

The repertoire of insurgent violence

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Abstract

How do insurgencies decide their repertoire of violence? Why do some rebel groups recur more to terrorist attacks than to guerrilla-like actions? We propose in this paper a systematic exploration of the repertoire of violence practiced by all insurgent groups in the world from 1970 to 1997. We claim that the repertoire of violence insurgents can use is determined by its capacity to seize and hold territory from the state's grip. Whenever insurgents are able to control territory, they are better equipped to proceed with the typical guerrilla war against the state. To the contrary, if insurgents do not liberate territory from the state's hands, they must remain underground, and therefore they cannot but rely on attacks most people would identify as fully terrorist. We use the Global Terrorism Database to test our theoretical claim. Although GTD1 claims to collect only terrorist events in the world from 1970 to 1997, its definitional criterion is so loose that many guerrilla actions were also included, under the rubric of "facility" attacks. We find in the cross-sectional analysis that holding territorial control is a major causal factor of the repertoire of insurgent violence, absorbing the effect of state capacity. In addition to territorial control, the size of the group (recruitment) has also an impact on the types of tactics insurgent groups follow, with larger groups recurring more to facility attacks. We complement this with the study of a specific insurgency, Hezbollah. Hezbollah's switch in tactics from the initial reliance on bombs to the later adoption of guerrilla tactics was largely anticipated by its capacity to capture and hold territory in the South of Lebanon. Despite seizing territory, Hezbollah still kept planting bombs in the localities remaining beyond its control, as epitomized by the recourse to terrorist attacks abroad.

Introduction

Despite the current trend to emphasize the terroristic side of insurgencies, many rebel groups still do give a low profile to terrorist attacks. For groups involved in asymmetric, irregular civil wars (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010), liberating territory from the state's hands is typically the most relevant strategy. To that end, groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and the FARC in Colombia keep carrying out ambushes, raids and small-scale battles against the military, rather than spending all their resources in planting bombs in the Capital cities. Although the insurgencies fighting for territorial control have an obvious access to terroristic warfare techniques, they sometimes seem to refrain themselves from exploiting systematically that option.

How, then, do insurgencies decide their repertoire of violence? Why do some rebel groups recur more to terrorist attacks than to guerrilla-like actions? We propose in this paper a systematic exploration of the repertoire of violence practiced by all insurgent groups in the world from 1970 to 1997. We claim that the repertoire of violence insurgents can use is determined by its capacity to seize and hold territory from the state's grip. Whenever insurgents are able to control territory, they are better equipped to proceed with the typical guerrilla war against the state. To the contrary, if insurgents do not liberate territory from the state's hands, they must remain underground, and therefore they cannot but rely on attacks most people would identify as fully terrorist.

Territorial control has implications for the dynamics of warfare. In another work we have shown that rebel groups capable to seize territory build larger irregular armies and produce more deadly conflicts (De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca 2011). Here we seek to explore how the control of territory determines the type of violent techniques insurgent groups use.

Typical terrorist attacks, such as IEDs, bank robberies and kidnappings, are usually carried out by small clandestine teams. Guerrilla attacks such as ambushes, raids and small-scale battles, to the contrary, are perpetrated by middle-size columns. There is therefore a natural translation of territorial control into the repertoire of violence: groups with no territory can give a better use to their resources if they are spent on terrorist attacks, since they maximize the impact of the act on the targeted audience; groups with territorial control, on the other hand, pursue to wear out the enemy and consolidate their territorial positions, which is better accomplished through guerrilla-like actions. If our expectation is true, non-territorial groups will carry out few guerrilla attacks, whereas territorial insurgencies will not largely recur to terrorist techniques.

The usual problem with this kind of research questions is data availability. There are datasets on civil wars, measuring onset, lethality and outcomes, but none comprehensively includes all attacks carried out by the parties in conflict. As for terrorism, most datasets are truncated to specific world regions. There is a way to surmount this caveat though. The Global Terrorism Database (GTD1), although specifically compiled to include terrorist actions from 1970 to 1997, is so overarching in

scope that also collects many attacks that fall beyond the common understanding of terrorism. Thus, the GTD1 variable categorizing the type of attack had five categories, one of which pointed to guerrilla-like attacks (“facility”) and another one to pure terrorism (“bombings”). Thanks to its extremely detailed information, GTD1 is the best dataset to investigate why different insurgent groups follow different warfare tactics.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. In the second section, we briefly present our main theoretical claim, namely, that territorial control has large implications for the repertoire of violence that insurgencies select. Secondly, we describe our dataset, a world-wide cross-sectional sample of 156 insurgencies, and statistically analyze the determinants of the main types of warfare. After showing that groups with territorial control have more guerrilla-like (and less terroristic) attacks, we finally run a longitudinal analysis of one insurgent group, Hezbollah. This group is critical for our argument, since it shows how a relatively new insurgency can switch tactics after gaining territorial control. Hezbollah’s initial reliance on bombs was soon replaced by gun battles and mortar attacks after having got a foothold within the Shiite strongholds in Lebanon.

Territorial control and the repertoire of violence

Insurgencies may be differentiated depending on whether they have territorial control or not. Some insurgencies are able to seize territory from the state’s control, acting in these areas as local rulers and replacing therefore the authority of the state. The LTTE in Sri Lanka fully controlled a large territorial area in the north and east of the country and it was to all intents and purposes the local ruler: it created a shadow state, including justice courts, postal service, police and broadcasting (Hussain 2010: 382). Some other insurgencies, however, do not seize territory and act under the constraints imposed by clandestinity. The Red Army Faction in Germany was a fully clandestine organization that acted exclusively in cities. It spent most of its resources looking for safe places to hide its members (Aust 2009).

There is a strong association between territorial control and rural guerrillas on the one hand, and a lack of territory and urban insurgency on the other. Most insurgencies that control territory are rural-based, having a base in the jungle or in the mountains, where they become local rulers. But the association is far from perfect (Staniland 2010). First, there are rural insurgencies of a nomadic nature that hide from security forces but fall short of controlling any territory. An interesting example is the *Maquis* in Spain under Franco: this was a rural guerrilla with no permanent territorial base, its members being always roving rebels trying to escape from security forces (Serrano 2006). Second, there may be territorial control of urban areas, as was the case for example in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war, where the contending parties had control of various areas of the city (Makdisi and Sadaka 2005: 66-7).

Our point is not exactly about rural vs. urban guerrilla, but rather on territorial control, be it rural or urban. As we explain in greater detail below, territorial control requires at least having camps or bases within the country borders, where the insurgents store weapons and train recruits. At most, territorial control means that the insurgents replace the authority of the state and create a parallel state that imposes order, administers justice and extracts rents from the population. By contrast, underground or non-territorial insurgencies are forced to hide all the time.

Both territorial and non-territorial armed groups challenge the monopoly of violence the state is supposed to hold. The difference between the two is rather one related to sovereignty. Territorial control means that the insurgents break the state's sovereignty over its own territory. In civil wars, sovereignty is segmented, or at least fragmented (Kalyvas 2006). In non-territorial conflicts, the state retains sovereignty even if an armed group commits violent attacks.

The literature on civil wars has shown that the main determinant of civil war onset is state capacity (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Hegre and Sambanis 2006). In another work, we generalized this argument by arguing that state capacity (and more specifically, GDP per capita) accounts well for the type of insurgency we observe: weak states cannot deter insurgents from seizing territory, becoming a guerrilla and waging a full-fledge civil war, whereas strong states can force rebels to remain underground and recur to terrorism. When the state administration works all over the national territory and the army and the police have an effective presence across the country, insurgents are not able to liberate territory from the state's control. This is most likely to occur in rich countries, which are the ones with the capacity to maintain sovereignty intact. Rebels, therefore, gain territorial control in poor, defective states.

Territorial control has also implications for the production of insurgent violence. Features of the dynamics of violence such as recruitment, lethality¹ and warfare may largely rely on the rebels' seizure of territory. In this paper we focus on the repertoire of violence that different insurgent groups practice. We want to investigate if it is possible to distinguish between guerrillas and terrorist groups by looking at the type of warfare.

¹ With regards to recruitment and lethality, we replicated the analysis with Asal and Rethemeyer's (2008) dataset of violent sub-state groups between 1998 and 2005. Their data are very convenient for us as an external source of validity for our theoretical claims, since Asal and Rethemeyer followed their own procedure to code whether the violent group controlled territory or not. We ran some simple means tests to analyze if the groups with, according to their definition, territorial control had more recruits and produced more killings than those without territorial control. The results proved our theory: groups with territorial control had more killings (166 vs. 15 deaths) and more recruits (the average value of group size for territorial groups was 1.6 compared to 0.4 for clandestine groups - "0" being less than 100 members, "1" between 100 and 1,000 members, "2" between 1,000 and 10,000 members and "3" more than 10,000 members).

If our theory holds, insurgencies with territory will attract more recruits and gather more resources. As a consequence, their military capabilities will allow them to hold small scale battles and employ hit and run tactics against the enemy, being these tactics crucial to keep and enlarge their territorial lot. Rebels without territorial control, in contrast, will have to act clandestinely, which imposes severe limits on their capacity to grow. Terrorist groups, therefore, cannot but restrict themselves to tactics such as improvised explosive devices, assassinations, hostage-taking and the like.

We also consider a set of alternative hypotheses to explain the repertoire of violence. Firstly, there are factors related to the nature of the state attacked by the rebels. Net of territorial control, low GDP per capita could influence how insurgents act by enabling weak groups to carry out guerrilla-like attacks. Likewise, high inequality could contribute to overcoming lack of territorial control by pushing more recruits into the rebel group, and so offering it the necessary manpower to mimic guerrilla behavior. In line with Abraham Guillen's well-known hypothesis about terrorism as the last resort for rebels operating in highly urbanized countries (Guillen 1973), it is possible that regardless of the weakness of the state, insurgents will rely more on terrorist attacks if the population lives mostly in cities. In the same vein, governments with better road access to all their physical territory will pretty much reduce the chances for rebels to carry out guerrilla-like attacks.

Second, there are factors related to the type of insurgency. The aim of the group is a major feature. As conventional in the literature (Buhaug 2006), we distinguish between groups pursuing regime change and those seeking ethnic or nationalist accommodation, the hypothesis being that the latter will recur more to guerrilla-like attacks, given their mastery of the terrain wherein they fight. Moreover, the size of the insurgency can also have an impact on the repertoire of insurgent violence. Keeping the control of territory constant, different levels of recruitment could produce different warfare strategies, relying the group more on terrorism the lower its size.

In the rest of this paper, we proceed to test this set of factors accounting for the repertoire of insurgent violence. Before getting into the results, we first describe the data used in the empirical analysis, the GTD1. We later run two tests, a cross-sectional analysis of 156 insurgent groups in the world, and a longitudinal analysis of the specific tactics pursued by Hezbollah in the Lebanon.

Data

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is the most comprehensive dataset on terrorism and political violence that is available today (see LaFree and Dugan 2007 for a full description). It is based on the files that the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service collected for the period 1970-97. These files are the basis for the first version of GTD, GTD1. Since then, the database has been updated and the coding criteria have been modified. GTD presents data at a high level of disaggregation, the unit of analysis being

a violent attack. The main advantage is that it provides detailed information about the nature and characteristics of the attack in terms of location, authorship, target, lethality, and type of action.

GTD relies on a loose definition of terrorism (“the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation”), which, in fact, covers all types of political violence. Thus, it includes many terrorist conflicts, but also much violence that it is usually considered guerrilla activity or, more broadly, civil war. This is really convenient to us, since it makes the comparison between types of violence possible. Thus, we can test our hypotheses about the factors that determine the choice of tactics.

The first version of GTD, GTD1, contains a variable which is particularly well suited for our purposes. It corresponds to attack type and distinguishes seven alternatives, which are defined, at least partially, in terms of whether the attack is compatible or not with the underground nature of the armed group. Some of the alternatives are marginal ones, regarding both number of cases and relevance (these are assault, maiming). We focus on the remaining five:²

Facility attack: “The objective of the act is to rob, damage, or occupy a specific installation. [...] The occupation of a town, wherein persons may be killed or wounded, also is a facility attack since the objective was to take the town (installation), not to kill or to wound persons. [...] Facility attacks may be carried out using automatic weapons, explosives, incendiaries, etc.” It is added, and here the crucial part comes, that “*Normally, a multi-member team is involved. The operation is carried out openly –in contrast to the covert placement of bombs at night*” (our italics).

Bombing: “The objective of the act normally is destruction or damage of a facility through the covert placement of bombs. *The action is clandestine in contrast to a facility attack.* Normally the identity of the perpetrator(s) is not known at the time, although claims of responsibility often follow. [...] *In contrast to a facility attack, which often is aimed at physically taking over the installation, a bombing is designed to simply destroy or damage it*” (our italics).

These are the two most important and frequent categories. The terms used to describe their content make the identification with territorial and non-territorial insurgencies almost immediate. Facility attacks are identified with large teams and with occupation of space, which are inherent characteristics of guerrilla activity. Given the requirements of this type of action, facility attacks are more likely to be observed when the insurgents have some territorial control. The only exception is bank robbery, which the coders include as facility attacks. Bank robberies can be done, and it has often be the case, by underground and open groups alike. In fact, bank robbery is usually the main

² See the codebook of GTD1 1.1 at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/22541/documentation>

source of financing for small, clandestine groups. Apart from this, however, the general description of facility attacks seems consistent with large, powerful groups that have some degree of territorial control and are interested in occupying and gaining new physical space.

Bombings, by contrast, are not aimed at taking over a place, but rather to destroy it. And, as the coders emphasize, the action of putting the bomb and making it explode is a clandestine one. Therefore, it is a tactic that be easily adopted by underground groups. Of course, territorial groups may also use bombings, but, because of the constraints of clandestine groups, we expect these to resort more often to this kind of attack.

The other categories are these:

Assassination: “The objective of the act is to kill a specific person or persons. Normally the victim is a personage of note, a policeman, government official, etc.”

Kidnapping and hijacking: Here we conflate these two attacks into a single one due to their similarity. The vast majority of cases in this category correspond to kidnappings. In the case of the kidnapping, the goal is “to obtain the payment of ransom, to force the release of political prisoner(s), or to achieve some other political objective.” In the case of hijacking, the aims are similar but it requires that the perpetrators “assume control by force or threat of force of a conveyance such as an aircraft, boat, ship bus, automobile, or other vehicle.”

Assassinations and kidnappings are compatible with any kind of insurgency. In principle, therefore, we do not have strong expectations about the association between these attacks and type of insurgency. Assassinations are no doubt carried out by all insurgencies. In the case of kidnappings, however, a distinction is necessary: whereas we expect underground groups to get involved in kidnappings, this cannot be done at a great scale due to the logistical constraints; by contrast, territorial groups may have the capability to kidnap people on a systematic basis. Thus, we expect that if a group spends a relatively high portion of its attacks on kidnappings, this must be because it has territorial control and the logistical possibilities that come with it.

These four categories (facility attack, bombing, assassination and kidnapping) constitute the variation in tactics that armed groups display. We think this classification is particularly convenient because of the association between facility attacks and territorial groups on the one hand and bombings and underground ones on the other. Needless to say, these associations are not going to be deterministic ones, if only because the menu of options is quite wide. Yet, according to our hypotheses, we think that some profiles of attacks will be more likely than others.

Curiously, GTD II, which covers the period 1998-2007, has changed the coding rules of the attack type variable. The new variable has more categories and it is not

strictly comparable to that of GTD1.³ In the version that merges GTD1 and GTD II there is still another change in the coding rules, so that facility attacks are not any longer defined in terms of open actions aimed at occupation by multi-member teams. Since the original coding is the one closer to our theoretical intuitions about the tactics among which armed groups have to decide, we stick to it, limiting ourselves to the analysis of GTD1, which contains 61,637 incidents.

Our interest lies in the patterns of tactics used by armed groups. We try to explain variation in these patterns. Thus, for each group, we calculate, throughout its whole period of activity, the proportion of facility attacks, bombings, assassinations and kidnappings. Not every single group is included, however. GTD1 contains many short-lived groups that never killed anyone, as well as generic identifiers that do not correspond to concrete groups (“East Timorese activists”, “Zulu militants”, and so on). There are in total 2,248 groups, most of which are non-entities. In order to avoid the noise that these hundreds of groups may create, we establish a minimal threshold of activity for a group to be considered in our analysis: we only consider armed groups that have a name, that have killed at least ten people and that have acted for more than one year. We think this captures groups that really pose some challenge to the state. The number of groups that qualify according to this criterion are only 156.

The modal category of attacks corresponds to facility ones (44 per cent). If it makes sense to assume that these kinds of attacks are more frequent in civil wars and guerrilla conflicts, this modal value shows clearly that GTD1 covers much more than terrorism. Bombings represent 32 per cent of all attacks, followed by assassinations (19 per cent) and kidnappings (5 per cent).

In accordance with our previous argument, we have divided the 156 armed groups depending on whether they have territorial control or not. The rule for coding territorial control contemplates three possibilities: (i) the existence of camps or bases within the country’s borders, in which they store weapons, train recruits, etc.; (ii) the presence of stable roadblocks that disrupt the flow of goods and people within the country; and (iii) rebels ruling the civil population in the localities they seize (e.g. extracting rents or administering justice). If one or more of these conditions are met, the group is classified as a territorial one.⁴

Our expectation is that, in general, the pattern of violent tactics will vary crucially on territorial control. Figure 1 shows box plots for each of the four tactics depending on territorial control. The left-hand panel corresponds to groups without territorial control and the right-hand one to territorial control. The patterns are quite different. Whereas in groups with territorial control facility attacks are clearly dominant and the other tactics represent a small proportion of all action, in groups without

³ The codebook of GTD II (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/22600/documentation>) states that the “attack type” variable is compatible with its counterpart in GTD1 (“incident type”), but whereas facility attacks are a majority in GTD1, they are marginal in GTD II.

⁴ See the appendix for a full list of the 156 groups and their values on the territorial control variable.

territorial control there is a much more heterogeneous distribution, with bombings in the first place, assassinations in second and facility attacks in third. Kidnappings are almost residual for non-territorial groups, though, as predicted, they are more important in territorial ones.

Although territorial groups have a wider range of choices, the fact is that they spend most of their resources in facility attacks. The other tactics play a clearly minor role. Non-territorial groups have greater difficulties, because of their underground nature, to carry out facility attacks and this is borne out by the data: now bombings and assassinations, which are compatible with clandestinity, play a much bigger role.

We proceed to analyze in greater detail and more systematically the determinants of tactic choice by armed groups.

A cross-sectional analysis of the repertoire of insurgent violence

We contend in this paper that the seizure of territory is a determinant feature of the fate of an insurgency. Thanks to holding territory, guerrillas have the ability to carry out systematically facility attacks, whereas groups remaining underground cannot but resort to terrorist attacks such as no-warning bombs. Although figure 1 offers a first validation of this claim, we propose in this section to run a set of more formal tests of the impact of territorial control on insurgent warfare. We proceed in two steps: we firstly analyze how country-based factors affect the insurgents' choice of tactics; and second, we incorporate into the model organizational features, such as territorial control and group size. Our expectation is that territorial control will mostly override the country effects, since the former is broadly determined by the latter, especially by GDP per capita.

The decision insurgents make with regards to choosing tactics will be dependent on the template of potential options they have. Similarly to voters that must choose between the actual number of parties in competition, insurgents must spend their limited resources between alternative options, such as facility attacks, bombings, assassinations and kidnappings (as defined by the GTD1). Intuitively, the number of facility attacks a group carries out will be deterministically related to the number of other types of attacks the group perpetrates. In other words, the different potential dependent variables are only meaningful if compared to each other.

Instead of running separate regressions on how many attacks of each type the 156 insurgent groups carry out, we run an integrated choice-based model. Following Van der Eijk and his associates (2006), we expand (stack, in technical jargon) the dataset by creating four rows for each insurgent group, as many as different types of attacks there are, according to GTD1. As our key independent variables are not choice-specific, that is, they do not vary for each specific type of attack,⁵ we need to produce

⁵ For instance, the GDP per capita in Peru when Shining Path started its lethal campaign does not vary with relation to the four different categories. In this sense, we say it is choice-invariant.

choice-specific values for each independent variable. We did in three steps: (i) regress every independent variable on each type of attack –that means 7 (casual factors) X 4 (choices)= 28 regressions (all of them with country-clustered errors); (ii) predict the expected values of the dependent variable; and (iii) incorporate the predicted values of each regression in its corresponding row of the expanded dataset. The expanded dataset has 156 X 4 observations,⁶ with choice-specific observations for all the relevant variables used in the analysis.

Our dependent variable is *type*, and includes the main four categories of attacks identified by GTD1. As independent variables, the first regression includes the country-based factors. *GDP per capita* measures the country value (in logarithm) when the insurgency started its campaign, and is taken from the Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers and Aten 2002). It works as the classic proxy for state capacity. An alternative way to capture state capacity comes from *paved roads*, which measures the share of roads in the country that are “surfaced with crushed stone (macadam) and hydrocarbon binder or bituminized agents, with concrete, or with cobblestones”, as defined by the World Bank (2007).

Inequality measures how wealth is internally distributed within the country where the insurgency is acting, and is a useful indicator of the level of grievances in the country. In this case, we take the country average value for the period under analysis, 1970-1997, in order to surmount problems of missing observations. The data come from the Texas Inequality Study (Deininger and Squire 1996). *Urban population* measures the share of the population living in cities and towns, as defined by the Correlates of War, version 4.0 (Singer 1987), and is useful to test the Guillen’s hypothesis. Finally, *regime* gauges the type of political regime the rebels were fighting against, according to the ACLP dataset (Przeworski et al. 2000). It measures the number of years during the duration of the insurgency the regime was a dictatorship, as a percentage of the total of years. We are not concerned here with the potential endogeneity of this indicator, since it seeks to capture if particular regime types are more prone to specific types of insurgent attacks, regardless of the initial political conditions before conflict onset.

Model 1 in table 1 includes the results for the country-based factors. The economic variables, GDP per capita and inequality, are the only statistically significant predictors of the repertoire of insurgent violence, having the other three factors a negligible impact. As the coefficients are not directly interpretable, we have calculated the predicted values for each type of violence as the most relevant independent variables vary, keeping the rest of the factors at their means.

TABLE 1

⁶ In practice, fewer observations are reported in the final analyses, due to missing information and also to the fact that we do not include vigilante groups and those producing more than 90 percent of their attacks abroad.

Figure 2 plots how inequality affects the warfare choices insurgents make. There are four lines in the graph, one for each type of attack. The effect of inequality on the repertoire of violence is quite remarkable. Thus, the most egalitarian countries host insurgents whose main tactics are bombings (34 percent) and assassinations (34 percent), with a low reliance on facility attacks (18 percent) and kidnappings (14 percent). To the contrary, the most unequal countries suffer insurgencies that strongly recur to facility attacks (55 percent) to carry out their fight, relying much less on bombings (17 percent), assassinations (8 percent) and kidnappings (20 percent). Inequality, it seems, has an independent impact on warfare, net of state capacity.

Figure 3 plots the effect of state capacity (as measured by GDP per capita) on the distribution between different types of attacks insurgents make. In poor countries, insurgents operating in the poorest countries overwhelmingly rely on facility attacks (50 percent), with a somehow similar number of bombings (20 percent), assassinations (15 percent) and kidnappings (15 percent). The story is quite different if insurgents must combat against rich countries, since around 42 percent of their attacks are bombs, with 31 percent of assassinations, 18 percent of facility attacks, and 9 percent of kidnappings. Congruent with our expectation, insurgents in poor countries carry out more facility attacks, whereas the ones in rich countries depend more on bombings.

FIGURES 2 AND 3

Still, GDP per capita is not the same as territorial control, so we proceed in model 2 to test the effect of the organizational features on warfare type. We firstly have measured whether the insurgent group controls *territory* in a permanent basis or not, as aforementioned. Second, we have also estimated, using different sources,⁷ the average number of recruits the group had (*recruitment*). We coded our estimations in a 5-value variable, being “0” less than 100 members, “1” from 100 to 500, “2” from 500 to 1,000, “3” from 1,000 to 5,000, “4” from 5,000 to 10,000, and “5” above 10,000 recruits. Finally, we also control for the *aim* of the insurgent group. We distinguish between those groups pursuing secessionist and/or ethnic goals, and those oriented to bring down the regime.

⁷ We used the START terrorist group profile database (http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/), UPPSALA non-state actor codebook (http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/eacd_notes.pdf) and Sambanis civil war coding notes (<http://pantheon.yale.edu/~ns237/index/research/CivilWarCodingNotes.pdf>) as the three main sources of information. For groups with no available information at the mentioned sources, we searched additional internet sources, such as the South Asia Terrorism Portal (www.satp.org) and the list of foreign terrorist groups released by the US Department of State (http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/terror_94/append.html). Finally, we checked monographies on specific groups to complete the dataset.

The general fit of the regression is better than in model 1, although we lose now some groups for which we were unable to find any estimate on recruitment. The three organizational indicators work well, and reduce the effects of the structural factors. However, inequality is still significant. This is a surprising result, since inequality does not seem to affect warfare through either state capacity (richer countries will be less unequal) or recruitment (more unequal countries will produce a larger pool of recruits for insurgencies).

Leaving *aim* aside, territorial control and recruitment have likewise a very strong impact on the repertoire of insurgent violence. As expected, territorial control overrides GDP per capita, which is a clear indication of the hypothesized relation between the two variables. Given that insurgency is a dichotomic variable, we use a bar graph to present the effect of territorial control on the choice of tactics. The composition of violence is quite different, depending on whether the insurgents control territory or not. Thus, 47 percent of the attacks perpetrated by guerrillas are facility attacks, compared to 20 percent of bombings, 17 percent of assassinations and 16 percent of kidnappings. These numbers switch completely if the group does not control territory: the main two tactics are now bombings (33 percent, a 13-point increase from 20 percent) and assassinations (25 percent, an 8-point increase), with facility attacks going down to 28 percent (a 19-point drop). If we bear in mind that facility attacks are somehow inflated because of the inclusion of bank robberies in this category, it is safe to say that clandestine groups mainly rely on bombs and target killings, being the guerrillas constrained by their territorial nature to facility attacks.

FIGURE 4

Finally, figure 5 plots the relation between recruitment and the different types of tactics. The smallest groups, those with less than 100 members, spend more resources in bombings (32 percent of attacks) and assassinations (26 percent) than in facility attacks (25 percent) and kidnappings (17 percent). Large-scale insurgencies, those with more than 10,000 recruits, have a very different distribution of tactics, concentrating on facility attacks (45 percent), and with a similar use of the other techniques (around 18 percent each).

FIGURE 5

The size of the organization seems to boost the capabilities of the insurgency, allowing it to carry out guerrilla-like attacks that would not be expectable in the absence of territorial control. This is usually the case when insurgent groups keep safe bases in

neighboring countries, which increases their capacity to recruit and behave like a guerrilla (Salehyan 2007). Thus, although the group must operate clandestinely within the territory of the country they fight, they could still launch guerrilla-like attacks from their sanctuaries, harassing the border forces without risking heavy losses.

To recap, country-specific factors run out of significance when group-specific features such as territorial control and recruitment are incorporated into the models. The exception is inequality, which affects warfare beyond state capacity and recruitment opportunities. Holding territorial control is key to account for the composition of insurgent violence: groups with liberated territory carry out many more facility attacks, whereas those remaining underground rely more on bombs and assassinations. Finally, the size of the group has an autonomous impact on warfare, net of territorial control. We hypothesized that this could be related to the existence of foreign patrons that give leeway to insurgencies by facilitating training facilities and safe passage to their territory. This may boost the rank and file of the insurgency, allowing it to run more guerrilla-like attacks than expected from its lack of territorial control within the borders of the state they are fighting.

An obvious criticism of this analysis is that its cross-sectional nature may be concealing enormous variation in the composition of insurgent violence, as well as in the territory under insurgents' control. Firstly, there could be groups that move from lack of territorial control during the first stages of the conflict to capturing territory later, or just the other way around, affecting the distribution of tactics used by the group. Second, although our theory assumes that guerrillas will mimic terrorist groups when operating in the cities, there is no way to test this with the data we compiled. In order to deal with these problems, we propose a look at a specific group, Hezbollah. We analyze temporal as well as spatial variation in targets to check whether switch in targets matched variation in territorial control and whether different types of attacks took place in different types of localities, as our theory would predict.

Hezbollah and the switch in tactics

Hezbollah ("Party of God") can be considered an ideal case study on a number of grounds. It has evolved from an underground group that fought in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon using terrorist tactics to a much wider organization, capable of (i) running military operations against the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), (ii) gaining seats in the Parliament and (iii) establishing a wide network of charity and welfare services (schools, hospitals) (Gunning 2007: 158). Moreover, Hezbollah has been involved in several conflicts, which introduces variation in the repertoire of violent tactics (Mannes 2004: 147-55). Finally, it has acted in various settings, from big cities such as Beirut to international attacks out of Lebanon. Thanks to the variation in time and space regarding the organization and its deeds, we can test in a single case some of the findings of the cross-group analysis.

Hezbollah is a Shiite group. It was born following the invasion of South Lebanon by Israel in 1982, being sponsored and financed by Iran. Its main aim is the expulsion of Western troops from Lebanon and the transformation of the country into an Islamist one. Hezbollah started as a loosely organized group, its base located in the area of the Bekaa Valley. Iran sent there around 1,500 members of the Revolutionary Guard to train recruits. When it became a stronger organization, it moved its headquarters to Beirut.

Hezbollah did not have a central role in the Lebanese civil war (1975-1989), in which the Palestinians were the main contending force in the Muslim side (Makdisi and Sadaka 2005). However, Hezbollah had a crucial intervention in the failure of the international peacekeeping mission. As it is well known, in 1983 Hezbollah carried out two suicide missions against the American and French troops in Beirut, which led the US and France to withdraw their military presence in Lebanon. Hezbollah was also involved at the beginning in several episodes of kidnapping Western people. These are quintessential terrorist tactics, compatible with the underground nature of the organization at the time. As the deputy general-secretary of Hezbollah, Naa'im Qassem, said in an interview, "Up until 1985, Hezbollah was not yet a single entity that could stand up and speak for itself. [...] The nature of our formation required clandestine behavior." (quoted in Jaber 1997: 62)

Hezbollah focused its activity on the liberation of South Lebanon from Israeli control. Although the resistance against the IDF was initially almost spontaneous, consisting of protests and small bombs, Hezbollah soon became the local leader and launched a long term war of attrition against Israel, expecting the Israelis to withdraw if certain level of violence was sustained through time (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002: 118-121). By 1984, Hezbollah controlled seven villages in the South of Lebanon in which the IDF could only enter by mounting a big military operation (Jaber 1997: 22). Thanks to this initial degree of territorial control, Hezbollah was able to increase its military capacity.

The real breakthrough took place in 1991 (Jaber 1997: 37). Having gained a hegemonic role in the Shiite community, the organization started to carry out raids and assaults against the IDF that in some cases amounted to small scale battles that were sustained for hours. The attacks were much better organized from a military point of view and gradually replaced the suicide missions that were common in the 1980s.⁸ In fact, Israel eventually withdrew from South Lebanon in 2000, which was taken by Hezbollah as a resounding victory in the war of attrition.

The hegemony of Hezbollah within the Shiite bloc was achieved after an internecine fight with its rival organization, Amal, supported by Syria (Norton 2007: 43-4). The hostilities started in 1988, in South Lebanon, and soon extended to Beirut, where Hezbollah emerged as the victorious actor. In 1990, under the initiative of Iran, a truce between the two organizations was signed.

⁸ According to Norton (2000: 29), while the IDF/Hezbollah ratio of casualties was 5:1 in the late 1980s, it went down to less than 2:1 by 1995.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that Hezbollah engaged in many acts of international terrorism, acting out of Lebanon, particularly in the 1990s. One of the most infamous attacks was the explosion of a car bomb in the building of the Jewish community in Argentina, on July 18th, 1994: eighty six people were killed.

Given this background information and our previous hypotheses, we may expect the following with regard to variation in time and space. On the one hand, the proportion of facility attacks should increase in time, as Hezbollah first gained territorial control in South Lebanon and then it developed a military structure. According to the consensus among experts, we should be able to detect a change in trend particularly after 1991. This was the year in which Hezbollah, having won a hegemonic role in the Shiite bloc, started to carry out typical guerrilla attacks against the IDF.

On the other hand, we should observe a clear geographical contrast, with different patterns of attack in Beirut and in South Lebanon. Whereas in South Lebanon facility attacks should be dominant, due to the kind of guerrilla activity that Hezbollah developed there for the expulsion of Israeli forces, in a big city such as Beirut we should observe few facility attacks, urban guerrilla tactics being more common (assassinations, bombings, kidnappings). Also, in the case of international attacks, which are typically terrorist, we should expect the use of explosive devices.

In terms of targets, the expectation is clearly that attacks aimed at civilians will be more frequent in international terrorism and also in urban settings. Taking into account that Hezbollah improved its military capacity during the years, civilian targets will be observed in a greater proportion in the early period.

We analyze here all the attacks carried out by Hezbollah that are included in GTD1. There are 206 of them. Of these, 48 per cent are lethal attacks, adding up 635 people killed. Of course, this is a minimal estimation of all Hezbollah violent activity. It is impossible to determine how representative this sample is with regard to Hezbollah's total violence.

We start with time effects. We have created a variable that divides attacks into two groups, those that happened before 1991, and those that happened in that year or after. Table 2 shows the results of a comparison of means for the four types of attack carried out by Hezbollah: facility attacks, assassinations, bombings, and kidnappings. Overall, facility attacks are 53 per cent of all attacks, followed by bombings (28 per cent), assassinations (10 per cent) and kidnappings (8 per cent).

TABLE 2

In the case of facility attacks, there is a big jump from 12 to 69 per cent in the two periods. This confirms nicely that 1991 was indeed the breakthrough year for

Hezbollah. From this year onwards, the greater military capabilities of the organization were translated into a spectacular increase of facility attacks. Territorial control and better trained recruits made possible this leap forward, whereby Hezbollah acted more as a traditional guerrilla.

By contrast with facility attacks, there is little temporal variation in bombings, though they were somewhat more used in the earlier period. The increase in facility attacks is produced at the cost of assassinations and kidnappings, which were widely employed in the initial period and then almost disappear. In general, Table 2 conveys the shift from terrorist to guerrilla tactics. As Hezbollah became stronger, its violence resembled more that of a traditional guerrilla.

GTD1 also contains information about the location of the attacks. This information exists for 190 of the 206 observations. Given the low number of observations and their concentration in a few places, it is necessary to present the information at a high level of aggregation. Lebanon is divided into six governorates (Beirut being one of them), which are, in turn, divided into 25 districts. Having examined the distribution across governorates, it turns out that 97 per cent of the attacks that took place in Lebanon were concentrated in Beirut and South Lebanon.⁹ We have excluded from the analysis the remaining 3 per cent. To this we must add the 22 attacks that were perpetrated out of Lebanon. The variable of location, therefore, has only three values: Beirut, South Lebanon and out of Lebanon attacks.

Cross-tabulation of type of attack and location can be seen in Table 3. Basically, location represents here different types of conflicts and therefore different types of tactics. Thus, the distribution for South Lebanon is consistent with the guerrilla conflict that Hezbollah was involved in for the expulsion of Israeli forces: in this area, the vast majority of attacks are facility ones (65 per cent). The contrast with the international campaign out of Lebanon is indeed stark: in this campaign, facility attacks have a marginal presence (18.2 per cent), the main feature being the use of explosive devices (54.5 per cent). International attacks represent the purest illustration of absence of territorial control. The insurgents have to act under full clandestinity when they move out of their country. Bombings are indeed the most expedient tactic for these circumstances.

TABLE 3

Whereas the campaign in South Lebanon fits well the main features of guerrilla conflict, the international campaign clearly corresponds to terrorism. The case of Beirut

⁹ By South Lebanon we mean the Nabatieh and the South Governorates, which have the border with Israel. We have included here too 12 attacks that took place in the north of Israel and which correspond clearly to the campaign against the IDF.

is a more mixed one. Indeed, Table 3 reveals a quite even distribution of attacks among the four types, at least compared with the other two conflicts. Interestingly, Hezbollah had control of the urban territory in West Beirut, in the Shiite enclaves. This was crucial for the infrastructure that makes kidnappings possible, particularly if they are carried out on a systematic basis, as it was the case. As can be seen, kidnappings represent the modal value, with 37.5 per cent of actions. This is hardly feasible without some territorial control, be it urban or rural. Assassinations were also frequent, as in many other terrorist campaigns.¹⁰

If we examine patterns of target selection, we obtain a profile that is consistent with the analysis based on time location. Based on the information coded in GTD, we have grouped targets into four groups: (i) military, (ii) police, (iii) government officials, and (iv) other civilians. The first two categories are those of combatants and sum 58 per cent of all the attacks, the remaining 42 per cent corresponding to non-combatants. These percentages vary significantly depending on when and where the attack took place.

With regard to the period, combatants are the target only in 18.6 per cent of the attacks that were carried out before 1991; after that year, it goes up to 73.7 per cent. This confirms the military growth of Hezbollah in the 1990s. As for location, Table 3H shows detailed results. The percentage of combatants goes up to 70 per cent in the guerrilla conflict in South Lebanon, and goes down to a mere 8.7 per cent in the international campaign, which focused on civilians. This fits the military component of the guerrilla and the purely terrorist one of the international campaign. The urban guerrilla in Beirut focused overwhelmingly on non-combatants (75 per cent).

TABLE 4

In sum, the case of Hezbollah is particularly interesting, since this organization was involved in quite different conflicts. It behaved as a pure terrorist group in the campaign of international attacks. And, after 1991, it resembled a traditional guerrilla in the South Lebanon campaign against the IDF. Finally, in Beirut it adopted the form of urban guerrilla specialized in kidnappings and assassinations. The different territorial constraints in each conflict, as well as the nature of the conflict in each case, explain to a large extent the variation we find in the tactics employed by the group.

Conclusion

¹⁰ The differences in percentages in Table 3 are highly significant. Cramer's V, which measures the strength of the association between the two variables, is pretty high (.46).

Insurgencies usually want to convince their potential constituencies of support and society at large that their goals are just and efficacious. A very convenient intermediate step is to capture some portion of the territory they fight for and rule the area to sow and spread the potential benefits of the alternative institutions and rulers. In addition to using liberated areas to proselytize, territorial control allows the group to increase its armed capabilities, by attracting more recruits and holding safe areas from which launching more deadly attacks. In this paper we have argued that another implication of territorial control is the repertoire of insurgent violence. Given its capacity to liberate territory, guerrillas should spend most of their resources in armed encounters such as hit-and-run attacks, ambushes, raids and small-scale battles. They mainly recur to bombings when they operate underground in areas beyond their control. Terrorist groups, to the contrary, do not have the necessary infrastructure to fight for territory, and therefore should choose warfare tactics that adapt better to their clandestine nature. Thus, bombings and assassinations are the classic repertoire of violence associated to terrorist groups.

Thanks to the GTD1, we have been able to offer two empirical tests of our theoretical argument. Although GTD1 claims to collect only terrorist events in the world from 1970 to 1997, its definitional criterion is so loose that many guerrilla actions were also included, under the rubric of “facility” attacks. We produced a cross-sectional dataset with all insurgent groups in the world that killed at least 10 people in more than year of activity, numbering 156.

We used this dataset to test if the composition of insurgent violence is determined by country-specific factors, such as GDP per capita and inequality, and by group-specific factors, such as territorial control and recruitment. We found that holding territorial control is a major causal factor of the repertoire of insurgent violence, absorbing the effect of state capacity. In addition to territorial control, the size of the group (recruitment) has also an impact on the types of tactics insurgent groups follow, with larger groups recurring more to facility attacks. Unexpectedly, income inequality kept a significant effect on tactics, net of state capacity and recruitment.

The cross-sectional analysis has been complemented with the study of a specific insurgency, Hezbollah, which has given us leverage to deal with issues such as temporal switch in tactics and mismatch between territorial control and the location of the attacks. Hezbollah fits well our expectation, since its change from the initial reliance on bombs to the later adoption of guerrilla tactics was largely anticipated by its capacity to capture and hold territory in the South of Lebanon. Despite seizing territory, Hezbollah still kept planting bombs in the localities remaining beyond its control, as epitomized by the recourse to terrorist attacks outside of Lebanon.

What are the implications of our analysis? First of all, the analysis has proven that understanding terrorism as insurgent violence perpetrated by clandestine rebels is a sound way to approach the phenomenon, since it captures not only the view of terrorism as an action (bombings, assassinations, bank robbery, and the like), but also its view as

an actor (clandestine groups). By looking only at its first meaning, many scholars fail to distinguish between perpetrators whose incentives to recur to terrorist tactics could be radically different (REF).

Second, our analysis also brings attention to the blind reliance that researchers have had until recently on datasets without asking themselves about the real nature of the observations that were being introduced in the statistical models (see also Sánchez-Cuenca and De la Calle 2009). Problems such as conflation of domestic and international terrorism, and guerrilla-like and terrorist-like attacks should be very carefully dealt with by the researcher before getting into the data.

And last but not least, we have shown that territorial control by insurgent groups has major consequences for the repertoire of violence that ensues. Given the increased capabilities of many rough states in the world to monitor their territory, it is becoming harder for rebels nowadays to capture it. As a consequence, we should observe more of a balance between guerrilla and terrorist attacks in the near future, just as Kilcullen anticipated (2009). Current conflicts in the FATA regions of Pakistan and in the Northern region of Yemen could be pointing in that direction.

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Table 1. Determinants of the repertoire of insurgent violence (two models).

. reg type gdp regl paved urba inequal if vigilante=0 & foreign<0.9, vce(cluster id)

Linear regression Number of obs = 524
 F(5, 130) = 57.51
 Prob > F = 0.0000
 R-squared = 0.4432
 Root MSE = .19194
 (Std. Err. adjusted for 131 clusters in id)

type	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
gdp	.7184816	.3198389	2.30	0.023	-.0909889 1.539096
regl	.1893981	.2358906	0.80	0.439	-.2782559 .6549862
paved	.0105915	.2501895	0.04	0.968	-.484339 .5055219
urba	-.389372	.3672943	-1.01	0.318	-1.090005 .3572907
inequal	.4990981	.1898472	2.57	0.011	-.1155828 .8825897
_cons	-.0117328	.018715	-0.70	0.484	-.0449014 .0213358

. reg type gdp insu aim inequal paved urba regl rec if vigilante=0 & foreign<0.9, vce(cluster id)

Linear regression Number of obs = 498
 F(8, 123) = 50.59
 Prob > F = 0.0000
 R-squared = 0.5294
 Root MSE = .17761
 (Std. Err. adjusted for 124 clusters in id)

type	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
gdp	.3261375	.2639371	1.24	0.219	-.1963098 .8485848
insu	.6132722	.1739164	3.53	0.001	-.2890154 .957529
aim	-.2615715	.1928597	-1.36	0.178	-.6431255 .1203825
inequal	.3663722	.1822024	2.01	0.047	-.0057137 .7279306
paved	-.2894027	.2454413	-0.98	0.325	-.6883003 .171495
urba	-.2206448	.2839712	-0.99	0.325	-.8429485 .2812588
regl	.0659071	.2483175	0.28	0.782	-.4278017 .5594158
rec	.4147206	.1508707	2.75	0.007	-.1164772 .712964
_cons	-.0089144	.0155403	-0.57	0.587	-.0398754 .0218468

Table 2. Temporal distribution of Hezbollah attacks.

	Facility attacks	Assassinations	Bombings	Kidnappings
Mean for the whole period	.53	.10	.28	.08
<1991	.12	.24	.37	.27
>=1991	.69	.05	.25	.01
t-value (two-tailed)	-8.62***	4.24***	1.77*	6.91***
N=207				
***, ** and *: significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively				

Table 3. Spatial distribution of Hezbollah attacks.

	Beirut	South Lebanon	Out of Lebanon
Facility attack	12.5%	64.6%	18.2%
Assassinations	31.2%	5.4%	18.2%
Bombings	18.8%	28.5%	54.5%
Kidnappings	37.5%	1.5%	9.1%
n	32	130	22
Chi-squared=79.15 (significant at 1%)			
Cramer's V=.46			

Table 4. Spatial distribution of Hezbollah targets.

	Beirut	South Lebanon	Out of Lebanon
Military	6.2%	43.1%	4.3%
Police	18.8%	26.9%	4.4%
Government	18.7%	16.9%	26.1%
Civilians	56.3%	13.1%	65.2%
n	32	130	23
Chi-squared=53.60 (significant at 1%)			
Cramer's V=.38			

Figure 1. Violent tactics and territorial control

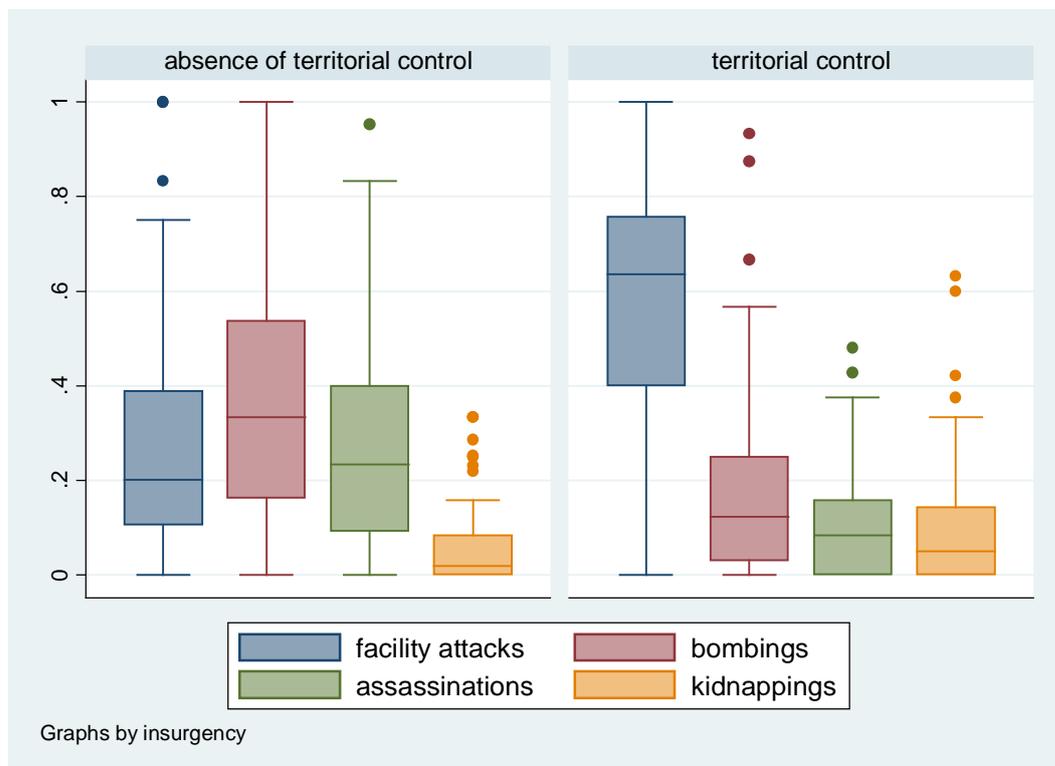


Figure 2. Type of Attack and GDP per capita.

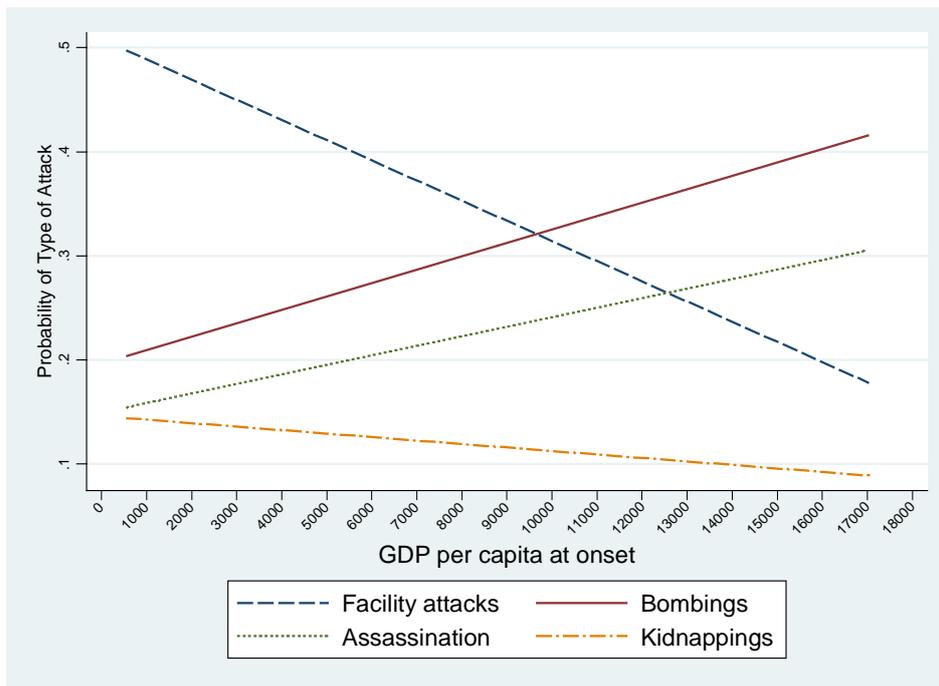


Figure 3. Type of Attack and Levels of Income Inequality.

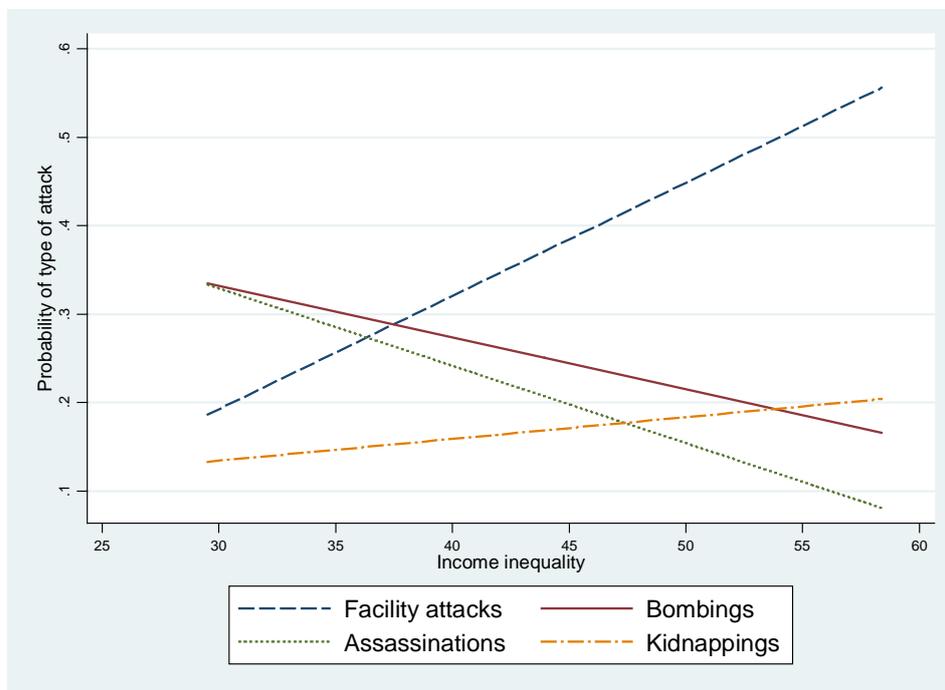


Figure 4. Territorial Control and type of attack.

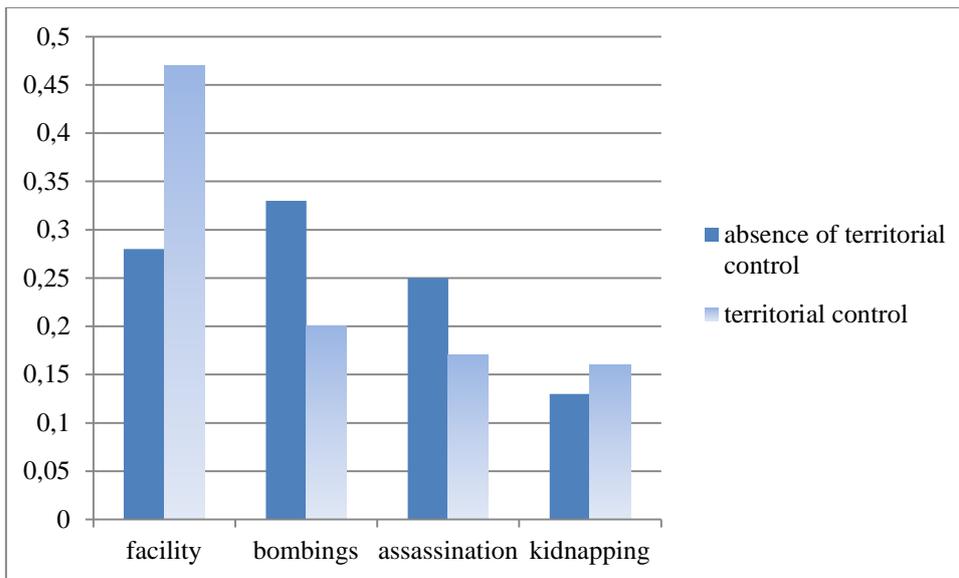


Figure 5. Recruitment and type of attack.

