Terrorism

Francisco Villamil

War, peace, and political violence

UC3M, Fall 2023

Housekeeping

- Final exam options:
  - → Exam (january/december)
  - → Book review
- Want to know before classes end

  (ie. **deadline to choose**: December 13)

- What is terrorism?



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

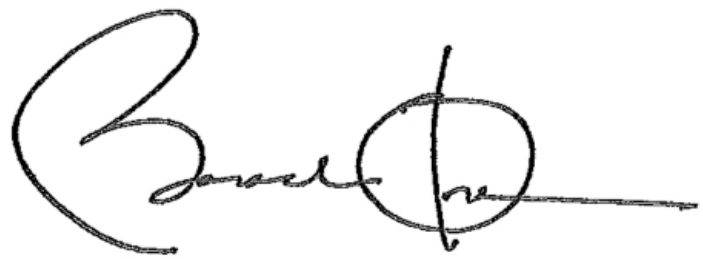
September 28, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with section 115(c) of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013, I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding so designated by the Congress in section 115(a) pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,



What is terrorism?

What is terrorism?

- Violence against civilians?

Violence against civilians?

The **Thiepval Barracks bombing** was a double car bomb attack carried out by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) on 7 October 1996. The bombs exploded inside Thiepval Barracks, the British Army headquarters in Northern Ireland. One British soldier was killed and 31 people were injured. This bombing was the first major attack on a military base in Northern Ireland since the end of the IRA's ceasefire eight months earlier.

The **Glenanne barracks bombing** was a large truck bomb attack carried out by the Provisional IRA against a British Army (Ulster Defence Regiment) base at Glenanne, near Mountnorris, County Armagh. The driverless lorry was rolled down a hill at the rear of the barracks and crashed through the perimeter fence. The bombing took place on 31 May 1991 and left three soldiers killed and 14 people wounded, four of them civilians.



What is terrorism?

- Violence against civilians?

Table 2. Target Selection (Fatalities) and Types of Terrorism in Western Europe, 1965–2005

	Nationalist	Extreme left	Extreme right	Vigilante	Neo-Nazi
Noncombatants (%)	40.7	44.8	83.3	87.4	96.6
Combatants (%)	59.3	55.2	16.7	12.6	3.4
Total fatalities	2,920	362	372	1,033	268

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What is terrorism?

- ‘Communicative’ violence?

What is terrorism?

- ‘Communicative’ violence?

terrorism noun

Save Word

ter·ror·ism | \ ˈter-ər-ˌi-zəm \

Definition of *terrorism*

: the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion

Terrorism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article needs to be **updated**. Please help update this article to reflect recent events or newly available information. *(August 2021)*

"Terrorist" redirects here. For other uses, see Terrorist (disambiguation).

Terrorism, in its broadest sense, is the use of criminal violence to provoke a state of terror, mostly with the intention to achieve political or religious aims. The term is used in this regard primarily to refer to intentional violence during peacetime or in the context of war against non-combatants (mostly civilians and neutral military personnel).[1] The terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" originated during the French Revolution of the late 18th century[2] but became widely used internationally and gained worldwide attention in the 1970s during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Basque conflict, and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The increased use of suicide attacks from the 1980s onwards was typified by the 2001 September 11 attacks in the United States.

There are various different definitions of terrorism, with no universal agreement about it.[3][4] Terrorism is a charged term. It is often used with the connotation of something that is "morally wrong". Governments and non-state groups use the term to abuse or denounce opposing groups.[4][5][6][7][8] Varied political organizations have been accused of using terrorism to achieve their objectives. These include left-wing and



United Airlines Flight 175 hits the South Tower of the World Trade Center during the September 11 attacks of 2001 in New York City.



(3) All or some Member States are party to a number of conventions relating to terrorism. The Council of Europe Convention of 27 January 1977 on the Suppression of Terrorism does not regard terrorist offences as political offences or as offences connected with political offences or as offences inspired by political motives. The United Nations has adopted the Convention for the suppression of terrorist bombings of 15 December 1997 and the Convention for the suppression of financing terrorism of 9 December 1999. A draft global Convention against terrorism is currently being negotiated within the United Nations.

EU Framework Decision on Terrorism, 2002

Understanding terrorism

This is not very useful for understanding anything at all

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This is not very useful for understanding anything at all

→ Identifying terrorism?

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- → Identifying terrorism?
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- → Who and when uses it?

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- → Identifying terrorism?
- → Political incentives for the use of terrorism?
- → Who and when uses it?
- → What does **prevention** mean? And how do we do it?

Perpetrator Provisional IRA

V · T · E **The Troubles** [show]

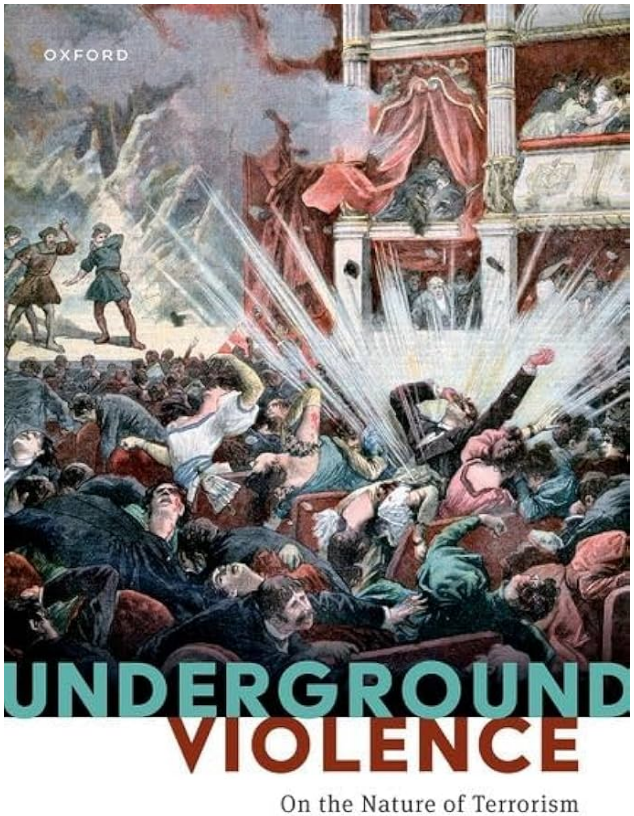
in Ireland

Barracks bombing [edit]

On 7 October 1996, two Provisional IRA volunteers gained access to the base using forged passes based on the identity card of a former British soldier who had joined the IRA.[5][6] They drove two 800-pound (360 kg)[7] car bombs several hundred yards into the Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, which housed the British Army headquarters in Northern Ireland.[8] The first car bomb detonated near a travel arrangement centre, injuring many people. When the wounded were moved to the military medical centre, the second car bomb detonated there, catching the victims of the first blast as well as the medical staff helping them. The medical centre was reduced to rubble.[9] There was a lapse of 12 minutes between the first and the second blast.[10] There were 31 injured, four of them seriously. A British soldier, Warrant Officer James Bradwell, died four days later of multiple wounds.[11] He was the first soldier to be killed in Northern Ireland since 1994.[12]

Understanding terrorism

Two ways to look at this



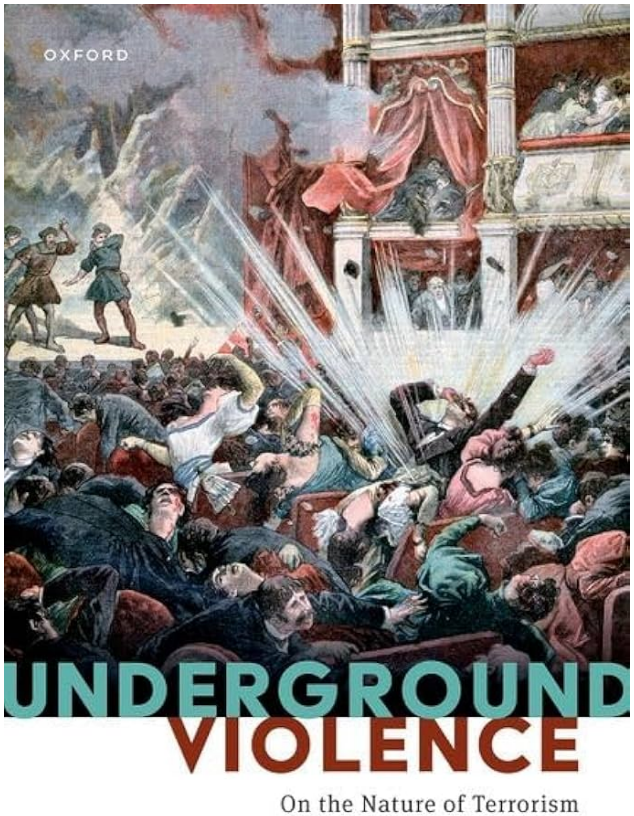
De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca (2024) *Underground Violence: On the Nature of Terrorism.* Oxford U Press.

Understanding terrorism

Two ways to look at this

- Terrorism (the action)

- Terrorists (the actor)

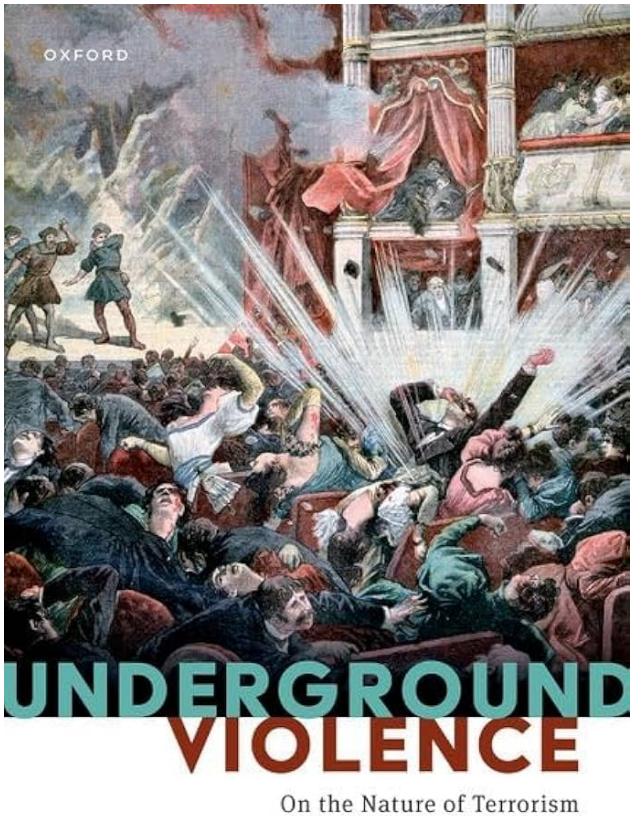


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Understanding terrorism

Two ways to look at this

- Terrorism (the action)
  - → What is a terrorist attack?
  - → How is it different from other forms of political violence?
  - → Why do actors choose terrorism?
- Terrorists (the actor)

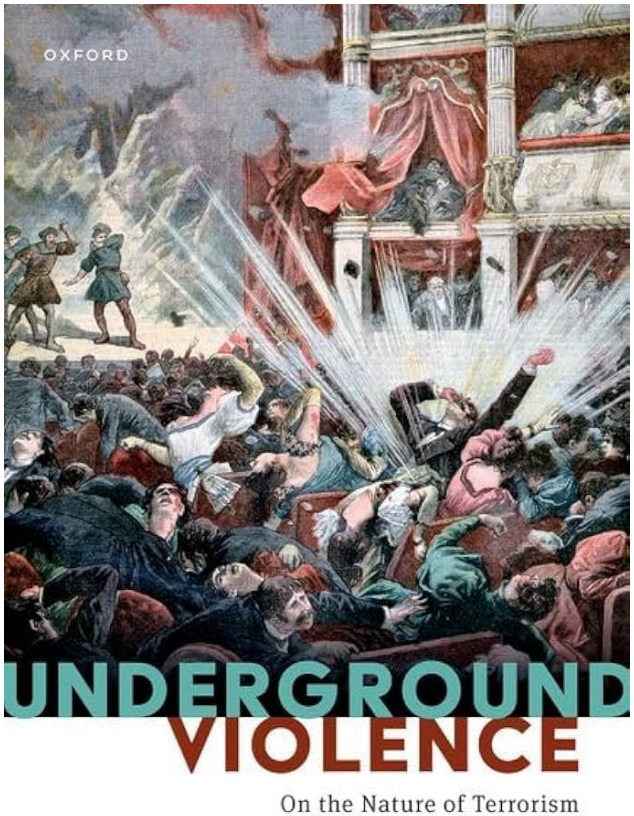


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  - → Why do actors choose terrorism?
- Terrorists (the actor)
  - → Why do actors rely **primarily** on terrorism?
  - → What is the 'opposite' of terrorism?



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Table 1. The Intersection of the Two Senses of Terrorism

		Actor sense	
		Underground	Territorial control
Action sense	Coercive violence: improvised explosive devices, hijackings, bank robberies	Pure terrorism	Guerrilla operating clandestinely in state-controlled areas
	Military power: battles, ambushes	Proto-guerrilla	Pure guerrilla

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- Terrorism as an action : military power vs the power to hurt
- Coercive nature of terrorist violent, compatible with having low military capacity

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- Terrorists as actors: underground groups without territory
- *Duopoly* of violence (vs fragmented monopoly)

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- 'Pure terrorism': underground groups that use coercive violence because they don't have any military capacity
- It's easy to distinguish between ideal types (guerrillas and terrorists)


ETA



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- But there are also 'hybrid' types, especially groups that control territory *and* employ terrorist violence (urban guerrilla is way less common)


MONTONEROS
P

More on hybrid types

- It's not only about groups that always remain the same, some of them transition over time

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  - → From guerrilla to underground groups: PKK in the late 1990s

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  - → From guerrilla to underground groups: PKK in the late 1990s
  - → From underground to guerrilla: Hezbollah after 1990


فإن حزب الله
هم الغالبون



More on hybrid types

- And there is also variation in space

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  - → A group might use guerrilla methods in one area but terrorist actions in another part of the country

More on hybrid types

- And there is also variation in space
  - → A group might use guerrilla methods in one area but terrorist actions in another part of the country
  - → Actions constrained by military capacities

Variation across space & time: Shinning Path



Lucanamarca Massacre

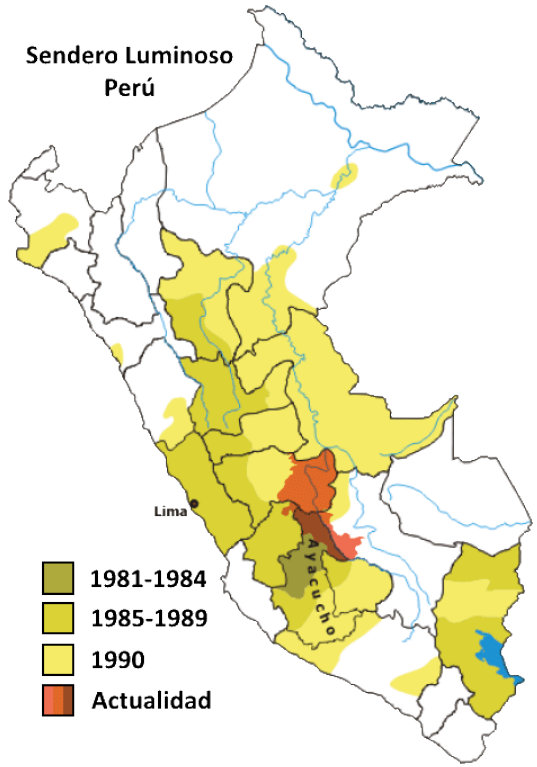
(Sendero Luminoso, 1983)

Variation across space & time: Shinning Path



Lucanamarca Massacre

(Sendero Luminoso, 1983)



- Massacre in response to local opposition
- Area controlled by SL

Variation across space & time: Shinning Path



Calle Tarata bombing (Summer 1992)

Variation across space & time: Shinning Path



Calle Tarata bombing (Summer 1992)

- Context of declining power by SL
  - → Fujimori's *autogolpe*
- Switch in SL tactics, different place

Understanding the *emergence* of terrorism

- So how does this help in practice?

Understanding the *emergence* of terrorism

- The relevant question usually focuses on the *actor sense*:

  when does a domestic terrorist group emerge?

  → i.e., an underground group that relies almost exclusively on terrorist/coercive violence

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  when does a domestic terrorist group emerge?

  → i.e., an underground group that relies almost exclusively on terrorist/coercive violence

- Action-sense: covers too many different things
  - → when is it used?
  - → by whom?
  - → what shape does it take?

Understanding the *emergence* of terrorism

1. State capacity
   - → Remember civil war onset and state capacity
   - → Terrorists are the guerrillas of richer countries

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   - → U-type relationship between repressive/democratic regimes and the onset of terrorism
3. Historical path-dependence
   - → Interwar Europe and terrorism after the 1960s/70s

   (In countries with a non-liberal path, the Left was more radicalized, but in liberal countries, social [leftist] support for violence was much lower → armed groups restraint)

Terrorists and the state

- What **do states do to stop terrorism?**

Terrorists and the state

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  Does it work?

Terrorists and the state

1. **State repression** (and counter-terrorist violence)

Terrorists and the state

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- **Risk of backlash**: counterreaction to state violence

Terrorists and the state

- Bloody Sunday (1972) in Northern Ireland





Terrorists and the state

1. State repression and counter-terrorist violence, does it work?

- Risk of backlash effect: counterreaction to state violence
- **Indiscriminate or selective violence?** The US and the COINTELPRO against the Left and the Black Power movt

Terrorists and the state

1. State repression and counter-terrorist violence, does it work?

- Risk of backlash effect: counterreaction to state violence
- **Indiscriminate or selective violence?** The US and the COINTELPRO against the Left and the Black Power movt
  - → Perhaps this is about state capacity and the quality of intelligence services: the killing by ETA of Melitón Manzanas in 1968 and subsequent mass detentions

Terrorists and the state

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  - → Imitation dynamics for other groups?

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  - → Imitation dynamics for other groups?
- Overall, no clear patterns

Terrorists and society

- What is the **relationship between terrorists and civilians?**

Terrorists and society

- What is the **relationship between terrorists and civilians?**

  How do they manage it?

Terrorists and society

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- In common: both need to enforce cooperation and deincentive defection or betrayal
- But **guerrillas** have more **local coercive power**, even in cases of fragmented sovereignty
- **Terrorists** do not have that power, they act underground and usually in a context where the state is dominant (no need to choose sides)

Terrorists and society

Table 2 Intended purpose of killing by type of terrorism in Western European countries[a]

	Total	Nationalist terrorism	Extreme-left terrorism	Extreme-right terrorism	Vigilante terrorism
goal-related killings	85.0% (3429)	83.5% (2102)	90.1% (283)	91.5% (289)	84.8% (755)
security-related killings[b]	15.0% (607)	16.5% (414)	9.9% (31)	8.5% (27)	15.2% (135)

[a]Source: Domestic Terrorist Victims dataset (**http://www.march.es/dtv**).

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- Which explains why so many killings are security-related
  - → Differences between terrorist organizations: nationalist and vigilante groups are more concerned with territory (and civilian constituencies)

Terrorists and society

What is the **relationship between terrorists and civilians?**

How do they manage it?

Terrorists and society

What is the **relationship between terrorists and civilians?**

How do they manage it?

And how are they influenced by it?

Terrorists and society

1. If **population is more moderate**: trade-off between acceptance of violence by society, and the use of violence to advance political means
   - → Particularly in the case of indiscriminate violence
   - → 'Extreme' people will likely think the same, but there is a risk of making moderates switch to the opposite side
   - → This constraint explains why terrorist groups restraint themselves

Terrorists and society

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   - → Particularly in the case of indiscriminate violence
   - → 'Extreme' people will likely think the same, but there is a risk of making moderates switch to the opposite side
   - → This constraint explains why terrorist groups restraint themselves
2. Opposite dynamics when the **population is as radicalized as** the terrorists
   - → Competition among groups and outbidding processes
   - → Higher risk of escalation

Terrorists and society

3. Also, terrorist violence can be a substitute or a reaction to declining levels of mobilization

Terrorists and society

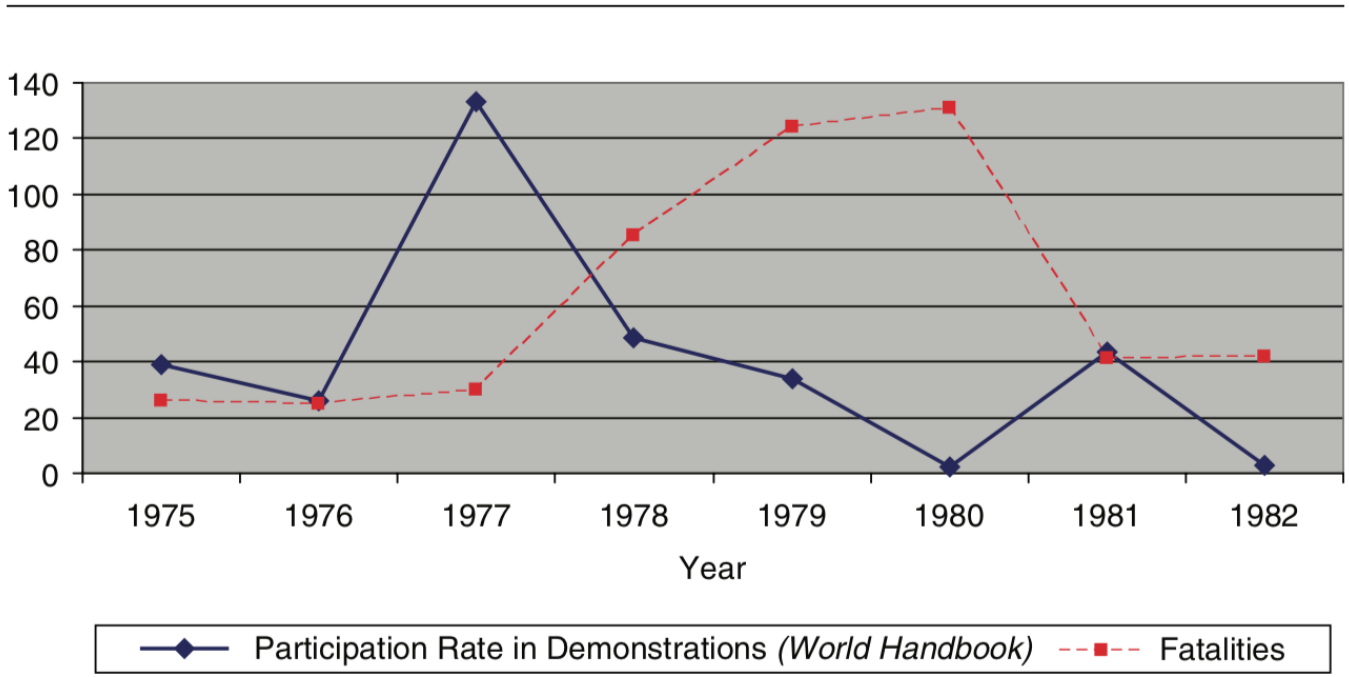


Figure 3. The cycles of demonstrations and terrorist violence.

Demonstrations and political violence during Spanish Transition

Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca & Paloma Aguilar (2009) Terrorist Violence and Popular Mobilization: The Case of the Spanish Transition to Democracy, *Politics & Society*, 37(3): 428–453.

Side gigs



Lemoiz Nuclear Power Plant

Side gigs







Lemoiz Nuclear Power Plant

Suicide bombing

- Suicide bombing, suicide attacks ...

  usually thought to be linked to terrorism

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  → Mostly, because of 9/11 and Islamist terrorist groups

Suicide bombing

- Suicide bombing, suicide attacks ...

  usually thought to be linked to terrorism

  → Mostly, because of 9/11 and Islamist terrorist groups

  → But not only: suicide attacks is a damage-maximizing method when there's no military capacity, so ideal for terrorist groups

Suicide bombing



Attack on USS Bunker Hill, 1945



Suicide bombing

- Modern suicide bombing after 1980s

Suicide bombing

- Modern suicide bombing after 1980s

  Lebanon (Hezbollah), Israel-Palestine (Hamas, Islamic Jihad), and Sri Lanka (LTTE), and became much more intense later in Iraq & Afghanistan



Differences in suicide bombing use

- Targeting civilians in Middle East

Differences in suicide bombing use

- Targeting civilians in Middle East
- Trained suicide bombers targeting high-rank military/civilian elites in Sri Lanka

Assassination of a President

Ranasinghe Premadasa, 1924-1993

V. JAYANTH
in Colombo

IN a matter of eight days, Sri Lanka has gone through a political upheaval with two major assassinations in Colombo. In quick succession, a top Opposition leader and potential President and then the President himself were felled in what will go down in Sri Lanka's bloody, tertorised history as the most traumatic blows to the system.

• • •

May Day. Central Colombo. President Ranasinghe Premadasa, sporting a green cap with 'victory' written on it, was busy directing his ruling United National Party's (UNP) procession at the Armour Street junction, some distance away from the Sugadasa stadium from where it had started. And even as he moved across the road (which was blocked to traffic) to take another look at the procession, the assassin struck. He rode a bicycle in the feeder procession that confluenced with the main rally at the busy junction. Upon the bicycle being stopped by the security personnel, the murderous explosion occurred — killing the President and 24 others, including the entire entourage of bodyguards and personal assistants.

A badly-damaged bicycle, an electrical tester, and a radio-type device were all the telltale evidence on the scene of crime. The trunk of the suspected assassin was blown off, and only the portions above the chest, and the feet remained. Perhaps that was why even 24 hours after the blast the police were unwilling to come out with an official version of the explosion.

But in the first official briefing after the assassination, at 7 p.m. on Sunday, May 2, Director, Crime Detection Bureau, Lionel Gunatilake said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was the prime suspect. "Both the *modus operandi*, which was similar to the killing of Navy Commander Clancy Fernando, and the presence of a piece of cyanide capsule embedded in the neck of the suspected assassin point in that direction," he said.

Though the Government Analyst's report had still not come in, sources said it was RDX which was used in the blast. The suspected assassin was stated to be young, perhaps around 20 (a Reuters report quoted military sources mentioning a 14-year-old assassin but this is discounted).

He confirmed that 24 persons had died and 38 were injured in the explosion. A link between this assassination and Democratic United National Front leader Lalith Athulathmudali's was also suspected and being investigated. A Scotland Yard team, in Colombo for Athulathmudali's case, will help in this.

While the needle of suspicion has magnetically swung to the LTTE, nobody seemed to be in a hurry to pinpoint the assassin. Copies of his photograph were circulated to Tamil groups such as the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOT) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) in a bid to identify him. Tamil sources told *Frontline*: "The person seems to be well-built, clean-shaven and looks to be a Sinhala." That is the rub.

The consensus among senior police and military officers is this: "The style is typical of the LTTE. It reminds us of the May 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi at Sriperumbudur (near Madras) and the November 1992 killing of Admiral Clancy Fernando here. But if a Sinhala man has been motivated enough to carry out a professional and scientific job on similar lines, we have a new phenomenon to reckon with."

Whoever assassinated Premadasa, the objective was surely to destabilise the country and shake up the political climate of stability. A weaker government without a popular mandate would be a much better proposition for the extremist and terrorist organisation which masterminded it.

Even as the shock waves of the assassination were being felt across the island-nation, just recovering from the April 23 gunning down of Athulathmudali, Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, 71, was sworn in President, as envisaged in the Constitution. Ironically, the Opposition had blamed Premadasa for the Athulathmudali killing.

Later, on May 2, it was announced that Provincial Council elections would be held as scheduled on May 17.

Cabinet spokesman and Industries Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe announced the unanimous nomination of Wijetunga as the UNP's candidate for the presidential election via Parliament. "We enjoy a majority in Parliament and are confident of having him elected the next President."

The articles on the assassination of Lalith Athulathmudali and the Provincial Council elections, on Pages 39 to 45, which form part of the Cover Story, were written before the killing of President Premadasa.



Premadasa on the dais at the SAARC summit in Colombo in 1991 as Chairman of the Association.

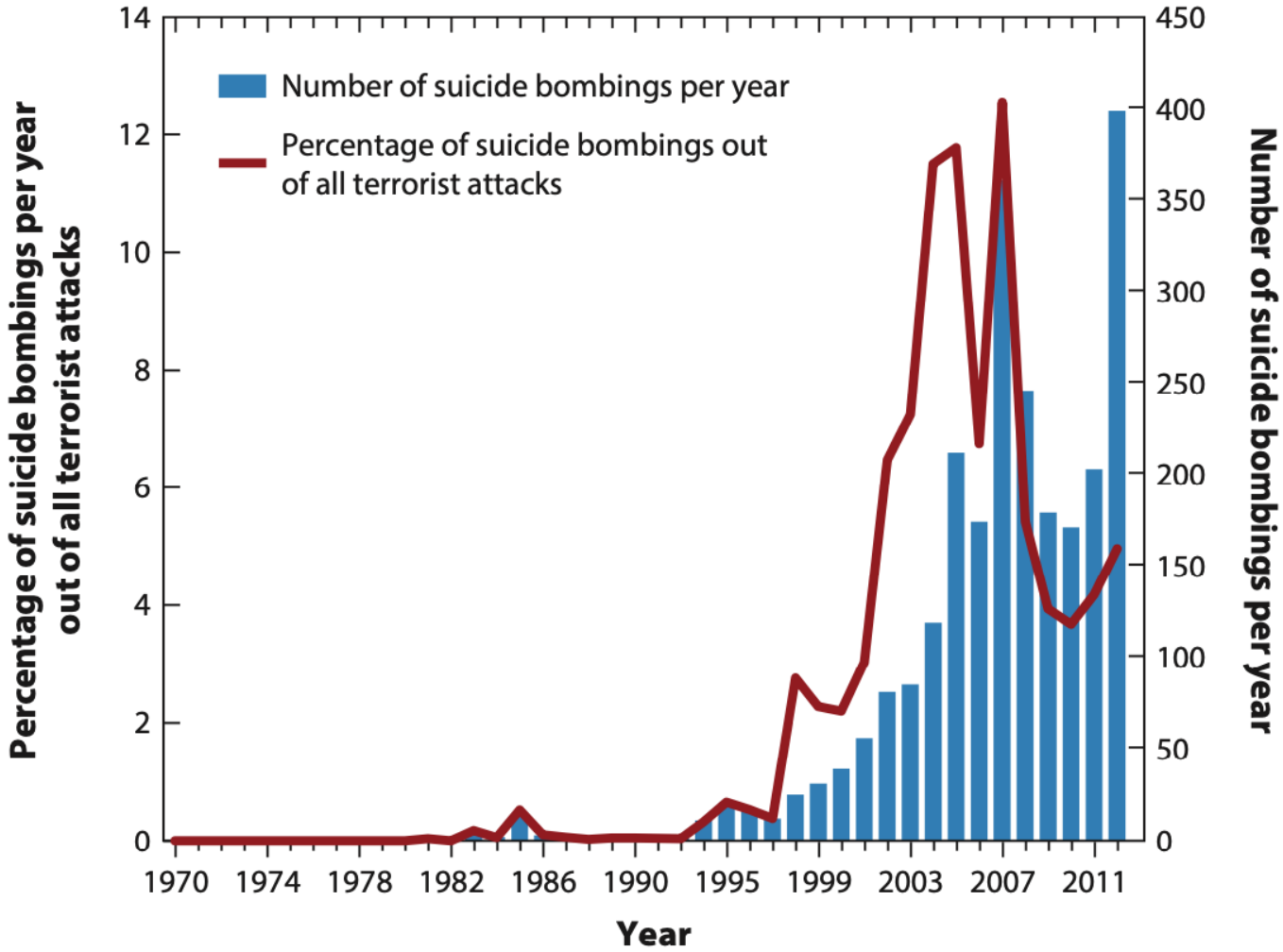






Two images from the assassination spot, minutes after the blast, and, bottom, Premadasa's body lying in state at the presidential residence... another traumatic blow.

Trends in suicide bombing



Why does it happen?

- We could think of factors at two levels

Why does it happen?

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1. Why do individuals engage in suicide bombing?

Why does it happen?

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1. Why do individuals engage in suicide bombing?
   - → Obviously, not obvious why people kill themselves

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2. Why do groups employ it?

Why does it happen?

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1. Why do individuals engage in suicide bombing?
   → Obviously, not obvious why people kill themselves
2. Why do groups employ it?
   → Same for groups, why waste manpower?

Why does it happen?

1. Individual motivations

Why does it happen?

1. Individual motivations
   - → Early on, just irrationality?

Why does it happen?

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     Not clear, actually wealthier than average by national standards

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   - → Organizations: newer, more 'innovative' groups, larger groups that can afford losing members, ...?