideology**
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	Marxist
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)	Marxist
Hamas	Islamist
Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)	Islamist
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)	Islamist

Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	Islamist
Islamic Unity (AIAI)	Islamist
Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia/Union of Islamic Courts (ARS/UIC)	Islamist
Kashmir Insurgents (starting 1991)	Islamist
Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (from 1997-2007)	Islamist
Patani Insurgents	Islamist
Ahlul Sunnah Jamaa	Islamist
Forces of the Caucasus Emirate	Islamist
East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM)	Islamist
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM)	Islamist
Macina Liberation Front (FLM)	Islamist
Maute Group	Islamist
al-Harakat al-Islamiyyah	Islamist
Non-revolutionary	**UCDP Change Political System Coding**
National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Isaac-Muivah faction (NSCN-IM)	Socialist
Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)	Socialist
Military Faction (forces of Hugo Chavez)	Socialist
Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA)	Socialist
Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)	Socialist
Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN)	Socialist
National Council of the Timorese Resistance (FRETILIN)	Socialist

People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)	Socialist
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)	Socialist
Republic of Abkhazia	Socialist
People's Front of Tajikistan (PFT)	Socialist
United Armed Forces of Novorossiya	Socialist
Communist Party of India – Marxist-Leninist – Janasakhti faction (CPI-ML-J)	N/A
Purbo Banglar Communist Party – East Bengali Workers Party (PBCP)	N/A
Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)	Islamist
POLISARIO	Islamist
Jami'yyat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan	Islamist
Junbish-i Milli-yi Afghanistan	Islamist
United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA)	Islamist
Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK)	Islamist
Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD)	Islamist
Free Aceh Movement (GAM)	Islamist
Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)	Islamist
United Tajik Opposition (UTO)	Islamist
Lashkar-e-Islam	Islamist
National Transition Council of Libya (NTC)	Islamist
al-Mahdi Army	Islamist