HOW TERRORISM ENDS:
UNDERSTANDING THE OUTCOMES OF VIOLENT POLITICAL CONTESTATION

Sarah Victoria Marsden

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Understanding the Outcomes of Violent Political Contestation

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Abstract

Existing scholarship suggests terrorism is an ineffective method of political contestation: groups rarely achieve their political objectives and are often disrupted by the security services. These findings invite us to look again at the dominant rational choice paradigm, which suggests that terrorism is selected as the best strategy to achieve predetermined goals. Unpicking the assumptions underpinning this model using historical case studies, comparative analysis and typology development, this thesis broadens our interpretation of what those who use terrorism seek to achieve. It does so via a tripartite framework. First, employing a new reading of American pragmatist thought, interpreting militant group goals as culturally and socially mediated problems opens up a new vista of outcomes, in particular examining the way terrorism seeks to change relations between people. Second, using Social Movement Theory as its organising framework, an empirically derived typology of militant groups sets out the background political conditions and organisational characteristics of 28 dormant groups. Using existing models of interpreting outcomes to assess these historical cases demonstrates the unmet challenges of providing robust explanations for why terrorism ends and what it achieves. Third, the thesis explores the promise of a mechanism and process-led approach to explaining outcomes. It does so through in-depth examination of two historical case studies: Kach and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. Despite being classified as failures, using largely neglected primary sources, the case studies reveal a range of fascinating and important outcomes that still resonate in Israel and Yemen today. Most of these methodological and conceptual tools are being applied to the question of terrorism’s outcomes for only the first or second time. In doing so, this thesis offers greater depth than existing scholarship on how terrorism ends, by looking beyond measures such as success and failure in interpreting outcomes, whilst affording greater breadth through its ability to make comparative assessments at the level of mechanisms and processes. The result is a more detailed and robust set of explanations as to how terrorism ends and what it achieves, illustrated through detailed historical case studies of two interesting, yet often neglected, groups.
Declarations

Candidate's declaration:

I, Sarah Marsden, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2008, and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in September 2009; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2008 and 2013.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Upon seeing news of another terrorist attack, I would simply change the channel. That is, until 5 October 2009, when I received a phone call that would change my life forever. The caller said that there had been a bomb blast in the office of the UN agency in Islamabad where my wife Gul Rukh worked.

I do not remember whether I drove, or how I reached the office. All I know is that somehow I got there. But there was nothing to see, and no one to meet. Someone told me that Gul Rukh had been taken to the medical centre. Driving there in a daze, I began asking myself the eternal question people in such situations ask: “Why us?” Upon reaching the medical centre, I stood surrounded by chaos, until a doctor took me to a gurney covered in a white sheet. Lifting it, I saw the face of Gul Rukh, drawn of all colour, lifeless.

As I stood there, numb and glued to the floor, I heard a scuffle. Looking up, I saw a hospital staff member pushing a television camera man away from near where I was standing. He’d been filming the chaos in the hospital as well as my reaction, and I realised that I had become the nameless, unknown face on the television that was shocked and stunned from the carnage of a terrorist attack. I was that “common” Pakistani no one really wanted to see.

Tahir Wodood Malik, Pakistan Terrorism Survivors Network

Such tragedy reminds us of terrorism’s arbitrary, devastating consequences, and the importance of understanding its evolution, and forcing its decline. Ever increasing numbers of scholars and practitioners are trying to mitigate this form of violence. This thesis represents part of that effort, offering a framework by which to understand the political, social and organisational outcomes of terrorism. Using typology, comparative analysis and case studies, what follows identifies those mechanisms and processes which influence the outcomes of violent political contestation.
Work on terrorism’s outcomes is relatively under-developed. Research to date is characterised by disagreement over whether terrorism is a useful tool for forcing political change. Analysts such as Robert Pape (2003) and Alan Dershowitz (2003) argue terrorism is highly effective and constitutes a rational choice for non-state actors, whereas others, such as Max Abrahms (2006) and Audrey Cronin (2009), find it is remarkably ineffective at achieving anything politically significant. As we will see, such discord is partially explained by differing measures of success and failure, and different ways of interpreting how terrorism ends. It is now necessary to unpick some of the issues existing scholarship has laid out in more detail. In doing so, drawing on a more developed area of study, with a canon of work considering political actors’ methods of contestation and their outcomes, seems a sensible route forward.

Social Movement Theory (SMT) is a field ripe for knowledge synthesis and as such provides the theoretical underpinning of this study. It takes into account the wider socio-political context within which groups operate, considers the way they mobilise, and examines how groups frame their arguments to motivate action and encourage change. It therefore offers a holistic framework for understanding how groups emerge, evolve and decline. SMT defines non-state groups as the primary unit of analysis. This does not negate the often far more harmful terrorism carried out by states, but chooses to focus on groups which act in opposition to governing elites. Although crucially, by positioning the group in its political context, SMT draws attention to state behaviour in its interaction with oppositional groups. Further, by incorporating state sponsorship of militant groups, SMT allows us to consider the role states play in facilitating terrorism, whilst still focusing on oppositional groups.

To date, very little work has tried to unite terrorism and SMT on the question of group outcomes. Some of the main insights we can draw from SMT’s body of work include the need to look beyond bald measures of success or failure, and to combine analysis of group characteristics and political context. SMT also invites us to shift attention from questions of ‘why’ terrorism develops, evolves and dies, to the question of ‘how’ it does so, it also offers a route to understanding terrorism focusing on those mechanisms and processes which influence violent political contestation (Sinai, 2007).
Understanding Terrorism’s Outcomes

Work to date on how terrorism ends has taken two main routes. Firstly, a small number of large-scale analyses have set out the scope of group outcomes, offering broad level descriptions of the primary reasons for a group’s success or failure, for example the arrest of key members, or a shift into politics (see Cronin, 2009; Jones & Libicki, 2008; Weinberg, 2012). Secondly, detailed case studies examining in depth, the reason for a group’s move away from terrorism (e.g. Ashour, 2009; Bjørgo & Horgan, 2009). These approaches have advantages and disadvantages. High level descriptive accounts set out the landscape of how violent groups decline, and case studies provide valuable detail on how particular outcomes come about. The first suffers from a lack of explanatory power, and the second from a lack of generalisability. This thesis proposes a third way, focusing on mid-level explanations combining the mechanisms and processes set out by Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow and others, with the wider socio-political setting in which groups operate.

This approach focuses on relations between people. Tilly (2003) argues there are ‘idea people’ who look to ideology, beliefs and values to understand political violence, ‘behaviour people’ who examine human evolution or human needs, such as security or protection, and ‘relation people’ who make interaction between people and groups the central focus. These three ways of understanding collective violence interact and inform one another, and in the pages which follow, there will be discussion of ideas and behaviour. But the focus remains on relations between actors, understood as self-defined groups sharing common political, social or cultural identities. This not only helpfully narrows down the field of study, but draws attention to how relations are impacted by the environment in which they develop, and looks to the intervening mechanisms and processes that mediate between ideas and behaviour. Moreover, by stressing relations between actors a more balanced view may be reached which reserves condemnation of particular ideologies or personal impulses. Finally, although the way particular mechanisms manifest is dependent upon the wider environment, they are considered to operate across a wide range of contexts, facilitating comparative analysis.
To date, only one study has used this approach to examine the decline of groups which use terrorism: Lorenzo Bosi and Donatella della Porta (forthcoming) apply a relational approach to the demise of the Provisional IRA and the Italian Left-Wing. It incorporates micro, meso and macro levels of analysis, and offers a cogent account of how similar mechanisms operated across both contexts, but in crucially different ways, influencing the groups’ shift away from political violence. Recognising the potential for such an approach, a more general, mechanism-led account of campaigns of terrorism has been attempted by Tosini (2011). However, it somewhat under-specifies the mechanisms it employs. For example, we learn that transformational mechanisms refer to agents’ interactions, but little more about their substance, and how these operate in different settings. Further, although Tosini recognises interaction between agents, any relation between the wider setting and the way particular actors behave, make decisions, or relate to one another is missing. The result is a largely descriptive account, which does not live up to the promise of explaining how, why and under what circumstances campaigns evolve as they do.

Taking lessons from these existing analyses, throughout the work which follows, those mechanisms and processes implicated in political contestation are clearly specified, and are understood in the context of the wider political environment. Central to this approach is the development of a typology of militant groups. By using a novel statistical technique, this makes it possible to identify the most discriminating characteristics of groups which use terrorism, and informs the subsequent interpretation of outcomes. It also guides group selection and comparison, draws attention to the similarities between seemingly very different groups, and helps to explain why and how particular outcomes are brought about (Chenoweth & Lowham, 2007). It also provides a platform for examining existing accounts of how terrorism ends.

Given the limited work on the outcomes of terrorism and its mechanisms (Bosi & della Porta, forthcoming), and the well-rehearsed challenges of researching terrorism (Silke, 2004), it is necessary to build knowledge drawing insights from other disciplines and take care with the scope of any conclusions. Throughout, this thesis hopes to offer careful insights to help advance the field towards a better understanding of how terrorism ends and what it achieves. By exploring those mid-
level explanations which are the focus of this study, we can develop our knowledge of the outcomes of terrorism, and offer a platform for further work on how terrorism ends. In setting out the foundation for this endeavour, what follows briefly explores terrorism’s definition and nomenclature, followed by a review of the main research questions before a précis of the chapters of the thesis.

**Conceptualisation and Definition**

It is ubiquitous in writing on terrorism to begin with a discussion of definition, and it is still largely accurate to say that the search for a widely accepted definition is: “the most confounding problem in the study of terrorism” (Poland, 1988, p.5). Proposed definitions are criticised as overly specific, or too broad, encompassing an unwieldy variety of activities and actors (Crelinsten, 1998; Weinberg, Pedahzur & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2004). There is little space here to review these debates, nevertheless, to offer conceptual clarity for what follows, this thesis employs Schmid’s (2011) most recent definition of terrorism. Based on a survey of experts in the field, this builds on previous work to develop an academic consensus definition (Schmid, 1984; Schmid & Jongman, 1988). It incorporates 12 elements on which there is broad agreement: the dual character of the term ‘terrorism’ as being both a doctrine and a practice; threefold context of: illegal state repression, propagandistic agitation by non-state actors, and as a tactic of irregular warfare; use or threat of violence; centrality of communication processes; incitement of terror; civilian or non-combatant victims; victims not being the primary target; varied nature of actors e.g. individuals, groups, networks, and states; its political nature; immediate aim to terrorise, destabilise and coerce; wide ranging motivations; and their position in a campaign of violence. This definition offers the scope and flexibility to underpin this enquiry into terrorism’s outcomes.

**Analytical Approach and Research Questions**

The output of this study comprises two major parts: the first is the development of the typology, and the second investigates group outcomes and the mechanisms which produce them through comparative and case study work. The thesis demonstrates that broad-ranging studies can be usefully unpicked via case studies to investigate specific questions of interest (George and Bennett, 2005). The first phase of the research therefore involves setting out the analytical framework
identifying the characteristics of the different groups under consideration. This is developed from SMT, of which three major components have been specified: political opportunity structure; resource mobilisation; and framing (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). Based on an analysis of the literature, two of these facets are deconstructed into their constitutive parts\(^1\) to develop a coding framework by which to analyse the groups.

On the basis of a set of decision criteria developed from the literature, twenty-eight groups were selected for analysis, drawn from a pool of several hundred. This focuses attention on groups which were operating from the mid-1990s onward, have since ceased operations, and were involved in a sustained campaign of violence, targeting civilians. Primary and secondary literature on the groups was applied to the SMT framework, forming the basis of the statistical analysis. Using the statistical technique of Multisimensional Partial Order Scalogram Analysis by Coordinates (MPOSAC), the relationship between the variables characterising the groups was investigated. The outcomes of the analysis differentiate the groups according to their most discriminative characteristics: their levels of infrastructure, resources, and the extent of their wider networks, which are cross-referenced with levels of political stability, civil rights and political freedom, and the presence of wider conflict.

The typology provides the foundation for the second part of the thesis which involves a comparative enquiry into group outcomes via an examination of existing explanations for how terrorism ends. This forms the springboard for two case studies which explore the mechanisms and processes that influenced two groups’ move away from terrorism: Kach and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army. Through these analyses, the mechanisms and processes that impacted the groups’ movement away from terrorism, and their interaction with the socio-political setting are identified and examined. Selecting groups from different areas of the typology enables a better understanding of how such processes operate in different contexts, and why and how these might produce different outcomes. This investigation is therefore undertaken with the following research questions in mind:

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\(^1\)The third, framing, is unsuitable for this type of analysis as it is involved with the qualitative nature of a group’s communication.
RQ1: What is the nature of a statistically-derived typology of groups which use terrorism?

RQ2: What are the most discriminating characteristics of these groups?

RQ3: What are the political and organisational outcomes of terrorism; how should these be interpreted; and how are they brought about?

RQ4: How might it be possible to consolidate the different measures of outcomes, accounting for the complex and dynamic nature of particular goals, and the socio-political context?

RQ5: What mechanisms and processes are implicated in bringing about particular outcomes; how are they operationalised; what are their effects, and why?

RQ6: How is the operation of mechanisms and processes impacted by the wider socio-political context and organisational characteristics, and why?

**Chapter Preview**

The thesis is made up of three major parts. The first sets out the theoretical, conceptual and methodological basis for the study. The second develops and explores the typology, and the third investigates in more detail those mechanisms and processes implicated in group outcomes. Chapter 2 reviews and critiques how the outcomes associated with terrorism have been conceptualised and assessed, looking at five levels of outcome: individual, tactical, organisational, strategic and ultimate, these are interpreted in the context of rational choice theory. Finding this wanting, a new approach to understanding how goals and outcomes might be conceptualised is introduced, drawing on the pragmatist theory of social mechanisms set out by Neil Gross (2009; 2010). Chapter 3 reviews work in the field of typology and terrorism studies, proceeding to describe the analytic framework that forms the foundation of the study. This includes a detailed exposition of SMT and its utility to the study of terrorism, before the framework from which the typology is developed is presented. Chapter 4 considers the methodology, looking at the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the work with respect to data identification, gathering and analysis.

The second part of the thesis presents the results of the typology development, and begins to grapple with the research questions. The scope and nature of the typology is outlined in chapter 5 (RQ1, RQ2), whilst chapter 6 considers the political and organisational outcomes of the groups used to develop the typology, and holds
Chapter 1: Introduction

them against existing explanatory models (RQ3, RQ4). Existing approaches, whilst
valuably mapping the terrain of militant group outcomes, are found less able to
provide compelling explanations as to how and why particular outcomes are brought
about. Building on these studies, the chapter sets out an alternative approach, using a
mechanism and process led technique. Part three consists of chapters 7 and 8, which
present the case studies, examining the processes and mechanisms that influenced the
two groups’ trajectory and outcomes (RQ5, RQ6). These investigations draw on those
contextual factors identified as important in the typology, the mechanisms and
processes developed in the SMT literature, and interpret them in light of the
pragmatist theory of social mechanisms presented in earlier chapters, focusing most
heavily on those implicated in the move away from terrorism. Finally, chapter 9
delivers the conclusions of the study, drawing together the findings of the research
and offering a comparison of the two cases.

In sum, this thesis is concerned with finding the most cogent way of
explaining the political and organisational outcomes of violent political contestation.
It builds on previous work in the field, which thus far has offered either broad level
explanations involving largely descriptive accounts of the major factors effecting
group outcomes, or case specific explanations of why individual groups have moved
away from terrorism. Arguing that these do not account for the complexity inherent in
the range of contexts, actors and outcomes with which terrorism is involved, and fail
to offer a sufficiently robust approach to explaining how terrorism ends, this research
offers an alternative mid-level approach to analysis. Using multiple methods,
including typological development, comparative analysis and case studies, this study
looks to those mechanisms and processes which in different combinations, and
subject to differing political contexts, bring about particular political and
organisational outcomes. These are interpreted in light of an innovative reading of the
pragmatist school of philosophy, recently reconceptualised and presented by
analytical sociologists.

The thesis explores several underdeveloped areas, and in doing so, offers a
number of original contributions. Firstly, our understanding of group outcomes is
comparatively weak. Although this is beginning to change, there are still relatively
few studies looking at the political and organisational outcomes of terrorism. By
analysing this phenomenon in more detail, this thesis hopes to move the field a little further forward in understanding what influences these outcomes. Secondly, although SMT has been applied to terrorism studies, its utility for helping to analyse and interpret terrorism is as yet underdeveloped. By expanding the depth and scope of this dialectic, this thesis contributes to further inter-disciplinary engagement. In particular, applying SMT to understanding terrorism’s outcomes has only been carried out once before, making this a valuable next step in interpreting what groups achieve in light of this theoretical approach. Thirdly, this thesis represents the first statistically-derived typology in the terrorism field, and one of only a very small number of studies to use these techniques to develop a typology in the social sciences. Fourthly, as discussed, current approaches to explaining terrorism’s outcomes are ripe for further development, given that they generally focus on higher-level explanations, sometimes amounting to little more than descriptions of how terrorism ends. This thesis represents one of only a very small number of studies to use a mechanism and process-led account to better explain how terrorism ends, and does so on groups not previously studied in this way. The original contribution therefore addresses both methodological and substantive questions, applying a novel set of multi-method, and inter-disciplinary tools to expand our knowledge of the political and organisational outcomes of terrorism, focusing on two groups often overlooked in the literature.
Chapter 2: Understanding Terrorism’s Outcomes: Concepts, Debates and Measures

Terrorism is used for different reasons, to different ends, at different times in political campaigns. As such it is not, as Tilly reminds us, a causally coherent phenomenon (Tilly, 2005). It is a form of violence, which encompasses a range of more or less specified goals, which can change over time, and differ according to which level of analysis is prioritised. What follows sets out the literature on terrorism’s outcomes, and considers the extent to which groups using terrorism have achieved their goals. The review moves through individual level goals, tactical, organisational, strategic, and ultimate outcomes. What emerges, despite much apparent disagreement between analysts, is a growing body of evidence to suggest that terrorism is largely ineffective at achieving positive political change for its enactors. Given this finding, the chapter concludes with a reflection on the applicability of rational choice frameworks for understanding why groups continue to engage in such an apparently unfruitful, risky activity. In response to the problems this critique raises, the chapter goes on to consider an alternative way of understanding militant group goals. Applying what Gross (2009; 2010) has coined a pragmatist theory of social mechanisms, this problematises rational choice, and incorporates it into a wider account of how individuals or groups solve problems. By understanding particular goals as culturally-informed ‘problems’, the response to which does not necessarily maximise utility or weigh ends and means, this approach offers, not only an alternative way of explaining why groups use terrorism, but also provides a springboard for subsequent engagement with questions about what terrorism achieves.

It is important to recognise the complexity of understanding terrorism’s outcomes. Assessing causation is problematic as effects may be diluted and spread over time, and multiple causes can influence particular outcomes (Crenshaw, 1983; 2007). Similarly, groups are subject to a range of events over which they have little control, but which may impact their campaign. For example, shifts in the political landscape can see groups once labelled as ‘terrorists’ achieve legitimacy and political success, perhaps most emblematically seen in the ANC’s campaign in South Africa. A further challenge is recognising the varying, and sometimes competing priorities across the membership of a violent group. Those goals most important to leaders may
be of much less relevance to ‘foot soldiers’. Analysis therefore needs to be sensitive to the fact that groups are not unitary actors. It also seems important to remember the unintended outcomes of terrorism, those perverse effects which may run counter to the group’s aims.

Another factor which makes understanding terrorism’s impact difficult, is the dynamic nature of goals (Bosi & Giugni, 2012). In addition, the reasons for using violence as well as its outcomes, may be constructed retrospectively, as strategy, goals, tactics and achievements are influenced by post-hoc justifications. Further, a successful outcome in one area, may equate to failure, or even greater success in another. As Clausewitz argued, breaking the enemy’s morale was a higher prize than military defeat in battle, whilst a greater perception of threat may bring about both outcomes, as the enemy surrenders in anticipation of defeat (Clausewitz, 1976). There is therefore the need for a “mix of the tangible and intangible yardsticks for victory” (Mandel, 2006, p.28). Real-world conflicts rarely fit neatly into categories of winning or losing, suggesting multiple benchmarks are needed to understand outcomes (Martel, 2007).

It is perhaps not surprising, given these challenges, that although research in this area is expanding, Sharif’s statement that the relative success of terrorism as a political strategy is “one of the least understood socio-political phenomenon [sic] of the last three decades” (1996, p.1) still largely rings true. In comparison to work on the ‘causes’ of terrorism, examination of if, and when, terrorism is effective, has received little investigative attention (Abrahms, 2006; Angstrom & Duyvesteyn, 2007; Kydd & Walter, 2006). This relative neglect is mirrored in the work on political violence as a whole, including the realm of war (Mandel, 2006; Martel, 2007). It hampers attempts to assess progress or regress against terrorism (Perl, 2007) and has an impact on the development of effective counter- and preventive-strategies (Kydd & Walter, 2006).

On first appraising the literature, there appears to be considerable disagreement over precisely what terrorism achieves. Opinions range from the view that “terrorist groups rarely achieve their policy objectives, and [that] the poor success rate is inherent to the tactic itself” (Abrahms, 2006, pp.43-44), to “[t]errorism often works. Extremist organisations … engage in terrorism because it frequently delivers
the desired response” (Kydd & Walter, 2006, p.49). With others proposing that terrorism can be counterproductive, hardening the resolve of the target government and the wider population (Crenshaw, 2007; Lomasky, 1989). Such polarised debates characterise the literature on terrorism’s ‘success’. However, as the following discussion sets out, on closer inspection it is different measures of outcome that have led to these divergent opinions, rather than a more fundamental difference over whether terrorism is actually effective at achieving political goals. Before reviewing these debates, a number of lower-order outcomes are considered, beginning with the individual goals people seek to fulfil by engaging in terrorism.

**Individual Outcomes**

The review of the personal motivations militants have given for their involvement in terrorism is organised in line with Andrew Silke’s (2003) appraisal of factors associated with engagement in terrorism. Whilst involvement is not synonymous with desired outcomes, the first four factors he considers encapsulate some of the main individual level goals identified in the literature. These are: social identification, vengeance, personal rewards, and coercion. The fifth factor – opportunity – is not considered here, as it is more closely related to recruitment, and is not discussed in the literature in the context of individual outcomes. Despite this approach to organising the literature, it is important to recognise that the outcomes individuals hope to achieve from terrorism are extremely diverse and sometimes idiosyncratic, what follows will, inevitably, neglect some of this complexity.

Abrahms (2008) argues that affective ties constitute the primary reason people are involved with terrorism. Indeed, a growing body of evidence underlines the importance of social bonds, including its role in recruitment, increasing radicalisation, continued involvement in the group, sacrifice for the sake of the group, and motivation for violence. For example, Bakker (2006), Sageman (2004), and della Porta (1995) all report that social ties were vital in the socialisation process towards violence. In another study of over 1,000 members of militant groups in Turkey, a third said they joined because a friend was also a member, and a quarter because a family member was involved (Yayla, 2008). Compared with only 3% who joined because of the political ideology of the group, social ties represent a significant driver. The largest qualitative research into republican and loyalist former prisoners supports this
finding (Shirlow, Tonge, McCauley & McGlynn, 2010). Interviewees regularly said their motivation to get involved “wasn’t anything to do with politics really” (Shirlow et al., 2010, p.55), but was more about shared collective identity, although politics provided the context within which decisions to engage in violence were made.

A second feature often cited, but less rigorously researched, is the desire for vengeance. ‘Getting even’ is a powerful motivator, indeed it can become an end in its own right, and is implicated in fuelling cycles of violence (Newman & Lynch, 1987). Cota-McKinley, Woody and Bell (2001) argue that revenge serves a number of functions including restoring an individual’s self-worth, as a deterrent, and righting perceived wrongs. Recent work on female suicide bombers has stressed the importance of revenge in motivating action, and the interaction between this intensely felt personal emotion, and the strategic goals of the wider organisation. The work of Anne Speckhard and colleagues (Speckhard, 2008; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006; Speckhard, Jacuch & Vanrompay, 2012) has underlined the influence of revenge in martyrdom operations. This body of work describes the desire for vengeance as a vulnerability which is most dangerous when groups offer the ideological and operational support to facilitate a suicide attack. In her examination of female suicide bombers, O’Rourke (2009) finds that they kill more people, on average than men, and that as a result both secular and religious groups purposely recruit them. Secular groups, not being as bound by traditional gender roles, are often first to employ them, whilst religious groups shift their policies to incorporate female suicide bombers into their arsenal. O’Rourke concludes that strategy trumps ideology in the search for more effective forms of attack, illustrating the complex interaction between strategic, organisational, and individual goals, and the impact they have on tactical outcomes.

The desire for personal rewards, in the form of power, money, and social and cultural capital is perhaps erroneously less often associated with terrorism. They are nevertheless clearly recognised as benefits, as one Palestinian militant reported: “[a]fter recruitment, my social status was greatly enhanced. I got a lot of respect from my acquaintances, and from the young people in the village” (Post, Sprinzak & Denny, 2003, p.182). This research, with Middle Eastern militants, highlights a number of the rewards individuals experienced when they joined the resistance. Perpetrators of attacks were considered heroes, families were supported financially,
and individuals reported feelings of self-fulfilment, honour and independence. These tally with a number of the features of the ‘culture of martyrdom’ Kimhi and Even (2004) discuss in their analysis of Palestinian martyrs, all of which can be important aims in themselves. This does not discount the religious and ideological significance of the operations, which Nasra Hassan (2001) argued is the primary driver for martyrdom operations. Rather, they demonstrate the importance of socially constructed notions of reward, and their interaction with individual level experiences, goals and belief systems.

Looking to other personal rewards, money can operate as a clearly defined outcome. The Taliban, and the Awakening movement in Iraq, have both been discussed in terms of the financial rewards of political violence, both against and on behalf of a state. Whilst the notion of the ‘$10 Taliban’ is unhelpfully simplistic, financial rewards remain relevant in a country of significant poverty, and limited opportunity (Coghlan, 2009; Felbab-Brown, 2010). As Mark Lynch (2011) argues, financial incentives were important in the Anbar Awakening, but only once the social stigma of working with the Americans had been overcome. Again, there are important interactions between the socio-political context and individual rewards.

A final relevant factor is avoidance outcomes; avoiding persecution, stigmatisation, violence or death can all be outcomes individuals achieve when they ‘sign up’. At its most extreme, the forced conscription of child soldiers by the Lord’s Resistance Army and others is a stark example of the use of fear and brutality to achieve the putative ends of the group (Grover, 2012). However, there can be subtler, social costs incurred by not joining a group. Again drawing on Post et al.’s (2003) work with Palestinian militants, one interviewee explained: “[a]nyone who didn’t enlist during that period (intifada) would have been ostracized” (p.178). In the nationalist context, the Ulster Defence Association was reported to have engaged in long-lasting feuds with individuals and families who refused to join, sometimes carrying on the victimisation from father to son (Helsinki Watch/Human Rights Watch, 1992). Such pressures can exist at both the recruitment stage, and during the individual’s involvement with the organisation. Abu Nidal’s increasingly paranoid and brutal behaviour towards his men acted as a powerful warning to others to remain, at least superficially, committed to the organisation (Seale, 1992).
The desire to avoid or attain some of these outcomes helps interpret what individuals seek to achieve from involvement in militant groups. However, it is important to remember that their relative importance, compared with wider ideological and political goals, will differ between groups, contexts, and individuals. It is also likely to shift over the period of involvement with the cause, and the balance of reasons is likely to differ across different tiers of the organisation. Moreover, each of these various points provides only a partial explanation of the outcomes an individual aspires to achieve from involvement. As the discussion of O’Rourke’s (2009) research clearly demonstrates, these need to be set in the context of wider tactical, organisational and strategic goals of the organisation, to which attention now turns.

Tactical Outcomes

The literature identifies a number of tactical outcomes relating to the number, scale, execution and target of individual acts of terrorism, for example a hostage-taking incident or bombing. Considering the logistical success of attacks, a study assessing data from 1968 to 1977, based on the ITERATE II database, concluded that “almost all terrorist events end in success” (Sharif, 1996, p.111). The chances of an outcome in line with the group’s aims were found to increase under a number of circumstances. Specifically, when explosives, as opposed to small arms are used, when explosive devices are chosen over other tactics, such as hostage taking or armed attacks, and when the target is infrastructure rather than people (Sharif, 1996). Based on the same dataset, but considering attacks over a longer time-scale between 1968 and 2007, another analysis supported these results (Flemming, cited in Schmid, 2008), with 79.6% of attacks carried out as planned. Logistically then, it seems terrorism is largely successful in achieving tactical aims (Enders & Sandler, 2006).

However, there are numerous unmet challenges in identifying failed and foiled attacks, making it important to remain cautious about over-estimating terrorism’s tactical efficacy. In particular, using large-scale databases of attacks as the main source of information, as most studies do, inevitably overlooks those attacks which do not reach the attention of the authorities or the media because of failure at an earlier stage of the operation. Moreover, they are likely to overlook those attacks prevented by the security services as again, these often remain unreported. In effect, the major
databases impose a relatively high threshold for inclusion which inevitably skews the results of any subsequent analysis. Specifically, that attacks have reached the commissioning stage, that they have come to the attention of observers, and are therefore deemed by a relatively high measure of success to have failed. Taking failed attacks as a measure can also overlook the substantial impact of operations which do not reach the execution stage. For example, the changes in airport security following the foiled ‘liquid bomb’ plot in 2006.

Considering specific types of attack, research has looked at a number of tactics such as hostage taking and hijacking (Atkinson Sandler & Tschirhart, 1987; Jenkins, Johnson & Ronfeldt, 1977; Sandler & Scott, 1987). In one study of hostage taking events, the perpetrators escaped on 80% of occasions, and approximately half of the incidents saw at least some demands met (Jenkins et al., 1977). Compared to the success of state-level coercion, for example, in the form of economic sanctions, this represents high levels of success (Abrahms, 2006; Pape, 1997). Looking at airline hijacking, positive outcomes for the group are again high, with 85% of attempts gaining control of the plane (Merari, 1998). Similarly, three-quarters of bomb attacks against planes are successful (Merari, 1998). Whilst this is based on data from 1947-1996, and has likely changed with continuing improvements to airport security, these analyses demonstrate a range of outcomes largely in line with militant group aims.

The relatively high levels of success for acts of terrorism are perhaps not as surprising as they might appear. For a start, groups may choose targets and operations with a high likelihood of success. As George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, is quoted as saying: “[t]he main point is to select targets where success is 100% assured” (Hoffman, 2006, p.249). In a study of Palestinian suicide attacks Benmelech and Berrebi (2007) found that older and better educated men were more often assigned to important targets, and achieved greater success than their less educated, younger counterparts. This suggests personnel were assigned to particular attacks with a view to maximising the likelihood of success. More generally, target selection and operational planning are aspects over which the group has greater control, which may see higher levels of reported success at this level compared with, for example, strategic outcomes.
Several arguments support using tactical success as a measure of terrorism’s outcomes. Firstly, terrorism has long been argued to be a means of communication, raising awareness of the group and its cause (Schmid, 2005). In the absence of other means of political engagement, or where a group chooses not to use them, without violence a group is silent, unable to impact opponents, supporters, or motivate group members. The efficacy of individual operations is therefore vital in the overall effort of the group. Secondly, as Arce, Kovenock and Roberson (2009) argue, given the asymmetry between states and non-state actors, whilst success for the state means preventing all attacks, success for their opponent can be a single attack which changes the political landscape. Further, if targeted judiciously and carried out well, it can involve potentially catastrophic disruption. However, whilst tactical outcomes might offer insight into the amount of imagination, operational planning and training the group has managed to achieve, alone it doesn’t tell us enough about the wider impacts of violence. Successful execution of an attack is the catalyst from which more substantial, and politically important outcomes emerge, which in turn depend on achieving particular organisational outcomes, which is the focus of the next section.

Organisational Outcomes

Almost all groups that use terrorism claim to represent a wider community, and demand, or aspire to gain their support. Small militant groups are in some senses, failed social movements, unable to attract the body of support necessary to escalate their campaign. Unsurprisingly then, an outcome likely to influence longer-term success is the level of support a group enjoys (Enders & Sandler, 2006). This is the case for both the group and its choice of tactics. Where there is social support for the use of terrorism, the group generally enjoys greater legitimacy (Simon & Martini, 2004), with public attitudes varying according to cause and motivation for violence (Wike & Samaranayake, 2006). A localised ‘cluster of passively consenting people’ which approves of a particular target can therefore facilitate terrorism (Galam, 2002). Equally, supporters’ attitudes can also temper a group’s violence. For example, in the nationalist context, greater restraint was shown in tactics and targeting to avoid alienating their support base (Sanchez-Cuenca, 2007). The group therefore has a careful balancing act to remain relevant, increase its popularity, and in doing so, select ‘appropriate’ targets for violence. Zarqawi’s excessive violence during the Iraq
war is an often cited example of the pitfalls of extreme violence against the ‘wrong’ targets (Hafez, 2007).

When support turns to active participation “the main resource of any terrorist organisation is its militants” (Faria & Arce, 2005, p.263). Without willing recruits, an organisation’s ability to plan and carry out attacks is severely limited (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006), making this an important marker of a group’s success. Indeed, organisational size is considered an important feature of successful groups: larger groups over ten thousand are 25% more successful in achieving their political aims, than groups under one thousand strong (Jones & Libicki, 2008). Hence, the more recruits, the greater the chances of success, to the extent that where there are sufficient ‘hard-core’ members, terrorism becomes undeterrable (Faria & Arce, 2005). Ideology has also been implicated in outcomes, in one assessment of 648 groups (Jones & Libicki, 2008) those adhering to a religious ideology always ended in failure. Whilst those with lower scale goals, were more likely to achieve concessions in line with their wider aims (Jones & Libicki, 2008). However, it seems likely that it is the scale of the goal rather than the ideology that affects outcomes from this perspective.

Terrorism can also be used to influence other extremist groups (Bloom, 2005). In a competitive environment, Bloom (2004) argues suicide bombing is used to gain recruits, increase group legitimacy and popularity, and raise the group’s profile. Whilst this thesis is not without its critics (see Brym & Araj, 2008), it offers one way of explaining how a group influences the wider movement. Taking up the case, Kydd and Walter (2006) argue outbidding is most likely when more than one group is vying for supremacy in a movement, and their broader constituency fluctuates between them. In this context, the best outcome falls to those perceived to use terrorism most effectively to represent the needs of the general population (Bloom, 2005). This in turn, is predicted to lead to more, and more significant attacks (Bloom, 2004).

Organisational outcomes are an important way of understanding violent group success. Indeed, the supremacy of organisational dynamics has been used to explain why groups which appear to have gained concessions, or for whom violence appears a poor way of achieving further gains, continue to commit acts of terrorism (Abrahms, 2008). Through this lens, prioritising the social benefits of terrorism means the extent
to which a group can develop and maintain affective ties, and sustain internal cohesion, should be the primary way in which we assess a group’s success or failure. However, as critics have pointed out (see Chenoweth, Miller & McClellan, 2009; Frisch, 2009; Staniland, 2009), violent groups change over time, prioritising strategy and social cohesion differently over the life course of the group. Equally, it seems likely that some groups are more strategic, and others more motivated by solidarity. Further, there are likely to be within group differences over the importance of strategy versus affective ties. Leaders are perhaps more likely to prioritise strategic objectives, whilst ‘foot soldiers’ may be more motivated by social bonds. Finally, if social solidarity is the primary driver, there appear to be many other less dangerous ways of achieving it than via membership of a violent organisation. However, whilst organisational outcomes are clearly vital to understanding how terrorism ends, and must be a primary feature of analysis, alone they do not offer a full understanding of the outcomes of terrorism. For that, it is necessary to combine analysis of organisation level outcomes with the broader strategic and political effects of this form of political violence.

**Strategic Outcomes**

Strategic outcomes relate to the social and political effects of terrorism, success therefore depends on the preferences and responses of the target (Harris, 2006). Some have argued this is terrorism’s inherent flaw, if the target’s preferences are poorly understood, or it does not respond in the anticipated manner, terrorism fails (Neumann & Smith, 2008). This makes it a potentially important way of understanding outcomes, which are now examined by looking at a range of potential targets: the government, society, and the media.

“Provocative terrorism is designed to bring about revolutionary conditions rather than to exploit them” (Crenshaw, 1983, p.387). Hence, provoking a government into a disproportionate response can be an important goal in itself, exemplified in Marighella’s *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Merari, 1993). Under these conditions, by reacting with excessive force, the population can become disenfranchised (Kydd & Walter, 2006) and in extreme circumstances may revolt against the governing body (Martin, 2006). Two causes of popular revolt have been hypothesised: the population learn of the government’s ‘true nature’ and lose faith in
Chapter 2: Understanding Terrorism’s Outcomes

it, or the negative economic outcomes of a crackdown have a radicalising effect (de Mesquita & Dickson, 2007). This is considered a particular risk when the government’s response is indiscriminate, often interpreted as indifference to a society’s norms (de Mesquita & Dickson, 2007). Under such circumstances, members of the moderate majority can be moved to support the militant group (Kydd & Walter, 2006; Lake, 2002). However, detailed analysis of polling data in Israel and the Palestinian Territories finds that whilst there is a radicalising effect of Israeli-inflicted casualties, this largely dissipates after three months (Jaeger & Paserman, 2008). Such research emphasises the importance of considering the decay of terrorism’s effects and the need to interpret outcomes over the course of a group’s militancy.

Where groups successfully provoke a government into action that reduces civil liberties, they risk delegitimisation, knock on effects from which can include increasing disillusion and alienation (Awan, 2012). Indeed there is some empirical support for the argument that terrorism impacts human rights, as transnational terrorism has been found to lead to increases in extra-judicial killing and disappearances (Piazza & Walsh, 2009). Current debates over the legality of targeted killings in drone attacks, highlights the increasing relevance of such issues (Finkelstein, Ohlin & Altman, 2012). Effects such as the increasing scope of the legislative framework in Western society (Gearty, 2007), and negative effects on the rule of law are further impacts of state-terrorism interaction (Crenshaw, 1998).

Relatedly, ongoing terrorism can see the military lose faith in its government. The escalating violence of the Tupamaros saw the military use increased emergency powers to crackdown on the group, shortly after, overthrowing the government (Freeman, 2003). In part, this was because the government was perceived to be ineffective in dealing with the Tupamaros, the net result was a more repressive regime and the group’s degradation (Lutz & Lutz, 2008).

Further outcomes at government level include disrupted peace processes, aiming to generate conditions more in line with the group’s aims (Inbar, 1996). There is some evidence for terrorism’s success in this regard. In a sample of 14 peace agreements (Kydd & Walter, 2004), violence resulted in one out of four deals being implemented, whilst an absence of violence saw six out of ten treaties enacted. Kydd and Walter set out a number of reasons why this might be the case. They argue
violence enables the group to generate mistrust between those in favour of the peace treaty. The use of terrorism thereby aims to exploit potential doubt that the other side is able to abide by the peace deal. This is most likely to be successful where the relationship between parties is sufficiently weak, and the degree of trust needed falls below that required to continue cooperative attempts at peace making. Research has also examined the impact of terrorism on voting preferences. In a careful study comparing areas which had experienced fatal attacks, and those which had not, over the course of five elections, Berrebi and Klor (2008) found evidence for the impact of terrorism on the electorate. Terrorism was related to an increase in support for right-wing parties and was likely to have affected the composition of parliament in each of the elections.

At the societal level, terrorism aims to generate fear and victimisation (Friedland & Merari, 1985; Schmid & Jongman, 1988). This can result in a range of negative psychological outcomes, however assessing fear of terrorism and threat perception is highly complex, influenced by gender, location, age, and people’s values and beliefs (Goodwin, Wilson & Gaines, 2005). Work on this is considered in a major review, The Psychology of Terrorism Fears (Sinclair & Antonius, 2012), which draws out three main features of research to date. Following an attack, levels of reported psychiatric disorders and more general distress increase; populations which directly experience an attack are more likely to report negative effects, and such feelings can persist over time; and finally, excluding those directly exposed to the attack, with time, psychological distress recedes.

Building on this research base, Sinclair and Antonius (2012) go on to argue that standard models of interpreting fear and its effects – primarily based around measures of psychopathology – do not allow a sufficiently robust understanding of terrorism’s impact. There is a need to incorporate anticipatory fear, what Zimbardo (2003) has called ‘pre-traumatic stress syndrome’, influenced by a chronic media and state preoccupation with terrorism. It is only by looking more holistically at the psychological and emotional consequences of terrorism, they argue, are we likely to fully understand terrorism’s effects – this research agenda is just beginning.

The recently adapted phrase “terrorists want a lot of people watching, and a lot of people dead” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 119) illustrates the media’s power to disseminate
information aimed at prompting change. This frames terrorism as violent and coercive communication (Martin, 1985), which extremist leaders seek to exploit (Schmid & de Graaf, 1982). Media exposure forces the group’s agenda onto a wider stage, without it, the group can struggle to instill fear and promote its cause (Nacos, 2002). Militants are well aware of this, in an analysis of their memoirs, five publicity related goals were identified: to generate sympathy, increase recruitment, demoralise the target, demonstrate their vulnerability, and polarise the political situation (Gerrits, 1992). Therefore, if terrorism’s most straightforward goal is to raise awareness (Crenshaw, 1981, p. 386), the more ‘professional’ they are (Gerrits, 1992), the more likely they are to achieve desirable outcomes. This of course, depends on the degree of press freedom, in countries suffering excessive government control of the media, a group’s ability to promote its agenda will inevitably be limited.

In interpreting the strategic impacts of terrorism, there is some support for its efficacy. Violent actors have proved able to disrupt peace processes, prompt governments to act in ways contrary to their professed liberal principles, achieve widespread coverage of their violence, impact the outcome of elections, and, it seems, create an environment where many experience unhealthy levels of fear. Applying these measures to individual groups is vital if we are to understand their overall impact, although it is important to remain cautious as there are significant methodological challenges in interpreting these effects. Moreover, such strategic impacts need to be held alongside the ultimate political goals of a group in order to gain a fuller picture of what terrorism achieves.

**Ultimate Outcomes**

This category covers two related outcomes – the final fate of the group and its political agenda. Looking first to political goals, these have been condensed into policy change, social control, territorial change, regime change, and maintaining the status quo (Kydd & Walter, 2006). Arguably these are the most important outcomes, facilitated by the tactical, strategic and organisational outcomes already discussed. When achieved, they have the most profound effect of all the goals discussed so far, often affecting huge swathes of the population, and with far-reaching consequences on the day to day life of the populace. Given their much grander scope, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is significantly less empirical support for success at this level.
Chapter 2: Understanding Terrorism’s Outcomes

At first glance, the literature encompasses diverse and contradictory views of terrorism’s political achievements. Some propose terrorism enjoys considerable success (Pape, 2003); others that it is partially successful (Merari, 1993); whilst others pronounce it a failure (Abrahms, 2006; 2012). Equally, a variety of approaches are applied to understanding terrorism’s ultimate achievements, including formal models (e.g. Lake, 2002), and detailed examination of individual cases (e.g. Hoffman, 2011). Others draw out a few notable successes, but as Abrahms (2012) points out, fail to hold these against a broader selection of cases (e.g. Dershowitz, 2002; Kydd & Walter, 2006). Indeed, several examples are repeated in the literature in support of terrorism’s effectiveness, namely the FLN in Algeria, in their fight for independence (Crenshaw, 1978); the Irgun in Israel, whose violence contributed to the end of the British mandate in Palestine (Martin, 2006); and Hezbollah, who effectively pushed peacekeepers from Lebanon in 1984 and 2000 (Atran, 2004; Pape, 2003). However, there are fewer large-scale studies examining the ultimate outcome of terrorism. What follows reviews five major comparative studies looking at how militant groups end, all but one of which find very little support for terrorism’s success.

Jones and Libicki (2008) analysed 648 groups operating between 1968 and 2006. Of these, only 10% ended because they had achieved their ultimate goals, the majority of groups ‘ended’ by joining the political process. It is a moot point whether this constitutes success or failure. Recognition by the political system may be a significant milestone for a group, leading to longer-term change in line with their aims, but it can also mean failure to achieve the immediate goals the group set out with. It may also lead to a further ultimate outcome for a group: factionalisation. Becoming incorporated into the political process, can either isolate and further radicalise, or destroy factions which do not believe in engaging with mainstream politics (Cronin, 2006). Alternative outcomes are that some members split away and renounce violence, or that the group disintegrates entirely (Wieviorka, 2004). In Jones and Libicki’s (2008) analysis, of the 648 groups studied, 136 splintered into factions, equating to 21% of groups in the RAND-MIPT database. The other major outcome was disruption by the police (40%) or, much less frequently, by military forces (7%).

Cronin’s (2009) study on how terrorism ends reached a similar conclusion regarding the extent to which militant groups achieve their ultimate objectives. Based
on analysis of 457 groups active from 1968 onwards, only 4.4% fully achieved their aims, 2% achieved substantial concessions, with a further 6.4% managing to achieve limited strategic objectives. This means 87% of groups failed to achieve any of their primary aims. The final outcomes of the groups in this analysis are categorised according to whether they were decapitated, by losing their leadership; reached a negotiated settlement; successfully achieved their aims; experienced repression resulting in defeat and elimination; transitioned to different forms of violence; or failed due to group collapse or a loss of support. The third of the major studies into the ultimate fate of militant groups by Leonard Weinberg (2012) finds little to disagree with Jones and Libicki or Cronin. Of 268 groups, 40% ended through policing; 43% by politicisation; 7% by military force; and 10% achieved victory. An earlier assessment, using a different dataset, concurs saying that “the overwhelming majority of the many hundreds of terrorist groups which have existed in the second half of this century have failed miserably to attain their goal” (Merari, 1993, pp. 384-5).

Evidence of terrorism’s failure is presented in a further study by Abrahms (2006). This assessed 28 groups, and their 42 policy objectives, of which 7% were achieved. He compares this unfavourably with the literature on economic sanctions, considered effective 34% of the time (Hart, 2000), concluding that terrorism is an inefficient way of achieving political goals. In a more recent paper Abrahms (2012) again demonstrates that terrorism more often than not fails. Putting this down to their choice of target, Abrahms found that of 125 violent campaigns carried out by 54 groups, 38 campaigns achieve some of their demands. This higher success rate, compared with the studies reported above, is likely to be due to the unit of analysis. Looking at campaigns rather than groups means the standards for achieving success are lower, focusing on partial, rather than complete victories.

One apparent exception to the growing consensus around terrorism’s failure to achieve political goals is that of Robert Pape (2003). His analysis of suicide bombing is often cited as evidence of the coercive power of terrorism, and embodies the counterargument against which Abrahms (2006; 2012) sets out his hypotheses. Pape’s research looked at all suicide attacks from 1980-2001, disaggregated into 11 campaigns of terrorism. Of these, six led to some of the groups’ goals being
addressed, such that the target government altered their policy in line with group demands. However, exploring this analysis a little more carefully, it becomes clear that reducing the bar for success leads to higher rates of apparent achievement. Most of the gains Pape sets out are partial successes and do not constitute a complete victory, the standard used for most of the other analyses. Further, Pape compares effectiveness before and after the implementation of terrorism, rather than holding achievement steady against the ultimate, predetermined goals of the group, as for example Abrahms does. Similarly, the measures by which Abrahms and Pape understand success are different, for example Pape sets Hamas’ victory in pushing Israel out of Gaza as success, whereas Abrahms marks down their failure to achieve an independent Palestinian state. Also, as Abrahms (2006) points out, whilst the Israeli Defence Force withdrew from parts of the Gaza Strip in 1994 – classified as a success by Pape – there was a simultaneous increase in the number of settlers, constituting a failure for Hamas. Finally, the extent to which it is appropriate to compare suicide terrorism against all other forms of terrorism remains to be seen. This demonstrates the need for clear criteria for success, an appreciation of all the various levels of analysis, and an understanding of the group’s wider aims.

Overall then, reviewing work to date on terrorism’s ability to achieve militant groups’ political ambitions, there is still support for the view that “acts of terrorism almost never appear to accomplish anything politically significant” (Schelling, 1989, p. 20). These findings raise serious questions for the primary framework which has underpinned much of the terrorism literature to date – that those who use terrorism are more or less rational actors who choose terrorism based on an assessment of the perceived costs and benefits as they understand them. The next section considers some of the research in the rational choice canon before offering an alternative approach to understanding terrorism’s goals and associated outcomes.

**Strategic, Rational Actors?**

Despite the growing body of evidence just reviewed, some make the point that terrorism must be perceived to be effective by its enactors, and that such a fact “is self-evident. Otherwise, why would they persist?” (Hoffman, 2011, p.268). This raises the question of the ‘rationality’ of terrorism. If terrorism is largely ineffective at achieving political objectives, are those who use it not behaving ‘rationally’? If not,
this challenges the argument that terrorism is chosen by rational actors to achieve specific political aims based on an assessment of likely costs and benefits (Kruglanski, 2006). Conceptualised as a means to an end (Harmon, 2004), terrorism is said to be selected from a range of alternatives as the strategy most likely to achieve particular goals (McCormick, 2003). In this framework, terrorism is a coercion strategy (Abrahms, 2006), using violence to fulfil specific objectives (Neumann & Smith, 2005), by inflicting psychological and economic costs on the enemy.

There are of course, different interpretations of what constitutes rational behaviour. Caplan (2006) sets out three primary forms of rationality. Most weakly, you are believed to be acting rationally if you act in order to achieve specified ends. A slightly stronger version, proposes that you select the best action, taking into account constraints, and according to a ‘utility function’, assuming preferences may be ranked. Finally, in the strongest definition of rationality, you act in accordance with rational expectations, based on past experience and available information, sensitive to incentives in order to maximise the benefits you are likely to receive. Choices made under all of these conditions are subject to a range of factors which may lead to erroneous decisions. Davis and Cragin (2009) synthesise factors influencing decision-making and the propensity to carry out an act of terrorism. These include perceived benefits for the group, its strategy and popular opinion; acceptability of perceived risks; acceptability of resources required; and having sufficient information.

The issues Davis and Cragin (2009) discuss demonstrates some of the limits of human decision-making. Indeed, most applications of rational choice frameworks do not demand ‘perfect rationality’ (Neumann & Smith, 2008). Political actors who use terrorism are considered largely unable to carry out intricate cost-benefit calculations, and rarely have all the requisite information at their disposal (Lake & Powell, 1999; Weinberg, 2012). Some of the influences that limit decision making by violent non-state actors have been listed as inadequate information; cognitive biases (e.g. group polarisation); emotional reactions (e.g. revenge); leader idiosyncrasies (e.g. paranoia); and physical limitations (e.g. exhaustion) (Berrebi, 2009; Davis & Cragin, 2009).

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2 This position is best explicated in the argument for ‘bounded rationality’ (Kahneman, 2002; Simon, 1982), a theory which proposes that given the high costs involved with weighing all available options, and the unlikelihood of having all the necessary information, decision makers are ‘satisficers’, who settle for a solution which is ‘good enough’ rather than making optimal choices (Simon, 1957; 1995).
A further explanation as to why groups continue to use terrorism despite the apparently slim chances of it helping achieve their political objectives, is that they are using it for non-instrumental, expressive reasons. Whilst the strategic model has been the predominant approach used to understand the demands and behaviour of those who use terrorism (Abrahms, 2008), many have recognised the importance of terrorism’s expressive nature (Merari, 1993). For example, showing support for a particular political outcome, rather than trying to actually achieve it (Lomasky, 1989); acting out of vengeance or anger (Merari, 1993; Schelling, 1989); and encompassing the symbolic, performative and communicative nature of the violence (Coker, 2007). Ultimately, both expressive and instrumental functions of terrorism are likely to be important (Crenshaw, 1995; McCauley, 2002). A point highlighted by Singh’s (2011) analysis of Hamas’ suicide terrorism. Arguing that, whilst the leadership pursues strategic and political goals aiming to inflict losses on their enemy through the use of the ‘ultimate smart bomb’, the fedayeen who carry out the attacks cleave to a more expressive, religious and symbolic understanding of the violence they inflict.

This analysis illustrates the differing interpretations of violent action that can operate within groups. Indeed, one of the problems with the rational choice, strategic model, is that it most often assumes unitary actors. As Victoroff (2005) proposes, the model of rational decision-making is perhaps better applied to leaders who set strategy, rather than followers. Further, leaders and foot soldiers, as well as different factions within an organisation may have differing if not competing understandings of the best course of action, informed by their contrasting preferences. Such organisational dynamics can crucially impact the form political contestation takes. As Pearlman (2012) found in her analysis of the Palestinian National Movement, lower levels of cohesion at the time of the Second Intifāda resulted in a far more violent uprising than in the First Intifāda. Given the apparent failure of militant groups to deploy terrorism to good effect and the range of other factors that seem necessary to take into account when interpreting the aims of militant groups, it seems we need to look beyond a rational choice approach to explain how violence emerges and declines.
Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms

How then, might we reconcile these different explanatory approaches in examining terrorism’s goals? One way which seems to offer a number of advantages is to problematise rationality as understood through the rational choice paradigm, and incorporate it into a wider interpretation of how individuals and groups solve particular problems. This sees the rational choice approach as but one, socially constructed way of responding to social challenges (Gross, 2009). Ganor (2005) reminds us that “cost-benefit considerations are the result of several variables – history, culture, sociological and psychological aspects” (p.74). Equally, it seems important to incorporate the meaning particular behaviours and contexts have for protagonists as well as understanding the expressive functions of violence. A newly recast theoretical approach – the pragmatist theory of social mechanisms – seems well suited to help us understand, not only how actors respond to social problems, but also the mechanisms which bring about particular outcomes.

Neil Gross (2009; 2010) has looked again at the school of American pragmatism expounded by Charles Peirce, William James, John Dewey and others, and in particular, at Hans Joas’s work (1993; 1996). Gross proposes that a practice-based account of social mechanisms offers greater explanatory power than rational choice and other practice-based approaches, such as Bourdieu’s. Understanding practices as socially constructed ways of acting, informed by a community’s shared assumptions and presuppositions, Gross draws on pragmatist thought to argue that human beings are problem solvers. In response to social and individual exigencies, people respond both habitually and, where this fails to resolve the problem, creatively.

Gross sets out five defining features of pragmatism which point the way to a better explanatory framework for understanding terrorism’s outcomes. First, the pragmatist account can incorporate, but does not demand, that actors maximise the utility of their choices. This is informed by the concern of pragmatists with a wide range of problems, from achieving political visibility – a goal which perhaps demands a clearer means-ends calculation – to more human level questions about how to live a meaningful life. Secondly, it sees problems as mediated by the cultural context in

3 After Dewey, habits are understood as “acquired predisposition[s] to ways or modes of response” (1922, p.42, italics in original, cited in Gross, 2009, p.366), rather than as rote behaviour.
which actors are embedded. The strategic or ultimate outcomes violent groups aspire to are informed by a ‘web of meanings’, which influence not only their goals, but the ways individuals and collectives try and attain them. Third, in contradistinction to the rational choice, means-ends approach to decision making, pragmatists argue much human behaviour is habitual. Further, they propose that when such instrumental decision-making takes place, this is in itself a habit – a particular mode of response, the nature of which is informed by historical and social processes. Finally, that means and ends can be both preconceived and emerge from social action, resulting from ongoing engagement in social behaviour, rather than necessarily forming the basis of action. These arguments make it possible to retain rational choice conceptions of violent group behaviour whilst relieving them of some of the explanatory weight.

These features of pragmatism increase our understanding of outcomes, not only by offering an alternative way of explaining human decision making, but also by informing our interpretation of social mechanisms. Such mechanisms mediate between cause and effect and are defined as “aggregations of actors confronting problem situations and mobilising more or less habitual responses” (Gross, 2009, p.368). Hence the problem, for example, of how to maintain group cohesion in the face of threat, is approached by actors whose behaviour is informed by the cultural systems in which they are embedded, and who operationalise either habitual, and/or creative responses, to try and maintain group solidarity. This may or may not be carefully calculated to maximise expected utility, and it may be enacted as per a preconceived plan, or may emerge and evolve through action. Although this account can focus on individual-level cognitive or behavioural habits, more pertinently for the needs of this thesis, it enables the behaviour of collectives to be interpreted through the notion of ‘repertoires of contention’. This notion is explored more in the next chapter, but briefly, this is a term developed by SMT scholars, to describe “a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice” (Tilly, 1995a, p.42) and are employed in the process of claim-making.

Importantly, the way mechanisms play out is influenced by the wider setting in which a group operates. This is particularly relevant to this thesis, as the typology presented in chapter 5 is partially determined by the wider political context. Further,
the pragmatist theory brings to the fore the notion that these settings are, in themselves, part of the problem situation a group faces. For example, a group wishing to mobilise in a high-capacity undemocratic state, faces a significant problem of having to overcome surveillance, and limited respect for human rights and the rule of law. Whereas, one in a high-capacity democratic state may face the challenge of persuading potential supporters that democratic representation is not the best way of bringing about change, and that violence is.

What Gross’ account seems to offer therefore, is a way of understanding potentially non-optimal outcomes, brought about through actors trying to achieve particular goals, conceived here as problems. This incorporates rationality, alongside other practices, as a habit operationalised through social mechanisms of problem-actor-habit/creativity chains. It allows the inclusion of conceptions of meaning and culture, and is not limited to one level of analysis. By incorporating the wider socio-political context, it is possible to observe how practices enacted at the group level are informed by and impact upon these settings. To date, the literature offers part of the answer as to why groups rise and fall, it is now necessary to make a more concerted effort to bring together different levels of analysis, and multiple types of goals to further our understanding of how terrorism ends and what it achieves.

Insights from the SMT literature can also help develop the scholarship on terrorism’s outcomes. Work in this field is considerably better developed than in terrorism studies (Amenta, Careen, Chiarello & Su, 2010; Bosi & Giugni, 2012; Earl, 2000; Giugni, 1998). Most relevant to our discussion is the interconnectedness of different outcomes, and a more nuanced way of understanding them (see Amenta et al., 2010). As such, SMT has made progress in highlighting the contingent nature of ‘success’, dependent as it is, on the particular political and cultural context, goals, strategies, and types of organisation trying to promote change (Gamson, 1990). Compared with unitary level explanations of what terrorism achieves and how it ends, multi-level analysis such as this offers valuable contextualisation and depth, most often through detailed case studies. Inevitably, this approach is faced with the problem of generalisability, therefore this thesis focuses instead on the mechanisms and processes that create particular outcomes. Within the SMT framework set out in the next chapter, this approach helps bridge the gap between simplistic high-level
interpretations of outcomes, and detailed, but generally case-specific accounts. By providing a mid-level of analysis that can be applied to a range of groups, we are in a better position to explain terrorism’s outcomes. The framework guiding this effort is the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter 3: Typology and Social Movement Theory: Organising Principles

The previous chapter described the complexities of understanding terrorism’s outcomes. Multiple layers of analysis, competing measures of success, and a wide range of actors using terrorism in different contexts, all complicate the effort of assessing what terrorism achieves. A further challenge is that much of the research lacked an organising framework by which to shape their analyses. If we are to gain a more contextualised appreciation of the outcomes of terrorism, identifying the most discriminative characteristics of groups can inform the search for explanations. A solid theoretical framework will help in this endeavour, as will a typology to help organise subsequent analysis, select groups for further study, and inform the interpretation of why and how particular outcomes are brought about. Building on these principles, this chapter sets out the theoretical framework for the study, making the case for an empirically-derived typology of violent non-state groups developed using Social Movement Theory (SMT).

In choosing SMT, a wide number of other theories have been considered and rejected. Candidates range from psychopathological, sociological or psychological theories, and theories of group processes (Victoroff, 2005). Or alternatively, work that places terrorism in the context of asymmetric warfare, as well as systemic-level frameworks, for example looking at economic or cultural factors (McAllister & Schmid, 2011). Most of these approaches were not suitable as they focused on a limited number of levels of analysis. They concentrate heavily on either the individual level, for example with cognitive theories, or the social level, as with the social-cleavage theory (Piazza, 2006), or the group level, for example, in Social Identity Theory. As the previous chapter set out, goals operate across all levels of analysis, suggesting we need a theory that does the same. Indeed, one of the major problems identified in the literature on terrorism is the lack of integrating frameworks which can incorporate micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis (Gentry, 2004; Ranstorp, 2007).

SMT has been successfully applied to understanding the outcomes of terrorism once before in an analysis of Irish and Italian militants (Bosi & della Porta, forthcoming). This study builds on this work, and is informed by three primary conceptual approaches. SMT acts as the guiding theory, providing the framework
underpinning the typology’s development to help identify the most discriminatory characteristics of the militant groups. Gross’ (2009) reinterpretation of American pragmatist thought offers a way of understanding how groups interpret and pursue particular outcomes. Whilst Tilly’s (2003; 2008) conceptualisation of causal mechanisms is used to examine in more detail how particular outcomes are brought about. This is explored further in chapter 6, but essentially it involves employing a range of mechanisms and processes to facilitate explanations about how terrorism ends and what it achieves.

Before going on to describe the SMT framework and expand on its utility for the study of terrorism and political violence, it is useful to review the contribution of typologies to the field. Beginning with an account of what constitutes typology, their benefits are outlined and some of the typologies of terrorism developed to date are reviewed, assessing their applicability for understanding the outcomes of terrorism.

**Utility of Typology**

Classification systems have long been applied to order phenomena and develop theories about the natural and social worlds. Typology has been used to classify everything from types of voter (Pew Research Center, 2011) and personality types (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk & Hammer, 1998), to forms of social mechanisms (Hedstrom & Swedberg, 1996). Their ubiquity demonstrates that robust frameworks capable of encompassing theoretical, empirical, and philosophical components can aid knowledge development and generate new paths of thinking (Marsden & Schmid, 2011). In respect to violent political contestation, applying typology to terrorism’s outcomes has been described as a way of identifying “distinctions that would be relevant for considering the strategic success of terrorism” (Kaplan, 2008, p.19). In what follows, this proposition is pursued further to consider how typological development can help us better understand how particular outcomes are brought about.

A number of definitions of typology have been posited, one proposed by McKinney (1966) and applied in this thesis, states that a “constructed type [is] a purposive, planned selection, abstraction, combination, and (sometimes) accentuation of a set of criteria with empirical references that serve as a basis for comparison of empirical cases” (McKinney, 1966, p.3). This definition identifies the constituent
parts of a typology, and specifies the make-up, application, and requirements for a useful typology. There are a number of continua by which to interpret typologies: the relation of the type to perceptual experience; the degree of abstraction involved in the types; the purpose of the type; its temporal and spatial scope; and its function (McKinney, 1966). These various dimensions of typologies describe their relative structure and assess their utility, a primary measure of which is facilitating conceptual clarity (Behling, 1978).

Done well, typologies help provide discipline and allow for the ordering of data, before it is taken forward for interpretation, discussion and narrative development (Tilly, 2004a). Because precisely the same phenomena do not recur in the social world, in order to develop better explanations, it is helpful to “reduce the complex to the simple, the unique to the general, and the occurrent to the recurrent.” (McKinney, 1969, p.3). Typology also allows the specification of types where an end state may be realised in a variety of ways (Doty & Glick, 1994), thereby helping to both describe and uncover equifinality (Elman, 2005; George, 2005). In turn, this helps to develop a better understanding of the different causal pathways that may lead to a given outcome.

Although there is a risk that using typologies can ‘freeze’ complex social phenomena, they can be open-ended (George, 2005). By taking a building block approach, as in this thesis, further cases can be included to challenge or support emerging thinking (George, 2005). Summing up, G. K. Roberts helpfully encapsulated the utility of typologies, noting that they should aim “to discover new relationships among things so ordered, to generate hypotheses, to lead on to the development of theories, and to identify areas for investigation.” (1971, cited in Schmid, Stohl & Flemming, 1988, p.216). With this in mind, some of the typologies that have been developed with respect to terrorism are considered taking into account some of their strengths and weaknesses.

**Typologising Terrorism**

Typology generally involves a simplification or exaggeration of reality (Dahlke, 1952; Rosenbaum & Sederberg, 1974). The utility of reducing complex social phenomena into types therefore needs to be demonstrated through its ability to
contribute to knowledge growth (Angstrom, 2001) and facilitate new findings (Vasquez, 1986). Given the potential of such endeavours, it is perhaps not surprising that typological development in the field of political violence is widespread. Efforts have focused on everything from assassination (e.g. Ben-Yehuda, 1997; Crotty, 1998) to warlordism (e.g. Giustozzi, 2005; Jackson, 2003; Lezhnev, 2005; Pejcinova, 2006). What follows identifies some of the most useful and interesting typologies that have been developed in the terrorism field.

Ganor (2008) combined the various measures used to develop typologies into a single ‘map’ to demonstrate how the search for parsimony can actually lead to increasing layers of complexity. Depicted in Figure 3.1, Ganor offered it as a prelude to developing a more elegant typology discussed a little later. It helpfully sets out a range of features considered important in trying to categorise groups and demonstrates the challenge of incorporating multiple influencing factors in a conceptually helpful way.

Figure 3.1. Classifying terrorist organisations by their characteristics (Ganor, 2008).

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4 For a review of some of these, and a comprehensive account of typologies of terrorism developed over the last 40 years, see Marsden and Schmid (2011).
At the other end of the spectrum, offering a far more parsimonious account of terrorism over the last century and more, there is perhaps the best known of the time based approaches to interpreting terrorism, Rapoport’s (2001) four waves thesis. Proposing four qualitatively different types of revolutionary terrorism, Rapoport begins with the anarchist wave, starting in the 1880s, lasting 40 years, an anti-colonial wave lasting a similar time, superseded by the new left wave, which ended in the 1990s, and finally a new religious wave. Demonstrating the thesis’ appeal, a fifth, or ‘tribal’, wave has been posited (Kaplan, 2007). This is “identifiable as a wave of millenarian violence contemporaneous with the ongoing religious wave of terrorism” (Kaplan, 2007, p.546).

Rapoport’s approach has been widely used and has withstood empirical testing. Rasler and Thompson (2009) found that targets, tactics, and number of deaths shifted in the predicted direction, informed by the characteristics of the most recent waves. Rapoport’s approach parsimoniously maps a hugely complex landscape of causes, outcomes, ideologies and social and political contexts. Moreover, the typology positions terrorism in a historical canon useful for looking at if and how terrorism evolves. However, it is not without problems. Rapoport acknowledges the potential for overlap between categories and that the waves are not unitary phenomena, with low levels of other types of terrorism existing alongside the predominant wave. It also neglects whole genres of terrorism, for example, right-wing terrorism is not represented at all. Its high level of abstraction, whilst indicating broad trends, is limited in the extent to which it helps us interpret how individual groups rise and fall, for this we need to move down the ladder of generalisation.

Ideology is one of the organising principles of Rapoport’s wave thesis, and recurs in the typological literature. Of many examples, that proposed by Wilkinson (2001) characterises groups by political motivation or ideological orientation, listing nationalism, separatism, racism, vigilantism, ultra-left ideology, religious fundamentalism, millennialism, and single-issue campaigns. In addition to these, the author proposes that state terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism be added to the list. This is a useful heuristic, and is often used in media and academic accounts. However, it risks over-simplifying complex and sometimes competing motivations. To take just one example, Hamas may be discussed in terms of their nationalist and/or
their religious influences, either of which is likely to suggest a quite different set of explanations, motives and ambitions.

For the purposes of trying to understand terrorism’s outcomes, looking through the lens of ideology assumes that ideological motivation can tell us something about the likelihood of achieving their goals. To some extent, this may be accurate, for example, Jones and Libicki (2008) found that groups with religious motivations never achieved their goals. This is most likely because of the broad scope of their demands, making concessions and negotiations extremely problematic. However, focusing primarily on ideology neglects the context in which groups operate. For example, comparing primarily nationalist groups, as diverse as the Sudan People’s Liberation Army and the Real IRA, seems less explanatorily useful, compared with an approach that, for instance, looked to the degree of political freedom, or social support groups experience, and how changing levels of these factors influenced outcomes.

A central concern of this thesis is the way wider socio-political context impacts terrorism’s outcomes. In this vein, efforts to typologise aspects of this context include categorising the relationship between the militant group and the state. Some of the earliest efforts in this direction include Thornton’s (1964) regime terror and agitational terror. More recent work, looking to the global stage, includes Lizardo and Bergesen’s (2003) work which considers the group’s position in relation to the world system. Groups are either embedded in the structural core, on its periphery, or in-between, in the semi-periphery (Chase-Dunn, 1998), thereby specifying a number of actor-target dyads. These categories are set alongside ideological justification, which is delineated according to historical period and echoes Rapoport’s (2001) four waves. The outcome is a typology of three types: ‘terror in the core’, where popular violence or revolt is carried out in core states; ‘struggling against oppression’ which sees the greatest use of terrorism; and ‘the transnational turn’ which involves groups in the semi-periphery attacking core targets across international borders.

Such typologies position political actors in a sweep of relations with the state or opposition group. Conceptually, they operate on a broad scale and are useful from a legal and political perspective in delineating actors, jurisdictions and levels of proscription. However, they neglect important interactions between militant groups
which can be crucial in interpreting outcomes, particularly in a competitive environment (Bloom, 2004).

In recent years there has been growing interest in organisational approaches to understanding violent groups. This lends itself to typological development, and a range of options have been set out. A popular approach, responding to the increasingly dispersed nature of militant organisations has been to characterise groups as networks (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2001). Brian Jackson (2006) takes a broadly similar approach based on command and control relationships. The premise is that organisations are bound by the links between constituent units, or nodes: individuals at a low level, and components of an organisation at a higher level. These enable the organisation to communicate, convey authority and shape the behaviour of others in the organisation.

Taking a different approach to the question of organisational constraints and opportunities, Ganor (2008) has proposed a limiting variable typology. The most innovative of the recent typologies, this classifies organisations by the variable that limits their activities. Displayed in Figure 3.2, the different types of groups are delineated by the level of motivation and operational capability they have at any given time. Where both these variables exceed the ‘terror level threshold’, terrorism will occur.

Figure 3.2. Ganor (2008) terrorist organisations typology.
The foundation of this model is the ‘terror equation’ and the ‘counter-terror equation’. The terror equation posits that an organisation’s activities depend on motivation levels to execute attacks, multiplied by the extent of the organisation’s operational capability to realise that motivation. Motivation and operational capacity are defined by a series of factors, against which the counter-terror equation is held. This incorporates a range of offensive and defensive steps that change the cost-benefit outcome of the decision makers in the militant group by impacting on its operational capabilities and the leaders’ motivations to attack.

These are useful and relatively underdeveloped aspects of typological inquiry. However, the ‘single limiting variable’ needs further specification as it seems to conflate a great many variables. Similarly, the terror and counter-terror equations need to be more fully explained. Compressing the various interacting influences on violent groups is a valuable exercise, as is linking the characteristics of groups, their opponents and operating environments to the likelihood of violence. However, it remains to be seen whether these can be supported empirically, and whether it is possible to condense them in the manner implied through the equation metaphor.

A number of authors have tried to specify a range of influencing and descriptive features to propose multi-dimensional typologies. One of the more widely used approaches, was developed by Schmid and Jongman (1988), incorporating political-orientation, motives and actors. It is represented in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. A basic typology of terrorism. Adapted from Schmid and Jongman, (1988).
Note: A = state actor; a1, a2 = non-state actors; [b] = proxy actors; [B] = other state actor.
An alternative, and to date, the most comprehensive attempt to map the various factors influencing terrorism was developed by Post, Ruby and Shaw (2002a; 2002b). Through a delphi procedure, they identified four broad categories of cause: historical, cultural and contextual features; key actors such as the regime, opponents and supporters of the group; group and organisational characteristics, for example, group processes and structures; and features of the immediate situation, or triggering events. Deconstructed into 32 variables, incorporating indicators of risk of group radicalisation, this comprehensive approach outlines a plethora of potentially important influences on the trajectory of violence. The authors applied the framework to types of groups identified by Schmid and de Graaf (1982), with the addition of a ‘new religions’ category. The result was an overview of those factors considered important in radical group development per type of group, providing the basis for empirical testing, and highlighting gaps of knowledge in the field.

Post et al.’s (2002a; 2002b) study represents an expansive effort to understand the various factors that influence groups. However, its comprehensiveness may be one of its downfalls. The 32 variables the authors set out are broken down into a further 139 observable indicators, which makes it a labour-intensive, time-consuming exercise to apply to individual groups. However, it has withstood empirical testing. By applying the knowledge base on al-Qaeda, the various factors represented in the framework were found to coalesce around a number of temporally defined themes (Marsden, 2008). The factors were found useful in interpreting al-Qaeda’s development, although the way the variables were organised in the original framework was less well supported. Using Smallest Space Analysis five different factors emerged: socio-political context; socio-political actors; group influences; group action; and group coalescence, which together rationalised and reorganised the original indicators.

This research demonstrates not only the utility of incorporating a range of factors in interpreting violent groups, but also the applicability of techniques such as Smallest Space Analysis in analysing complex, multi-dimensional phenomena. In particular, their ability to condense complex episodes into manageable frameworks, allowing the user to move up and down the ladder of generalisability depending on their needs. This thesis builds on this work, using a similar approach
(Multidimensional Partial Order Scalogram Analysis by Coordinates) to develop a typology of militant groups. Post et al. (2002a; 2002b) constructed their framework by aggregating expert knowledge. Arguably, it would be preferable to use a well-developed theory to inform the typology’s development. As the following discussion sets out, SMT is an ideal candidate for this. It has the advantage of a foundation of research and knowledge spanning several decades and its assumptions have been subject to rigorous debate and review, as well as qualitative and quantitative testing. Before going on to outline the SMT framework, it is instructive to review a number of challenges to much of the typological development carried out to date.

**Common Problems with Typology**

There are a number of issues which befall many typologies of terrorism. The first is that most conceptualisations are deductively developed. Of the crop of current typologies, only a minority use an inductive, empirical route to development. Most select a particular issue of interest to build their frameworks around, without incorporating empirical data either at the development stage, or in an effort to test the models to see if they hold up to scrutiny. As discussed, a typology that has stood up to empirical analysis is Rapoport’s (2001) ‘waves thesis’. It is in this way, by developing typologies, followed by detailed further investigation, that the literature is likely to fulfil its potential to successfully describe, classify and explain terrorism.

Terrorism studies has been criticised for neglecting the context within which campaigns develop (Gunning, 2007). It is a criticism reflected in typological work; only those looking at state-, non-state relationships incorporate the wider context into their conceptualisations. Arguably, it is at the intersection of the violent group, the ruling power, and the people, that the success or failure of the group is decided.

Incorporating these aspects into typology development therefore seems essential to developing our understanding of how terrorism ends. The final issue with typological work to date is its lack of theoretical foundation. By developing top-down frameworks, without reference to theory there is a greater risk that important features of militant groups are missed, reducing the chances of developing cogent explanations for terrorism’s outcomes. Theory offers a way of identifying and organising group characteristics, relating them to causal relationships, and linking multiple factors at different levels of analysis (Conteh-Morgan, 2004).
If the goals of discovering relationships, generating hypotheses, developing theory and identifying new areas for investigation are to be achieved (Roberts, 1971), it seems wise to look more closely at the way we build typologies. As this review has demonstrated, most conceptualisations have failed to use theory to its best effect, have largely neglected empirical routes to typology development and have taken the group out of its socio-political context. This thesis hopes to respond to these issues. Through a theoretically founded, empirically developed typology of groups which use terrorism, the aim is to offer a strong foundation for an examination of how terrorism ends.

Social Movement Theory

Social movements have been defined as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Tarrow, 1998, p. 4). Sometimes considered under the wider rubric of contentious politics, SMT analyses social movements via a tripartite framework (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996). This incorporates mobilising resources, political opportunities, and framing (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996). Through this, it tries to address questions associated with why, how, and under what conditions social movements emerge, function and decline. SMT has been described as “an orienting device for the sorting of observations” (Tilly, 2004b, p. xi), and it is primarily in this context that it will be utilised in this study. This description should be understood in the context of the following word of caution given by Charles Tilly:

“I]nvestigators will have to explain [these observations] by other means. As … no-one has identified powerful empirical regularities or compelling causal models that account for all sorts of political opportunity structures, framing processes, or sequences of political mobilizations. Regularities and explanatory principles operate at the level of mechanisms and processes, not at the level of these descriptive categories. (Tilly, 2004b, p. xi).

Hence, whilst SMT can be used to set out the features of groups and their environment, it is necessary to look beyond these to identify what is doing the causal work. By combining analysis of background conditions and organisational characteristics, via SMT and typology, with mechanisms and processes via case
studies, this thesis attempts to combine both broad descriptive accounts and more detailed analysis to develop more robust explanations about terrorism’s outcomes.

SMT’s explanatory value is strengthened by the synthesis of mechanisms from a variety of political theories, including rational-choice, structural and cultural theory (Chandler, 2005; Hafez, 2003). This offers “an integrated, multi-dimensional framework which provides stronger explanatory value than single theories or monolithic analysis of movements” (Chandler, 2005, p. 6). It also ties in with Gross’ (2009; 2010) argument that theories such as rational choice are themselves socially constructed ways of solving particular problems. In turn, this enables a better understanding of the relationship between individual behaviour and the wider social context (Crenshaw, 2000), and the various methods used to affect social change, including terrorism (della Porta, 1992). An integral part of this involves examining the interaction between the state and group, directing attention towards state practices and the effect this has on contentious politics (Gunning, 2009).

Previously neglected in the terrorism field (Goodwin, 2004; Gunning, 2009), SMT is increasingly being applied in this area, notably in respect of Islamic activism (Hafez, 2003; Wiktorowicz, 2004). This has engaged with questions such as how and why government action influences mobilisation, and what determines the effectiveness of particular forms of protest (Wiktorowicz, 2004). As such, SMT has been described as “one of the most consistent attempts to devise a more neutral, objective set of theoretical tools to analyse the movement as a dynamic movement without focusing on Islam as the determinant factor” (Meijer, 2005, p. 287).

Because of its interdisciplinary and unifying nature (Beck, 2008; Wiktorowicz, 2004), and the way it incorporates micro, meso and macro levels of analysis (Gentry, 2004; Gunning, 2009) SMT is considered an ideal theoretical framework for understanding terrorism and political violence (Beck, 2008). Alongside this, it incorporates the subjective, constructed reality of those involved with violent politics (della Porta, 1992). Moreover, it approaches the movement cognisant of both the dynamic environment in which it operates (Chandler, 2005), and the historical context which influenced its development (Gunning, 2009). These features make it an ideal candidate to guide typological development as della Porta argues:
Not only do underground organizations differ according to their goals, they also have varying organizational models and favor different forms of action. Any attempt to develop interpretative hypotheses about ‘terrorism’ is therefore destined to fail without a typology that can identify their range of application. (1992, p. 5).

There are inevitably some disadvantages to using SMT. Firstly, not all terrorism is a form of collective violence. There are ‘lone actors’ who operate largely or wholly independent of wider organisational networks. Similarly, very small groups of individuals who do not benefit from a broader constituency, and are somewhat closer to cults, can use terrorism to pursue their aims. Finally, some ‘groups’ are better described as loose aggregations united by a common cause, sometimes acting together, at other times acting independently, depending on circumstance. The approach taken in this thesis is less helpful in explaining the reasons why such actors stop using terrorism, and what they achieve by it. Secondly, SMT offers a comprehensive account of the various factors that influence group mobilisation and action, however it could neglect important features. By focusing on a particular set of characteristics, it may represent too rigid a framework by which to understand a diverse set of actors’ behaviour. As such, this research represents a test of concept as much as an empirical study. However, SMT has a strong provenance in the literature, and has proven helpful in interpreting the outcomes of more traditionally defined social movements, as well as at least one study of violent groups (Bosi & della Porta, forthcoming), making this thesis an important contribution to our knowledge of SMT’s applicability to thinking about how terrorism ends.

A detailed examination of some of the most important elements of SMT now follows. These are used to build a framework against which the knowledge base on the selected groups is held, which in turn is used to develop the typology. This endeavour of describing and categorising movement characteristics has been described as a particularly important, and sometimes neglected, area of social movement work (McCarthy, 1996). As Smelser said:

[Whilst the] demarcation of collective behaviour is not an end in itself, and is not so intriguing as the inquiry into causes and consequences of collective behaviour, it is of prime importance. Before we can pose questions of
explanation, we must be aware of the character of the phenomena we wish to explain. (Smelser, 1963, p. 5).

Social Movement Theory Framework

SMT is generally held to be made up of three aspects: resource mobilisation, political opportunity structures, and framing (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996). Broadly described, mobilising resources are those things which allow the mobilisation and operationalisation of collective action, such as finance and personnel. These combine with political opportunities to provide the circumstances conducive to social movement emergence. Finally, the concept of framing has been conceptualised by Snow, as the purposive effort to “fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 6).

The first two of these are used to develop the framework which informs the typology. Framing processes are not used in the typology development, as these focus on the qualitative way groups frame their message to organise and mobilise, and is hence less suited to strict categorisation and quantitative analysis. The relevant elements of SMT are deconstructed into their constituent parts to form a coding framework, used to develop the typology. To guide this effort, the literature on social movements was reviewed to identify comprehensive, well-defined, contemporary frameworks of each aspect of the theory to guide the typology coding protocol. Two frameworks fulfilled these criteria: Edwards and McCarthy’s (2004) conceptualisation of resource mobilisation and Kriesi’s (2004) framework of political opportunity structures, alongside McCarthy’s (1996) identification of core areas of research.

Resource mobilisation

This element of SMT examines group efforts to secure the resources it needs to affect social change (Jenkins, 1983). Positioning actors as part of the political process (della Porta, 1999), resource mobilisation is described as “those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilise and engage in collective action” (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 3). Mobilising structures incorporate a number of features relevant to the success of the movement (McAdam et al., 1996), such as ‘tactical repertoires’, as well as ‘micromobilisation structural social locations’, for example networks of friends or family (McCarthy, 1996).
In order to understand the relative importance of the various features of SMT to group outcomes, it is necessary to rigorously specify those factors which influence mobilisation (McCarthy, 1996). Doing so, the resource typology developed by Edwards and McCarthy (2004) is used. Based on the assumption that resources and their control are unequally distributed (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004), the aim of this strand of SMT is to offer greater insight into how movements operate, despite this disparity, to attempt change. In doing so, broad themes are parsed into sub-themes, further articulated through specific indicators.

The framework is made up of four elements, illustrated in Table 3.1. The first are the types of resources to be mobilised, divided into five elements: moral, cultural, social-organisational, human and material. In turn, these are deconstructed into a number of indicators that offer a finer-grained approach to analysing these primary resources. The second feature of the framework considers the utility of these resources alongside two measures: fungibility, or the degree to which the resource is transferable between contexts; and proprietarity, or the level of control it is possible to hold over the resource. Thirdly, mechanisms of resource mobilisation are considered, looking at how movements get access to these resources, described by four categories: movement self-production, where they generate the resource themselves; aggregation of many people’s resources; appropriation or co-option involving the legitimate borrowing, or exploitation of another’s resources; and finally patronage, where resources are gifted by a benefactor. Finally, four processes of resource mobilisation are considered, looking at the way in which resources, once accessed, are put into practice. This focuses on the mobilisation of finance and personnel, both of which are influenced by the development of an organisation or movement structure, and finally, creating resources and mobilisation through collective action.
Table 3.1: *Four aspects of resource mobilisation (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources to mobilise</td>
<td>Moral, cultural, social-organisational, human, material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility of resources</td>
<td>Fungibility, proprietarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms of mobilisation</td>
<td>Movement self-production, aggregation, appropriation or co-option, patronage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes of mobilisation</td>
<td>Mobilising money, mobilising activism, creating organisations/building organisational capacity, mobilising through collective action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 illustrates the main features of the framework described by Edwards and McCarthy (2004), along with specific indicators adapted for application to groups which use terrorism. This framework evolved over the course of data collection in response to the availability of reliable data and its relevance to the set of groups under scrutiny. Recognised as an important aspect of theoretical testing and development, by doing this, it is possible to reach a better representation of groups for the purposes of comparative analysis (Broadbent, 1998). In addition, it allowed the framework to evolve, within the epistemic and ontological bounds of the theory, to offer a better fit between the theoretical framework and its application to groups which use terrorism.

Table 3.2: *Resource mobilisation indicators. Adapted from Edwards and McCarthy (2004)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral: aggregation</td>
<td>Support from local population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural: patronage</td>
<td>Support from other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-organisational: aggregation</td>
<td>Network development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-organisational: self-production</td>
<td>Found an official organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human: self-production</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human: aggregation</td>
<td>Pre-existing group of fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human: aggregation</td>
<td>Membership levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material: patronage</td>
<td>State sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material: co-optation/appropriation</td>
<td>Territory/safe haven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table illustrates five main types of resource alongside a range of indicators by which they are operationalised. They are delineated by two of the four
aspects of Edwards and McCarthy’s (2004) framework – the type of resources, and the mechanisms by which they are accessed. Issues of process and utility are better suited to a finer grain of analysis and are incorporated in the case studies.

As with all aspects of the framework this chapter presents, these broad categories inevitably struggle to describe the dynamic and complex nature of militant groups. However, given the aim of developing a typology, it is necessary to balance complexity with a parsimonious analytical approach. The case studies that make up the third part of the study are better placed to examine in detail those causal processes implicated in how terrorism ends. The indicators in Table 3.2 are perhaps best understood as a large-scale map setting out the terrain of the groups which use terrorism, in order that interesting contours and features may be identified and examined in more detail.

Political opportunities

This aspect of SMT focuses on the way in which movements interact with, and are situated within a wider political context (Eisinger, 1973) and the opportunities and constraints the group faces (McAdam et al., 1996). It is based on the assumption that “political opportunity structures influence the choice of protest strategies and the impact of social movements on their environment” (Kitschelt, 1986, p. 58). Analysing such structures is particularly helpful in incorporating state-movement interaction (della Porta, 1996), a neglected and important feature of research on groups which use terrorism (Gunning, 2009).

Examining the role of political opportunity in cross-country comparative work has helpfully elucidated movement outcomes, and constitutes one of the main dependent variables considered in the literature (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; McAdam, 1996). However, some have argued that the concept has been so widely used as to dilute its analytical utility (Gamson & Meyer, 1996). Therefore, it is important to be as clear as possible in setting out its scope. In doing so, the literature identifies a number of features, including the extent to which political institutions are organised in stable or unstable coalitions; whether movements have allies in political elites; the timing and extent of state repression; and the network of opportunities or constraints placed on the group in the wider socio-political environment (Campbell, 2005;
Given these varying and contested aspects of the political opportunity structure, Kriesi’s (2004) framework was selected as it offers a theoretically driven, yet flexible, structure. This flexibility is particularly important as the exact factors determining political opportunities differ across contexts, which together constitute a ‘set of clues’ for analysing how, and under what conditions, movements emerge and evolve (Tarrow, 1998). Hence, analysts are advised to use the framework to develop a ‘political opportunity set’ combining particular elements to ask relevant questions of the object of study (Kriesi, 2004). The original framework is presented in Figure 3.4. Made up of three broad themes constituting sets of variables, these include, structures, configurations of power, and interaction contexts (della Porta, 1996; Kriesi, 2004), which are further broken down into a number of smaller elements.

**Figure 3.4.** A framework for the study of the political context. Adapted from Kriesi (2004).

With respect to structures, the two broad contextual features of *international context* and *cleavage structures* both influence political institutions and cultural models. *International context* is the nature of the regional, national and international settings within which, and with whom the movement is engaged. *Cleavage structures*, are embedded within the social and cultural conflict structure of the society, and are influenced by social change; for example, industrialisation or processes of
democratisation. The two core concepts of the structures aspect of the framework focus on the political institutions, classified according to their relative openness and level of centralisation, and cultural models for dealing with challengers (Koopmans & Kriesi, 1995) interpreted along a continuum of exclusive, repressive policies or an integrative, cooperative approach.

   The configuration of political actors encompasses a triad of interacting players: protagonists, antagonists, and bystanders (Hunt, Benford, & Snow, 1994). Such actor configurations are time and context specific, and represent assessments of their relative capabilities, perceptions and likely outcomes of action, as well as the compatibility of their aims, and their stability.

   The interaction context represents the relationships between structure and agency, where actors’ strategic behaviour coincides. The opportunities aspect refers to the parity between movement goals and state behaviour. Reform denotes a policy shift in favour of the movement; where the state acts against the interests of the group, it is conceptualised as a threat. With respect to collective action, a positive reaction through the provision of support is defined as facilitation, and a negative one, increasing the costs of the action, is repression.

   Political opportunity sets are informed by the focus of study (Kriesi, 2004). In determining which aspects to focus on, cross-sectional analyses benefit from focusing on structural, more stable elements, (Meyer, 2004). Hence, informed by previous work on terrorism and social movements (Alimi, 2006; Araj, 2008; Gunning, 2009; Hafez, 2003; S. Jackson, 2006; Wiktorowicz, 2004), the researcher’s understanding of work carried out to date, and McCarthy’s (1996) discussion of the most important feature of political opportunity structures, three sets of variables were isolated. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system; the degree of stability illustrated by the broad set of elite alignments; and the way in which the state engages with challengers. Analysis of these three aspects makes use of an array of data, a more detailed exposition of which is given in the methodology chapter. Briefly, political openness and how elites deal with challengers are assessed in terms of the country in which the group is based using Freedom House measures. Similarly, political stability is assessed using World Bank measures. These three sets of
measures aim to assess the varying and contested elements of the political opportunity structure in which a group operates.

**Conclusion**

The foregoing has set out the theoretical and organising framework for the study. Beginning with an exposition of the utility of typologies, previous efforts to develop typologies of militant groups were reviewed, making the case for an empirically developed, theoretically founded typology. The SMT framework was then set out, demonstrating its applicability to the study of terrorism, rooted in its incorporation of the socio-political context and consideration of different levels of analysis. Through careful application of the literature on different groups, this offers a route to comparative analysis that avoids some of the pitfalls terrorism research has been accused of. Specifically, a-historicity, analysing groups in isolation from their socio-political context (Silke, 2007), a failure to take into account the interaction between oppositional forces, and the neglect of state action (Toros & Gunning, 2009).

This represents the second set of tools this thesis uses to investigate how terrorism ends. Alongside the pragmatist account of how actors try and resolve particular problems, and Tilly’s mechanism and process-led approach to explaining social phenomena, this triumvirate of explanatory, descriptive and theoretical ideas provides the foundation for the development of the typology and subsequent investigation of the case studies. The next chapter sets out how this is operationalised by describing the study’s methodology and introducing the various analytic techniques used in developing and analysing the typology.
Chapter 4: Methodology

Having established the theoretical foundation for the typology in the previous chapter, and headlined some of the links between theory and methodology that underpin this thesis, it remains to explain how these ideas will be operationalised. Informed by a number of disciplines’ methodological approaches, what follows sets out the quantitative and qualitative tools used to explore terrorism’s outcomes. Beginning with an overview of the research design, the methodology underpinning the development of the typology is laid out including discussion of group selection and the data used to generate the typology. Attention then turns to the approach taken to the case studies, concluding with a brief discussion of epistemological issues.

Research Design

There are two phases to the research design, the first is the development of the typology which is presented in chapter 5, and explored in chapter 6. The second stage is a detailed investigation of two groups to explore important mechanisms and processes and the outcomes they produce, presented in chapters 7 and 8. These two phases are operationalised via a six-step process described in Figure 4.1. The first stage involves identifying appropriate groups for inclusion, then, using the SMT framework, data on these groups is analysed using Multidimensional Partial Order Scalogram Analysis by Coordinates (MPOSAC) to develop the typology. Comparative analysis is then undertaken to assess relative outcomes, focusing on the ultimate fate of the group, current explanations for group outcomes are then held against this analysis. In addition, those mechanisms and processes involved in the move away from violence are specified, drawing on the SMT literature. These are combined with insights from the typology and applied to the in-depth study of two cases. These case studies are drawn from different types identified in the typology to facilitate comparative enquiry, and explore causal relationships and interactions in more detail. Finally, the conclusions of the study are set out, focusing on the benefits and drawbacks of the methods used and consider the implications of the research for understanding the outcomes of violent political contestation.
Chapter 4: Methodology

1. Identify groups to be analysed
   - Ensuring a representative selection, specifically with respect to outcomes

2. Coding frame from SMT literature developed
   - Constituting: “an orienting device for the sorting of observations” (Tilly, 2004b, p.xi)

3. Content analysis of knowledge-base on the groups, drawn from Jane's World/open source data applied to the coding frame

4. Typology development using MPOSAC

5. Comparative analysis identifying and exploring organisational and political outcomes
   - Examine existing explanations for group outcomes

6. Investigate two groups from different types, using in-depth case studies aiming to “reconstruct causal sequences, and concentrate explanation on links within those sequences” (Tilly, 1995b, p.1594), relating to group outcomes

7. Draw conclusions focusing on methodological and substantive insights into the outcomes of violent political contestation.

Figure 4.1. Stages of research process.

Group Identification

Group selection was determined by a set of decision criteria. The first was that groups should exhibit a range of outcomes, and provide scope for comparative enquiry. In addition, it was important to keep in mind Smelser’s (1976) criteria for case selection that cases are appropriate to the theoretical problem; relevant to the phenomenon under investigation; similar to one another on the criterion by which they are classified; have sufficient data available through which to conduct analysis; and be standardised and repeatable.

As explored in chapter 2, three major studies have examined the outcomes of a large number of violent groups: Cronin (2009); Jones and Libicki (2008); and Weinberg (2012). These provided the starting point to select groups for further analysis. Jones and Libicki examined 648 groups overall, whilst Cronin’s study

---

5 The other pieces of work discussed alongside these studies, by Abrahms (2006; 2012) and Pape (2003), looked at a much smaller sample of groups and were hence unsuitable to use as a basis for group selection.
analysed a total of 457 groups. These two pieces of work therefore form the basis of group selection. Weinberg’s study did not list the groups in the study and so was not suitable for group selection. Cronin’s groups were drawn from the (now defunct) MIPT database, and were chosen on the basis of two selection criteria: that groups had attacked civilian targets, and that they demonstrated a sustained campaign of violence. Jones and Libicki, (2008) drew their information from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). A total of 648 groups were studied over the period 1968-2006, of these 136 (21%) of them splintered into factions, 268 (41%) ended, and 244 (28%) were still active when the study was carried out. Taking the groups identified in these two studies as a starting point, a number of further decision criteria were used to make the final selection:

1. Groups which had re-emerged, continued operations, or whose factions were still involved in violence were excluded.
2. Groups which ended pre-1997 were excluded (as some data used to build the typology is not available pre-1997). The cut-off date for the groups to have ceased violence was 2009.
3. These groups were cross-referenced with GTD and RAND databases to assess the number of attacks for which they were held responsible. Those where there were no data in either database about the group, or where both agree there was no sustained campaign\(^6\) were excluded.
4. Finally, to ensure there was sufficient data on which to draw, the remaining groups were cross-referenced with Jane’s World of Insurgency and Terrorism; where no profile was found, they were excluded. Jane’s database was the primary source of qualitative data used to develop the typology. Described as “[e]xemplary in the field of terrorism research” (Price, 2011, p.452) in a review of databases in the field, Jane’s profiles cover the years under analysis and offer a comprehensive overview of the group, its operations, background and current status offering the most reliable and thoroughgoing set of data in the field.

\(^6\) A sustained campaign was defined, in line with Cronin, as more than one or two attacks which took place on more than one day. Therefore, groups that only carried out a limited number of attacks on a single day were excluded.
This resulted in 28 groups going forward for analysis. These are detailed in Table 4.1 alongside assessments from Cronin, and Jones and Libicki, as to their achievement against overall aims.

Table 4.1. Groups selected to go forward for analysis alongside Jones and Libicki (2008) and Cronin’s (2009) assessment of achievement against ultimate aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Cronin</th>
<th>Jones &amp; Libicki</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu Nidal Organisation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andres Castro United Front</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Islamic Group</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodo Liberation Tigers</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee for the Security of the Highways</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First of October Antifascist Group</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Aceh Movement (GAM)</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's Army</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Red Army (JRA)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kach</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish Democratic Party</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalist Volunteer Force</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of the Revolutionary Left</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muttahida Qami Movement</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polisario Front</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Organisation 17 November (RO-N17)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary United Front (RUF)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITA (National Union for the Total independence of Angola)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Abbreviations for Jones and Libicki’s outcomes: PO: Policing; S: Splintering; PT: Joined political process; V: Victory; MF: Military Force.*

As Table 4.1 demonstrates, the selection of groups demonstrates a range of outcomes. Cronin’s assessment incorporates 23 (82%) groups which failed, and five (18%) which achieved partial success. Jones and Libicki’s analysis included six groups which were ongoing at the end of their period of analysis, but had ended according to Cronin. This was confirmed through consulting the knowledge base on
the groups, and they were therefore included in the study. Of the remainder of Jones and Libicki’s selection, 9 (41%) joined the political process; seven (32%) ended through policing; three (14%) ended through military force; and two (9%) achieved victory. It is interesting to note that Cronin, and Jones and Libicki, reach differing conclusions over the fate of a number of the groups they examine. However, the reasons for this are hard to identify as the rationale underpinning the decision to classify a group as having failed or succeeded is not specified in any detail in either of the studies.

Taking Jones and Libicki’s overall analysis of the groups in their study as a comparator set, these groups demonstrate an array of outcomes roughly commensurate with the outcomes of the 268 groups which had ceased violence. Through their analysis, they found that 43% of the groups renounced violence and became part of the political process and 40% ended because of the arrest or killing of key members by the police. Military force accounted for the end in 7% of cases, and around 10% were considered to have attained their stated objectives and achieved victory.

The selection of groups is subject to a number of limitations. Firstly, the relatively small number of groups means any which are extremely unusual could have a disproportionate impact on the outcome of analysis. Demanding that groups ended between 1997 and 2009 also excludes a large number of militant organisations, which impacts the breadth of conclusions that may be drawn. The necessity of relying on analyses (Cronin, 2009; Jones & Libicki, 2008) which use two, albeit well-established and well-used, US-based databases (RAND and MIPT), means group selection displays a Western-based conceptualisation and categorisation of terrorism. Somewhat inevitably, this reflects particular threats believed to be important in this context, and may neglect other interesting and important phenomena not captured by these databases. Finally, the demand for a satisfactory amount of information to be available in the public realm also means that larger, higher profile groups are examined, possibly excluding interesting and analytically useful smaller groups.

However, as this thesis considers groups which have ceased operations, it speaks to an area which demands more attention, namely, the analysis of historical cases (Duyvesteyn, 2007; English, 2009). The comparative neglect of movements that
have ended is described as an important gap in the literature; as one comprehensive review of the terrorism literature puts it:

… this wider context is almost entirely ignored as terrorism research is increasingly driven by a need to provide a short-term immediate assessment of current groups and threats. Efforts to establish more contextualised and stable guiding principles have been almost entirely sidelined. This is a serious cause for concern, and the deteriorating appreciation of historical research since 9/11 is deeply troubling. (Silke, 2007, p. 91)

A further advantage of looking at historical cases is that information on those groups selected for case-study analysis can be somewhat easier to come by, as the passage of time allows for more information to emerge. The research is also afforded a little distance from the political context within which campaigns were waged which can help produce more balanced accounts. Again, these approaches are recommended when trying to identify causal relationships, and are considered some of the advantages of historical comparative approaches in the social sciences (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003).

**Social Movement Theory**

Having selected the groups for analysis, the next step was to identify and categorise the various features applied to the study of social movements, within the orienting categories of political opportunities and resource mobilisation presented in the preceding chapter. This forms the foundation of the analytical framework, and acts as a coding frame. The various measures are presented in Table 4.2 (see Appendix A for the coding definitions and Appendix B for full original list).
Table 4.2. Social Movement Theory derived coding measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political opportunity measures</th>
<th>Mobilisation measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political rights</td>
<td>Popular support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil liberties</td>
<td>Other group support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political stability</td>
<td>Territory/safe haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Official wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-existing fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State sponsorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As well as the iterative process of reducing the number of variables guided by the availability and reliability of information described in the previous chapter, the statistical approach demands the various measures shared a ‘common range’. This means that all the items are ordered in a particular direction, guided by a common meaning (Shye, Elizur & Hoffman, 1994). The notion of a ‘common range’ is an important feature of this type of research, and is therefore worth expanding on a little more. The first point to note is that meaning is derived from the theoretical foundation for the study, it precedes measurement and guides variable selection and research design. Secondly, the common range can be relatively flexible (Canter, 1985) and allows the integration of objective and subjective variables (Lipshitz, 1986). It need not use the same scale, set of response categories, or range, however it must share a common meaning. In this case, the common range is defined as the level of resource mobilisation exhibited by the groups. The political opportunity measures on the other hand, are incorporated as external variables superimposed on the typology, a feature considered in more detail below.

**Typology Development Source Data and Coding**

The third stage of the research used content analysis to analyse the knowledge base on those groups selected for analysis. Using the coding framework, this process assessed the relative presence, absence and intensity of variables in particular groups. The data consisted of a number of sources. Political rights and civil liberties were assessed using Freedom House measures (Freedom House, 2010), which considers six aspects of political rights and civil liberties and is widely used as a measure of political openness, including in work on social movements and violent politics (e.g. S.
Jackson, 2006). It is reflected in two scores, one for the degree of political rights and one for level of civil liberties. World Bank measures of political stability were used (World Bank, 2010), defined as “capturing perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism” (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2009, p. 6). Six measures make up the Governance Indicators put forward by the World Bank, consisting of a wide range of organisations’ data on specific countries. Here, only the one assessing political stability was used because the other measures overlap with those of Freedom House, and Freedom House contributes information to them.

As discussed, the rest of the variables were coded using qualitative data, relying in the first instance on information derived from Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism. Using a single database has obvious limitations, hence, as far as possible all data were crosschecked against additional sources which demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the groups (see Appendix C for full bibliography by group). This echoes Cronin’s (2009) approach of using the MIPT group profile database and cross-checking with additional sources, and Abrahms’ (2006) use of the RAND MIPT Knowledge Base, cross-referenced with other open source reviews of militant groups.

The content analysis was guided by a set of definitions derived from the literature (see Appendix A). All definitions were developed ensuring that they were mutually exclusive and as unambiguous and clear as possible, taking into account Weber’s (1990) view that “reliability problems usually grow out of the ambiguity of word meanings, category definitions, or other coding rules” (p.15). Specifically, the SMT literature guided development of the mobilisation variables, whilst Richardson’s (2005) scale of state-sponsorship guided coding for this measure. This use of qualitative data, coded numerically for use in quantitative analysis is one of the advantages of MPOSAC and its associated techniques. It is an approach successfully applied in studies examining a range of topics, including analysing the structure of criminal organisations (Canter, 2004; Porter & Alison, 2001, 2006). To test the reliability of the coding carried out by the primary researcher, 25% of the data (equating to analysis of seven groups) were assessed by a second person with experience in qualitative data analysis. The percentage agreement between the raters
was 92%. A further assessment of consistency was carried out using Spearman’s rank order correlation. This technique was selected as the data do not meet the assumptions necessary for parametric correlation statistics. Specifically, the data are not normally distributed, and is on an ordinal scale. The inter-rater reliability between raters was found to be .95 (p < .01), a high level of agreement, suggesting the coding definitions and data used in the analysis facilitated reliable, consistent results. See Appendix D for raw scores from both raters and SPSS output.

**Typology Development**

Once collated, the information on the groups was consolidated and analysed to develop the typology (see Appendix E for raw data). This method makes it possible to investigate, empirically, the relationship between the measures which characterise the groups, and provides the foundation for the selection and analysis of cases for in-depth study. This thesis therefore applies two approaches to comparative analysis: “variable-oriented studies [which] mainly aim at establishing generalized relationships between variables, [and] case-oriented research [which] seeks to understand complex units” (della Porta, 2008, p. 198). Whilst often portrayed as incompatible, these approaches can be complementary (della Porta, 2008). Hence, this study applies both methods, to first classify the groups by their most discriminative features, and second to investigate the processes and mechanisms implicated in individual group outcomes in depth. The first stage involved using MPOSAC to explore the structure of the data at the group level.

**Multidimensional Partial Order Scalogram by Coordinates**

MPOSAC is described as “a unique approach to integrating theory construction, research design, choice of observations, data analysis, and interpretation” (Guttman & Greenbaum, 1998, p. 13). It is a multivariate technique that allows the analysis of a subject – in this case, a group – which is represented by scores on a set of variables (Guttman & Greenbaum, 1998). As discussed, these variables must exhibit a common range, that is, a scale where each item is assessed along the same range of meaning (Shye, 2007). In this case, it is the group’s level of mobilisation. Hence, variables were coded in the same direction – higher scores representing greater levels of mobilisation. Each group has a particular profile of responses, made up of a score on each variable, known as a *structuple*. Based on these
scores, points representing the groups are arranged in multidimensional space. MPOSAC therefore portrays “multiple comparisons of respondents’ profiles simultaneously, and [allows detection of] structural patterns among the profiles” (Guttman & Greenbaum, 1998, p. 25).

MPOSAC developed from the Guttman scale (Guttman & Greenbaum, 1998). This is a set of profiles across a range of variables defined by their comparability/incomparability (Shye, 2007). The matrix of responses constituted by the profiles is a scalogram of responses (row) x variables (column). If \( p_1 \) is \( \geq \) \( p_2 \) on all of the variables it is said to be comparable, if \( p_1 \) is \( \leq \) \( p_2 \) on at least one variable it is incomparable (Shye, 2007). The Guttman scale is a scalogram where all profiles are comparable and may therefore be ‘simply ordered’ by the attribute the variables assess them against (Shye, 2007). Graphically, this could be represented by a one dimensional plot, where the ordinal scores on the measure of interest define the position of a subject: high to low. Hence, each subject can be assigned a single score which represents the degree to which they embody that particular attribute and which orders them in the array.

However, where a simple order, or unidimensionality, is not maintained, as is often the case in empirical work, this approach needs to be adapted (Shye, 2007). One such approach is MPOSAC (Amar, 2005). MPOSAC takes a range of scores (structuples), on a particular set of variables. As explained, these structuples can be comparable or incomparable (denoted by #). For example:

\[
\begin{align*}
p &= 4343422 & p &> q \\
q &= 4223312 \\
p &= 2422343 & p &\neq q \\
q &= 3432323
\end{align*}
\]

In representing these incomparable profiles, it is no longer possible to use a single score to denote that one profile is greater than another. Therefore, for a two-dimensional solution, two scores for each profile are necessary, these represent their incomparability. Each structuple is therefore assigned two ranks, rather than the number of variables on which they were originally measured. These figures are coordinates, which define the subject’s position in an array of all subjects in the study. They also denote that a set of regions are greater or lesser than the given point, and
also, that a region (made up of two parts) is incomparable to it (Shye, Elizur & Hoffman, 1994). This is illustrated in Figure 4.2. The procedure therefore tries to solve the problem:

\[ \text{Given a set } A \text{ of observed profiles in } n \text{ tests, can we assign two scores (that is, a point in the coordinate plane) to each profile in } A, \text{ so that for any two observed profiles, their observed relation would be represented correctly by their corresponding two-coordinate profile?} \]

(Shye et al., 1994, p.152).

Where two dimensions are insufficient to represent the partially ordered scale (a procedure that would be run using POSAC: Partial Order Scalogram Analysis), MPOSAC (Multidimensional Partial Order Scalogram Analysis) makes it possible to move into higher dimensions. Hence, the MPOSAC algorithm tries to reduce the number of variables \( n \) from \( n \) to \( m \). Each profile \( p = (p_1, p_2, \ldots, p_n) \) in \( P \) (partially ordered set of profiles on \( n \) variables) will correspond to a profile of base coordinates \( (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_m) \) in \( \mathbb{R}^m \) (the Cartesian plane), whilst maintaining the partial order in \( P \) as far as possible (Amar, 2005). That is, MPOSAC reduces the number of variables which constitute the partial order to the smallest dimensionality possible, whilst maintaining the partial order of the profiles so that they may be observed graphically (Levy & Amar, 2000). To calculate this in multidimensional space, for example using a three dimensional solution, MPOSAC uses the profiles to calculate three ranks which constitute the coordinates defining their position in the array. Importantly, MPOSAC combines theoretical considerations with data analysis and is described as a

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**Figure 4.2.** Regions of comparability and incomparability in relation to point P. Adapted from Shye, Elizur & Hoffman, (1994), p.152.
“systematic way of deriving measurement from structural theory” (Shye, 2007, p.309).

As well as displaying the array of profiles in multidimensional space, it is possible to introduce external variables to the plot. In this case, these are the political opportunity measures. This enables the observation of the relationship between the groups arranged with respect to their levels of mobilisation, and levels of political stability and civil liberties. Essentially, this involves superimposing the various measures of these variables onto particular groups, whilst not changing the structure of the typology.

As well as the scalogram displaying the position of the groups according to their partial order, MPOSAC produces a number of ‘item diagrams’. These display the same array of points in the same place, but detail the score each group received on each of the variables. This makes it possible to see how the scores on the measures partition the space. Ideally each variable should run from high to low on each measure such that the item diagram can be partitioned into regions containing a single score. In practice, there are often deviations, a limited number of which are acceptable (Canter, 2004; Levy & Amar, 2000). The interpretation of these item diagrams forms the foundation of the typology which is presented in chapter 5, along with further explication of the methodology where appropriate.

Comparative Analysis and Case-studies

The second phase of the research uses the typology as a foundation for comparative analysis and case studies. In chapter 6 existing explanations of how terrorism ends are examined, holding previous interpretations of group outcomes against those identified in this analysis, setting out an alternative way of interpreting these effects. In the next two chapters two groups, selected as being conceptually and empirically different due to their presence in different regions of the typology, are subject to in-depth investigation. These were analysed to both elucidate the individual case, and comparatively, to consider how background context and organisational characteristics influenced the action of particular mechanisms and processes thereby impacting outcomes (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001). Ideally, a larger number of groups would be subject to detailed case study analysis to offer greater scope for comparative analysis. However, space constraints balanced with the need to offer an
in-depth analysis of the groups means only two could be examined as part of this thesis.

Case studies offer a detailed, ‘thick description’ using multiple, triangulated sources and methods (Snow & Trom, 2002). They explore a ‘system of actions’ to examine how particular events and processes “are produced and reproduced or changed by examining their ongoing interaction with other elements within the particular context” (Snow & Anderson, 1991, p.153). To describe the context more clearly, it is useful to think of the ‘multiorganisational field’ within which opposition takes place, encompassing group members, antagonists, targets, allies, and constituents (Snow & Trom, 2002).

The case studies are approached with the aim of identifying and exploring the mechanisms and processes involved in the outcomes of terrorism. This follows the framework set out by McAdam et al. (2001), which suggests that firstly, cases are chosen on the basis of different forms of contention in different regimes. Secondly, that they allow analytically valuable comparisons, and finally, about which there is sufficient information to carry out analysis. In line with Bosi and Giugni (2012), this shifts attention from the conditions that may facilitate violent contestation to exploring the processes and mechanisms which produce a decline in violence. The value of such an approach has been recognised by others examining processes of political violence, as Burke (2011) argues: “[t]he key was not necessarily in the ‘who’ – essential character traits or profile or an individual – nor even in the ‘why’ – the sense of injustice or the attraction of a cause – but was to be found very often in the ‘how’ … this dynamic, complex and often chaotic interplay of environment and agency.” (p.736). Tilly and Tarrow (2007, p.207) suggest a number of steps to guide case studies, which this study applies to investigating Kach and the Aden Abyan Islamic Army.

1. Describe the initial conditions that shaped the contention, identifying the characteristics of the sites, and examine how these changed and interacted with the main political actors.
2. Set out the main political actors and identities, institutions and movements that are involved in the conflict, alongside the main sites at which conflict erupted, this includes the objects, originators, and spaces of contention.
3. Specify the *streams of contention*, or periods of collective claim-making that are the focus of study.

4. Identify the *outcomes* we wish to explain.

5. Set out the *episodes* of interest; these are ‘bounded sequences of contentious interaction’. In this case, these represent the main periods of violent political contestation which occurred between the protagonists.

6. Interrogate the episodes to identify the *mechanisms* which produced the immediate effects of interest.

7. Pull sequences of mechanisms together to reproduce the *processes* that produce particular outcomes.

8. Combine the initial conditions, episodes of contention, the mechanisms and processes to generate *explanations* of why and how specified outcomes came about.

**Case study source data**

A wide range of sources were utilised in analysing the groups, drawing as far as possible on primary sources (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Layton-Henry, 2004). These were supplemented with secondary and tertiary sources, aiming to use as many types of information to reconstruct events with the primary research questions in mind. Incorporating multiple sources of data, methods, and often different methodologies in this way aims to produce a more detailed, thick description of the events which led to the move away from terrorism. The following are the main sources used, with a brief description of how they have been applied in the research, the exact make-up of these sources is detailed in the individual case study chapters.

1. Contemporaneous media accounts drawn from the major newspapers of the day. These are used to identify the main periods of contestation, and set out the primary political and violent episodes with which the groups were involved.

2. Writings, speeches and interviews of the leaders and, where available, group members were analysed, with a particular focus on how leaders frame goals and aspirations. Although some of the main protagonists involved in the two organisations are now dead, they left a canon of written material which offers valuable insight into their thinking, aims, political ideology and approach.
3. Writings, speeches and interviews featuring opposition voices, looking at how particular behaviours and claims are framed by opponents and the measures undertaken to counteract them.

4. Where available, polling data on political affiliation, socio-economic circumstances and demographics are used to understand the initial and evolving opinions of potential constituents or opponents of the groups at the social level.

5. Historical accounts of the periods under review drawn from the academic corpus.

6. Parliamentary and political debates about the groups and their claims are considered to understand the political impact the groups had, and how this was framed in the political arena.

7. Art, images and symbols of the groups are assessed to try and interpret how the groups wished to portray themselves and the meaning they sought to give to the groups’ message and actions.

8. Group propaganda in the form of statements, leaflets, music, slogans etc. are considered to examine how they wished to portray themselves, and how they tried to motivate and mobilise support.

**Epistemology and Methods**

The approach described above, of ‘processes’, ‘sites of contention’, and ‘episodes’ may sound a somewhat mechanistic way of addressing what are complex phenomena, influenced by a range of human emotions, subjective meanings, flawed reasoning and political and personal ambitions. Hopefully, through the course of the case studies, these dry terms will come to life, and demonstrate their utility in offering a grammar by which particular organisational and political outcomes may be explained. The aim is to apply these concepts to identify the most important features of violent political contestation’s decline, rather than slavishly force such events into predetermined constructs. The analysis uses multiple methods and data sources, and adopts what has been described as a ‘non-paradigmatic’ approach (della Porta & Keating, 2008). It rests on the assumption that the world cannot be understood in one particular way, but rather, that it should be interpreted in multiple ways, informed by the questions being asked. This seems appropriate as, firstly, our understanding of the outcomes of terrorism is still in its infancy, and secondly, only a limited number of
approaches have been used in trying to understand it. Hence, it makes sense to begin with the question – how does terrorism end – and build a set of methods, drawing from relevant methodologies, to respond to that question as robustly as possible (della Porta & Keating, 2008).

Typology inevitably ‘freezes’ complex events, and the dynamic behaviour of groups of individuals. Alone, this is incapable of explaining the genesis, evolution or demise of political contestation. However, it is helpful in organising a complex field, identifying the most discriminating features of groups and their environment, and providing a foundation which can then be unpicked and interrogated using more detailed, nuanced methods. With these issues in mind, the thesis is informed by an epistemological approach drawing on social constructionism and interpretivism (Schwandt, 1998), which conceives of objective and subjective realities as fundamentally linked (della Porta & Keating, 2008). As such, the thesis does not propose that the typology represents a ‘truth’ about the world, but, after Hacking (1999), rather that it is a convenient way of representing a highly complex, embedded set of phenomena.

Morris (2000) rightly critiqued the SMT approach for neglecting agency, and placing too great a weight on factors external to movements to explain their political and organisational character and outcomes. This, he argued, led to deterministic interpretations of movements, whose mobilisation and impact were primarily influenced by the strength of ruling elites and the associated political opportunity structure. Efforts to address this issue included focusing more on the shared meanings activists and supporters had about their circumstances via the application of framing analysis (McAdam et al., 1996). This highlights the importance of understanding the meanings that motivate action at the heart of the interpretivist approach. Valuable progress has been made in bridging structural and cultural assessments of social movements. For example, in an analysis of the relationship between repression and contention in the Palestinian Territories during the First Intifada, Alimi (2007) makes a strong case for the impact of the meaning given to the threats and opportunities available to activists, through a process he calls a ‘meaning-laden dialectic of opportunities and threats’. This study draws on some of these ideas, which proceeds by examining a range of data, incorporating wider political structures, alongside the
construction and interpretation of events and opportunities, to understand how particular outcomes are produced. The explanations it offers do not come in the form of universal laws, but rather from the mechanisms and processes that make up political contestation, which are in turn, informed by the meaning given to events by the actors.

Using SMT inevitably filters the knowledge base in a particular way. However, it is a particularly useful theoretical approach in that it combines high level contexts, such as political opportunity structures, alongside the agency that informs political contestation. In doing so, it not only makes it possible to ‘organise’ a highly complex situation, but facilitates multi-level analysis. Further, although MPOSAC is heavily dependent on statistics, the data which generates the typology is qualitative. As such, it incorporates the subjective view of the researcher, and applies a less deterministic (although still comparatively rigid) interpretation of the way in which groups mobilise and the political opportunities with which they were faced. The case studies complement this approach by focusing far more on the meaning given to events and the impact this has on outcomes. In this way, this thesis tries to balance consideration of the impact of wider structures, human agency and group mobilisation on political outcomes.

**Conclusion**

The foregoing has described a multi-method approach to investigating how terrorism ends. Along with the previous chapter, what emerges is a comprehensive, theoretically-grounded framework for understanding groups which use terrorism and a valid argument for the application of SMT to the study of such groups. By deconstructing the various elements of SMT in line with well-developed proposals for the study of resource mobilisation and political opportunities, the groundwork is laid for an empirically derived typology of militant groups. This provides the basis for an examination of their political and organisational outcomes, a critique of existing explanations, and an exploration of the causal mechanisms and processes that are implicated in such events.

Throughout, the aim is to combine theory with empirical analysis to produce more cogent explanations of terrorism’s outcomes. Hence, Tilly’s approach to
mechanisms and processes as explanatory tools is informed by Gross’ rereading of American pragmatist thought, and together help to interpret how groups try to achieve existing or emergent goals, conceived as problems the group are faced with. The various practical tools and theoretical constructs are drawn together, firstly to offer a methodological approach to help develop better explanations about how terrorism ends, and secondly, demonstrate their utility for developing the knowledge base. Most of these approaches are being applied to the question of terrorism’s outcomes for only the first or second time. As such, this thesis builds on the most contemporary work on typology development, SMT and its application to terrorism studies, American pragmatist thought, and terrorism’s outcomes, hoping to demonstrate the utility of a novel, multi-methodological approach to analysis.
Chapter 5: Typology of Militant Groups

Chapter 2 discussed the apparent disagreement between researchers in the field, over terrorism’s outcomes perhaps, a debate perhaps best exemplified by Pape (2003) and Abrahms (2006; 2012). Highlighting the importance of sample selection in comparative analysis, this was in part explained by the analysts’ choice of groups. For example, one of the most notable differences between their samples was the size of the groups. Abrahms’ selection included a number of relatively small organisations, whereas Pape examined some of the most sizeable groups to use terrorism: Hezbollah, LTTE, and Hamas. Given Jones and Libicki’s (2008) findings which suggest larger groups tend to be more successful, the difference in sample selection is likely to have influenced their divergent conclusions.

This seems to demonstrate that analysis needs to more systematically take account of important characteristics of groups and their operating environments. Work has begun on this agenda. Abrahms (2012) has offered the most comprehensive assessment to date, looking at the effects of 13 variables on policy outcomes, identifying target selection as the most discriminatory. However, assessing each variable independently still only offers a partial view of the impact of group and opponent characteristics on outcomes. This raises the challenge of identifying the most discriminatory features of groups and their environment, and understanding how they interact. Typology offers a way of responding to this challenge. By identifying the most important features of groups and their wider socio-political settings as defined by SMT, and analysing them using MPOSAC, arguably we are better placed to start to unpick the complex influences on group outcomes. What follows reviews the results of the analysis, presents the typology, and concludes with a discussion of how it informs the rest of the thesis. For ease of presentation and interpretation, some aspects of the methodology are discussed here alongside the results.

Multidimensional Partial Order Scalogram Analysis by Coordinates

The HUDAP (Hebrew University Data Analysis Package) software package was used to carry out the analysis, a programme designed specifically for this stable of techniques. Previous types of data used with this approach have included responses from individual people, but may also be social structures or geographical distances (Amar, 2005). In this case, they are based on content analysis of data on the groups, coded in line with a framework developed from SMT. As discussed, all mobilisation scores were coded in the same direction: high to low mobilisation. The input was therefore the array of variables (known as structs)
across the various groups, and is presented in Table 5.1. This displays each group’s scores across the resource mobilisation measures, their overall score, and frequency. The resulting group profiles are known as *structuples*. See Appendix E for full array of raw data, and Appendix F for an exemplar of the content analysis approach used in the study, which looks at one group (Abu Nidal Organisation), to illustrate how the qualitative data was used to derive a score for each of the resource mobilisation variables.

An advantage of MPOSAC is that it offers a visual representation of the data which is easier to interpret than a table such as that below. It does this in multi-dimensional space, which in this analysis is constrained to three dimensions, as this provided an interpretable array without the need to explore further dimensions. As the methodology section described in detail, the *structuples* for each group are ‘partially ordered’, such that one is higher than another if it is greater on at least one measure of mobilisation, but not lower on any other. These are displayed in a space of smallest dimensionality whilst preserving the partial order as far as possible. The output is presented in Figure 5.1 and shows a three dimensional *scalogram* of the solution (see Appendix G for original output).
Table 5.1. *Group structuples across nine resource mobilisation variables, overall score and frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>State support</th>
<th>Popular support</th>
<th>Group support</th>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Official wing</th>
<th>Develop network</th>
<th>Pre-existing fighters</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Member-ship</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>Abu Nidal Organisation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic Union of Kurdistan &amp; UNITA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattani United Liberation Organization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polisario Front</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Organisation 17 November</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary United Front</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Typology of Militant Groups

Figure 5.1. Three-dimensional scalogram of MPOSAC output.

Number of MPOSAC variables: 9
Number of read cases: 28
Proportion of profile-pairs correctly represented: .9355 (= 406/434)

Key to groups

1. Patriotic Union of Kurdistan & UNITA
2. United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia
3. Kurdish Democratic Party
4. Free Aceh Movement
5. Kosovo Liberation Army
6. Polisario Front
7. Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist
8. Revolutionary United Front
9. Abu Nidal Organisation
10. Pattani United Liberation Organisation
11. Bodo Liberation Tigers
12. Movement of the Revolutionary Left
13. AMAL
14. GIA
15. Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
16. Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
17. Mutahida Qami Movement
18. Kach
19. Aden Abyan Islamic Army
20. Japanese Red Army
21. Irish National Liberation Army
22. Committee for the Security of the Highways
23. Andres Castro United Front
24. God’s Army
25. Revolutionary Organisation November 17
26. Loyalist Volunteer Force
27. 1st October Antifascist Group

Note that numbers 1 and 29 do not represent groups; rather, they represent the ‘extreme profiles’ generated by the programme, as by definition, all other profiles are ordered between them. Here, they represent the highest possible structuple (43333334) and the lowest (11111111).
Interpreting the scalogram

To help interpret Figure 5.1, the discussion that follows will move through a series of steps to lay out the structural properties of the typology. First, the three most discriminate variables able to describe the groups’ arrangement in the figure are identified. This involves identifying those variables which correlate most strongly with the three axes. Moving on, the position of the groups in the context of these and the six other variables is considered. Finally, a number of external variables drawn from the political opportunity measures described in the framework of analysis are superimposed onto the array. Together, these various features help produce the typology, and demonstrate the benefits of laying out the groups’ variable combinations, and how the groups relate to one another. As Sabbagh, Cohen & Levy (2003) explain:

POSAC is capable of revealing a typology of response styles … because it focuses on the nature of relationships among groups of individual subjects rather than on relationships among variables (as in multidimensional scaling or factor analysis) or on magnitudes of isolated variables (e.g. degree of endorsement of equality or effort). (p.328).

In interpreting Figure 5.1, it is helpful to remember that each point represents a group, and that the position of the group is defined by its profile on a range of variables assessing their level of resource mobilisation. The closer together they appear, the more they have in common, and vice versa, whilst the highest possible score on all resource mobilisation variables is represented in the far right of the array, by the number 1, and the lowest in the bottom left, by the number 29, the line between these two points is the ‘joint direction of the partial order’ (Amar, 2005). All groups with comparable profiles are aligned in this direction. The objective is therefore to interpret the plot in a way which makes it possible to explain why particular groups cluster together, or fall further apart, based on their position relative to these two extremes of mobilisation.

Examining the inter-correlations between variables

The first task is to inspect the correlations between the scalogram and the various mobilisation items, represented in Table 5.2 below. This demonstrates that
several items correlate strongly with each of the axes: pre-existing fighters with axis 1; other group support with axis 2; and official wing with axis 3 (J represents the coefficients of the joint direction just described). These are therefore the most discriminating variables, and help to define the position of the groups. However, the table also demonstrates that a number of other variables correlate strongly with the axes. Hence, state support, territory, and membership correlate with Axis 1, develop networks with Axis 2, and popular support, and training with Axis 3. It appears therefore, that three primary factors help define the groups:

1. Resources: state support, territory, pre-existing fighters, membership.
2. External networks: other group support, develop networks.
3. Infrastructure: official wing, training, popular support.

Table 5.2. Coefficients of weak monotonicity between each observed item and the resource mobilisation measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>X1</th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>X3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State support</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular support</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other group support</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold territory</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official wing</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop networks</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-existing fighters</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The three most discriminant variables are underlined in bold, the other highly correlating variables are shown in bold only.

**Goodness of fit measures**

MPOSAC also gives a number of indices of goodness of fit, setting out how many of the profile pairs were correctly represented in the array (see Appendix G for these and an explanation of how they are calculated). In this analysis, the vast majority of pairs were correctly represented, with the proportion of correct pairs reported at .94 – a high coefficient (Sabbagh et al., 2003). That such noisy data are interpretable in this way suggests empirical support for the theory’s underlying structure. Given the relatively imprecise measures of what are assumed to be
underlying constructs, and that the data is likely to include error, it is striking that three clear discriminatory constructs emerge.

**Interpreting the typology**

The partitions represented by the three most discriminate variables are an important vehicle for developing the typology, guiding us to interpret the plot in line with the scores the groups were allocated on these measures. Indeed, other analyses using this approach have relied solely on the most discriminating features to develop a typology (e.g. Cohen, 2006). However, it is important to bear in mind that this approach does not just express the relationship between three items, rather, it displays the relationship amongst all of the variables. This means the other six variables should be taken into account. To do this, it is necessary to combine interpretation of the way the groups align in Figure 5.1 alongside the data in Table 5.1, and the item diagrams\(^7\) of each of the variables.

To break the analysis down a little further, it is helpful to examine the factors which define the primary axes (resources, infrastructure, networks), in two dimensions. Doing this makes it possible to observe how the groups’ scores on these variables partition the array, therefore Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate the ‘front’ and ‘back’ sections of the three-dimensional figure. They portray Figure 5.1 as though it has been bisected in a vertical line parallel to Axis 3. Each of the types identified by numbers 1-8, therefore corresponds to low or high scores on the three sets of variables. These were identified by iteratively examining the plot in Figure 5.1 and the specific item diagrams of each variable.

Hence, Figure 5.2 illustrates Axis 1 (resources) vs. Axis 3 (infrastructure) at the ‘front’ of the cube in Figure 5.1 – the area representing limited levels of network development. Figure 5.3 represents the same axes, taken from the rear of the three-dimensional array, representing more substantial levels of network development. In total, eight ‘types’ are specified which are discussed more fully in the next section when the external, political opportunity variables are superimposed onto these plots.

\(\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{7} These are charts which display the individual scores on each of the variables, whilst maintaining the individual group’s position in the array as that portrayed in the final solution. Examining these enables us to observe how the space is partitioned by each individual score on specific variables. See Appendix H for the item diagrams.}\)
Figure 5.2. Two-dimensional configuration of the MPOSAC output showing types 1-4: Axis 1 (resources) vs. Axis 3 (infrastructure); limited network.

Key to groups

2 Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) & UNITA
3 United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Self Defence)
4 Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)
5 Free Aceh Movement (GAM)
6 Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)
7 Polisario Front
8 Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (Communist)
9 Revolutionary United Front (RUF)
10 Abu Nidal Organisation (ANO)
11 Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO)
12 Bodo Liberation Tigers (Bodo)
13 Movement of the Revolutionary Left (Rev Left)
14 AMAL
15 Groupe Islamique Armee (GIA)
16 Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Jammu)
17 Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Tupac)
18 Mutahida Qami Movement (Mutahida)
19 Kach
20 Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)
21 Japanese Red Army (JRA)
22 Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)
23 Committee for the Security of the Highways (Committee)
24 Andres Castro United Front (FUAC)
25 God’s Army (God’s)
26 Revolutionary Organisation November 17 (N17)
27 Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)
28 1st October Antifascist Group (1 Oct)
When interpreting these figures, and the item diagrams that make them up, it is important to note that a perfect set of regions containing a single score is relatively uncommon, and moderate deviations are acceptable (Lipshitz, 1986). In a comparable study looking at the nature of criminal networks, Canter (2004) employed a similar process, examining the item diagrams to identify a number of broad types of network. As in this study, Canter’s research also found some groups did not represent ‘perfect scores’. Hence, the position of the groups in these two figures demonstrates the best fit, but inevitably contains some variation, observable by inspecting Table 5.1.

In describing the outcome of the MPOSAC analysis, we have seen that the most discriminating features of the groups (resources, infrastructure and networks)
define the three axes of the three-dimensional figure. Based on their scores on these measures, each group was positioned in the array; the more similar the groups are to one another, the closer together they appear and vice versa. Partitioning the axes to denote high and low scores on these variables produces eight ‘types’ of group. This represents our typology based on the resource mobilisation measures, it now remains to impose our external political opportunity measures.

**Political opportunity external variables**

The political opportunity variables are drawn from measures of the level of political stability and political rights/civil liberties\(^8\) operating in a group’s home country. In superimposing these measures onto the typology it is possible to examine whether there is any relationship between the mobilisation profiles the groups exhibit, and the political opportunity structure they are operating within. To illustrate these as simply as possible, each of the types in Figures 5.4 and 5.5 are set out with measures of political stability and civil liberties represented by different colours. Groups in red illustrate low/low-mid political rights and stability, whilst those in blue denote high/mid-high levels, with orange in the middle.

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\(^8\) The relationship between political rights and civil liberty measures was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables \((r=.926, n=28, p<.000)\). As such, the two measures were summed and combined to create one measure for ease of interpretation.
Figure 5.4. Levels of political rights/civil liberties: Types 1-4.
Note: Red denotes low/mid levels of political stability and low/mid levels of civil liberties. Orange denotes mid levels of political stability and civil liberties. Blue denotes high/mid levels of political stability and high levels of civil liberties.

Figure 5.4 illustrates that this sample includes only one group with limited networks and resources, but substantial infrastructure, with Muttahida Qami located in type 1. In type 2, is a cluster of groups which illustrate external networks of relatively limited scope, high levels of infrastructure and resources, whilst operating in an environment characterised by generally low levels of civil liberties and political stability. Type 3 contains three groups with similarly limited external networks, and low levels of infrastructure, although more substantial resources, notably experienced cadre and some territorial control. In common with type 2, these groups are generally based in areas of low political stability and civil liberties. Type 4 includes groups with the lowest level of all three of our main resource mobilisation measures. Interestingly, the political context these groups operated in was characterised by higher levels of
political freedom and civil liberties, in marked contrast to the other types portrayed in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.5. Levels of political rights/civil liberties: Types 5-8.
Note: Red denotes low/mid levels of political stability and low/mid levels of civil liberties. Orange denotes mid levels of political stability and civil liberties. Blue denotes high/mid levels of political stability and high levels of civil liberties.

Turning to the types depicted in Figure 5.5 these are characterised by well-developed external networks, generally offering practical or logistical support, as well as gaining support from other militant groups. Beyond this main feature, these four types are delineated by the extent of their infrastructure and resources. Hence, type 5 includes groups demonstrating comparatively low levels of resources, but more substantial infrastructure, in particular, in the shape of an official wing, and generally good levels of popular support. With respect to their political operating environment, they are drawn from countries characterised by mid or mid-high levels of political stability and civil liberties.
Type 6 demonstrates low/mid-levels of political stability and civil liberties. This type also represents the most highly mobilised of all the groups in the sample, demonstrating substantial infrastructure in the form of territory, and membership often into the tens of thousands. They are also often in receipt of state support, as well as demonstrating official representation and generally high levels of public support. The RUF is an exception to this last measure, a fact which helps explain why it is somewhat removed from the other groups in this type. Type 7 on the other hand, has lower levels of infrastructure and mid-high levels of resources, in particular in the shape of cadre with previous fighting experience. These groups are also characterised by a political context with largely low levels of political stability and civil liberties. Finally, type 8 demonstrates low levels of infrastructure and resources, but similar to type 4 in Figure 5.4, are based in countries with generally high levels of political stability and rights.

Not all of the clusters demonstrate uniform levels of political rights and political stability, nor would we necessarily expect them to, given the range of countries and contexts included in the sample. However, it is possible to discern some general trends. Using the three-dimensional scalogram, looking at axis 1 vs. axis 3, it becomes clear that the majority of groups in the right of the plot (denoting greater levels of resources: types 2, 3, 6 and 7) are located in countries with generally low levels of political stability and similarly low levels of civil liberties. Whereas, those in the bottom left quadrant of the scalogram (marking groups with low levels of infrastructure and resources: types 4 and 8) are based in contexts marked by high levels of political stability and rights. The top left quadrant is the least uniform of the regions, showing no strong pattern with respect to political context.

In summary, the foregoing analysis has established that the three axes representing the three clusters of resource mobilisation measures helpfully determine the position of the groups in the array. The typology not only sets out this information in a more interpretable manner than for example a table such as Table 5.1, it also illustrates how these variables relate to one another. More than this, the typology reveals an interesting relationship between levels of resource mobilisation and political opportunity structure. This seems to suggest a relationship between the scale and scope of groups and their operating environment – a finding that would be worth
pursuing further. Indeed, the typology invites us to consider a range of research questions, and there is much that could be done with the framework as it stands. However, the focus here is on how it can help to interpret how and why groups end and what they achieve, it is to these questions attention now turns.

**Typology**

The findings set out so far contribute to our understanding in a number of different ways. First, for those interested in the organisational make-up of militant groups, developing the typology has demonstrated empirically that three main constructs inform group structure. Second, the different types informed by these organisational characteristics seem to be related to the type of political system the groups are operating within. Third, this analysis has illustrated the utility of a novel approach to identifying regularities in complex data that is virtually unique to this method of analysis. Moreover, it is the first attempt at using such a technique to examine militant groups, and offers a way forward to further analysis.

Because results are based on the analysis of a range of important variables in relation to one another, rather than correlating individual variables, MPOSAC has made it possible to identify the most discriminate features of the groups, and superimpose further external variables to generate the typology (Amar & Cohen, 2008). This helps to identify the ‘conceptual constructs’ that underpin the phenomenon of interest. A final advantage of this approach is that it takes into account both the group, and the political context within which it was operating. Not only does this invite us to consider what impact this may have on group outcomes, it also serves as a reminder to consider the presence of wider conflict. Before exploring this observation in more detail, the typology is described in light of the literature discussed in previous chapters.

Firstly, considering Elman’s (2005) outline of types of typology differentiated by whether they describe, classify or offer explanations about a case, this typology is closest to the first type. Given the complexity inherent in the data, it would be unwise to specify hypotheses regarding outcomes based on a group’s particular ‘type’, as determined by the mobilisation and political opportunity values. Indeed, empirical work in SMT to date seems to confirm that these measures are not indicative of
specific outcomes (see Amenta et al., 2010). Hence, the effort here is focused on identifying mechanisms and processes, and setting these in the context of the constructs identified through the typology to examine particular outcomes.

Other characteristics of the typology are its relatively low level of abstraction. Although these measures are some way from the individual lived experience of group members, they are not as far removed as broader concepts such as levels of poverty, which are sometimes applied to assessing terrorism’s causes and effects. Further, it is possible to relate them to perceptual experience. We can recognise different sized groups and their attendant levels of mobilisation and support and may be able to heuristically imagine where we would place particular groups along these three axes. It also perhaps facilitates a more objective approach to analysing groups from different countries and with different ideologies. By avoiding classification along ideological lines, attention is more clearly directed towards what is doing the work in terms of causal mechanisms, and helps avoid attributing outcomes to essentialist notions, relating to often highly politicised and sometimes poorly understood ideologies.

**Placing terrorism in context**

Beyond these descriptive accounts, a helpful way of interpreting the typology is by considering the scope of political conflict with which the groups were involved. The Correlates of War (COW) dataset provides a helpful starting point for exploring this further. By examining the COW data on intra-state war, it is possible to identify a relatively robust relationship between the presence of civil war and a number of the types identified in the typology; these are illustrated in Figures 5.6 and 5.7. Those groups picked out in red were directly involved in intra-state war; as the figures demonstrate, this includes all of those groups in sections 2 and 6 of the typology. With one exception, there is similar consistency in types 4 and 8, which all operated in contexts largely free of wider political conflict. To capture the presence of conflict that fell between these two extremes, those groups marked in orange are best characterised as being involved in ‘low intensity conflict’, defined as:

\[\text{P}olitical\text{-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional wars and above the routine, peaceful competition among states.}\]
principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. (United States Army, 1990, p.1)

Although this is a relatively broad term, and whilst there are substantial divergences over how best to conceptualise this type of conflict in the literature, the notion of low intensity conflict does seem to adequately represent those conflicts with which all but two groups in sections 1, 3, 5 and 7 were involved.

![Figure 5.6. Presence of wider political conflict: Types 1-4. Note: Red denotes groups involved in civil war, orange denotes groups associated with low intensity conflict, blue denotes groups operating in 'peacetime' conditions.](image)

Interestingly, Stepanova (2008) has set out a functional typology of terrorism, which echoes some of these findings. She delineated the scale of a group’s goals and the degree to which terrorism is related to a wider armed conflict, setting out three types of terrorism: 1) the ‘classic’ terrorism of peacetime, which, regardless of the group’s goals, stands apart from wider conflict; 2) ‘conflict-related terrorism’, where terrorism is used along with other violent tactics as part of a broader asymmetrical or regional conflict, for example in Kashmir or Palestine; and 3) ‘superterrorism’ – global terrorism with existential, unlimited goals and motivations, epitomised by al-Qaeda.

Two of these three aspects are present in this study’s typology. The first ‘classic’ terrorism of peacetime clearly relates to the bottom left section of the framework, where a number of left-wing groups using terrorism aside from any wider armed confrontation are situated, alongside smaller groups involved with the Northern
Ireland conflict. The top right section of the typology tallies with Stepanova’s conflict-related terrorism, as most of these took place in the context of a wider conflict, be that the fight for an independent Kurdistan; the wars in Angola and Sierra Leone; the conflict in Kosovo; or the insurgency in Nepal. However, there are no groups which exclusively represent ‘superterrorism’. As al-Qaeda and its affiliates were not included in the analysis which generated the typology, this conceptualisation neglects al-Qaeda’s particular organisational form, context and strategy. However, given that MPOSAC is designed to identify particular aspects of the entire ‘content universe’ of possible observations, it is possible to widen the scope of investigation to include these groups at a later date.

Beyond these two categories of peacetime and conflict-related terrorism, the bottom right and top left aspects of the typology mainly depict groups which have used terrorism in the context of national liberation struggles and ethnic conflict. Here, low intensity conflicts associated with the disputes in Kashmir, Israel-Palestine, and a range of ethnic, religious and left-wing inspired confrontations in India, Pakistan, Thailand, Burma, Yemen and Nicaragua are represented. The typology therefore sets the use of terrorism firmly in the context of other forms of political violence and contestation. Identifying how terrorism relates to its historical and socio-political context in this way helps avoid the path to exceptionalism the study of terrorism has sometimes been accused of (Jackson, 2009). Instead, the typology cements terrorism as a tactic used in all types of conflict, from civil wars, liberation movements and smaller-scale causes. Not a new idea, but certainly a benefit of this approach.

The continuum of mobilisation represented in the typology allows for dynamic changes in violent mobilisation and levels of support. Clearly not uni-directional, this puts terrorism in a spectrum of violent actors from small, clandestine groups, to large-scale insurgencies. After Bjørgo, the typology supports the idea that “there is not one ‘terrorism’ but several ‘terrorisms’. [Hence] there are different types of terrorism with highly disparate foundations” (2005, p.2). Further, in this sample different levels of mobilisation appear in particular political contexts at different rates. Hence, in states with low levels of political freedom and stability, terrorism is more often found alongside other forms of political violence in the context of wider conflict, enacted by larger groups, often more akin to guerrilla armies. Whereas in politically free settings,
smaller groups use terrorism against the state in settings best characterised as peacetime (although the INLA would probably have rejected this designation).

**Typology as a foundation for explaining how terrorism ends**

The typology offers some clarity on a number of further issues with which the literature has engaged. Firstly, by setting groups in a spectrum of political contexts, which appear to be related to the form and scope of political violence, it further clarifies why there might be differing assessments of success. For example, by looking at the correlations in Table 5.2 and the item diagrams, generally, as levels of mobilisation increase, so do levels of popular support. This is perhaps not unexpected, as groups gain support, they are likely to be able to engage in more official activities and bolster their organisational and violent resources, which in turn is likely to give them greater reach and influence over the population. These trends suggest that comparing groups with significantly different levels of mobilisation – from November 17, which perhaps had no more than 25 members at its peak, to the GIA, which numbered in the thousands – is unlikely to yield analytically helpful conclusions about the efficacy of terrorism. Differences such as these underline the fact that there are simply too many other factors to bear in mind drawing the conclusions Abrahms and others have tried to establish on the basis of a limited number of variables.

Further, by demonstrating the wide variety of contexts in which terrorism is used, the typology points to the different reasons it is likely to be employed. For example, terrorism may be less frequently used to communicate a political agenda in a country where the state controls the media, and where communication technologies are comparatively limited, for example in North Korea. In these settings, terrorism may be better understood as a policy of coercion directed towards a more localised population or particular aspect of the state apparatus. These are all questions the typology raises, which invite us to further explore the implications and potential reasons why groups appear in the different regions of the framework. Furthermore, the typology draws attention to the varying measures of success that are relevant in different contexts.

Considering some conceptual issues, the typology helps explain why there are so many divergent definitions of terrorism. Given the multiplicity of contexts in which it manifests, it is not surprising that there are still debates over the appropriate
components of a definition. Also, taking into account the varying organisational forms represented in these types, this analysis suggests we need to be more critical of the notion of ‘groups’ and their effects on terrorism – an argument which is beginning to be explored in the field (Taylor, 2011). Some of the organisations considered in this analysis are closer to guerrilla armies, others only small cells, whilst others are often far more loosely connected, or represent umbrella organisations of groups or individuals with shared interests. This serves as a reminder that the stereotype of the ‘terrorist group’ is perhaps as much a product of wider discourses as it is a feature of reality.

As such, it is important to remain mindful that the typology is building on existing, Western databases, which have effectively compartmentalised one particular tactic used in a huge range of settings, by diverse actors, and reflected that concept back on to the groups to act as a defining marker. Using these databases is something of a necessary evil in comparative work. However, by exploring the characteristics of the groups and their political settings, the typology draws out some of the complexity in understanding not only what terrorism achieves, but also how best to interpret and understand those who use it. It also offers an opportunity to reflect more critically on how we categorise militant actors.

Looking at the typology through the theoretical lens set out by Neil Gross (2009), certain points stand out. Firstly, the theory directs attention to understanding how mechanisms, understood as configurations of actor-problem-response relations, are likely to play out differently in varying political settings. Importantly, this relates not only to the actual political opportunity structure, for example, levels of democratic representation, but also in terms of the way the cultural and social setting informs the actors’ response to the problem as they perceive it. Problem situations are culturally and socially informed – the goals, identities, and motives of actors embedded within them interact with the wider setting. Hence, not only does socio-political context provide a set of practical constraints and opportunities, it also offers a culturally bounded set of meanings which limit and support particular responses to problems.
Conclusion

So far, this thesis has achieved a number of things. First, it has illustrated the utility of SMT as a way of organising qualitative data in a way that makes it suitable for quantitative analysis. Second, it has demonstrated a novel way of developing typologies using MPOSAC; that some useful and interesting regularities have been identified in such noisy data is testament to its ability to disentangle complex phenomena. Further, the typology’s ability to incorporate questions of organisational structure, political context and levels of wider conflict, speaks to its capacity to parsimoniously describe a range of different types of groups.

We now have a typology defined by three clusters of variables relating to different aspects of resource mobilisation. They also demonstrate an interesting relationship to levels of civil liberties and political stability, with groups characterised by high levels of resource mobilisation generally found in contexts of low political rights and stability. There was also a comparable relationship to the presence of wider conflict. How then, might this aid interpretation of how and why groups end? Firstly, describing the typology in light of the literature of asymmetric conflict is useful, as it sets the groups’ violence in their socio-political context. This serves as a reminder that there are many reasons why groups might relinquish violence, influenced by factors across micro, meso and macro levels of analysis, not least of which is whether it is operating in the midst of a civil war, or low intensity conflict. The typology underlines that in order to understand outcomes, it is important to begin with an appreciation of the setting within which terrorism is used.

Further, interpreting the typology in this way suggests reasons why there have been such differing conclusions about the efficacy of terrorism. Comparing very different groups without taking into account their levels of mobilisation, leaves analysts comparing guerrilla armies with very small, clandestine groups. This puts too great a weight on group selection, and arguably does not offer much analytical clarity over what terrorism actually achieves. By putting terrorism firmly in its organisational and political context, and looking at it through the lens of Gross’ rereading of pragmatist thought, it becomes possible to expand our understanding of the role of the socio-political context. Specifically, that it acts, not only as a practical limiting or enabling environment, making up the problem space a group wishing to promote
political change faces, but also that it informs how they develop and respond to their
goals, and how they understand their opponent’s, and their own actions within a
culturally mediated web of meanings.

Moreover, the typology provides a basis for comparative analysis, because it
makes it possible to parsimoniously identify those features groups have in common,
and on which they differ. Finally, using the typology invites us to consider which
features of groups to focus on when setting out to explain why terrorism ends. To
some extent, the opportunities for opponents to degrade violent groups are determined
by the organisational form and political context within which it is operating. For
example, groups with mid-levels of infrastructure, but high levels of network
development may be degraded by attacks on a group’s official wing, or its training
facilities, but are unlikely to be destroyed if they can rely on the support of other
groups via substantial external networks. Similarly, attacking such external networks
is unlikely to be effective if the group has substantial resources, such as state support.

Many of these points have been made in the literature before, however,
comparatively few of these conclusions have been built on a carefully wrought,
empirical foundation which, step by step, has aimed to aggregate the knowledge
available into an intelligible framework. So far this thesis has reviewed debates over
whether terrorism is politically effective and conceptual confusion over how to
incorporate terrorism into wider accounts of political violence. Further, it has set out
the charge that analysis of terrorism frequently fails to take account of the socio-
political context in which violence takes place, can neglect the advantages of theory,
and sometimes unnecessarily ignores relevant levels of analysis. Such differences in
the literature point to the difficulty and complexity of researching terrorism, but also
highlight the need for conceptual clarity and careful analysis. Hopefully the foregoing
has offered a robust starting point from which to continue this exploration of the
political and organisational outcomes of terrorism. We are now in a position to take
these insights forward. Firstly, using the typology as a framework for assessing
existing efforts to explain how and why terrorism ends, and secondly, establish the
typology as the backdrop against which an alternative set of explanatory principles
can be applied to understanding terrorism’s political and organisational outcomes. It
is to these efforts we turn in the next chapter.
Chapter 6: Explaining Terrorism’s Outcomes

In this chapter the two main areas of the study are brought together: the outcomes of violent political contestation, and the typology laid out in the previous chapter. In doing so, existing approaches to understanding how terrorism ends and what it achieves are reviewed and applied to the 28 groups examined in this thesis. This analysis provides the springboard for a discussion of work to date on how terrorism’s outcomes have been conceptualised and assessed. Generally taking policy goals as the main measure, the literature encompasses three broad approaches to explaining outcomes. The first consists of large-scale studies, which helpfully map the terrain of outcomes, but offer little detail on the causal mechanisms implicated in how and why terrorism ends. The second offer mono-causal explanations which seem unable to accommodate the multiplicity of factors impacting terrorism’s outcomes, whilst the third seeks to explain in detail how individual groups declined, offering little in the way of comparative insights. After discussing the challenges these explanations face, and assessing the suitability of policy outcomes as a measure, a different approach to understanding outcomes is set out.

What follows proposes that better reasons, both for why terrorism is used, and for its effects, are likely to be uncovered by looking at how terrorism impacts relations between people, through the action of specific mechanisms and processes. The typology presented in the previous chapter provides the starting point. It encapsulates the most discriminative organisational and background features, likely to affect the way particular mechanisms and processes operate. These, combined with an understanding of the particular problems groups try to resolve through violent political contestation, provide the framework for the more detailed examination of Kach and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army set out in the following two chapters.

Assessing the Outcomes of Violent Political Contestation

Before assessing the explanatory value of the various approaches found in the literature, it is helpful to first set out the phenomenon they seek to address. That is, to consider the outcomes identified as important in the literature and hold the groups examined in this study against them. Rather than impose an entirely new framework for measuring outcomes, the primary measures used in the major studies in the field are used (Abrahms, 2006, 2012; Cronin, 2009; Jones & Libicki, 2008; Weinberg,
Although all of these studies recognise the challenges inherent in understanding success, they nevertheless focus on a number of core outcomes. Foremost among these, and the measure used by all of the studies in identifying ‘success’ or ‘victory’, is achieving policy goals. A second common feature is organisational outcome: how the group ended or transformed itself. Based on a content analysis of the literature on the groups (see Appendix C for a full bibliography of sources on which analysis was based), the primary policy goals and organisational outcomes of the groups were identified. Table 6.1 sets out the results, specifying policy change outcomes as total, partial, or no success, and a range of causes for the group’s demise, or shift away from violence.

**Organisational outcomes**

Looking first at group outcomes, using the same measures as Weinberg (2012) and Jones & Libicki (2008),⁹ there are some obvious similarities between the studies. Of the groups examined in this study, 32% (9) transitioned to politics or other forms of mobilisation, compared with 43% of both Weinberg, and Jones and Libicki’s groups. Other than the 10% that achieved ‘victory’, the remainder of groups in these two comparative studies are classified as having failed, either through organisational decline (an outcome Weinberg finds little evidence of), policing, or military force. This explains 61% (17) of this thesis’ sample, and 47% of both Weinberg’s and Jones and Libicki’s. Two groups (7%) in the current selection achieved some, but by no means complete, success and demobilised.

Summarising previous work exploring outcomes, McCauley (2011) delineates between internal factors impacting groups, for example, its leaders, membership and organisation, and external factors, for example, military offensives against the group. Even though, as Weinberg (2012) helpfully emphasises, analysts are generally looking for central tendencies rather than single factors, there are significant challenges identifying what caused a particular outcome. Often a range of issues combine to produce a particular result, and there is generally an interaction between internal and external factors, which belies a straightforward dichotomy.

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⁹ Cronin’s are not considered here as her coding framework only assessed relative achievement of strategic (policy) goals; engagement in negotiations; and lifespan. Similarly, Abrahms (2006; 2012) only looked at policy outcomes.
Incorporating all of the categories used in the major studies in the field to date, these can be broken down to look at more specific causes. The following definitions therefore set out the reasons groups end, separating ‘victory’, from a range of reasons for organisational outcomes short of success.

- **Transition to other forms of contestation**: groups adopt, or focus exclusively on non-violent forms of political contestation;
- **Transition to mainstream politics**: sees groups recast as political parties, or focusing exclusively on political means to achieve their goals;
- **Peace deal and demobilisation**: peace deal agreed between protagonists, accompanied by the demobilisation of armed factions;
- **Leaders killed/arrested**: primary leaders killed or arrested by security forces;
- **Military/police intervention**: cadre are arrested, killed, or forced into permanent decline by opposing state forces, police or security services; and
- **Organisational decline**: factionalisation and split; purging or loss of cadre through desertion; shift away from political aims towards banditry or crime; loss of state, constituent, or ideological support; degradation by competing militant groups.

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10 The specific reasons the different analyses list are: Cronin (2009): decapitation; negotiated settlement; transition to politics; success; ‘failure’; repression/defeat; and reorientation to another form of contestation; Weinberg (2012), and Jones and Libicki (2008), assessed whether the group was defeated by the police, or military force; moved into politics or achieved policy-defined victory. Abrahms (2006; 2012) focused on policy achievement, coding for success, partial success or failure.
Table 6.1. Group outcomes and group policy aims and outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Organisational outcome</th>
<th>Policy goal</th>
<th>Policy outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abu Nidal</td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>Destroy Israel, establish Palestinian state</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA)</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Overthrow government &amp; establish Islamic state under Sharia law</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader killed</td>
<td>Remove Western interests from Yemen</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal</td>
<td>Committed to politics</td>
<td>Increase influence of Shi’ite population</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andres Castro United Front (FUAC)</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Improved rights &amp; social conditions for ex-soldiers</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders killed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Islamic Group</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Overthrow government &amp; establish Islamic state under Sharia law</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodo Liberation Tigers</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Separate state of Bodoland</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee for Security of the Highways</td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>Protect Jews moving about the West Bank</td>
<td>No success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Overthrow the monarchy &amp; establish Marxist republic</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders moved into politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First October Antifascist Group</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Overthrow government &amp; establish Marxist-Leninist state</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Free Aceh Movement GAM)</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Abolish Spanish cooperation with NATO &amp; US</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Committed to politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>God’s Army</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Independent Karen state (unclear)</td>
<td>No success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)</td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>End British rule &amp; unite Ireland under Marxist-Leninist state</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front</td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>Independent state of Kashmir</td>
<td>No success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kach</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Restore Biblical land of Israel under religious rule</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>Expel Palestinians</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Independent/autonomous Kosovo</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders moved into politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)</td>
<td>Committed to politics</td>
<td>Independent/autonomous Kurdistan</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)</td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>Maintain British rule in Northern Ireland, against the peace process</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace deal and demobilisation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement of the Revolutionary Left</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Overthrow Chilean government &amp; establish Marxist state</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muttahida Qami Movement</td>
<td>Committed to politics</td>
<td>Provincial autonomy</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)</td>
<td>Committed to politics</td>
<td>Independent/autonomous Kurdistan</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO)</td>
<td>Organisational decline</td>
<td>Independent state in Malay-Muslim region</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polisario Front</td>
<td>Ceasefire in operation (since 1991)</td>
<td>Independent state in Western Sahara</td>
<td>Partial success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Organisation 17 November (N17)</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Overthrow government &amp; establish leftist government</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary United Front (RUF)</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Sever Greek-US relations</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA)</td>
<td>Military/police operations</td>
<td>Overthrow Peruvian government &amp; establish Marxist state</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia</td>
<td>Peace deal &amp; demobilisation</td>
<td>Remove US and Japanese presence</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)</td>
<td>Leader killed</td>
<td>End to Portuguese rule, then removal of Marxist government</td>
<td>No success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even using these more nuanced (but still admittedly broad) categories, it was not straightforward to assign the groups in this sample to one exclusive category. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, of the 28 groups, 18 were seriously impacted by two major factors. The most common single factor was military/police intervention and organisational decline (6), followed by a transition to politics (5), a move to politics combined with a peace deal and demobilisation (4), or a peace deal and death of leadership (4). Further reasons include military/police action (3), organisational decline alone (2), military/police action and leadership killed (2), and a peace deal and demobilisation alongside organisational decline (2). Even this only slightly more sophisticated approach offers a little more insight, for example, suggesting that it is important to consider both what happens to the leaders, and separately, what becomes of their fighters. Ten of the groups saw leaders and cadre take different routes away from violence, with the leaders killed or moving into politics, and the rest of the organisation demobilising or being disrupted by security forces. However, this slight gain in analytical clarity still neglects a host of other factors which influenced individual group outcomes, and almost entirely overlooks interactions between these various factors. These issues are considered in more detail a little later, for now, it is enough to note that at this level of analysis, this study’s sample confirms the current picture of the organisational outcomes of violent groups: the majority move into politics, or are disrupted through policing, military intervention, and only a very small number achieve some of their aims and either disband or transition to politics.
Figure 6.1. Group outcomes delineated by transition, external or internal factors.
Policy outcomes

In assessing policy outcomes this study follows Abrahms’ approach (2006) of coding for total, partial or no success of each major policy rather than taking the group as the unit of analysis. In line with most empirical work on terrorism’s effectiveness, this analysis suggests the bulk of policy aims go unfulfilled. As Table 6.1 illustrates, of 34 policy goals, 24 were not realised, with one policy aim successfully achieved, and nine partially attained. This is somewhat higher than Abrahms’ (2006) results. Here, 29% (10) of aims are partially or wholly achieved as against 17% of Abrahms’ policy measures. It is also more than Cronin’s (2009) analysis, which identified 13% of groups achieving partial, limited or complete success, whilst Weinberg (2012), and Jones and Libicki (2008) both found 10% had achieved victory. This higher level of success is likely to be due to firstly, lowering the level of measurement from groups to policy goals, and secondly because this study deselected groups which were still active. All of the other analyses used a sample which included a comparatively large number of groups still engaged in violent political contestation. By choosing groups which have ceased violence, for whatever reason, they have been afforded a greater timeframe by which to achieve at least some of their goals, and clarity over their final outcome.

Further evidence for this explanation is suggested by Abrahms’ (2012) most recent analysis. This sample took campaigns rather than policy outcomes or organisations as a measure, and examined groups currently and historically classified as Foreign Terrorist Organisations by the American government. In doing so he found that 30% (38) of a sample of 125 campaigns, carried out by 54 groups, achieved some success. It is not appropriate to directly compare this study and Abrahms’ (2012) analysis as they apply different measures of outcome. However, the parity in results suggests, perhaps unsurprisingly, that by lowering the measure for success and including groups which have ceased violence, higher achievement rates are recorded.

To complete the review of the organisational and policy outcomes of this sample of militant groups, one measure is held against the other. Figure 6.2 demonstrates that groups that move into mainstream politics are more successful at achieving some of their policy aims. This is perhaps not surprising as it might be anticipated that groups may move away from violence but not relinquish their
political ambitions, particularly where their goals are associated with achieving political power. Although, there are some in this sample which attained political representation and were closer to achieving their goals, but moved away from the political process and committed to further violence. For example, the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* were given the opportunity to engage in the political mainstream in Chile, but rejected this and renewed their violence.

Figure 6.2. Group versus policy outcome.

Such examples demonstrate an apparent anomaly – one of a number which emerged through the content analysis – which questions the primary assumption underpinning the use of policy attainment as a way of understanding outcomes. That is, its instrumental, strategic nature as a tool of the weak to achieve explicit political goals. Some of the challenges to this position have already been set out in chapter 2. However, in looking more closely at a smaller sample of groups, it invites us to further consider whether policy outcomes might not be the best way of interpreting how and why terrorism ends and what it achieves.

A number of issues with the measures currently used to understand terrorism’s outcomes demand appraising. Abrahms (2006) argues when putting the case for using
a policy change measure, that they represent a “stable and reliable indicator of their actual intentions” (p.47). However, it is not difficult to think of groups which have significantly changed their goals over the course of a campaign. For example, Thomas Hegghammer (2009a) has observed that jihadist groups have undergone a process of ideological hybridisation which has significantly changed the extent to which the various currents focus on the ‘near’ or ‘far’ enemy. Indeed, only two years after championing policy change as an ideal measure of outcome, Abrahms (2008) published another article which characterised the protean and shifting nature of violent group goals as one of the fundamental puzzles of terrorism research, arguing: “[s]ome of the most important terrorist organizations in modern history have pursued policy goals that are not only unstable but also contradictory” (p.88). If this is the case, and it seems likely that it applies to at least some militant groups, then using policy outcomes as a measure is missing something more fundamental about what those using terrorism seek to achieve.

A further important issue, which encourages us to think again about how to conceptualise outcomes, is the potentially fluid nature of perceptions of success and failure. Rather than fixed, static notions, progress and regress are perhaps best understood as dynamic concepts. Shifts in leader attitudes (or leader), changes in aims and aspirations, or changes of government can all alter perceptions of success and failure. What was once an unassailable goal may become a matter for debate or compromise. A static rendering of outcomes neglects these issues. Furthermore, the agenda-setting nature of terrorism, which attracts attention and forces the government to confront the group’s aims, may be a necessary precursor for political engagement. The notion of the ‘vanguard’ which makes real political change possible is relatively well established in the terrorism literature, however, this insight has not yet been applied to discussion of terrorism’s outcomes. It suggests that we should perhaps be looking at the extent of political representation, or longer-term outcome measures. However again, there are problems trying to apply single measures to a varied collection of actors. Whilst this may be useful in assessing some cases, it is not appropriate for those who are more interested in encouraging popular revolt than gaining official political representation, such as the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru. It seems that by solely using policy goals to assess success and failure,
efforts to develop cogent explanations as to why terrorism ends and what it achieves are jeopardised.

Where then should we look for a way of understanding outcomes? One answer is to consider the implications of the relational approach which underpins this thesis a little further. The fundamental premise of relational accounts of political violence suggests attention should focus on how terrorism changes relations between people, for example, by redefining identity boundaries, or polarising the distance between political actors. Taking this as a starting point for understanding outcomes suggests we should look to how groups provoke changes in relations between or amongst people, in ways that help respond to the particular problems the group is concerned with. Again, to reiterate the other theoretical approach this study relies on, the focus on problems is drawn from Gross’ (2009; 2010) reading of pragmatist thought which suggests people are problem solvers, responding to culturally and socially informed goals, by employing a mix of creativity and habit.

The relational approach seems to offer a number of advantages. Firstly, it opens up a broader range of impacts, beyond somewhat simplistic policy or organisational measures. However importantly, it does not entirely reject them, such goals are of course relevant, and can be subsumed within relational accounts by de-privileging them and setting them alongside other forms of outcome. Moreover, using relational outcomes invites us to consider unintended and counter-productive outcomes more systematically. Taking relations between people, rather than concepts such as success/defeat as the primary measure establishes greater parity between outcomes for which the group should take primary responsibility, and those more properly attributed to state-led efforts (although there is almost always an important interaction between these). A further advantage is that by adopting a finer-grained lens, it captures important outcomes that fall short of outright victory/failure.

This approach also suggests a response to some of the ‘puzzles’ Abrahms (2008) sets out in the literature on terrorism, for example, failing to take responsibility for attacks. Described as a puzzle because forcing change demands the audience(s) knows by whom, and to what end an attack was carried out, the relational approach would suggest that violence alone could change relations between people. For
instance, by polarising relations between the government and the people because of a failure to keep the population safe, or by carrying out an attack on a particular ethnic or religious group, making a particular identity boundary become more salient. Depending on how well – according to its own dynamic needs – the militant group judges the socio-political situation, they are still able to progress their aims without taking credit for an attack. Hopefully this has offered an insight into some of the advantages this approach promises, which are expanded upon in the case studies in the next two chapters. However, first existing explanations for terrorism’s outcomes are considered in more detail.

**Explaining Terrorism’s Outcomes**

In explaining why terrorism ends, analysts have generally taken one of three approaches, setting out broad theoretical explanations, proposing a series of lower-order factors argued to influence outcomes, or examining individual cases in detail. Abrahms (2006, 2012) adopts the first approach, suggesting that whilst group size, its capabilities, and those of its opponent are all factors influencing success, target selection is the most important reason why violent groups fail. Through a robust series of tests, he finds that groups which select civilian targets are almost never successful compared with those that focus on military targets. Abrahms puts this down to the perception by governments, that when groups are minded to use a tactic as extreme as terrorism, they are likely to have equally extreme, radical political intentions. Citing Wilkinson (2002), he argues that because of this flaw in communicating their aims, governments perceive such groups as untrustworthy and ‘incorrigible’ thereby reducing the bargaining space available to the actors.

Abrahms’ explanation, although based on rigorous analysis, only incorporates the group-state dyad and fails to consider the impact of the wider social context. Targeting civilians may, for example, impact group support from their constituency, perhaps to the extent it can no longer operate. It also neglects the impact of group dynamics on targeting preferences, which can have similar negative effects. Finally, it doesn’t clearly specify how governments develop their responses based on interpretations of extreme demands. Indeed, there is evidence that governments clearly recognise the aims of those who use violence against their civilians. A number of groups considered in this analysis (e.g. PULO, GAM) entered into negotiations
with the government. In doing so, they went through the process of setting out preconditions, agreeing the parameters for talks etc., all of which demand that the government, to some extent, acknowledges their wider aims. Abrahms therefore seems to conflate governments’ stated positions and their actual policy decisions. For example, the British government has a policy of ‘not negotiating with terrorists’, despite engaging in back channel negotiations over many years with the IRA (Ó Dochartaigh, 2011). Finally, Abrahms fails to test the theory to offer clear evidence that this is indeed how governments perceive violent group aims. In short, Abrahms’ explanation is perhaps best understood as one possible reason why groups fail, falling well short of a viable explanation of why terrorism is politically ineffective.

Drawing out central tendencies more than offering robust explanations, Jones and Libicki (2008) consider group size to be the most powerful variable in determining group success. They found it explained 32% of the variance in outcome, with additional variables offering little in explanatory power. Based on this, and the finding that groups in democratic settings tend to be smaller and achieve fewer of their aims, they offer a number of observations about the relationship between group size, level of host-country development and terrorism’s success rate. They propose that democratic political contexts offer a more stable environment with less likelihood of large-scale disaffection amongst their peoples. A more methodological response to their findings focuses on the GTD database from which they developed their analysis. As its primary source is media reporting, it privileges high-income countries with media which is better established, and operating more freely. As such, it is likely to under-represent smaller groups in countries with more restrictive media coverage, thereby failing to incorporate their relative success rates into their findings. As for explanations as to why group size is the most powerful variable affecting success rates, the authors suggest, somewhat tautologically, it is because they “have stood the test of time and can stand on their own” (p.40). Jones and Libicki focus more on the policy implications of these findings rather than identifying clear explanations as to why these circumstances favour success. Hence, there is something of an explanatory deficit in their analysis, which demands more thoroughgoing investigation.

Weinberg (2012) offers a broader analysis setting out a range of pathways for how terrorism ends. He proposes defeat is most likely when governments are prepared
to use extreme repression to put down potential challengers, or through large-scale military action, as with the Sri Lankan army’s final offensive against the LTTE. Decapitation is another option, as are selective incentives for underground members to give themselves or their compatriots up, for instance with the left wing groups in Italy. Organisational issues can also see groups fail. Loss of membership through a failure to recruit a new generation, or through disillusion and defection can severely impact groups. As can losing constituency support, for example, if groups attack particular targets, or use tactics which repel potential or actual supporters.

Organisations succeed, according to Weinberg, when terrorism is used sparingly and alongside other tactics, but almost never when it is the only form of coercion applied. Terrorism, Weinberg argues, is only likely to bring about tactical or strategic successes which fall short of achieving the ultimate goals of the group. A final pathway involves the transformation of the group. This can see a shift into organised crime when the personal rewards gained by membership of the group come to focus on material rather than ideological issues, because of boredom or disillusionment. A transition to more conventional politics is a final route out of terrorism, considered most likely when there is a change in political opportunity structure, which makes politics more attractive and violence less so, for example, if members are offered an amnesty and/or the opportunity to take part in the political system.

Cronin (2009) demonstrates a similar approach to Weinberg, setting out a number of pathways out of terrorism: decapitation, success, repression, reorientation or ‘failure’. In this last category, Cronin classifies groups which implode, provoke a backlash, or become marginalised as having ‘failed’, thereby somewhat problematically framing the outcome she wishes to explain as a causal factor. This aside, by avoiding broad level explanations, Cronin identifies a number of factors influencing these various pathways, and in so doing offers the most comprehensive analysis to date of how terrorism ends. In concert with most analysts who have conducted empirical work on terrorism’s effectiveness, Cronin agrees that terrorism rarely ‘works’. She suggests when it does, there are clear and attainable goals, a wider socio-political environment conducive to the group’s cause, other methods alongside terrorism are applied, and powerful actors become convinced of the legitimacy of the group’s aims. Failure on the other hand, is caused by a range of factors including
implosion and infighting, loss of support, becoming distanced from their support base, a failure to recruit the next generation of militants, loss of operational control, or acceptance of amnesties.

Cronin and Weinberg offer the most helpful overview of how terrorism ends in the literature. However, somewhat inevitably given the large-scale nature of their analyses, there is less attention given to explaining why particular outcomes come about. As such, they offer a relatively clear account of categories of reasons for how terrorism ends (which is primarily what they set out to do), but less in the way of actual explanations as to why, and under what circumstances, terrorism campaigns end the way they do and what they achieve. Setting aside the challenges facing large- \( n \) studies when using relatively limited vignettes of individual groups to illustrate particular points – specifically, that they can sometimes be factually inaccurate, and inevitably gloss over important features involved in group development and decline\(^{11}\) – some of the problems with Cronin’s approach can be examined by reviewing one of the pathways she lists.

Looking at the effectiveness of decapitation as a strategy, in the introduction to the section, Cronin unintentionally sets out the problem which seems inherent in taking such broad categories as the primary explanatory factor, when she says: “[c]harismatic leadership is not important to all groups at all stages and at all times.” (p.15). As Cronin implicitly acknowledges, the role of leaders, and the impact of their removal from the field, are highly dynamic factors, subject to shifting perceptions, the influence of external interventions, intra-group processes, and the wider political context. A robust account of why terrorism ends (or continues) following decapitation, therefore promises a response to these issues, specifying why and under what circumstances they are important, Cronin’s account seems to fall short of this.

On the basis of reviewing some of the evidence for decapitation’s effectiveness at a broad-level, and after offering a number of brief case-studies of individual groups, Cronin concludes that the effectiveness of a decapitation strategy depends on the extent to which the group relies on the leader, the group’s popularity and its level of mobilisation. She finds that arrest is generally more effective in

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\(^{11}\) See English (2011) and Schindler (2011) for reviews which discuss this issue with Cronin’s book.
diminishing groups as it avoids the chances of making a martyr of the fallen leader, or increasing support for the group because of the state’s potentially unpopular use of assassination tactics. These appear important factors, but could be said of a range of different counter-terrorism actions. Perhaps with the exception of the risk of creating a martyr, the impact of popularity, mobilisation and popular backlash could, and indeed are, implicated in the effectiveness of other state-led approaches. These explanations therefore seem to fail the test of offering particular insight into the role of decapitation in ending terrorism. Further, Cronin’s account occasionally strays too close to somewhat hollow descriptions and ‘common-sense’ notions, shedding little light on precisely why, in what specific circumstances, and by what mechanisms decapitation undermines a group. Describing broad factors which may or may not be relevant in particular cases seems too imprecise to offer genuine explanatory insight.

In reviewing the existing explanations for why terrorism ends and what it achieves, two main approaches have been considered: large-scale explanations aiming to account for most cases of non-state terrorism and its outcomes through reference to a limited number of variables (Abrahms, 2006, 2012; Jones & Libicki, 2008). Or a range of more focused explanations that specify trends related to group and policy outcomes (Cronin, 2009; Weinberg, 2012). As this discussion revealed, little of this scholarship responds robustly to the question of which causal processes are implicated in specific organisational, political and social outcomes. With a phenomenon of such broad scope, setting out a ‘shopping list’ of potential pathways and influencing factors, as Weinberg and Cronin do, is a valuable move towards explaining different outcomes. However, compartmentalising it into aggregate categories, such as ‘failure’, insufficiently specifies the causal processes at work and seems to confound an array of potentially important influential factors. Equally, variation in the data is poorly explained where higher-order descriptions accounting for group success and failure are sought. For example, Abrahms’ argument of communication failure as the primary driver for terrorism’s poor rate of success, inevitably risks oversimplification. Such approaches are unable to take account of the multiple actors involved in a conflict and the problems of assigning causality between violence and policy change, issues acknowledged by Abrahms (2006) and Amenta et al., (2010) as important, but difficult to overcome.
One of the main challenges, as Tilly (1999) elegantly illustrates in Figure 6.3, are the multiple internal and external influences that impact movement claims. This is something analyses to date recognise, but do not successfully address. Indeed, Cronin (2009) and Abrahms (2006) sidestep this issue entirely in important elements of their analyses. Where policy goals were achieved, both code groups as successful regardless of who or what may have actually contributed to the outcome.\(^{12}\) To some extent this reflects a genuine problem in larger-scale analyses. Identifying exactly what carried the causal weight, when examining 100s of groups as Cronin does, is a significant practical challenge. However, the extent to which applying such an approach advances our understanding of when and under what conditions terrorism is successful is debatable.

**Figure 6.3.** The problem of identifying social movement outcomes. Adapted from Tilly (1999).

Note: Letters denote the following: A: Effects of movement actions that bear directly on movement claims; B: Joint effects of movement actions and outside influences that bear directly on movement claims; C: Effects of outside influences (but not of movement actions) that bear directly on movement claims; and D: Joint effects of movement actions and outside influences that don’t bear on movement claims.

\(^{12}\) Cronin (2009) states “achievement is indicated if the group’s goals were wholly or partially achieved during the group’s life span, regardless of who directly achieved or negotiated that outcome. Usually the strategic goal of a group is shared by various actors in a conflict, and this database does not attempt to claim which group enjoys primary responsibility for the outcome” (p.211, italics in original). Similarly, Abrahms (2006) clarifies “all policy successes are attributed to terrorism as the causal factor, regardless of whether important intervening variables, such as a peace process, may have contributed to the outcome.” (p.51).
Where then, does this leave us in trying to understand militant group outcomes? It might appear that in highlighting the challenges facing large-scale studies, this discussion has merely reiterated some of the well-worn debates contrasting such approaches with case studies (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Layton-Henry, 2008). Is the only alternative to engage in detailed examinations of specific cases, expanding our knowledge of those groups, but offering little in the way of more generalisable conclusions? As Richard English puts it in reviewing Cronin’s (2009) book, the challenge “is to harmonize the insights of the hedgehogs and the foxes: for case-study specialists to do more than they have tended to do to reflect on wider patterns, and for wide-angled students of the subject to be sure to learn fully from case-study hedgehogs as they proceed” (2011, p.10). Much in this spirit, this study applies an alternative, mid-level approach, which makes it possible to look closely at individual groups, but also to deliver comparative insights.

Tilly (1999) points the way, suggesting attention should focus less on the relationship between group characteristics and their effects, but first theorise causal processes, then ‘work upstream’ to identify examples of the effects and see if the hypothesised cause was in operation, to ‘work downstream’ to examine where the causes are operating, and to ‘work midstream’ to see if the causal chain operates as the hypothesised processes would dictate (p. 270). This demands that outcomes are treated as a result of specific causal mechanisms and processes, and invites us to consider how these same mechanisms operate in different contexts.

Having reviewed existing approaches to explaining outcomes, it seems apposite to build on the valuable contributions of larger-scale analyses to develop more satisfactory explanations for why terrorism ends, and a better approach to conceptualising outcomes. The studies just reviewed offer a valuable jumping off point in an area that has only recently begun to establish an empirical foundation. However, they are best characterised as ‘soft theory’, helping to lay out the structure of the debate and identify important factors, but not sufficiently robust to offer clear causal explanations (Gvineria, 2009). By looking more closely at the mechanisms and processes which influence these events across different levels of analysis, it becomes possible to reach more informed conclusions about group outcomes. Scholars of political sociology offer a method for doing this, by drawing attention to the way in
which a range of mechanisms and processes, in different combinations, and in the context of different regimes, produce different outcomes for those engaged in political contestation.

Explaining Terrorism Through the Lens of Contentious Politics

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) set out an agenda for understanding contentious politics which can help move analysis forward. This involves, firstly setting out the sites and background conditions for the episode of contention, and then identifying, from a range of mechanisms and processes, those doing the explanatory work. Tilly (2003) used this framework as the premise for arguing that the type of regime influences the way various mechanisms and processes play out, and the form violence takes. He considered levels of democracy and state capacity as the most important factors, proposing amongst other things, that regime type impacts the scale of violence. For example, high-capacity democratic regimes are likely to experience comparatively low levels of violence, as their ability to police and monitor their territory decreases the space for violent actors to mobilise and act, whilst state violence is selectively employed and relatively rare. Tilly’s approach in The Politics of Collective Violence demonstrates the utility of taking background conditions as a starting point. However, the notions of democracy and state capacity employed are very broad, and are perhaps best characterised as a template which are fleshed out by looking at particular episodes and types of collective violence, rather than as a rigorously defined, measured and applied set of concepts.

The typology presented in this thesis offers a slightly finer grained way of understanding background conditions. By using standard measures, selected because of their provenance in the SMT literature, it is possible to look more closely at how levels of democracy, stability and the extent of wider conflict influence violent non-state groups. Earlier in the thesis, examination of these external variables in the context of the typology revealed a relationship between wider socio-political factors and the scale of group mobilisation. It is therefore these factors of conflict, stability and political rights that constitute the background conditions employed in this study. These offer a starting point, from which specific mechanisms and processes that cause terrorism’s outcomes are considered in more detail.
Incorporating background conditions in this way offers a set of parameters, suggesting explanations as to why and how militant groups might be affected by the type of regime they are in interaction with, and how this may influence the move away from violence. Moreover, by describing the group’s most discriminating characteristics, the typology provides a further layer of information to help to interpret why particular outcomes come about. As such, it provides a jumping off point, allowing us to more systematically examine the impact of regime type and organisational characteristics on violent political contestation and its decline. Finally, it offers an empirically derived way of selecting groups for further analysis. In the case studies to follow, two groups located in different areas of the typology are considered, both of which operated in the midst of very different political settings. This makes it possible to see how different regimes impact terrorism’s outcomes, and how particular mechanisms and processes play out differently dependent on the context and organisational structure of the groups. Before this, however, the nature of these mechanisms is specified in more detail.

**Mechanisms and processes in the move away from terrorism**

This thesis has chosen to begin, not with the ‘why’, but with the ‘how’ of mechanisms and processes. Drawing heavily on the work of SMT scholars, in particular McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly’s (2001) seminal *Dynamics of Contention*, Tilly’s (2003) *The Politics of Collective Violence*, and Tilly and Tarrow’s (2007) *Contentious Politics*, what follows sets out the relational approach and the means by which to understand terrorism’s outcomes. In these texts, the authors define and employ a range of mechanisms and processes which determine the form and outcome of oppositional movements, offering a mid-level approach to analysis, sitting between description and universal social laws.

According to this approach, understanding *episodes* of ‘bounded sequences of contention’, involves a series of descriptive and explanatory concepts which act across specific *sites* of contention. These sites are defined as the origin, object and/or place of contention. For example, the Syrian army may be considered a site of contention, as in the 2012-13 conflict it originated violence, was its object, and was a site of contention as members defected, complied with, or instigated commands. *Initial conditions* at these sites are important in determining the process and outcomes
of political contestation as explained above when discussion considered how different regime types impact the nature of violence. *Conditions* also include the existing relations between the range of political actors and identities at work. For example, the strong ties between Israel, its lobbyists, and the American government, and the much weaker ties that characterise Palestinian links to power in the USA.

*Outcomes* of contention include shifts in the relations between political actors, or transformations of the actors themselves. Nelson Mandela went from a prisoner of the regime, decried as a terrorist, to leader of the country. Alongside this, relations between political actors in South Africa shifted as the apartheid regime lifted and power was redistributed. Understanding how such outcomes come about involves delving into the mechanisms and processes that have influenced them. *Mechanisms* produce similar effects across a range of situations and come in a variety of forms. For example, *brokerage* sees the connection of previously disparate sites, facilitating coordination and communication. The Zapatistas demonstrated this as they rapidly built a national and international following using the Internet, connecting a range of anti-regime activists. *Processes* aggregate mechanisms and produce larger-scale outcomes. A common process is *mobilisation*, which sees human and physical resources increase the resources available to a political actor. Again the Zapatistas are a good example, as through brokerage, and a range of other mechanisms, they developed their capacity to mobilise against the Mexican government and gain stronger representation for native peoples. A full account of the various mechanisms and processes Tilly and Tarrow (2007) is set out in Appendix J.

A range of agents are involved in contentious episodes, including the regime, government and other political actors including group members, challengers to the group, and outsiders. *Political identities* are also important in the dynamics of contestation. They are implicated in questions of who ‘they’ and ‘we’ are, and are part of the claims political actors make. They are particularly important in the process of boundary formation, where political actors activate boundaries between classes of people. For example, when Meir Kahane articulated and activated particular ‘Arab’ and ‘Jewish’ identity claims that went beyond the notions of citizenship common in Israeli discourse at the time. These actors operate in shifting political opportunity structures determined by its openness, stability and the way it deals with challengers.
Thus, political actors instigate and respond to a variety of mechanisms and processes, which operate in shifting political opportunity structures against a background of initial conditions to produce particular outcomes. In specifying a range of causal processes, this approach offers a grammar by which to interpret and explain terrorism’s outcomes. It sits between grand theory and situation specific explanations or descriptive accounts and therefore makes it possible to develop robust, mid-level explanations as to why and how terrorism’s effects are wrought.

The typology not only provides the backdrop for analysis, but helps to identify appropriate groups for comparison based on the range of factors that saw particular groups cluster together. The next two chapters consider the processes and mechanisms involved in Kach and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’s violent political contestation. They have been selected for a number of reasons. First, they are groups located in different sections of the typology and were subject to different political contexts. This ‘most-different’ design has been advocated in SMT research, and involves selecting cases “not to maximize resemblance or even to pinpoint differences among whole countries, but to discover whether similar mechanisms and processes drive changes in divergent periods, places and regimes” (McAdam et al., 2001, p.82).

Continuing the theme of selecting different cases to compare, the two groups are drawn from quite different ideological perspectives. Kach was a far-right group operating in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, whilst the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army was a militant Islamist group based in Yemen. Again, selecting groups which cross apparently ‘dichotomous divides’ has been called for in the SMT literature, to gain greater insight about how group characteristics overlap and how they differ (Gunning, 2009). These are also groups which, whilst having received some attention in the literature, have been less thoroughly researched. Finally, a range of primary resources were available on these groups which had not yet been exploited in existing analyses, details of which are included in the following chapters. Hence, the case studies hope to not only demonstrate the utility of the approach to understanding outcomes laid out in this chapter, but also to contribute to the knowledge of two groups which are less well understood. It is to this task the next two chapters are devoted.
Chapter 7: Kach

In the next two chapters the analytical principles set out so far are brought to bear on the final series of research questions to investigate which mechanisms and processes are implicated in violent political contestation; what insights do the organisational characteristics and background conditions described in the typology offer into the process and outcomes of this contention; how do these interact with political claim-making; what are the political, organisational and relational outcomes of these interactions; and why did they come about.

The first study is the Israeli group Kach. Its founding leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane was shot dead in a New York hotel on November 5 1990, at the age of 58. The organisation was in decline when he was assassinated, and although satellite groups continued in his name after his death, they have not attained the political success or public notoriety Kahane achieved in his lifetime. However, their impact on Israeli political and social life continues, providing the framework for a new generation of actors preoccupied with the same concerns Kahane set out in the 1970s.

Kach was at its most visible in the 1980s and 90s, and much of the scholarship on the group was undertaken during this time. With Kahane’s death, interest in the group waned, and with one or two exceptions, there has been little rigorous study of Kach in the last decade. Consequently, the longer-term effects of Meir Kahane and his followers have been largely neglected in the academic corpus. With perhaps the exception of Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger (2009), there has been no recent systematic examination of the group and its offshoots. However, even their book, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel*, falls some way short of a detailed examination of Kach, and although they mention the impact of the Kahanists on more contemporary right-wing activists, this is little more than a footnote, offering little insight into Kach’s impact and decline. The other major scholar of the right-wing in Israel, the late Ehud Sprinzak, predicted Kach would wither and die following Kahane’s death (Sprinzak, 1993). However, as this chapter will demonstrate, Kach’s impact resonates in Israel today. If we are to understand the ongoing presence of ‘Kahanism’ in Israeli politics, a thoroughgoing assessment of Kach’s legacy is necessary.

In addressing this question, this chapter considers how the protracted conflict between Israelis and Palestinians impacted Kach’s evolution and decline in the
context of a largely democratic, but sometimes politically unstable environment. Further, what follows examines the particular problems Kahane and his followers tried to solve, and sets out how Kach’s position in the typology can be both explained and also offer insight into Kach’s political contention. Throughout, the focus is on the specific mechanisms and processes central to their claim-making, and how these were influenced by the wider political context. It is in this way more robust explanations of Kach’s outcomes are wrought. The chapter proceeds by first setting out the initial conditions that shaped Kach’s contention, going on to examine the main political actors, identities and ideologies implicated in their activities, before exploring four periods of collective claim-making, concluding with a detailed examination of why and how specified outcomes came about. Before that, the data that informs this investigation is reviewed.

**Methodology and Data**

A range of secondary sources are available on Israel’s far-right, most notably Ehud Sprinzak wrote a considerable number of books and articles on the various parties of the radical right, including Kach (1985a; 1985b; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1999; 2000). Others whose work has proved a valuable source of information include Ami Pedahzur, alone (2000; 2001; 2002), with Arie Perliger (2009), and with Leonard Weinberg (2003). Rapheal Cohen Almagor (1992; 1994; 1996; 1997), Janet Dolgin (1977), and Ian Lustick (1988) have all written on the Jewish Defence League (JDL) and Kach. In addition, several books have been written about Kach’s founding leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane, by journalists and those who knew him, including Yair Kotler (1986), Raphael Mergui and Philippe Simonnot (1987), Robert Friedman (1990) and his wife, Libby Kahane (2008).

Given that a number of the main protagonists of Kach are dead, it is useful to turn to the artefacts they left behind. In this regard there are two major sources – the voluminous writings of Meir Kahane, and a substantial archive of organisational documents spanning 15 years, from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, which are available at a website maintained by activists based in Kiryat Arba, near Hebron. The archive contains over 770 documents, ranging from 1-30 pages in length, primarily in Hebrew, with a handful in English. They include propaganda leaflets,

13 Website: http://rabbikahane.org/
posters, internal letters and communiqués, press releases, petitions, newspaper advertisements, policy documents, press cuttings, journals, newsletters, bumper stickers, activity reports and photographs. To identify those documents of interest, a bilingual Hebrew-English speaker was employed to translate the titles of the documents and offer a précis of their contents. A smaller selection of publications was chosen for full translation, totalling nearly 200 letters, communiqués and other relevant documents. Media reporting was used to supplement these primary sources, whilst further information was gleaned from the ‘grey’ literature. These included government reports, polling data, court documents and parliamentary debates. In addition, the FBI holds substantial files on Meir Kahane, released through freedom of information requests, which offer a valuable counterpoint to journalistic and autobiographical accounts. These sources were triangulated to generate a comprehensive picture of Kach’s organisational, political and social activities, and the ideas which informed their contestation, activities which began in New York with the JDL.

The Jewish Defence League: An Emerging Repertoire of Contention

Kach is somewhat unusual in that its origins were on a different continent to its final area of contestation. Its precursor organisation, the JDL, was born in the New York of the 1960s, before its leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane undertook aliya (return or ascendance) to Israel, in large part to avoid further prosecution in America (Friedman, 1990). Based on similar principles to the JDL, Kach maintained a number of core features of the US-based organisation. Hence, although a full exploration of the JDL is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is instructive to review some of the key mechanisms which echo throughout Kahane’s career, that first emerged in New York.

The first mechanism is boundary activation between different identities, specifically between ‘Black’ and Jewish Americans. Amidst growing racial tension (Lederhendler, 2001; Pritchett, 2003; Vernon, 1960), Kahane targeted his rhetoric on a perceived increase in the victimisation of elderly Jews by ‘Black gangs’. A further issue he dedicated time to, reflected Stalin’s ongoing persecution of Jews in Russia.

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14 See Dolgin (1977); Friedman (1990); Kahane (1975); and Kotler (1986) for more detail on the group’s ideology, founding principles, evolution and membership.

15 Specific mechanisms and processes discussed in the text are italicised, definitions for which can be found in Appendix I.
These remained his primary themes whilst in America, and although the JDL did undertake violent direct action against representatives of the PLO in New York, the Israel-Palestine question was a subsidiary concern (Kahane, 1963; 1964). A further important boundary Kahane activated was that between the ‘new Jew’ and the ‘Jewish establishment’, the latter characterised by their “old, pathetic insecurity born of the galut [exile] mentality” (Kahane, 1972, p.70), and the former, “a new person, proud of his origins, capable of defending himself and fully devoted to the cause of his brothers all over the world” (Kahane, 1972, p.5). Failure to inculcate these characteristics, according to Kahane, increased the chances of a second genocide, and the potential degradation of Jewish identity in the face of young Jews’ interests in other identity groups (e.g. the ‘New Left’), and the related threat of assimilation (Rosenfeld, 1967).

Here we start to see the themes that Kahane improvised around for the rest of his life: an existential threat to the Jewish community; the attribution of blame outside this community, most often defined in terms of a particular ethnic or racial group; a failure to represent and defend the interests of ‘real Jews’ by the state apparatus and the ‘Jewish establishment’; a drive to action to protect Jewish interests, often involving force; and finally, the desire to recapture and promote a particular notion of Jewish identity centred on the need for a strong Jewish constituency to defend and promote Jewish interests. In the character of many right-wing ideologues, through this, Kahane increased the salience of already sensitive identity group boundaries, and used these as a platform to initiate a further process of actor constitution. The result of this process was the JDL, Kach’s precursor.

**Kach: Genesis and Initial Conditions**

It is something of a truism to say that since Israel’s founding in 1948, its borders, citizenship and model of governance have been subject to intense debate and conflict. Positioning it in the typology, a number of anomalies emerge. Not only has the state’s capacity changed over the period of interest, it is also a divided piece of land – what Tilly and Tarrow (2007) have described as a segmented composite regime – in which different systems govern different parts of the population. Furthermore, over the period of interest, Israel underwent significant territorial change, perhaps most importantly for our interests following the war in 1967. Nevertheless, the

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16 The measures used to develop the typology are those of Israel, as this was largely the system which had jurisdiction over Kahane and Kach.
political context in which Kach operated has remained relatively stable. The measures of political freedom and stability used to develop the typology show Israel was characterised by generally high levels of political rights and civil liberties, and mid-high levels of stability. Throughout the period of Kach’s contestation, Israel has however, been in the midst of intermittent low intensity conflict which as we will see, was important to Kahane’s claim-making. These are the background conditions against which a range of political actors made their claims, and a number of mechanisms and processes played out, providing the backdrop to the following discussion.

In setting out the initial conditions that shaped the rise of the right in Israel, of which Kach was a part, it is hard to overstate the importance of the Six Day War. Not only did the conflict redefine Israel’s borders, bringing 100,000s of Palestinians under Israeli jurisdiction, it asserted its power in the region, defeated a set of powerful enemies, and brought some of Judaism’s holiest sites under Jewish control for the first time since the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE (Shindler, 2008; Tessler, 1994). Strategically, politically, and symbolically, the war impacted the national discourse, and with this, the possibility of establishing sovereignty over Biblical Eretz Yisrael was resurrected. The implications of this offer a useful jumping off point, from which we can survey the political actors, and the ideological and historical roots of the various currents in the right-wing, and position Kach within this milieu.

In the lee of Israel’s 1967 victory, a number of actors on the right began to crystallise their political identities, finding wider support for what had been a relatively marginal aspect of Israeli politics. Broadly speaking, political representation on the right was split between revisionist Zionism and religious Zionism. The former was dominated in the early days by Herut, which became Likud in 1973. Led by Menachem Begin, they emerged from the Irgun, and drew their ideology from the revisionism of Ze’ev Jabotinsky. Religious Zionism was perhaps most clearly politically represented by the National Religious Party (NRP), which tried to preserve

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17 The exact political and theological constitution of Biblical Eretz Yisrael – literally, the Land of Israel – is deeply contested (for example see Davies, 1982; Whitelan, 1996). Despite this, it seems reasonably safe to say that Eretz Yisrael encompasses modern day Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and parts of modern day Jordan, Syria and Iraq (Sprinzak, 1991).

18 Jabotinsky was central to the project of Jewish nationalism built on drawing together the Jewish Diaspora, creating a state defined by its Judaic culture, and defending it with force (Shavit, 1988).
the centrality of Judaism in politics and linked land settlement to the coming of the Messiah\(^\text{19}\) (Shindler, 2008).

Support for the right began to grow in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but it was not until 1978, with the signing of the Camp David Accords, that the ‘radical right’, emerged as a stronger force. This followed a number of other important events, which it is only possible to headline here. Namely, the 1973 Yom Kippur War, which impacted Israel’s post-Six Day War feelings of strength and invulnerability, and saw Labor suffer at the polls. Menachem Begin’s coalition building, from which emerged an alliance of right-wing parties, the Likud. Likud’s success in forming a coalition government with the NRP, and finally, their electoral success in 1977. Before exploring the impact of these events on Kach’s development in more detail, the ideological foundations of Kahane’s political claims are first considered.

**Political Actors, Identities and Ideology**

Accounts of right-wing actors have recognised the challenges of defining such a heterogeneous, socially constructed and dynamic category (Caiani, della Porta & Wagemann, 2012; Mudde, 2000). However, two features central to the concept are ideologies of inequality and the acceptance of violence. Further characteristics include xenophobia, ethnocentrism and racism (Heitmeyer, 2003). Describing those on the ‘radical right’ in Israel, Sprinzak (1993) characterised them as a “climate of opinion [which] constitutes a syndrome of political behaviour” (p.146) with a number of defining features: a romantic vision of pre-Israel Zionism populated with strong, Zionist yishuv;\(^\text{20}\) religious fundamentalism manifested in a belief in the sacredness of Israel, and the imminent redemption; the legitimacy of direct action and vigilantism; and finally, militarism and willingness to use violence.

Such characteristics are informed by the rich ideological traditions of Zionism, which can usefully be parsed into a number of groupings, which constituted the far-right in Israel when Kach was most active. Firstly, the Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful), an ultranationalist settler movement which split from the NRP, with 1,000s of relatively well organised adherents, who have a clear agenda to resettle the land,

\(^{19}\) These actors believe the age of redemption is here, evidenced in the ongoing settlement of Eretz Yisrael, which will precipitate the Messiah’s coming (Ravitzy, 1990). They also generally believe in cooperation with the state and with secular Zionists (Lustick, 1988).

\(^{20}\) The pre-state community of Jews living in Palestine.
and are rooted in a religious ideology, central to which is redemption (Ravitzky, 1990). Secondly, Tehiya and off-shoot groups, which were political parties sharing many of the same views as Gush Emunim, but were predominantly secular (Masalha, 2000). Finally, Kach, whose key ideological features and political identity are now reviewed. In doing so, it is important to recognise that Kahane’s ideology evolved to suit political and organisational needs. These ideas should therefore not be treated as a reified set of principles but as emblematic of the particular problems he faced.

Kach’s agenda

One of the aims Kahane organised his claims around was the desire to consolidate Eretz Yisrael throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Operationalised at the political level through their permanent annexation, and on the ground with settlement and vigilantism, Kahane advocated violent defence of the land gained through the Six Day War. However, Kach was not a settler movement, it was primarily concerned with the ‘transfer’ of Palestinians out of Eretz Yisrael; an epithet used to describe the policy of removing Palestinians from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), either through persuasion, force or mutual consent. Underpinning this is perhaps the most consistent aspect of Kahane’s ideology; the need for a more clearly defined Jewish identity to be inculcated through structural change. First through education, teaching the young about Judaism, Jewish nationalism, pride and exclusiveness, and through the media and legislature, for example, prohibiting intermarriage and abortions, except under halachic rulings. Based on a close reading of Kahane’s writings, what follows reviews five principles which provide an ideological framework for Kach’s political contestation.
The Chosen People and the true Jewish identity

Kahane’s discourse constructs a particular notion of Jewishness, defined as much in opposition to the ‘lost soul’ of the contemporary sabra (Israeli born Jew) (Kahane, 1990, p.56), as in its conception of the ‘new’ Jew, characterised by strength, principles of self-defence and willingness to use violence (Kahane, 1969). Borrowing heavily from Jabotinsky’s revisionist agenda (Shindler, 2010), the bedrock of Kahane’s case was the exceptional nature of Jews as the Chosen People. As Kahane put it “[God] chose us so that we would rise above the others, so that we would be holy and higher than all the rest” (1990, p.79).

Several things are important here, firstly, the inherently exceptional nature of the Jewish people, which lays claim to particular privileges and imbues ordinary, and potentially controversial practices with a divine character, and secondly, the inferiority of all other identity groups. A further implication of being God’s Chosen People is the superiority of halachic law over other systems of governance. Finally, Kahane’s approach rested upon rejecting the notion of national identity, something he decried as a ‘Western concept’ (Kach, n.d.a; n.d.b), in favour of a transnational religious identity. For example, multiple leaflets call for Syrian, Yemeni, Russian and Iraqi Jews to be saved. Figure 7.1 is one such case, which rails against the Israeli state for not taking action to help Syrian Jews on the basis that they ‘are not our citizens’.

Figure 7.1. Kach poster (n.d.a): ‘Demand for the Release of the Jews in Syria’.

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21 This was a message which resonated with many Israelis; in a 1974 poll, 57% of Israeli Jews believed the Jewish people were a Chosen People (Farago, 1974, cited in Lustick, 1988).
Palestinian identity claims
In defending himself against claims of racism, Kahane echoed Jabotinsky, arguing that as ‘good committed nationalists’, Palestinians were prepared to fight for their land, and hence represented an existential threat to Israel. He advanced a series of further, essentialist propositions about the ‘true nature’ of the Palestinians. Firstly, claiming they were inherently conflictual, incapable of coexisting with one another, let alone with Jews. Secondly, that “there are no Arab moderates: there are only clever Arabs and stupid ones” (Kahane, 1990, p. 37). The ‘stupid ones’ openly state they wish to eliminate Israel, the ‘clever ones’ appease Israel with the hope of land, money and eventual victory over the Jews. Finally, that the Palestinians do not, and will never wish for peace – ‘they wish Palestine’. As well as such overt threats, Kahane made more invidious claims about the Palestinians and their threat to Israel: that of intermarriage and intercourse with Jewish women, repeating the refrain that they would undermine Israel through ‘bullets or babies’ (Kahane, 1990). His language reflected these assumptions, and is from a recognisable stable of dehumanising, pejorative and inflammatory hate speech. Amongst other epithets, he called Palestinians ‘dogs’, ‘cockroaches’ and a ‘cancer’. Kach’s propaganda developed this and tried to highlight the threat they posed, as Figure 7.2 demonstrates. Here, a range of newspaper headlines accuse Palestinians of brutal murders, stockpiling weapons, and the killing and mutilation of a 12 year old girl.

Democracy and the Jewish state
Reflecting ongoing debates in Israel about the most appropriate model of governance, for Kahane democracy was antithetical to Judaism. As he put it, “there is an unbridgeable conflict, utter contradiction between Zionism … and Western democracy” (Kahane, 1990, p.49, italics in original). He offered two reasons, first, given higher birth rates in the Palestinian community, comparatively low rates of immigration by Jews to Israel, and lower birth rates in some parts of the Jewish
community, there would be a Palestinian majority by 2020. A point he illustrated in unsubtle leaflets such as that in Figure 7.3. Furthermore, the State of Israel was a religious, rather than a political creation. As such, the presence of Gentiles in Israel was untenable, not only for demographic reasons, but as discussed in the next section, because Israel was forged by God in response to Gentile aggression (Ravitzky, 1986). Most radically set out in his treatise They Must Go, Kahane proposed Palestinians be offered the three options presented to the Canaanites by Joshua: evacuate, make peace, or prepare to fight (Kahane, 1980a; 1980b).

**Hillul Hashem**

Kahane’s political agenda was underpinned by a number of memes from Jewish scripture which also appear in Jabotinsky’s revisionism. Two of its main features were *Hillul Hashem* – profanation of God’s name, and *Kiddush Hashem* – sanctification of God’s name (Selengut, 2003). In describing *Hillul Hashem*, Kahane claimed that each individual Jew was a representative of God’s divinity. Hence, whenever a Jew was attacked, it desecrated God’s name. Similarly, the persecution they suffered when in exile was a profanity. Conversely, the return to Israel and the end of Jewish persecution is *Kiddush Hashem* (Kahane, 1978). Together, these ideas elevated even a common act of violence to one of spiritual desecration (Kahane, 1973), and made acts of retributive, expressive violence towards Gentiles a sacred act. Furthermore, failure to act on the principles of *Kiddush Hashem* was failing to respond in a way consistent with God’s will in creating the State of Israel.

A number of implications flow from this: that Israel is sacred not only because of how it facilitates Judaism, but of how it inflicts revenge on the Gentile for centuries of persecution. Also, that freedom, in the form of a state, becomes associated with the ability to take revenge against the Gentile. Hence, the stronger Jews are, the freer they
become (Sprinzak, 1992). Redemption was another key theme underpinned by the notion of Kiddush Hashem. Kahane made the case that “miracles don’t just happen … they are made” (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p.55) and that the key to this was repentance and a return to Orthodox Judaism. The reward was redemption ‘without the Messianic birthpangs’ which, if not averted, would bring disaster and tumult.

**Havlaga and violence**

A central part of Kahane’s ideology was the need for violence in defending and promoting Jewish interests. In doing so, he resurrected and simultaneously rejected the notion of havlaga – the pre-mandate policy of self-imposed restraint in the face of attacks on Jews by Palestinians. Kahane invoked the Irgun, who broke with Jabotinsky’s support for self-restraint, and retaliated against Palestinian violence (Shindler, 2010). By framing his own approach to violence in the context of the struggle for Israel’s independence, Kahane contextualised the present day struggle as one for the very existence of Israel. Whilst drawing on Jabotinsky’s concept of Barzel Yisrael (Jewish iron), Kahane’s approach was actually closer to Begin’s doctrine of militarism, which reinterpreted the notion of the ‘Iron Wall’ to focus on offence and military training, rather than defence (Shindler, 2008). Perhaps most clearly demonstrated in Kahane’s agenda for Israeli counterterrorism – something he set out after a number of particularly brutal attacks by the PLO on Israeli civilians (Sela & Ma’oz, 1997) – Kahane proposed an uncompromising use of terrorism, involving:

1) An international Jewish anti-terror organisation to prevent and retaliate against attacks.
2) Terrorism against civilians in Arab countries to force the population to demand their governments expel terrorists from their country.
3) If Jewish hostages were taken to ransom the release of Arab prisoners, those prisoners were to be executed, if no prisoners were named, the same number whose release they demanded should be killed.
4) For each act of terrorism against Jewish interests, 1,000 Palestinian families should be evicted from the Occupied Territories.

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22 In the 1920s, Jabotinsky argued that the time had come for an ‘Iron Wall’; a solid political barrier to prevent Palestinians from interfering with the Zionist enterprise (Shavit, 1988).
5) Given the intrinsic hostility of Palestinians to Israel, they should be incentivised to move to other countries (Sadan, 1974, cited in Kahane, 2008, p.410).

These prescriptions for terrorism are interesting on a number of levels. First, they combine a strong retributive element with a clear deterrent focus. In an unusual twist, Kahane, as a non-state actor, is endorsing a deterrence policy which is normally the purview of states. Kahane addressed the potential conflict between this notion and the existence of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) by arguing that if the standing army was incapable of protecting the Jewish people, it became a religious obligation, under the notion of Kiddush Hashem, for individuals to act (Kahane, 1974/1996). Also, Kahane promoted the notion of terrorism as a strategy of coercion, aiming to raise the cost of terrorism against Jewish targets to unacceptably high levels. What we see therefore, is a combination of expressive and instrumental aims. Revenge in God’s name, related to the concept of Hillul Hashem, and a more geostrategic focus on developing Jewish security across the world. Kahane also saw violence as central to the project of healing the psychological scars caused by centuries in exile. This violence constituted a ‘fist in the face of the Gentile’, a phrase symbolically represented in the JDL, and then Kach logo, shown in Figure 7.4.

**Figure 7.4. Jewish Defence League/Kach logo.**

**Kach’s ideology: Defining relations, aims and methods?**

Setting these ideological themes in the context of the rise of the right-wing in the 1970s, it becomes clear that Kahane was presented with both a threat and an opportunity. Growing support for the right’s agenda offered Kahane a platform, yet the plethora of voices competing for political and social space meant Kahane had to carve out a distinctive niche for himself. He did this, in part, by offering more extreme prescriptions to the problems the right-wing perceived Israel faced. Two related mechanisms were implicated in his ideological account: polarisation of the political spectrum by espousing a more extreme vision for Israel, and boundary...
activation, increasing the salience of the boundaries between Palestinians and Israelis, and between much of the mainstream political spectrum and the far-right.

Looking at the specific problems Kahane was concerned with, there are a number of features common to violent right-wing discourse: how best to remove or reduce the impact of a hostile and inferior other; how to define and mobilise a constituency in support of these claims; and what methods are best suited to achieving these goals. In response, we again see familiar far-right themes: delegitimisation and degradation of the other through hate speech; defining a clear in-group under threat that must mobilise to protect itself from dire economic, social or political consequences; and the legitimisation of violence in response to these problems. However, if we look a little closer, a number of further issues that Kahane was concerned with emerge. Although he was certainly focused on the perceived threat from Palestinians, the identity of his primary enemy shifted over time, from African-Americans in New York, to Palestinians in Israel. This, along with Kahane’s discussion of Jewish identity suggests he was at least as concerned with promoting and reconstituting particular notions of the Jewish self-concept as he was attacking hostile identity groups. Relatedly, as well as attacking non-Jewish groups, Kahane was also focused on attacking hostile elements of his own, religiously-defined, identity group.

Hence, what appear to be comparatively simplistic prescriptions defining enemies, and making salient particular identities, are somewhat more complex than they first appear. The polarisation between political positions worked in two directions: outwards to the hostile out-group, and inwards to all those to the left of Kahane’s position. Kahane’s ideology was therefore defined by its relational nature, and the way it tried to change and reinforce boundaries between people. Kahane’s ideological enemies are perhaps best characterised by Bjørgo’s (1995) development of Sprinzak’s (1995) concept of split delegitimisation, organised by an enemy’s level of power and ethnicity (here understood as religious identity group). Presented in Table 7.1, this helps describe how Kahane constructed identity boundaries between his opponents, between Jew and Gentile, Palestinian and Israeli, ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ Jew, and legitimate and illegitimate Israelis.
Table 7.1. Kach/JDL enemies defined by power and religious identity groups. 
Adapted from Bjørgo (1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious in-group</th>
<th>Government/establishment enemies</th>
<th>Non-government/non-establishment enemies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli government and state bodies, Jewish establishment</td>
<td>Left-wing, secular, ‘Hellenist’ Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious out-group</td>
<td>Governments hostile to Jewish interests including: US, Russia, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt</td>
<td>Palestinians, African-Americans, ‘Black Hebrews’, Christian missionaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understood through the lens of identity construction and boundary activation, Kahane’s ideology might therefore appear relatively internally consistent. However, such a reading is overly static. Kahane’s themes evolved over the years, indeed, there is evidence that he retro-fitted aspects of his ideology to suit, offering post-hoc justifications, in particular, of violence (Sprinzak, 1991). Spinzak (1992) interprets these shifts as a conscious effort to create and sustain a violent order. However, it is also also possible to read this in light of pragmatist thought, as a way of drawing ideological threads out of emergent events to suit particular exigencies, rather than as part of a well-defined, strategic plan to achieve a set of unchanging ends.

Interpreting Kach’s ideology in light of Gross’ (2009; 2010) theoretical approach illustrates that the cultural and social context offered not only the explicit ‘problem’ to which Kahane responded, but also mediated the way he framed his goals. This has a number of consequences which are headlined here, and explored further when discussing Kach’s political and organisational outcomes. First, this reading might anticipate a failure to maximise the strategic potential of violence, by not providing a stable foundation for the use of violence, and by making expressive, spiritually informed calls to violence equally, if not more, salient than instrumental goals. Second, Kahane is faced with the problem of attracting a constituency and political allies with an extreme and polarising platform, which by definition does not represent wider swathes of opinion. Also, there is the challenge of how to enact change whilst simultaneously engaging with and discrediting democracy. Finally, the difficulty of how to promote a set of identity claims via a political programme, and relatedly, demonstrating and defending his legitimacy to speak for Israelis, given a) his own identity as an American born Jew, and b) an agenda which has been
described as opportunistic and incoherent (Kotler, 1986). These are the main ‘problems’ Kahane was concerned with, and are important to keep in mind as we explore Kach’s claim-making in the pages ahead.

Streams of Contention

There is often a relatively static reading of Kach, which neglects the trajectory of Kahane’s militancy. Perhaps with the exception of Sprinzak, analysts who have engaged seriously with Kahane’s ideas tend to treat them as a single block of thought, which neglects its dynamic nature. For example, Ravitzky (1986; 1990) in an otherwise excellent interpretation of Kahanism largely neglects the shifting nature of these ideas, treating them as a fully-fledged ideological programme. Taking this approach overlooks the lessons to be learned about how and why Kahane chose the targets and methods he did, and what effect this might have had on the achievement of his goals. In what follows, four primary periods of contention are mapped out tracing Kach’s development from the 1970s to the present, setting out how his methods and ideological claims evolved.

**Haliga Lehagana Yehudit**

On arriving in Israel, Kahane initially declared, somewhat disingenuously, he had no interest in continuing his political activities. Despite this, JDL-Israel was born under the Hebrew translation *Haliga Lehagana Yehudit*, shortened to ‘Liga’. Similarly to the JDL in America, focus was on education and training, including a separate cadre taught to use weapons (Freidman, 1990; Kotler, 1986). As well as demonstrating Kahane’s desire to promote a set of identity claims, the education initiative also perhaps served to appease those on the right-wing in Israel who did not want a violent JDL operating in their midst (Friedman, 1990). Portraying his efforts as congruent with Israel’s norms, Kahane was fully aware he had to make the case for the JDL in Israel:

People ask: “What purpose is there for JDL in Israel? Are there troubled neighbourhoods? Is there anti-Semitism?” … What must concern us is the Sabra who IDEOLOGICALLY proclaims himself an Israeli first and a Jew second. (Kahane, 1971, p.30, capitals in original)
Chapter 7: Kach

**Confrontational contention**

Kahane’s interest in education and teaching did not remain his primary focus for long, very soon, he and a small group of largely American followers targeted the Black Hebrew community in Dimona. Kahane denied that he was attacking them because of their ethnicity (NBC Archive, 1971), however although he adapted his rhetoric for his new surroundings, these early confrontations were built on a racialised discourse, centred on the need to ‘guard the nation’s honour’ (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1971). Kahane’s interest in Russian Jews also continued to motivate his activities (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.; Weinberg & Pedahzur, 2003). However, Kahane’s agenda was soon to settle more firmly on Palestinians, and in August 1971, he began a campaign to resettle Hebron. Following protests in the town by Kahane and his followers, he experienced the first concerted effort by Israel to inhibit his activities, and in September 1971, he was banned from entering the OPT. Undeterred, Kahane’s continued provocation of Palestinians quickly escalated, and soon saw him in court (Friedman, 1990; Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1973a; Kotler, 1986).

Kahane’s early activities in Israel employed similar methods to those he developed in America – provocative, contentious performances at the boundaries of legality designed to gain attention. They were also explicitly political. For example, Kahane’s first target – the Black Hebrews – not only emphasised racial identity boundaries, it represented a direct challenge to the right-wing parties which dominated the town to respond to a divisive local issue (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1971). Such performances were implicated in a number of mechanisms: gaining a political profile through *actor constitution*, challenging existing political actors by *activating boundaries* in the right-wing, and through the process of *contention*, establishing a confrontational repertoire of behaviour for a new audience. Very soon, more organised, and ostensibly more violent activities entered Kahane’s repertoire.

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23 The Black Hebrews of Dimona are a small group who arrived in Israel in 1969 from the US and Liberia, claiming they were descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel; their status as legitimate citizens of Israel, and as Jews, was contested for many years (Singer, 2000).

24 Hebron (Al Khalil in Arabic) is a site of some religious significance. One of the four holy cities of Judaism, it is said to be the place where the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, lived and were buried. Hebron is also sacred to the Christian and Islamic faiths, again because of the centrality of Abraham. It has therefore been at the epicentre of clashes between members of the two faiths for centuries, and remains a focal point for Kach’s contention.
Threatening performances

Pedahzur and Perliger (2009) argue the tenor of Kach’s violence changed from hooliganism to more concerted terrorism with the Munich Games killings of Israeli athletes in 1972, and Kahane’s subsequent efforts to attack the Libyan embassy in Rome. It is worth looking at this case in a little detail to illustrate how Kahane exploited state responses and media attention through his claim-making. Securing the help of Amichai Paglin, Kahane arranged for weapons to be smuggled out of the country. The plot was soon uncovered, and the crate of weapons did not get further than Lod Airport; Paglin, Kahane, and two others were arrested, and two years later they stood trial, receiving suspended sentences. In her summing up, Judge Hadassah Ben-Ito, characterised their goals to free Soviet Jewry and fight terrorism by Palestinians as generally legal and widely accepted. Further, that “[t]hey certainly should not be punished for these goals, nor for devoting their lives to work for the public good” (cited in Kotler, 1986, p.82).

Here we see acts sufficiently serious and substantiated to result in conviction, interpreted favourably in light of the wider context. This afforded Kahane the opportunity to raise his profile and stake his claim as the strong arm of Jewish retribution. Indeed, there is some evidence, contrary to Pedahzur and Perliger’s (2009) thesis, that Kahane manufactured the episode to create that opportunity. Further, that there was little real intent behind the operation, and that Kahane himself had informed the secret services about the weapons (Kotler, 1986). Paglin’s notoriety guaranteed media interest, and Kahane maximised the resultant publicity, calling a news conference as soon as he learned of Paglin’s arrest. He also tried to make a deal with the authorities – full disclosure of the plot in return for an amnesty (Kahane, L., 2008). These do not appear to be the actions of someone who wishes to pursue a covert military campaign. Rather, the evidence suggests Kahane was more interested in the ensuing publicity to continue the process of actor constitution. Importantly, this rested on the authorities’ response to him and his ability to capitalise on the relatively limited repression he experienced.

These events should be seen through the prism of Kahane’s effort to mobilise support for his election to the Knesset. In 1973, in his first attempt to gain a seat,

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25 Paglin was the former Chief Operations Officer in the Irgun, who planned the King David Hotel bombing (Morris, 2004).
Kahane engaged in an energetic campaign which ultimately came to nothing: Liga gained only .81% of the vote – 12,811 votes in total (Legum & Shaked, 1978). Bookmarking his electoral campaign were two of the first violent acts directly implicating Liga members. Both were against Christian missionary activities, and both were arson attacks (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1973b). Kahane praised the operations but took no responsibility for them – although he was undertaking a hunger strike at the Wailing Wall to draw attention to the issue of missionaries as the second series of firebombs was ignited (Kahane, 2008).

Most analysts largely neglect this first period of contention, or mark it down as a failure due to Kahane’s lack of success in his Knesset campaign and his involvement in a number of court cases. However, it is in these early efforts that we see a clear connection between the thesis’ three organising frameworks. Background conditions characterised by ongoing inter-communal conflict between Israelis and Palestinians saw Kahane’s provocative performances treated relatively leniently. In turn, these influenced how he responded to particular problems as he tried to progress his agenda, and the way a range of mechanisms manifest themselves. Israel’s democratic system afforded Kahane the opportunity to run for parliament. However, he faced the problem of being a relative unknown, his efforts at actor constitution therefore achieved only limited results. Nevertheless, these did not fail, he was able to draw together a group of activists and managed to gain substantial publicity via the process of contention, operationalised through threatening performances. Kahane also clearly marked out the claims differentiating Liga from other political actors, thereby activating a further boundary in the right-wing through more extreme rhetoric and direct action. He also began to exploit the existing boundaries between Palestinians and Israelis that were all too present in the country. As such, this period marked an important phase of Kahane’s lifelong effort to define what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate membership of particular identity groups, in particular those of rightful Jews and Israelis. Themes we see develop further as Kahane consolidated a clearer political identity in the form of Kach.
Kach

Announcing the formation of Kach\textsuperscript{26} in 1974 was little more than a rebranding exercise (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1974). The same followers, many of the same policies, and the same provocative set of behaviours were in evidence. The main difference Kahane was hoping to make was the shift to a more explicitly religious platform, making Judaism the ‘cement’ of the organisation (Kahane, 2008, p.425). Kach developed into a network of chapters which revolved around Kahane. At its height there was a secretariat and a general council of approximately 50 people (Sprinzak, 1991). Beyond this, local groups were established across Israel. Organisational records suggest at different times there were up to 19 branches, varying considerably in size and significance.

In 1976–7 Kahane was fully involved campaigning for the Knesset. He secured support from Rav Kook of Gush Emunim, on the basis that Kahane would progress the effort to secure Eretz Yisrael (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1977a). However, Kahane’s efforts to broker relationships between his own and wider potential support bases largely end here. He rejected the idea of working with Begin on several occasions (Friedman, 1990; Kahane, 2008), and his efforts to mobilise a wider constituency failed. Consequently, Kahane did far worse in the 1977 elections than in 1973, attracting only 0.8% (4,396 votes) of the vote (The Israel Democracy Institute, n.d.). Kahane put some of the losses down to his confrontational behaviour, claiming to have lost 5,000 votes in one day when he visited the mayor of Nablus with a group of gun-carrying Kach members (Friedman, 1990; Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1977b). This also saw Kahane banned from the West Bank for a second time (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1977b), which curtailed campaigning in the OPT amongst Gush Emunim members who were primarily based there.

Although Kahane failed to win a seat, he hailed Begin’s victory (Shargil & Mendelson, 1977). After years of coalition or Labor governments, Israel was finally to be governed by a right-wing administration. However, after being a clear advocate of Israel encompassing ‘both banks of the Jordan’, Begin’s rhetoric and political

\textsuperscript{26}It seems likely the name derived from Rak Kach, a slogan embedded in Irgun’s history meaning ‘Only Thus’ (Gilbert, 1998; Rapoport, 1999). The name may also have been chosen for convenience. When running for election in 1973, Kahane chose the letters kaf, kaf (Kahane and Knesset) to represent them on the ballot paper. When this was refused by the Elections Committee, after Liga had printed its campaign material, they added the character ‘sofit’ and reprinted it on the campaign leaflets. The result was kaf-kaf sofit, which could be understood as ‘Only Thus’ (Kahane, 2008).
agenda changed (Shelef, 2004). His overtures towards Sadat, and the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978, amounted to a personal and political betrayal for Kahane. Since his days in New York, Kahane had known and supported Begin, even writing the foreword for his book, *The Revolt* (Begin, 1951/1974). From this point on, Kahane refused to recognise the legitimacy of the government in Israel, declaring Begin’s actions *Hillul Hashem* (Kahane, 1978).

**Terror Neged Terror**

As discussed, Kahane called for a government-sponsored ‘worldwide anti-terror group’ (Kahane, 1974/1996), and in 1975 Kahane’s agenda for organised violence found an outlet in ‘Terror Neged Terror’ (Terror Against Terror, or TNT). TNT have been described as an unofficial armed wing of Kach (Sprinzak, 1991). However, this perhaps overestimates the extent to which it existed as an organised group. It seems most likely that ‘TNT’ was a small group of Kach members, engaged in largely self-starting, relatively small-scale violence. What is clear is that Kahane endorsed both the activities and agenda of these men (Mergui & Simonnot, 1987). Despite this violent advocacy however, he maintained a distance from them, and his primary role, described by one policeman, seems to have been “[creating] the climate for his supporters to act in” (Friedman, 1990, p.241).

The exact number of their attacks is difficult to determine. Although a common problem in terrorism research, the reasons for the difficulties in this case illustrate the political opportunity structure at work. Firstly, a number of violent settler groups were active in the OPT, this makes identifying the perpetrator of a particular incident difficult due to denials of responsibility and the number of potential candidates. Secondly, many incidents appear to be relatively low level vandalism and violence, which either went unreported or uninvestigated. The Karp Report (Karp, 1984) describes a system of reprisals by settlers against Palestinians, and an equally systematic failure to properly investigate, or bring to justice the perpetrators, amounting to a culture of collusion between army and settlers. Many incidents therefore went unrecorded or unreported, both for fear of reprisals, and because the Palestinians held little hope of any action (Brown & Karim, 1995).

A search of the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the secondary literature, and media reporting, reveal a number of clusters of organised violence, as well as
isolated acts by individuals whose level of affiliation to Kach varied. The most intense period of violence came between mid-1983 and March 1984, when five Kach members were arrested for attacks on Palestinian and Christian targets (UN Special Committee Report, 1984). Other operations included several attacks against Palestinian buses in 1975 (Sprinzak, 1991); a spree of attacks by Baruch Ben-Yosef; several attacks against Palestinian targets in East Jerusalem in 1978 (Friedman, 1990); and a grenade attack by Harry Goldman, which killed two Palestinians in Jerusalem’s Old City (Sedan, 1982).

In addition to the operations which led to convictions, according to interviews with the police (Friedman, 1990); official reports (United Nations Special Committee Report, 1984); and analysis of Hebrew language media reports (Demarest & Shakra, 1985), right-wing violence in Israel and the OPT was extensive. According to one analysis, from 1980-1984 over 380 attacks led to 23 deaths and 190 injured (Demarest & Shakra, 1985). These operations certainly involved Kach members, some of whom even suggested Kahane was too moderate (Guzovsky, n.d.). The most serious accusation against Kahane came in 1980 (Weinberg & Pedahzur, 2003). In response to the killing of Kach members outside a Hebron synagogue by Palestinian militants, Kahane and Baruch Ben-Yosef were accused of planning to blow up the Dome of the Rock. How serious the plot was remains unclear, Kahane was never formally charged, and the evidence for his detention was not disclosed (Cohen-Almagor, 1992; Sedan, 1980). However, at the very least his detention suggests the security services believed him to represent a viable threat, either to the Dome of the Rock, or to inter-communal tension.

There are several points to note about this violence. The attacks most closely connected to Kach were carried out by American-born JDL members, many of which ended in failure (United Nations Special Committee Report, 1984). Generally against strategically unimportant targets, they primarily attacked Palestinians in acts often reflecting more traditional notions of hate crime than terrorism. Finally, they appear to have been carried out largely independently of the wider organisation. Although Kahane offered rhetorical and occasionally limited practical support (Friedman, 1990), there is little conclusive evidence suggesting Kahane explicitly knew about or directed particular operations. However, he did try and capitalise on them after the
fact. For example, making a man who fired a shell at a Palestinian bus an honorary member (Associated Press, 1984).

Here we are afforded our first insight into a number of themes which repeatedly limit Kahane’s capacity to establish wider coordinated action, what Tilly and Tarrow (2007) call achieving scale shift. Kach’s confrontational repertoire of contention offered little flexibility in terms of the two main mechanisms by which broader support might be mobilised: diffusion (spread of contention via already connected sites), or brokerage (linking previously unconnected sites). Via the mechanism of brokerage, Kahane came to a political understanding with Gush Emunim leaders, because of a shared interest in Eretz Yisrael. However, this neither lasted very long, nor offered substantial support given Gush’s links to the NRP, with which they shared greater interests. Further efforts at brokerage were limited because Kahane defined legitimate identities very tightly, thereby delegitimising much of the political spectrum and limiting potential allies. This was also impacted by Kahane’s demand to lead any group with which he was involved – an issue discussed a little later.

Diffusion was constrained because Kahane lacked existing networks in the country, but also because his provocative methods and rhetoric limited the number of people likely to identify with his claims. Confrontation, racism and violence were the habitual modes of response created and reproduced under Kahane’s leadership. They were also central to the group’s ideology and identity. By capitalising on such violence Kahane responded to the problem of attracting publicity to a little known group in a crowded marketplace of actors. However, as already discussed, Kahane’s extremism faced two ways, negation of Palestinian claims to citizenship, and an attack on the state and large swathes of the Jewish community. As such, even those who were attracted by his uncompromising stance towards Palestinians may have found it harder to accept his attacks on some of the core components of the State of Israel – a state still asserting its legitimacy and right to exist following the trauma of World War II.

Reviewing Kahane’s activities in the late 1970s and early 1980s in light of the thesis’ analytical framework, although Kahane’s inability to instantiate the process of scale shift was impacted by his failure to broker wider networks and the violence of
some of his followers, Kahane still capitalised on this violence. Given the background conditions characterised by the unstable situation in the West Bank, Kach members were able to continue attacking Palestinians at relatively little risk. This allowed the further consolidation and instantiation of Kahane’s Jewish identity claims, as well as impacting relations between Palestinians and Israelis. Therefore, although Kahane was not maximising Kach’s organisational potential – a feature recognised by analysts of the far-right in Israel – he was still able to progress his agenda by working to polarise relations between the major identity groups in the country. Furthermore, the political situation allowed Kahane to crystallise his identity claims for the ‘true Jew’ willing to use violence to – as he framed it – protect Jewish interests, something largely neglected in the literature on the group.

Meir Kahane: Member of the Knesset

In the early 1980s the political landscape in Israel changed, offering an opportunity for Kahane, both politically and ideologically. As the Camp David Accords were put into effect, and with Begin’s retirement following an unpopular war in Lebanon (Schiff & Ya’ari, 1986), it became easier for Kahane to appropriate the mantle of the Greater Israel cause from Jabotinsky and promote his notion of strong Jewish leadership (Ravitzy, 1986). He also developed a series of justifications, borne out by Begin’s perceived treachery, to reject democracy. For Kahane, the failure of the secular political system to deliver Eretz Yisrael reduced his commitment towards it (Cohen-Almagor, 1994). This was combined with a changing picture on the ground. Settlements in the West Bank had quadrupled in the four years up to 1981 (Shindler, 2008), and there was considerable support both for settlement building and for the transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank.27

The 1984 election therefore came at a propitious time for Kahane. As well as the issues already discussed, the socio-economic climate was particularly conducive to Kahane’s anti-Palestinian narrative. Economic gloom had descended on Israel, the expensive military confrontation in Lebanon had drained the country’s resources, a programme of reforms initiated by Likud were increasingly unaffordable, and the country’s trade deficit was in the billions (Stork, 1984; Tessler, 1994). The Sephardim communities, who had largely supported Begin, were now a significant potential

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27 In 1981, a Jerusalem Post poll found 61% of the population supported settlements (Shindler, 2008), and polls between 1983 and 1986 suggest support for those working for the transfer of Palestinians increased from 22% to 38% (Davar, 1986, cited in Lustick, 1988).
constituency for Kahane. Exacerbated by increasing tensions between Ashkenazim and Sephardim communities, and the Sephardim’s persistently disadvantaged socio-economic position (Stone, 1988), Kahane’s narrative of a misguided government and Palestinians threatening ‘Jewish jobs’ became increasingly resonant. It was in this context that Kahane’s greatest political legitimacy was achieved when he was elected to the Knesset in 1984.

Although polls showed persistent low-level support for Kahane (Mergui & Simonnot, 1987; Van Leer Institute, 1985) there was virtually no political support in the Knesset. His pariah status was unprecedented. Haim Herzog, the Head of State, refused to meet him, and the head of Likud, Yitzhak Shamir declared him “negative, dangerous and damaging” (Orgel & Landau, 1984, para. 4). Even those on the far-right decried his appointment as a Member of the Knesset (MK). Moshe Levinger, the head of Gush Emunim said he was dangerous, and the head of the ‘Greater Israel’ movement, Yuval Neeman refused to see him (Mergui & Simonnot, 1987). Almost all aspects of the political spectrum were aligned against Kahane, and the national unity government actively worked to delegitimise him. Education efforts against him were funded, in particular trying to influence constituencies which had supported him in the election, primarily the young and the armed forces (Cohen-Almagor, 1992).

Kahane’s apparent commitment to the political process raises the question of how he reconciled using representative politics to win power given his rejection of democracy. Grappling with the problem of maintaining legitimacy and offering a way of operationalising radical change, Kahane recast democracy as a system to be used if it suited his understanding of the needs of the Jewish people. As the trustee rather than the owner of Israel, he argued the government should serve the needs of the Jews, instead of making Jews beholden to a foreign system of governance. Recognising the potential contradiction between undermining democracy and taking a seat in parliament, his first act upon reaching the Knesset was to refuse to take the standard oath of office without appending a line from Psalms. This indicated that, were the laws of the Knesset to come into conflict with the laws of the Torah, the latter should prevail (Kahane Agitates the Knesset, 1984). However, Kahane also had somewhat more pragmatic reasons for engaging with the democratic process. By gaining a seat in the Knesset he could take advantage of the right to parliamentary
immunity, bypassing the restrictions the authorities had placed upon him (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1977b; Tessler, 1986).

Despite his incorporation into legitimate politics, Kahane made few concessions to the professed norms of the Knesset. Indeed, he seemed to bait the MKs in an attempt to win more publicity. He continued to put forward highly controversial bills, and engage in provocative performances on the floor of the Knesset (Sedan, 1984). These bills included calls for non-Jews to be given the status of resident alien, granted only personal, not national rights, and for any act of assimilation between Jews and non-Jews to be made illegal, including marriage, intercourse, or mixed residency (Morgan & Attias, 1990). Kahane returned to provoking the Palestinians with his newfound parliamentary immunity, travelling to villages, threatening the local population and telling them they had to leave (Palestine Chronology, 1985). The result was an unprecedented bill removing Kahane’s immunity and restricting his freedom of movement (Landau & Orgel, 1988). Kahane was also barred from appearing on radio and television or speaking in Israeli schools. Whilst opposing all of these interdictions vociferously through the courts, Kahane was largely unsuccessful in gaining any concessions, or seeing any of his bills implemented (Cohen-Almagor, 1994).

Kach’s representation in local politics also improved in this period. After failing to gain any seats in the local election in Kiryat Arba in 1980, they won two seats in the 1984 campaign. Here, Kach was somewhat more successful in achieving political goals. For example, they enacted an ‘apartheid policy’ of not employing Palestinians in the town (Sedan, 1985). Beyond this however, Kach largely failed to advance their political agenda in a meaningful way, but there were a number of other outcomes from Kahane’s time as an MK. The first was enabling the process of self-representation. Although Kahane was banned from most media outlets, he was still afforded a degree of attention due to his controversial policies and practices. This enabled him to demonstrate his commitment to Eretz Yisrael, encourage aliyah, and promote his platform of evicting Palestinians from the OPT and Israel. Second, because he had achieved the process of institutionalising his claims, he had a more stable foundation from which to progress his aims. However, this was not to last.

Before going on to look at post-Knesset Kach, it is instructive to briefly consider two
primary influences on how these processes developed, the leadership principle by which he ran Kach, and his constituency base.

**Leadership principle**

Those involved with Kach speak of a rapidly changing senior membership due to clashes with Kahane (Kotler, 1986). This reflected the leadership principle Kach operated under. Described as cultivating a cult of personality (Sprinzak, 1985a), Kahane marginalised those who had claims to influence in the group (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2009). This had a number of effects. Kahane’s demand to lead whatever organisation he was involved with stymied his ability to broker alliances that may have broadened his reach. For example, talks with NRP leadership broke down when Kahane insisted on voting according to his own conscience, rather than with the party. Further talks with younger members came to nothing when he demanded to lead any breakaway faction (Friedman, 1990). It also perpetuated the conflation of Kach and Kahane, thereby perhaps limiting the organisation’s legitimacy as a political voice. That a leading member wrote a piece addressing the question ‘Is Kach a one man movement?’ suggests members were aware this was a problem, not only politically, but organisationally (Kach, n.d.e). The result was a somewhat weak organisation, which depended almost entirely on Kahane for its direction, fundraising and identity.

**Constituency**

Of those who voted for Kahane in 1984, 33% came from development towns, 33% from the religious moshavim, and 23% from less affluent urban areas (Mergui & Simonnot, 1987). Primarily areas with large populations of Sephardic Jews, this constituted Kahane’s main support base (Shafir & Peled, 2002). In mobilising support in the Sephardim communities, as well as the discourse of Palestinians threatening ‘Jewish jobs’, Kahane tried to leverage the cultural and social distance between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Arguing that the Ashkenazim tried to deprive the Sephardim of religious expression, for example, not allowing their children to go to religious schools, Kahane aimed to activate not only a social identity boundary, but also a boundary between secular and religious Jews (Kahane, 2008).

Moreover, Kahane claimed the Sephardim as his own, arguing they understood his antagonism to the Palestinians because “they come from Arab countries; and they know what Arabs are; and they did not want to live under Arabs; and that’s why they’re my people” (CBS News, 1984). Kahane’s extreme religious
nationalist rhetoric thereby tried to answer a practical and an identity need. He offered an economic solution, and made a set of identity claims which prioritised Jewish identity over ethnicity, thereby drawing the boundary of legitimate citizenship in such a way that it welcomed the, often newly arrived, Sephardim. Similarly, he reinforced the notion of an ‘Arab’ identity, the mirror of which was a Jewish identity that transcended national citizenship (Shafir & Peled, 2002). In doing so, he was also responding to questions of his own legitimacy as an outsider. By defining identity groups in religious-nationalist terms, he became more clearly a rightful citizen of Israel.

Summarising this period, Kahane capitalised on the political and economic situation and the relative openness of the democratic political system to successfully engage with the mainstream political process. Despite his disavowal of democracy, he thereby institutionalised his claim-making, enabling the process of self-representation. A number of other mechanisms and processes are at work helping to explain the level and locus of his support. Firstly, Kahane’s failure to complete the process of scale shift because of his unwillingness to work constructively with others, and his leadership principle. In response, there was a process of decertification, where members of the Knesset refused to engage with him or his claims, events explored a little more in the following section. However, throughout this period, he did manage to further polarise a number of relations between identity groups. Most notably, between Palestinians and Israelis, by putting forward highly inflammatory and racist bills in parliament. We have also seen how he mined the division between Ashkenazim and Sephardim Jews for his own purposes of constituency building, and in so doing made the boundary between secular and religious Jews more salient.

**Post-Knesset Kach**

The final legal challenge came when the Knesset voted to ban parties expounding racist views from seeking election (The Knesset, n.d.), effectively prohibiting Kach from running in 1988 and ending Kahane’s parliamentary career. The ruling came at a significant time, with the Intifada developing momentum, Kach’s message offered a clear, if extreme, answer to the increasing violence. Indeed, a 1988 poll found support from approximately half of Jewish Israelis for Palestinians to be evicted from the OPT (cited in McDowell, 1989, p.313). Further polls suggested Kach could achieve up to three seats, and given the forecasted even split between
Labor and Likud, had the potential to make Kach something of a kingmaker (Brinkley, 1988). It is interesting therefore, that it was two members from the right of the political spectrum who put forward the motion that would eventually ban Kach – Tehiya’s Guela Cohen (formerly of the Irgun), and Likud’s Yitzhak Shamir. Although Kahane was ideologically unpopular, it seems practical politics were foremost amongst his opponent’s concerns, as Ariel Sharon told his supporters: “‘our danger is … Kahane, who takes all our votes” (cited in Kotler, 1986, p.109).

Despite this final process of *decertification* from the mainstream, Kahane did not abandon politics, rather, he announced a parallel state in waiting. On January 18, 1989 he declared that as the permanent annexation of the West Bank was looking less likely, it was necessary to establish the framework for a State of Judea, to be “a Jewish state, not a state of Jews” (Silow Carroll, 1989, para. 8). Via an elaborate performance including unveiling a new flag, anthem, and identity cards (Silow Carroll, 1989; Sprinzak, 1991), the State of Judea concept acted as focal point around which a range of other militant actors organised. In particular, following attacks by Palestinians on Jews living in the OPT in 1987, individuals aligned with Kahane and the State of Judea idea established the Committee for the Security of the Highways (another of the groups used to develop the typology). Initially led by Shmuel Ben-Yishai, the Committee vowed to protect Jews travelling on the roads in the West Bank with violence if necessary, Ben-Yishai even suggested they could be the next ‘Jewish terrorist underground’ (Hamilton, 1987).

Their protection agenda almost immediately evolved into attacking Palestinian villages (Frankel, 1988), and ‘suspicious-looking Arabs’ (Hamilton, 1988). Tiran Polack, who led the group after Ben Yishai’s arrest for arson (Goldberg, 1990), claimed up to 1,000 people were involved (Lagaziel, 1994, cited in Sprinzak, 1999). The number of members is hard to verify, in particular as the Committee were less of a formal organisation and more a loose social network (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2009), coordinated by a smaller group of more committed organisers. 28 The number of attacks they were responsible for is also extremely difficult to isolate, for many of the same reasons as identifying specifically ‘TNT’-related attacks.

28 Including Shmuel Ben-Yishai, Tiran Polak, Baruch Marzel, Noam Federman and Michael Ben-Horin; Binyamin Kahane, David Axelrod (Ha’ivri) and Yekutiel Ben-Yaakov (Mike Guzovsky).
Claiming to have carried out about 1,000 operations between 1992-3 (Lagaziel, 1994, cited in Sprinzak, 1999), media searches confirm dozens of arrests or reports of provocation and violence between 1987 and 1994. These are generally for less serious offences such as incitement, trespass, disturbance and protest. However, there are a number of accusations of violence against Palestinians, including alleged beatings, shootings, and arson. What is clear is that there was a marked radicalisation of Kach and its satellites during this period, heavily influenced by the ongoing Intifada. It is also noticeable that the authorities largely failed to arrest and convict Committee members. Although they were constantly coming to the attention of the army and the police, almost none were sent to prison. The primary reason given was a lack of evidence, but the widespread failure to enforce the rule of law in the OPT offered Kahane’s followers a significant opportunity to engage in violence, largely untroubled by the army and the police.

Here again, we see the wider political context offering Kahane’s followers the opportunity to consolidate their political and identity claims. The growing instability in the OPT afforded them the chance to respond to the decertification of the official movement through violence at relatively low risk. However, with Kach’s disbarment from mainstream politics, Kahane had to manufacture another platform from which to promote his ideas. This came in the form of the State of Judea movement, which although it attracted a range of actors under its umbrella, largely failed to gain any real political momentum, marking another failure in the process of scale shift.

**Death of a leader**

Kahane’s assassination in 1990 by El Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian-born American with connections to militant Islamists, prompted a leadership crisis in Kach. To some surprise, a ballot selected Abraham Toledano, a computer engineer and Rabbi at the Yeshiva of the Jewish Idea to lead Kach (Landau, 1991). Kahane’s son, Benyamin, was appalled (BBC, 1991), and along with a group of primarily American members, founded *Kahane Chai* or ‘Kahane lives’, based in the settlement of Kfar Tapuach.29 Toledano proposed they should rescind their most vehement racism and violence, and seek election to the Knesset (BBC, 1991; Sedan, 1991). However, this

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29 Those who split off to form Kahane Chai were: Binyamin Kahane, David Axelrod (Ha’ivri) and Yekutiel Ben-Yaakov (Mike Guzofsky).
softer agenda was not widely popular and he was soon replaced by Baruch Marzel, who led Kach until it was officially banned in 1994. Espousing the same ideas and aims, the primary source of difference between the factions appeared to be the role of political representation (BBC, 1991; Honig & Yudelman, 1991). Benyamin initially declared he was against it, but nevertheless still attempted to gain approval to run for election, which suggests there were other reasons for the split. According to Sprinzak (1999), these are to be found in the American’s reluctance to be led by a Moroccan Rabbi (Toledano), and the Israeli’s unwillingness to share power with the Americans.

The landscape changed when on Purim eve, during Ramadan in 1994, Baruch Goldstein shot dead 29 Muslims in the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. To put these events in context, Labor had won the last election, the Oslo Accords had just been signed, and there was ongoing violence by Palestinian militants. There was also increasing concern in Hebron that Hamas were planning an attack, and the sounds of Etbach el Yahud (Kill the Jews) were heard around the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the days leading up to the attack (Auerbach, 2009). The frame by which these events were interpreted, was that the redemption many on the right believed was imminent would be delayed with the loss of the OPT, a situation Sprinzak (2000) described as ‘messianism in severe crisis’. It was in this charged climate, that at 5am, during morning prayers, Goldstein walked into the prayer hall and started firing. He killed 29 people and injured 125 more before being killed by the congregation when his rifle jammed.

These events are significant because of Goldstein’s membership of Kach. Whilst the official report found it was the act of a single man (Commission of Inquiry, 1994) it would be an oversimplification to designate Goldstein’s actions those of a ‘lone actor’. He had a long history with Kahane (Brownfeld, 2005; Shamgar Commission, 1996). He was on Kach’s party list in 1984 and 1988, and served for Kach on the Kiryat Arba council (Shamgar Commission, 1996). He was therefore fully embedded in the Kach nexus of political contestation, and support for his actions from this community was strong. In the hours after his attack, Kahane Chai released a statement declaring him a man who had died “in the sanctification of God’s name” (cited in Pedahzur & Perliger, 2009, p.71). Those associated with the State of Judea

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30 Other prominent members were Noam Federman and Tiran Polak.
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pronounced him a ‘righteous man’ and a ‘martyr’ (Baum & Singer, 1994, cited in Shahak, 1994). Support in Kiryat Arba was also substantial, in a poll, 43% saw him as a hero (cited in Cohen-Almagor, 1997). Such figures support Sprinzak’s contention that the Hebron massacre was a “collective act by proxy, a colossal demonstration of political violence expressing a crisis of an entire fundamentalist milieu” (Sprinzak, 1999, p.3) in response to the receding possibility of the redemption.

Death of a Prime Minister

The effect of the massacre on the network of Kahanists in the West Bank was immediate. The government banned Kach and Kahane Chai, and made supporting or preaching their ideology a crime (Government of Israel, 1994). All of the main protagonists were arrested, and many were placed in administrative detention (Anti-Defamation League, 1995; Cohen-Almagor, 1996). Before going on to examine how Kach and Kahane Chai members responded to the final official banning of their movement, it is instructive to look at perhaps the most consequential piece of political violence in Israel’s history, the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by another ostensibly lone actor, Yighal Amir.

Rabin was shot dead at a peace rally on 4 November 1995, when the Oslo peace process was well underway. In the context of increasingly vitriolic attacks against Rabin by the right-wing, his own efforts to delegitimise the settlers, and a lethal suicide bombing campaign by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, discussion turned to whether the Prime Minister was guilty of breaking halachic law. In particular the laws of din rodef (the law of the pursuer), which demands the death of any Jew who puts other Jews in danger; and din moser (the law of the informer) which states that any Jew who gives over Jewish property without proper rabbinical approval is liable to be killed (Shahak & Mezvinsky, 1999). It seems unlikely that Amir received a rabbi’s endorsement (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2009), but the theological discourse supporting the view that Rabin was committing such grave crimes was widespread (Sprinzak, 1999). Amir was involved with the radical Eyal group which was influenced by Kahane’s ideology (Jurgensmeyer, 2000), as was Amir himself (Cohen-Almagor, 1997). Hence, although he appeared to have acted alone, Amir’s behaviour was understood in the context of Kach’s platform and violent rhetoric (Shamgar Commission, 1996).
The end of a movement?

In the lee of these events, the flurry of legislative action and efforts to delegitimise Kach and Kahane Chai curtailed their activities, but did not stop them entirely. Despite initially declaring the intention to cooperate more closely with one another (Associated Press, 1994), the groups went on to engage in largely separate contentious, and sometimes violent activities. Kahane Chai was somewhat less involved in militancy, primarily because Binyamin Kahane spent much of his time in prison, involved in legal cases, or under surveillance. With Kahane’s assassination by Palestinian paramilitaries in 2000, in what was apparently an untargeted attack (Wright-Neville, 2010), most of Kahane Chai’s leaders relinquished contestation on any significant scale. They are still active in the West Bank, for example Kfar Tapuach provides a space for attendees, often young Americans, to undergo training in military tactics and religious studies, and engage with Kahanist ideology (McAllester & Laub, 2009).

The leaders of what was Kach have engaged in more concerted contestation, and have also seen greater attention from the security services. Marzel and Federman, along with Itamar Ben Gvir, a man involved with the far-right (including the Eyal group) since his teens, are currently perhaps the most recognisable faces of the far-right in Israel. They have also been implicated in some of the most serious plots to have emerged from this milieu, although they have largely avoided conviction (Setton, 2005). Focusing much of their contention on the fight for ongoing Jewish settlement in Hebron, they have also engaged with the political process. In 2006, Federman gained 24,848 votes for the Jewish National Front party. This was insufficient to reach the Knesset, but saw him campaign on a confrontational platform of government reform, no territorial compromise over Eretz Yisrael, and the primacy of the Jewish nature of the State of Israel (Eidelberg, 2005; Potter, 2004). Finally, with Michael Ben-Ari’s election as part of the National Union alliance of far-right parties in 2009, a long-time follower of Kahane achieved a seat in the Knesset. He appointed Marzel and Ben Gvir as aids (Cook, 2009a) and they, along with another man, Aryeh Eldad – dubbed the ‘new Kach’ – ran under their own party (Otzma LeYisrael: Power to Israel) in the 2013 election (Harkov, 2012). Failing to get over the two percent threshold, Eldad and Ben-Ari lost their seats (Lis, 2013). For now,

31 Currently, the ‘Israeli Academy Canine Unit and Yeshiva’ is fulfilling this role. See: http://defendisrael.net/about.shtml
Kach’s followers have no official political representation, and remain an extremely marginal voice in Israeli politics, without a strong leader and lacking popular legitimacy.

**Kahane: Political Entrepreneur**

Reflecting on these events, in the years after Kahane’s death two of the worst acts of terrorism in the history of modern Israel had taken place, both significantly influenced by his ideology and efforts to change relations between the different identity groups in Israel. However, it is unwise to assume all of the far-right celebrated Rabin’s assassination. Rather, these events seemed to cause significant reflection within this milieu, in particular within the ranks of Gush Emunim rabbis (Sprinzak, 2000). Indeed, these events deepened a boundary in the far-right. Following the assassination, those on the right more clearly distanced themselves from Kach, a boundary the media recognised and further embedded through their coverage (Wolfsfeld, 1997).

Although Kach and Kahane Chai were the only ones not to condemn Rabin’s killing, it is interesting to consider whether Kahane himself would have welcomed these events. Kahane was always between two worlds, the overt world of the politician, and the covert world of violent intimidation. However, in Tilly’s terms (2003), he was a political entrepreneur rather than a violent specialist, far more engaged with making political claims and promoting his identity interests. His role in violence was through activating boundaries, changing relations between identity groups and promoting particular claims through the threat of violence. What seems clear is that Kahane did not wish to be an underground leader, nor for Kach to be a clandestine organisation. Repeated efforts to engage with the political process, suggest he was more interested in pursuing his aims in the full light of media attention. His failure was in not reproducing or reinforcing the structures he developed, so with his death there was conflict over who should control Kach’s claim-making.

This is reflected in Kach’s position in the typology. Its profile demonstrates few of the characteristics of predominantly violent groups, most noticeably in its limited resources. For example, it did not try and hold territory, or have experienced fighters amongst its ranks. However, Kahane did manage to develop moderate levels
of organisational infrastructure through Kach’s official political activities. Hence its position in the typology is characterised by a mid-level infrastructure, and low levels of resources. However, there appears to be an anomaly between the argument made above, that Kahane largely failed to consolidate a process of scale shift, and Kach’s categorisation as a group with solid wider networks.

There are two reasons for this, informed by the type of leadership Kahane exhibited. Although Kahane largely failed to develop networks within Israel, he maintained strong links in America, to which he returned regularly to give talks, fundraise and coordinate activities with the JDL. A product of his time leading the JDL, he was able to exploit this network without competition from other far-right actors at relatively little cost. However, in trying to develop similar networks in Israel, not only was he inhibited by his position as an outsider, he had to compete for political and social support. Achieving ‘scale shift’ in Israel would mean brokering a relationship with other far-right actors, or competing with them. He proved unable to do either: unwilling to cede political ground or leadership to Gush Emunim and lacking wider political support because of his polarising views.

Secondly, as we have seen, Kach is regularly connected to the Committee for the Security of the Highways – another of the groups used to develop the typology. The literature generally treats them as a separate organisation, understood as such, they appear to offer additional support to Kach. However, the Committee are better understood as an offshoot of Kach. By examining each separately, Kach appears to have broader networks within Israel than is perhaps the case. This reflects one of the problems of treating often complex networks of actors as ‘groups’ which may not necessarily reflect the day to day reality of militant claim-making. It also serves as reminder to look beyond broad-level categorisation to unpick the mechanisms driving such militancy.

In the final section, these characteristics and the effect they had on Kach’s political outcomes are considered. Before that, it is worth reviewing some of the main mechanisms and processes implicated in Kach’s rise and fall discussed so far. First, we saw Kahane adapt the repertoire of contention he had developed in America to his new environment in Israel. In doing so, he consistently tried to activate boundaries between particular identity groups: Israeli-Palestinian; Jew-Arab; legitimate-
illegal Israeli; secular-religious Jew; and Ashkenazim-Sephardim. Moreover, by activating a further boundary in the right-wing, he was able to make political space for himself, and as explored further in the next section, he created a new set of practices and discourses put to use by far-right actors long after his demise. However, Kahane failed most notably in the process of scale shift. Whilst he managed to establish a set of political and identity claims which became ‘Kahanism’, his inability to relinquish control of the organisation, and failure to build stronger links with other political actors meant that with his assassination, Kach stalled.

Throughout his political career, in the manner of all good political entrepreneurs, Kahane took advantage of the background conditions in Israel to advance his aims. He used the democratic political process to instantiate the process of self-representation, briefly institutionalising his claim-making. Similarly, the ongoing low intensity conflict in Israel and the OPT created a unique political opportunity structure for Kach. He capitalised on the inter-communal violence to legitimise his identity claims about Palestinians, reinforce his rhetoric about the need for a ‘new’ strong Jewish identity, and the need to consolidate control over Eretz Yisrael. The relatively limited repression his followers faced meant they were able to act on these identity claims through vigilante violence. As the violence of the First Intifada grew, so did the Kahanist’s militancy. Up until his death, Kahane took advantage of these macro-level political events to further his political claims, but not to consolidate a strong organisation. With Kahne’s decertification and subsequent factionalisation, they lost their organisational and political cohesion. In examining Kach’s outcomes, it would be a mistake to stop here however. Kahanism continues to have an impact in Israel, and it is to this attention now turns.

**Outcomes: Why Did Kach End and What Did it Achieve?**

In locating and interpreting outcomes what follows looks first at how, through the mechanism of diffusion, Kach’s symbols and ideas have become widely understood shorthand for particular subject positions. Such diffusion is also seen in the activities of the ‘hilltop youth’, who echo Kach’s vigilantism in their ongoing attacks against Palestinians. The role of violence in constituting particular identities within the Kahanist milieu is examined, and how this came to define Kach to their various audiences in Israel. Then, the effect of Kahane’s polarising, racialised
discourse in expanding the boundaries of acceptable speech is considered, alongside an examination of how this consolidated new limits of expression and debate in Israel.

**Kach and Kahanism: Decertification but not dissolution**

The process of decertification, seen in the state’s move to disavow their place in the political and social system, severely disrupted Kach and Kahane Chai’s activities. However, it has not destroyed the phenomenon of ‘Kahanism’, what is best described as the broader set of claims invoked by a range of actors on the right self-consciously drawing on Kahane’s ideological and political programme. Websites, blogs and literature continue to be produced about Kahane’s ideas. His name is invoked, commemorative songs rehearsed, and Kach paraphernalia openly sold in Israel and the OPT (Maeir, 2008; Setton, 2005). The anniversary of his death, and that of Baruch Goldstein’s, is commemorated by ‘Kachniks’ who have marched on symbolically important Palestinian towns (Gedalyahu, 2010), and celebrate their yortzheit (death days) (Cook, 2009b; Medzini, 2010).

Moreover, there are chapters of the JDL across the world promoting the platform of Kahanism. Kach symbols are used by these actors, and in a range of contexts in Israel, from football matches (see Figure 7.5) (Baram, 2010; Hasson & Rosenberg, 2012; Rosenberg, 2012), to animated cartoons, music videos (Gofstein, n.d.) and comic books illustrating the life of Meir Kahane (see Figure 7.6) (Ma’an News Agency, 2010). On one occasion supporters put up posters (see Figure 7.7) in the town where Eden Zaada killed four Palestinians in a gun attack on a bus (Raved, 2005). After going AWOL from the army, Zaada spent time in Kfar Tapuach and was committed to Kahanist ideology (Popper & Haaretz, 2005).

*Figure 7.5.* Beitar football club fans with Kach banner (Hasson & Rosenberg, 2012). Picture by Haggai Aharon (2012).
The purpose of these illustrations is to demonstrate the ongoing resonance of Kahane’s ideas. Gaining a clear idea of how many people adhere to ‘Kahanism’ is necessarily very difficult. However, perhaps more interesting than headcounts, these vignettes suggest the image of Kahane and Kach have retained a positive symbolic value. This is perhaps most obvious in the graffiti found in Hebron. Figure 7.8 illustrates four typical cases, taken from the Tel Rumeida Project website,\(^32\) which documents the behaviour of settlers in the settlement of Tel Rumeida and nearby

\(^32\) http://www.telrumeidaproject.info/
Hebron. It is far from an impartial source, and these images are relatively common in pro-Palestinian online environments, along with other images displaying spray painted tags such as ‘Die Arab Sand Niggers’ and ‘Exterminate the Arabs’.

However if, rather than approaching them simply as documents purporting to show the behaviour of settlers in the OPT, they are interpreted as social artefacts, used to construct and shape notions of the other, they offer greater insight. As such, it becomes clear that the conflict between the communities is understood and represented through the imagery of Kach and the JDL: they have come to signify particular subject positions. Hence, the symbols and political identity that Kahane developed in 1960s Brooklyn have transmuted into the crudest shorthand for anti-Palestinian ideas and practices in the West Bank nearly 50 years on. Understood and recognised by both communities, and observers, their use as propaganda or as forms of intimidation, demonstrates the resonance of the Kahanism brand which has found life through its diffusion across different sites of contention, further polarising relations between Israelis and Palestinians.
‘Price-tagging’ and limited repression

There is a noticeable resemblance between the tactics Kach (including Kahane himself) employed and what has recently been termed ‘price-tagging’, an epithet used to describe the retributive ‘price’ to be paid by Palestinians or (less frequently) Israeli security forces for acts perceived to impact the settlement project. It encapsulates a particular form of violence and intimidation (B’tselem, 2012), of which the United Nations has documented an exponential rise in recent years (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2011). Although increasingly lethal, it is primarily characterised by attacks against property and land, for example arson, vandalising property, graffiti, and destroying olive trees (Cook, 2012). The perpetrators are most often described as the ‘hilltop youth’.

Without a central organisation, they share a set of aspirations and tactics (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2009), and are increasingly being treated as a ‘terrorist group’ for security purposes (Byman & Sachs, 2012; Jerusalem Post, 2011). The ideological roots of these settlers demonstrate a degree of ideological hybridisation. Combining the most extreme aspects of the messianic redemptionist script, with the self-sufficiency of the pre-mandate Labor ‘Jewish farmer pioneers’, and the violence and vigilantism of Kach.

The influence of Kahanism on these actors was displayed in a recent, and relatively uncommon, insight into the ‘hilltop youth’, in which one young woman convicted of ‘price-tagging’, espoused views strikingly similar to Kahane’s, whilst wearing a pendant sporting the Kach emblem (Corbin, 2012). Further evidence of Kahane’s influence is seen in the frequent use of the phrase Kahane Tzadak (Kahane was right) in the graffiti activists spray on cars, churches, buildings and schools (Friedman, 2012). Indeed, there are marked parallels between ‘price-tag’ attacks and those carried out by Kahane. The use of graffiti, arson attacks against religious targets and entering villages provoking the Palestinian inhabitants were some of the hallmarks of Kach, and resonate loudly in the actions of the ‘hilltop youth’. Clearly, these tactics were not the sole purview of Kach, for example, Gush Emunim’s vigilantism has been well documented (see Weisburd, 1989). However, there do seem to be ideological and tactical similarities which echo Kahane’s repertoire of contention; what the terrorism literature might describe as ‘contagion’ (Nacos, 2009). Sufficient perhaps to make the case that there has been a diffusion of tactics through
to a new generation of far-right actors. One which illustrates a particular subject position this next wave wishes to invoke, further embedding the ‘Kahanist’ political identity and reinforcing this boundary in the right-wing.

Organisational decline

The organisational infrastructure of Kach and Kahane Chai has demonstrated far less longevity than their ideas, and for reasons not solely attributable to the process of repression initiated in 1994 by the Israeli government. Kach was always organisationally weak. Its heavy dependence on Kahane, and the leadership principle which permeated the organisation, meant that with his death, not only was there no clear organisational structure or leadership, there was also a limited supply of funds. Kahane’s ability to fundraise was a function of the networks he had developed and cultivated in America through the JDL. Without him, this funding stream was far less lucrative, and his adherents’ efforts at fundraising in America have not been on the same scale (Popper & Haaretz, 2005). Not least because the groups are classed as Foreign Terrorist Organisations by the US authorities and ex-members can struggle to gain travel visas (Lis, 2012; Mulholland, 2009).

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to stop at practical and fiscal reasons for Kach’s organisational decline. To some extent, the lack of organisational cohesion and longevity was afforded in Kahane’s political programme. To understand why this is the case, it is necessary to turn to the set of political claims described at the beginning of the chapter. The primary tool Kahane claimed was responsible for protecting the people was the state. It was only if the state failed to satisfactorily fulfil this role that extra-institutional action should be taken. For Kahane this involved far more extreme practices than the state could sanction, so almost inevitably, it legitimated vigilantism. However, Kahane’s focus, in his political claims at least, was still largely on achieving these aims via existing institutions. There was less focus on developing a clear organisational structure with the capacity for violent action, such as might be found in, for example, the Abu Nidal Organisation. The consequence was a clearer focus on a set of ideological and political, rather than organisational claims which, allied to his demand for sole control over Kach, meant there was no organisational repertoire on which to draw on his death. The result was much greater success in developing Kahanism as an idea, than Kach as an organisation.
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The role of the state is also important in explaining why this is the case. Whilst the processes of repression and decertification certainly impacted the Kahanist’s ability to maintain their claim-making, it was not sufficiently strident to destroy their ability to engage in political contention. As we have seen, those involved with Kahane Chai and Kach continued to engage in a largely similar repertoire of contention despite the ban, albeit on a lower scale. The previous section set out the scope for Kahanist symbolism and language to emerge in Israel’s political chamber, on its streets and in the hills of the OPT. The type of regime and level of capacity in the OPT in part explains this. The comparatively lenient attitude of the IDF towards settler violence – of which Kahanists are a part – has been well documented (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2011). The evidence strongly suggests there is, if not complicity between settlers and the army, a systematic failure to investigate and prosecute those responsible for attacks against Palestinians (Yesh Din, 2012). As such, the political opportunity structure is sufficient for them to engage in such practices at relatively low personal risk, but not enough for them to mobilise in a more substantial way. Both because of the lack of organisational infrastructure, and the more stringent security efforts likely to ensue in the face of more organised violence (Byman, 2011).

The status of the OPT offers a further opportunity for the Kahanists. Firstly, it opened a space for Kahanism to become a lived reality rather than just a set of ideological principles. The OPT offers young, fervently religious Jews, the chance to live a settler life. Consequently, they are in a target rich environment, with little in the way of social or political control, and an opportunity for potentially extreme voices from outside the country to be allowed in under the auspices of aliyah. Further, living in the West Bank allows ready access to weapons, and mandatory army training offers Israelis the skills to use them. Added to which Palestinians, as they see it, continue to threaten this way of life, not only through demographic changes in the state of Israel, but in the OPT through daily opportunities for confrontation and the violence of Palestinian militant groups. Such an environment amounts to a limited form of facilitation by the authorities, which allows low-level contestation and the ongoing dissemination of Kahanist ideas, prolonging the process of actor constitution. Rather than asking why Kahanism is a relatively marginal element of the far-right in Israel, it
is perhaps more intriguing to ask why it has not produced more significant violence than it has. It is to these questions attention now turns.

**Kach’s violence: Consolidating identity claims**

To understand the outcomes of Kach’s militancy it is necessary to examine how they understood violence. In the earlier discussion of Kahane’s ideology and evolution, the argument was made that identity claims, expressive, religiously-defined goals, and political claims interact and sometimes conflict in informing the purpose and meaning of violence. These different strands are influenced by the various problems Kahane faced when establishing Kach. To revisit some of the points already made, given his position as an outsider in Israel, and the growing number of voices on the right, violence and extreme responses to the ‘Palestinian question’ more clearly differentiated Kahane from other political actors via the process of polarisation. Such calls were also embedded in the identity claims that defined Kahanism, and gave meaning to its members. For example, Matt Liebowitz, one of Kahane’s supporters who followed him from America explained: “for me and for others there was a certain mystical attachment to blood and violence. This was the violence that drew us to the JDL and bonded us together in the struggle” (Friedman, 1990, p.202).

In the discussion of the political identities embedded in Kahane’s ideology, the centrality of developing a ‘new’ Jewish identity was noted. One characterised by strength and violence and a willingness to defend Judaism and *Eretz Yisrael* against its enemies. In establishing this set of claims, Kahane initiated the process of actor constitution, inculcating the identity he promoted with particular traits and behaviours, drawing on theological claims rhetorically justifying violence. Here we see violence used to influence two audiences – facing outwards to define Kach to political opponents and competitors, and facing inwards to authenticate a set of identity claims for members and constituents.

Kahane’s development of these claims affords both expressive and instrumental reasons for violence reflecting the boundary between religious and political ends. Despite engaging with the political process, Kahane prioritised religious claims. Indeed, his involvement was predicated upon such a position. Hence, whilst some of his calls for violence were presented as serving strategic, political goals (e.g. with the state-led anti-terror group), the majority of them became
religiously-defined ends in themselves. Again to recap, because Palestinians living in
the land of Israel profaned God’s name, and because the state of Israel was founded as
a response to the desecration of God, violence against Gentiles was constructed as a
good in itself. Further, given the threat Palestinians were perceived to pose – through
‘bullets or babies’ – and the embedding of these claims in racist discourses, attacking
Palestinians became justifiable because a) they were an existential threat; b) they
profaned God by their presence; c) they were inferior; and d) by dint of being the
object of the Jewish identity claims Kahane tried to make. As Kahane capitalised on
such violence, he produced and reproduced the justifications for violence in light of
new events.

Chasdi (2002) makes the case that with Kahane’s exclusion from the Knesset,
the political opportunity structure at the national level closed, increasing the
likelihood of violence. This claim is important to explore, and underpins the question
of whether inviting extreme voices into the political complex increases or decreases
the chances of violence, a subject of increasing amounts of research (e.g. Wiegand,
2010; Weinberg & Pedahzur, 2003). Notably, Dugan and Young (2010) claim that
incorporating such voices reduces the scope for terrorism by offering an alternative
way of voicing political concerns. Looking more closely at the violence for which
Kach was held responsible this does not appear to hold. The two most significant
periods of violence came in 1984 with the ‘TNT’s’ spate of attacks, and widespread
vigilantism in the context of the First Intifada between 1987 and 1994. The first wave
came just before the 1984 elections and the second began whilst Kahane was still in
parliament, both periods when Kach had a stake in the political system. Hence,
although it is important to remain careful about placing too great a weight on what are
uncertain estimates about violence, and it is not possible to predict what may have
happened had Kahane remained in the Knesset, there appears to be no systematic
relationship between limiting the opportunity for political engagement and a reduction
in violence. Rather, the evidence suggests two somewhat parallel tracks: Kahane
pursing political representation, whilst his followers engaged in largely expressive
acts of vigilantism and revenge.

Putting to one side Goldstein and Amir’s attacks for a moment, Kach members
were largely involved in violence against targets of little strategic importance. They
did not, for example, systematically target Palestinian militants or political figures, or
strategically or symbolically important Israeli targets. There may be some very good operational reasons for not attacking such hard targets. Indeed, their efforts have been described as amateurish (Pedahzur & Perliger, 2009), and the frequent failure of their operations has already been noted. Nevertheless, looked at in this way, Goldstein and Amir’s violence was actually very different to that of Kach’s satellites. The two men successfully used violence against hugely symbolical and strategically important targets in a qualitatively different way to the rest of the Kahanists. Despite these differences, and the fact that they were carried out independent of a wider organisation, they were largely unproblematically classified as part of Kach’s sphere of influence. This demonstrates how successful Kahane had been in establishing a recognisable repertoire of contention. The actual violence, and its rhetorical legitimation had the effect of producing and reproducing the context by which such acts could be interpreted as belonging to a certain repertoire of claims. The outcome was the decertification and outlawing of the group, but also the consolidation of a set of political and identity claims which resonate in Kahanism.

**Ideological constraints**

In the context of the other elements of the extreme right in Israel, it is clear that as an outsider, Kahane had to work harder to substantiate his claims. Taking Ravitzky’s (1990) conceptualisation of the two main currents in the radical right, of messianic redemptionism (e.g. Gush Emunim), and ultra-orthodox religious radicalism (the Haredim), whilst not mainstream in any sense, they are recognisably part of the Judaic tradition. As Ravitzky (1990) convincingly sets out, they incorporate within them a number of radicalising and moderating forces which help explain their behaviour. Specifically, the ultra-orthodox are primarily opposed to secular Zionists who they believe are not only impacting on their beliefs, but are likely to prolong the redemption. This makes secular Jews the primary target for confrontation. However, as the Haredim are still technically in exile, protest is limited as they are required to persevere under adversity, and not rise up against their rulers. Hence, there is a moderating force on the extent to which they will confront their primary antagonist, whilst defining quite clear targets for any militancy and violence. On the other hand, the religious messianist camp is moved to precipitate the redemption, making religious symbols the most obvious target, as their destruction may hasten the Messiah’s coming. The epitome of this was a plot to blow up the
Dome of the Rock in the 1980s. However, these currents are tempered by a number of other factors, first the need for rabbinical approval for violence (failure to achieve this saw the Dome of the Rock plot shelved), and second, the tradition of working with secular Zionists. As this is an important part of their practice, they are less likely to alienate themselves from the mainstream, or reject the will of the wider Jewish community, as represented in the political and social mores of the state.

The argument made by Ravitzky and Sprinzak is that because Kahanism was external to the main theological currents in Israel, its ideology offered no such constraints. Kahane’s reading of the redemption tradition defined two substantial categories of enemies: Palestinians for living in a land promised exclusively to Jews, and Jews who allow Palestinians to remain in Eretz Yisrael, and defend a democratic system. As Kahane put it: “every Jew who is killed has two killers, the Arab who killed him, and the government who let it happen” (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p.52).

However, looking more closely at his ideological claims, and the violence for which Kach members were responsible, it seems restraints were in operation. Because of the dichotomy between politico-strategic and religious-expressive reasons for violence, and the greater weight placed on the latter (for the organisational and identity-related claims already discussed), Kach’s violence manifests itself largely in expressive and non-instrumental ways, and hence failed to maximise its strategic potential.

**Redefining tolerated practices**

There are obvious challenges in understanding the wider political effects of Kach on the Israeli polity. Identifying one relatively marginal group’s impact in such a complex and dynamic setting faces problems of identifying path-dependent relationships, and isolating the degree of impact. Further, filtering out the wealth of other possible reasons for any shift in political attitudes or policies, particularly given the number of voices on the right, is also extremely difficult. In responding to this challenge, Sprinzak (1993) suggests a number of ways of trying to understand the impact of the radical right as a whole, for example, the extent to which they achieved political representation or penetrated larger parties. The task here is somewhat harder, as we are concerned with one highly marginal current, rather than the trajectory of a limited, but still significant block of political opinion.
It is tempting to look at ongoing support for Kach’s claims as evidence of impact. In doing so, a Kahanist legacy might perhaps be perceived. Looking at the question of Palestinian ‘transfer’ – perhaps Kahane’s most totemic policy, of which he was the first visible advocate – soon after Kach’s ban from the Knesset, others began voicing support for similar ideas. For example, McDowell (1989) characterises the views of Defense Minister Michael Dekel, and Meir Cohen (then Speaker of the Knesset), as broadly supportive of ‘transferring’ Palestinians, and in the 1988 elections a Likud mayoral candidate – David Bar-Lev – advocated moving Palestinians out of Acre (Williams, 1989).

Looking at actual political representation, in 1992, the far-right amounted to approximately 15-20% of the vote, compared with just over 10% in the previous election (Masalha, 2000). Notably for our purposes, parties advocating the policy of ‘transfer’ made significant gains over this period (Masalha, 2000; Sprinzak, 1991). Whilst these parties distanced themselves from Kach (Landau & Sedan, 1990b), their actual policy regarding Palestinians clearly resonated with Kahanist ideas. However, it is unwise to take these shifts as an indication of Kahane’s impact, particularly as it is not clear that Kach supporters necessarily voted for such parties. A study by Peled (1998) found that it was actually the ultra-Orthodox parties – Agudat Yisrael and Shas – which most benefitted from Kach’s disbarment in the 1988 election. Looking more systematically at data pertaining directly to ‘encouraging emigration’ of Israeli Arabs from Israel, Figure 7.9 demonstrates ongoing support for the transfer policy, measured through annual national opinion polls.
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Figure 7.9. Chart showing percentage of Israelis in favour of ‘encouraging the voluntary emigration of Israeli Arabs from Israel’ (data for 2008 are not available). Compiled from polls in Trends in Israeli Public Opinion on National Security (Arian, 2003; Ben-Meir & Shaked, 2007; Ben Meir & Bagno-Moldavsky, 2010).

Whilst these data suggest that Kahane’s calls for ‘transfer’ still remain attractive for many voters, it is clearly not appropriate to make causal claims on this basis. Given the range of other factors implicated in such attitudes, the problems with polling representation, and as figures from before Kahane’s election are not available, they offer no clear picture of what influenced these opinions. It is perhaps preferable to consider outcomes in a slightly different way, and look to how Kach impacted the boundaries of acceptable behaviour through its claim-making. In doing so, two related phenomena are of interest: the shift in public and political discourse around racism, and the change in the boundary between forbidden and contentious behaviour. With regard to the first question, via a thorough analysis of Hebrew-language media between 1949 and 2000, Herzog, Sharon & Leykin (2008), suggest three phases in the popular discourse about racism. From an absolute reluctance to impute the term in the first decades of Israel’s existence, the 1980s marks a turning point, when political and popular debate about what constitutes racism emerges. A range of events influence this shift including the peace deal with Egypt, the Lebanon war and the First Intifada. However, Herzog et al. also identify Kahane’s election to the Knesset as an important factor.
Examination of Kahane’s Knesset debates, and Kach’s organisational literature, suggests how Kahane impacted the political discourse. By violently confronting the political establishment with the implications of an evolving demography, he used heavily racialised and pejorative rhetoric to highlight the fundamental problem of two people inhabiting one land. Herzog et al. (2008) argue that the effect was to broaden the understanding of the racism concept, moving beyond a biologically defined notion, to incorporate a sociological one, related to nationalism, and essentialist ideas of a particular Palestinian ‘mentality’ and the consequent implacable threat they represented. Hence, Kahane contributed to breaking the taboo of invoking the concept of racism, and catalysed the debate over what actually counted as ‘racist’. On the basis of a detailed examination of this issue, Raphael Cohen-Almagor’s ends his book, *The Boundaries of Liberty and Tolerance: The Struggle against Kahanism in Israel*: “racist ideas do prevail in Israeli society. Kahane deserves much of the credit, or rather, discredit, for making them as popular and as outspoken as they are today” (1994, p.253). Through the process of polarisation, Kahane increased the scope of the subject positions it became possible to discuss, and allowed less extreme voices to raise the question of ‘transfer’ and how best to deal with the ‘Palestinian problem’. In doing so, he was at the vanguard of changing relations between Israelis and developing a further set of identity boundaries defined by political actor’s beliefs about what was appropriately classified as racist.

The Knesset responded to Kahane through a range of legal measures trying to curtail his most vehement claims – notably the 1986 law against racist incitement (Cohen-Almagor, 1994). As well as barring Kahane from the Knesset, this also permanently redefined what was merely tolerated and what was forbidden in Israel. By forcing the Israeli government and, to some extent, Israeli society, to appraise what they believed the acceptable limits of free speech to be, a very marginal actor impacted the scope of political discourse. Reflecting the well-trodden debates over the appropriate balance between democratic principles and public protection, Kach’s decertification has had a lasting legacy. Legal and political responses to Kahane limited the extent to which the regime was open to particular actors, and facilitated the development of a new set of claims around racism and discrimination. Although Interestingly, this law is increasingly being used against Arab parties in the Knesset. It seems then, that in contrast to Ehud Sprinzak’s (1993) prediction that Kach would
disappear with the death of its leader, there has been a lasting impact that belies his marginal status. Rather, Kahane appears to have constituted and defined a confrontational and violent repertoire of contention which echoes decades after his and his organisation’s demise, and has embedded an important boundary in the limits of expression and debate in Israel.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, we return to the research questions to consider Kach’s outcomes and look at how the tools set out in the first part of the thesis have helped to explain these outcomes, and what advantages they offer over current approaches to interpreting how terrorism ends. First, by interpreting Kahane’s goals as culturally mediated problems concerned with how to reconstitute particular notions of Jewish identity, consolidate control over *Eretz Yisrael*, and remove the Palestinians which threatened this vision, a broad canvas by which to interpret Kach’s claim-making has been established. Alongside these problems, the way Kach’s organisational characteristics evolved in the context of the background socio-political conditions described in the typology was examined. To interpret these problem-actor-situation configurations, a number of mechanisms and processes to help explain Kach’s organisational, relational and political outcomes were employed.

Hence, we saw that through confrontational contestation and polarising the political discourse, Kahane began the process of actor constitution, developing Liga into Kach, finally institutionalising his claim-making by achieving a seat in the Knesset. In doing so, he tightly defined legitimate identities, and activated, or further embedded, a series of identity boundaries in ways which provoked conflict via a heavily racialised discourse. However, Kahane’s failure to consolidate the process of scale shift, by not brokering relations with other political actors, alongside efforts to undermine him, meant that Kach failed to achieve a solid organisational base. That said, the wider political context, characterised by low-level conflict, interspersed with peaks of inter-communal violence, allowed Kahane’s followers to engage in violence at relatively little cost. With Kahane’s assassination, Kach’s split, and the Hebron massacre, the group was finally decertified.

However, this was in no way the end of the Kahanist story. As we have seen, Kahane’s legacy goes on, finding form in a range of outcomes which continue to
impact relations between those living in Israel and the OPT in important and consequential ways. Most notably, in the diffusion of Kach’s ideas in the action of ‘Kahanists’ and the ‘hilltop youth’ who continue to invoke his methods and symbols in their own claim-making. Kahane also impacted the mainstream social and political environment by further polarising the right-wing in Israel and changing the boundaries of acceptable discourse around racism, permanently redefining what is tolerated and what is forbidden in Israel’s political arena. Previous work on Kach largely closes the story with Kahane’s assassination, and the banning of Kach and Kahane Chai. As this chapter has demonstrated, this neglects the ongoing effect Kahane and his followers have had in Israel and the OPT. By constituting a recognisable repertoire of contention through his claim-making, Kahane’s ideas have spread far beyond their genesis in 1960s Brooklyn.

Returning to the models for explaining how and why terrorism ends set out in the previous chapter, it becomes clear how employing a different set of tools has shed greater light on the outcomes of political violence. Rather than looking at somewhat hollow pathways such as factionalisation or police disruption, by examining how those who use terrorism impact relations between people, a new vista of interesting and important outcomes hove into view. Moreover, by expanding analysis to look beyond ‘strategic model/rational-choice’ explanations for why terrorism is used, it became possible to see violence’s role in solving particular problems related to identity needs, as well as organisational and political aims. By looking in more detail at how micro-level processes, such as leadership characteristics, interacted with meso-level factors to produce a generally weak organisation, in the context of macro-level inter-communal violence, a much deeper insight into Kach’s outcomes was brought about. The multiple levels incorporated into the typology, alongside a close reading of Kahane’s ideology made it possible to explain the comparatively limited scope of their violence and why Kahane focused more on developing a political organisation than a militant group. Finally, by interpreting Kach’s rise and fall in light of the mechanisms and processes which produced it, we are in a position to compare Kach with other organisations which have employed terrorism. A subject to which attention now turns in the second case study: the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army.
Chapter 8: The Aden-Abyan Islamic Army

As with the study of Kach, analysis of the Aden Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA) is approached with a view to uncovering the specific problems its leaders were concerned with, those mechanisms and processes implicated in its claim-making and their interaction with the wider socio-political context. Throughout, the aim is to elucidate and draw insights from the AAIA’s position in the typology to explore and explain the AAIA’s political, relational and organisational outcomes. In what follows the reasons for the AAIA’s militancy are explored followed by an explanation of why it ceased violent contestation on three different occasions. What emerges is a complex story, which involves the AAIA going through most of the pathways deemed to lead to terrorism’s decline. We will see leader decapitation, factionalisation, and extreme state repression and negotiated demobilisation recur, all of which were deemed to have put an end to the AAIA’s violent contestation. For now, the AAIA is in remission, making it possible to examine how these various approaches influenced its outcomes.

The AAIA is just one strand of the militant Islamist stream in Yemen, which itself has a long history in the country, rooted in a complex local context involving an array of identity and interest groups. Originally coalescing in the late 1990s, despite being dismantled by the security services soon after it emerged, the AAIA has retained – in popular discourse at least – an intermittent presence in Yemen. Their history of violent political contestation offers a fascinating insight into the complex relationships between state and non-state actors, the tensions within what might best be called the ‘jihadist current’ in Yemen, and the state’s approach to counterterrorism. It also casts light on the most recent period of violence in southern Yemen, which has seen jihadists try to administer and control territory.

The AAIA has received little scholarly attention, as such this represents the first attempt to examine their history, evolution and outcomes. As we shall see, most analysis goes no further than their apparent demise in the wake of the kidnapping of 16 Western tourists in 1998 that led to the capture and execution of its founding leader, Zayn al-Abidin al-Mihdar. Looking beyond this first incarnation however, affords a fascinating look at his ‘successor’, Khalid bin-Muhammad bin-ali Abdulrab al-Nabi, and his efforts to enforce and promote his ideological position. After looking
at the data that underpins the analysis, as in the previous chapter, the socio-political context in Yemen is outlined, before going on to examine the various Islamist identities relevant to our study. Five distinct periods of claim-making are then discussed, beginning in the 1990s going through to the present, before examining a range of organisational, relational and political outcomes.

**Methodology and data**

Tim Mackintosh-Smith likened ‘truth’ in Yemeni politics to “onion layers which you peel apart to get to the heart of the matter. Except that, like onions, the stories tend to have no heart, just a final little layer curled in on itself, and the truth is no more than the sum of its different versions” (1997, p.167). It is a statement as true now as when it was written over 15 years ago. Ascertaining the veracity of many of the political actors’ claims is difficult – the media is not free and there are many vested interests at work, which means false information is often reported as ‘fact’. As such, the claims and counterclaims made by the various actors are perhaps best understood as reflecting the vested interests at stake rather than the ‘truth’ about any particular allegation. Equally, media archives of Arabic and English language sources on Yemen are not as comprehensive as in the Israeli case, nor is the secondary literature as substantial. Similarly, the output of the AAIA was far less than we see, for example, in al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s (AQAP) sophisticated media messaging.

Nevertheless, there are primary sources on which to draw. The AAIA produced statements setting out its claims, and the most recent leader regularly gives interviews. Also, a number of jihadist ideologues have written about the AAIA. Fadil Harun 33 and Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, 34 both discuss the AAIA, whilst a number of other important jihadists such as Osama bin Laden and Abu al-Walid al-Masri refer to Yemen in their writings. All available material generated by the group and which discusses the AAIA, or jihadism in Yemen was identified by the researcher, and

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33 Also known as Fazul ‘Abdullah Muhammad, Harun was al-Qaeda’s ‘confidential secretary’, and was central to al-Qaeda’s operations in East Africa until his demise in 2011. In 2009, he released a substantial biography, described as the most valuable primary resource documenting al-Qaeda’s activities in the public domain (see Lahoud, 2012).

34 Abu Musab al-Suri, born Mustafa Sethmanian Nasar, is a leading jihadist ideologue who has written extensively on the global jihad. In particular, the *Global Islamic Resistance Call* (2005) reflects on the strategy of the global jihad through the lens of historical campaigns, including the AAIA in Yemen. He has also written a longer tract specifically on Yemen and jihad: *The Yemeni People’s Responsibility towards Muslims’ Holy Sites and Their Wealth* (1999).
where necessary translated by a professional English-Arabic translator. This amounted to 19 interviews, communiqués and statements by AAIA leaders, and three tracts from jihadist ideologues – two from Al-Suri and one from Harun. Together this material makes it possible to consider a ‘native’ interpretation of what, if anything, the AAIA achieved, and whether and by what measures they failed. These accounts are supplemented by media reports; searches of LexisNexis and a range of Arabic language media sources were undertaken, cross-referenced and where necessary, translated. In total, 23 substantial articles in Arabic were identified and translated, and 101 English language media articles were used.

A number of secondary sources were also extremely helpful in providing historical, cultural and political context and identifying primary resources. These include works by Boucek and Ottaway (2010); Blumi (2011); Brehony (2011); Carapico (1998); Clark (2010); Day (2012); Dresch (1989; 2000); Johnsen (2012); Phillips (2011); and Weeden (2008). Finally, the journalist Brian Whitaker carefully documented a range of documents and reporting pertaining to the AAIA in the 1990s which were extremely helpful in elucidating the first incarnation of the group’s activities.35

Yemen in Context

On the Western shore of the Bab al-Mandab, between the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, Yemen has long been an important staging point between Africa, India and the East, and Arabia. In contrast to most countries in the region, its status as a distinct entity existed long before colonialism began carving out states, and it retains a bounded historical tradition, if not one characterised by political cohesion (Dresch, 2000). More recent history has seen significant political and social upheaval. Following the 1962 coup in the north, and Britain’s withdrawal from Aden in 1967, two separate states emerged. In the north, the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), and in the south, what became the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY).36 Conflict and instability beset both states throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Civil war in the north became a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which eventually saw Ali Abdullah Saleh take power in 1978, whilst in the south different left-wing

35 These are catalogued on his website: www.al-bab.com
36 Throughout the chapter, the terms north and south refer to these two states, rather than specific geographic designations, which are specified separately where necessary.
nationalist factions fought for power. It was not until 1990 when, influenced by a range of factors including Russia’s decline (a long time supporter of the PDRY), the discovery of oil along the north-south border, and the PDRY’s increasingly perilous economic situation following the 1986 war, Yemen became a united country. Ali Abdullah Saleh was installed as head of state, and the head of the ruling party in the south – Ali Salem al-Baydh of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) – became vice president.

Saleh’s reign witnessed a number of hugely important events, including the decline of pan-Arabism, the end of the Cold War, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, and a growing American presence in the region. Yemen also began a largely unprecedented move towards democracy. In April 1993 it held what was widely considered a ‘reasonably free and fair’ election (Carapico, 1993; Detalle & Hiltermann, 1993). The result saw the General People’s Congress (GPC), under Saleh, gain the most seats in parliament. The YSP on the other hand, which had been expected to do well in its southern base, was pushed into third place by al-Tajammu ‘al-Yamani li-l-Islah: Islah, the Yemeni Grouping for Reform, a relatively new Islamist party based in the north. The interaction between Saleh, Islah and the remnants of the socialist parties would inform Yemeni politics over the next two decades. The first violent manifestation of this came with the 1994 war between what had been north and south Yemen, a war the north quickly won (Halliday, 1995; Warburton, 1995).

Amongst those who fought in the civil war were approximately 5,000 Yemenis who had recently returned from fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan (Dresch, 2000). Saleh co-opted and mobilised them against the south (International Crisis Group, 2003), capitalising on the ‘Afghan Arabs’’ hostility towards the southern socialists and their fighting experience (Bruce, 1995). Some of these militant leaders, through the processes of co-optation, would go on to work with the regime after the war, others did not. Understanding what determined these choices helps interpret the political and organisational outcomes of the militant factions with which we are concerned. We start therefore, by looking at the various political identities and ideologies that underpin their claim-making.
Chapter 8: The Aden-Abyan Islamic Army

Political Actors, Identities and Ideology

In the aftermath of the 1994 civil war, Saleh consolidated his grip on power. Although there were elections in the years to come, almost until the end of his presidency in 2011, Saleh maintained what has been described as a dynastic style of governance (Phillips, 2011). This is reflected in the AAIA’s categorisation in the typology, characterised as having low levels of political freedom and civil rights, and low-mid levels of political stability. Despite this, a semblance of multi-party politics remained, with the GPC, YSP and Islah constituting the three primary groupings in the country, along with some of the militant Islamists who fought for Saleh in the 1994 war. It is this Islamist stream that we are primarily concerned with, therefore, in what follows, the main Islamist currents in Yemen are sketched out, outlining their political aims and ideological claims in a little more detail.

Islamism in Yemen

Yemen has a rich religious tradition, historically characterised by the distinction between Shia Zaydis, and Sunni Shafi’is (Central Intelligence Agency, 2002; Day, 2012). Most of the currents about to be discussed are therefore ‘imports’, drawn from largely Saudi interpretations of Wahabism, Salafism, and Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood. Whilst oversimplifying a diverse and dynamic picture, in interpreting these influences, it is useful to speak of three main currents of explicitly Sunni Islamism in Yemen (Bonnefoy, 2009a): Islah, the Salafists, and what Bonnefoy calls, violent ‘jihadi’ fringes.

A coalition of tribalists and Islamists, Islah is rooted in the Muslim Brotherhood and incorporates a spectrum of views on the role of religion in daily political life (Dresch, 2000; Schwedler, 2004). The primary Salafi grouping coalesced under the late Shaykh Muqbl al-Wadi‘i’s tutelage at the Dar al-Hadith Institute in Dammaj. Best characterised as ‘quietist’ or ‘purist’ Salafists (Wiktorowicz, 2006) their primary focus is education and da’wa, generally eschewing the political realm (Bonnefoy, 2009b). However, there is another Salafi current, one altogether more militant, which first made its presence felt in the aftermath of the

37 The leader of its most extreme faction, and its best known ‘radical’ is Abd al-Majid al-Zindani, who has been styled a ‘Specially Designated Global Terrorist’ by the United States (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2004).

38 For a detailed examination of Salafism in Yemen see Bonnefoy (2011), and for ‘Global Salafism’ more generally, see Meijer (2009).
1994 war (Dresch & Haykel, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1994; Roth, 1994a). In describing this grouping, whilst it is useful to draw on the substantial literature that has developed around the phenomenon of jihadism and ‘jihadi-salafism’,\(^39\) it is important to try and unpick what these ideas meant for the specific actors with which we are concerned. As Christina Hellmich (2008) helpfully reminds us, the notion of ‘jihadi-salafism’ most often ascribed to such groups, is a far from discrete ideological category. Individuals and groups emphasise different aspects of the doctrinal elements embedded within these currents (Lahoud, 2012). It is therefore important to remain mindful not only of their complexity, but also of the local dynamics which inform how they manifest themselves.

**Islamic Jihad**

Amongst those involved in this more militant Salafism was ‘Islamic Jihad’. Comprising ‘Afghan Arabs’ newly returned from the Afghan-Soviet war, and Fadhli tribesmen, Islamic Jihad was led by Tariq bin Nasr bin ‘Abdullah al-Fadhli. The son of a Sultan, exiled when the socialist regime took over southern Yemen, al-Fadhli was firmly embedded in the global jihadist milieu (Bergen, 2001; Diraz, 1991; Roth, 1994b). Deeply unhappy that despite unification, the socialists maintained a monopoly on power in the south, when war broke out in 1994, he was in a position to serve two masters (Whitaker, 2009a). President Saleh, because they shared the desire to destroy the YSP’s power in the south, and Osama bin Laden who had a strong interest, not only in overrunning the socialists, but also in establishing Yemen as a base for his global jihadist project.\(^40\) Al-Fadhli also saw the opportunity to regain his family’s lands, and reinstate the traditional prominence of the tribes degraded by the PDRY (Dresch, 1989).

With the north’s victory al-Fadhli turned his back on the jihad, securing a place in Saleh’s government with a position on the Consultative Council, a stipend, and the return of his family’s land (Clark, 2010). It is here we see the first example of the mechanism of co-optation. A ‘big tent’ policy which incorporated Islamists and socialists in government alongside the GPC (Vick, 2000), and an approach used with

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\(^{39}\) See for example: Haykel (2009); Hegghammer (2009a; 2011); Kepel (2006); Roy (2004); Wagemakers (2012).

\(^{40}\) In pursuit of this aim, bin Laden helped mobilise ‘Afghan Arabs’ in Yemen by establishing training camps in the mountains near Sad’a in the North, and outside Ja’ar, in Abyan in the South (Bergen, 2001). He also made efforts to develop a stronger base of support delivering lectures and sermons to ‘incite Muslims to fight the socialists’ (bin Laden, 1996/2004, p.35).
such frequency it might be described as an official policy (Lapidot, 1994; Worth, 2008). Of those ‘Islamic Jihad’ members not incorporated into the political system, around 60% were reported to have returned to civil society, encouraged by al-Fadhli to “get jobs in accordance with the legitimate framework” (Watkins, 2004, para. 9). Not all did so however, and ‘Salafists’ and ‘Islamists’, were accused of instigating substantial unrest in the south after the war (Agence France-Presse, 1994; Webman, 1999), in part motivated by the failure to instantiate a theocracy (Boucek, Beg & Horgan, 2009). Eventually, after repeated clashes in Aden between security forces and Islamic Jihad, they fled the town (Combating Terrorism Center, 2011; Kuwait News Agency, 1994). Burke and Whitaker (1999) reported that the remaining militants dispersed in three groups: one to the Marib, one to al-Jawf and another to the mountains of Abyan (Higgins & Cullison, 2002). This last, led by Zayn al-Abidin al-Mihdar and comprising around 200 men, became the AAIA (Burke & Whitaker, 1999).

Whilst most accounts suggest al-Mihdar fought for Saleh in the 1994 war, there is compelling evidence that this is not the case. Tariq al-Fadhli reports al-Mihdar railing at him for fighting in a war he considered one of ‘darkness and ignorance’, even visiting al-Fadhli’s camp declaring “you are fighting under Ali Abdullah Salih’s banner, not under the Prophet’s … this is not jihad” (Johnsen, 2012, p.58). Moreover, Saleh stated that those ‘Afghan Arabs’ who ‘took part in defending unity’ were generally absorbed into government institutions, contrasting them with those who were ‘up to their ears’ in al-Mihdar’s extremism (MBC TV, 1999). To explain why these men chose different responses to the war it is necessary to set the AAIA in the context of the various streams of ‘jihadist’ ideology in operation at the time.

**Aden-Abyan Islamic Army: Ideology in practice**

In examining the AAIA’s ideology, it is perhaps unwise to assume that a well thought out, diligently documented ideological platform exists ‘out there’ to be discovered. Instead, it is preferable to understand the ideas they developed and employed as somewhat ill-defined and dynamic. As briefly mentioned, the AAIA has had two incarnations – one under al-Mihdar, and the other under the leadership of Khalid al-Nabi. These men had differing political visions and are therefore treated
separately in what follows. Hegghammer’s (2009a) characterisation of the various forms of Islamist activism offers a useful framework for exploring the AAIA’s ideology. Taking the group’s political and behavioural preferences, rather than its theological commitments as a frame of reference allows us to understand the differences between these men’s agendas.

Hegghammer’s typology outlines five forms of Islamist activism: state oriented, socio-revolutionary Islamism (e.g. EIJ); nation-centred violent irredentism (e.g. Hamas); morality-oriented activism, manifesting in vigilantism, (e.g. enforcing hisba); sectarian violence (e.g. Lashkar e Jhangvi); and Ummah-oriented violent pan-Islamism, either in the form of Abdullah Azzam’s classical jihadism, focused on fighting non-Muslim enemies in conflict zones; or bin Laden’s global jihadism using ‘indiscriminate’ violence against primarily American targets, anywhere in the world. Whilst actors might promote more than one of these objectives, and may change their position over time, these delineations are a useful way of understanding a group’s main priorities. As discussed a little later in the chapter, these divisions are not only helpful in interpreting and classifying the AAIA’s militancy, they also inform the differing outcomes of the group’s two incarnations.

**Al-Mihdar: Socio-revolutionary or global jihadist?**

Although the two are inextricably linked, al-Mihdar demonstrated far greater focus on political rather than theological themes (Agence France-Presse, 1999a). This political agenda spoke of the evils of the ‘far enemy’ in the shape of American imperialism, demanding their expulsion from the Arabian Peninsula (Supporters of Sharia, 1998a; Whitaker, 1999a). A strong advocate of the global jihad (Burns, 1999), al-Mihdar praised al-Qaeda’s attacks against the embassies in East Africa (Deutsch Presse-Agentur, 1999; Whitaker, 1999b) and instructed Yemenis to “kill the Americans, take their belongings and destroy their facilities” (Nasrawi, 2000, para.16). However, his discussion of America (Webman, 1999; Whitaker, 1999c) was rooted in a desire to topple the ‘near enemy’. Al-Mihdar therefore called for the downfall of the apostate government in Yemen (Whitaker, 1999a), hoping that Saleh’s overthrow would trigger a domino effect, leading to Islamic rule across the Arabian Peninsula (Supporters of Sharia, 1998b). He therefore explicitly supported the aims of the global jihadists but also demanded a change in regime, closer to the socio-revolutionaries of Hegghammer’s conceptualisation.
It is tempting to read further into al-Mihdar’s apparent combination of socio-revolutionary and global jihadist principles. For example, to consider the extent of ‘ideological hybridisation’ he exhibited (Brooke, 2010; Hegghammer, 2009b). That is, the increasing tendency to blend near and far enemy goals and targets, either because of weakness and political isolation (Hegghammer, 2009b), or as a strategic adaptation to balance competing goals, trying to leverage the support attacking local rulers can offer (Brooke, 2010). However, there is evidence that al-Mihdar held a relatively ill-defined set of aims. Al-Suri warns in both of his treatises on jihad in Yemen, that al-Mihdar failed, in part, because he started out “without a clear programme and plan for it [jihad] ... characterised by spontaneity and emotion” (al-Suri 1999, para.3). Hence, it seems likely that rather than developing a clear plan incorporating both near and far enemy targets for strategic or organisational reasons, al-Mihdar’s combination of socio-revolutionary activism and global jihad is perhaps better understood as a consequence of a somewhat underdeveloped political programme.

Twelve-thousand fighters

Turning to al-Mihdar’s successor, it is important to note that Khalid al-Nabi consistently denied the existence of an ‘Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’ (Arab News, 2004), generally claiming it was an invention of the security services (al-Hammadi, 2008). Notwithstanding these denials, the idea of the AAIA remained a robust construction. The media, the authorities, and perhaps more importantly, the local population described the AAIA as an active force. As we shall see, al-Nabi did lead a group of men who used arms to defend their interests and attack their enemies. Whether or not they self-identified as members of an organisation called the ‘Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’ is hard to tell, as no interviews with al-Nabi’s cadre were unearthed in searches of the literature. However, it seems reasonable to say that al-Nabi was considered to lead a group of militant Islamists, which the social discourse identified as the AAIA.

It is possible to interpret al-Nabi’s refutation of the AAIA by looking at the particular problem denying the group’s existence solved. Most obviously, it reduced

41 For example, al-Nabi is described as the leader of the AAIA in sermons at the mosque in Ja’ar (Shpami Hadrami, 2008), and searches of Arabic language, non-jihadist online forums on Yemen (ye1.org and hdrmut.net) reveal repeated discussions positioning al-Nabi as the leader of the AAIA.
the likelihood of unwanted attention from the security services. As we shall see, in the mid-2000s al-Nabi came to an agreement with the authorities to give up his militancy, and as such perhaps had little choice but to deny its existence. Another possibility is that he was responding to a problem of theological legitimacy. Yemen’s claim as a base for jihad is strengthened by repeated references to Yemen in both Islamic scripture, and the fad’ail, or virtues literature (Barfi, 2010). The Prophet Muhammad described Yemen as the ‘last refuge’, the place to which his followers should retreat should disaster strike (Johnsen, 2012). Moreover, an oft-repeated hadith states that “an army of twelve thousand will appear from Aden Abyan who will aid God and his Messenger” in the battle at the end of times (Cook, 2006).\(^42\)

Whilst offering a powerful historical narrative for the legitimacy of violent Islamism in southern Arabia, there was also a risk of misinterpreting these traditions. For example, Harun (2009) equated al-Mihdar and his men to Juhayman al-Otaybi, who took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979 proclaiming his companion, Mohammed al-Qahtani, to be the Mahdi (Hegghammer & Lacroix, 2011). Harun went on to say that the biggest problem, with which jihadists have long struggled, is the accusation of takfir.\(^43\) He seems to be saying that in suggesting al-Mihdar might be the long-awaited Messiah, his followers risked worshipping a false idol, and hence becoming apostates risking takfir. As a result, Harun comprehensively dissociates himself and al-Qaeda from al-Mihdar, going on to explain that bin Laden did not encourage anyone to declare a ‘local front’, thereby reinforcing that al-Mihdar was acting alone.

Al-Nabi also seems to recognise this tension. When asked about the ‘Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’, not only does he deny its existence, he generally refers back to the scriptures, carefully saying that the ‘Army’ is “not dependent on an individual but is linked to a religion and a faith. The aims of this army are known and they are founded on shari’a as to when it appears and what its banners are” (al-Hammadi, 2008, para. 23).\(^44\) Given these denials, it is important not to assume al-Nabi speaks on

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\(^{42}\) Yemen’s place in scripture, given the ongoing jihadist presence in the country, is sufficiently important to be the subject of an extensive question and answer session with Muhammad al-Maqdisi, one of the more important radical Islamist writers of recent years. See al-Maqdisi (2011).

\(^{43}\) The process of declaring another Muslim an infidel, and hence legitimising violence against them, takfir is the subject of substantial discord in jihadist circles. See Hafez (2010) for a discussion.

\(^{44}\) Al-Nabi perhaps has to be particularly careful given that ‘Nabi’ means ‘Prophet’, or to prophesise.
behalf of a wider organisation, nor that he is necessarily setting out a concrete political platform. His discourse can however, help inform understanding of his militancy, and what he hoped to achieve by it, aims which are somewhat different to those al-Mihdar articulated.

**Classical jihad**

Taken as a whole, al-Nabi’s political and ideological stance owes much to Adbullah Azzam’s doctrine of classical jihadism. Although al-Nabi does not reference Azzam in his discussions – in fact, he refers to relatively few outside authorities – his position is strikingly similar. The disjuncture between Azzam’s articulation of jihad and other radical Islamists rests on a number of principles (Gerges, 2005; Hegghammer, 2008). As well as focusing on attacking the ‘far enemy’, Azzam’s doctrine concentrates on liberating the land (*al-ard*), rather than opposing the state (*al-dawla*), prioritises Muslim identity over the nation state, and argues that jihad is *fard al-ayn* – a compulsory individual duty on all Muslims.\(^{45}\)

Al-Nabi articulates views according with all of these principles, although he demonstrates less personal commitment to putting them into practice. For example, although he fought in Afghanistan, as far as it is possible to know, he did not participate in the 2003 Iraq war, despite calling it a legitimate jihad requiring no external sanction.\(^{46}\) His militancy is also tempered by a reluctance to attack foreign targets within Yemen. When asked if he would use violence against foreign interests, he says only if they were attacked would he respond in kind (Mudabish, 2010a). Hence, although al-Nabi is opposed to the US, delighting in their defeats, and blaming them for many of Yemen and his own ills, he does not call for direct attacks against them absent of their overt aggression. Thus, he demonstrates little commitment to the global jihadist vision.

**Al-Nabi and Salafism**

Al-Nabi’s commitment to Salafism was a far more explicit identity. Adhering to a number of commonly held principles, he expressed a desire to fight innovation (*bid’a*), practice *da’wa* both locally and internationally, engage in education (*tarbiya*),

\(^{45}\) See Azzam’s two main treatises setting out his position on jihad: *Join the Caravan* (2001); and *Defense of Muslim Lands* (n.d.).

\(^{46}\) This is in contrast to the Yemeni Salafi scholars who generally agreed that the Iraq war would only be a legitimate jihad if declared so by the rulers (Bonnefoy, 2011). Al-Nabi seems to implicitly criticise this position, urging the scholars to issue a fatwa on the subject of Iraq and jihad to “explain the matter and clear their consciences before God” (Mudabish, 2006, para. 14).
and fight corruption (*fasid*). However, al-Nabi was primarily concerned with the implementation of shari’a law in Yemen. Although following unification, the 1994 and 2001 constitutions decreed shari’a should be the ‘sole basis’ of legislation (Arab Law Quarterly, 1992; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2001), it was not employed in line with Salafist strictures. Al-Nabi therefore consistently advocated for an end to any commitment to democracy, and the full implementation of his interpretation of shari’a law (Alkamim, 2009).

Although committed to applying shari’a, al-Nabi did not adhere to the more clearly jihadist notion of *tawhid hakimiyya*. The Qutbist idea that as a consequence of the unity and sovereignty of God, rulers who do not adhere to shari’a are deemed unbelievers (*kafirun*) (Meijer, 2009). It is here we see one of the tensions in the Salafi and jihadi currents. Generally speaking, mainstream Yemeni Salafism calls for a quietist attitude to politics, believing that engaging in the political realm leads to *fitna* (civil strife), and that the state’s legitimacy should not be overtly challenged (Bonnefoy, 2011) – both positions generally reflected in al-Nabi’s behaviour.

Al-Nabi remained reluctant to attack the Yemeni state, an attitude that could be interpreted as little more than a desire to avoid state censure – part of a ‘non-aggression pact’ between the government and the militant Islamists (Bonnefoy, 2009a). Others have suggested it was because he was in the pay of the state, branding him with the *non sequitur* of ‘state jihadist’ (Novak, 2011). Whether or not these accusations are true, in not calling for the overthrow of the government, he is behaving in a way consistent with Salafist prescriptions. Despite this, al-Nabi’s discourse was still explicitly political, which seems to fall short of the largely apolitical stance Salafists are supposed to adopt. However, it would be a mistake to count this as a break with Salafist practice in Yemen. Bonnefoy (2011) makes the point that although Yemen’s Salafists may preach quietism, they are far more flexible in their practice, finding less direct ways of trying to influence political practice in line with their beliefs.

**Negotiating legitimacy in a repressive state**

A political grouping which neither the Salafists, nor al-Nabi, had any compunction over criticising was the socialists. Al-Nabi’s antagonism towards the old socialist regime remains central to his political discourse, nearly 20 years after they
were defeated in the 1994 war. An attitude likely to be influenced by his experiences growing up in the PDRY, a period he describes as an ‘open war on Islam’ (al-Hammadi, 2008). Whilst this may represent genuinely felt enmity, al-Nabi’s ongoing criticism of the socialists – who he emphasises are embedded in the government, security services and local administration – also offers a way of criticising the state whilst not appearing to do so. Because they are clearly kafir (unbelievers), it is possible to be far more critical of them than he would be of Saleh or the government. Al-Nabi therefore lays the blame for some of the state’s behaviour at the socialist’s door, thereby downplaying any perceived threat to the government, yet still presenting himself as a legitimate political voice.

Al-Nabi’s somewhat equivocal forays into the political realm are complemented by another feature of his political contestation; the enforcement of *amr bi alma ‘ruf wa nahi ‘an alnunkar: hisba*, or commanding good and forbidding evil. As Bonnefoy (2011) points out in relation to the more mainstream Salafi movement in Yemen, engaging in *hisba* enables the Salafists to more subtly oppose political transgressions, helping to maintain some legitimacy, whilst remaining relatively safe from state censure. Al-Nabi did something similar, the result of which has been called the ‘Islamification’ of al-Nabi’s area, which began soon after the 1994 war.47 More recently, according to residents of Ja’ar – al-Nabi’s home town – *hisba* was enforced by groups of men patrolling the town ‘promoting virtue and preventing vice; for example, ensuring all women and young girls (usually exempt until puberty) wear the veil (Mudabish, 2006). These activities meant al-Nabi remained engaged in local-level Islamism, balancing his own desire for strict Islamic rule and the need for local legitimacy, whilst avoiding challenging the state.

In Gross’ (2009; 2010) terms, al-Mihdar and al-Nabi were both faced with the same problem, of reconciling their beliefs with living in a state guided by very different principles. They chose quite different responses. As we shall see, al-Mihdar engaged in direct confrontation, both with the Yemeni state and the West, informed by his adherence to socio-revolutionary and global jihadist principles. Al-Nabi on the other hand, tried to progress his political objectives whilst not directly confronting the

47 Al-Nabi describes the change to an Islamic way of life in this period as “extraordinary … Mosques and shari’a teaching centers were being built, we had lots of support and of course there was also the reaction to what was happening in the Islamic world, people became more committed to religion so they could fight the crusaders” (Abdul-Ahad, 2010, para. 22).
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state, influenced by more clearly classical jihadist and Salafist ideas. These choices presented them with a number of further problems, most obviously, that of avoiding potentially harsh state repression. Al-Nabi also had to reconcile pursuing his claims and negotiating his political and religious legitimacy in the midst of a dynamic militant Islamist milieu. Together these might anticipate a number of further problems important to keep in mind as we follow the AAIA’s evolution. The first is the potential for conflict between the various militant Islamists in Yemen as they compete for ideological and material resources, and second, the problem of maintaining a claim to a legitimate political voice. Two main mechanisms are implicated in these problems, and the AAIA’s leaders’ responses: boundary activation between the various Islamist identities in Yemen, and self-representation, attempting to maintain a theologically and politically legitimate form of contestation. As we will see, these play an important role in determining the group’s outcomes.

Streams of Contention

The preceding discussion set out some of the differences between the various ideological currents in ‘jihadi-salafism’ in Yemen. These run as threads through the discussion of the AAIA’s political contestation, and are informed by the ideological influences the AAIA’s leaders encountered in Afghanistan. Exactly how this process of ideological diffusion occurred remains opaque. However, training in Afghanistan was not restricted to warfare, and Yemeni fighters in Afghanistan were also exposed to religious teaching (Carapico, 2000). Al-Suri, Zawahiri and others produced literature, audiotapes, and delivered lectures at the various guesthouses housing foreign mujahidin via the Markaz al-Nur lil-I’lam (The Nur Media Centre) (Lia, 2007). Indeed, some of al-Suri’s tapes and books were found in raids on al-Mihdar’s compounds, suggesting he found them of use (al-Suri, 2005). Through this process of diffusion, the ‘Afghan Arabs’ brought back with them knowledge of the ideas developed and disseminated in Afghanistan. It is here we pick up the AAIA’s story, first examining how they constituted themselves in the years following the 1994 war, going on to look at four distinct periods of the AAIA’s political contestation.

Consolidation and emergence

Al-Mihdar, also known by his kunya of Abu al-Hassan, was from Wadi Markha, in a district that borders the Shabwa and Aden governorates on what was the north-south Yemeni border (Warburton, 1992). Although he used this area to establish
a number of training camps, it was in the Hutat mountains in Abyan, that he established his strongest base (Combating Terrorism Center, 2011). Al-Suri (2005) dates their emergence to 1997, but it was not until early 1998 that reports of their activities began to surface. In March 1998 al-Mihdar established an ‘almost impregnable training camp’ (Whitaker, 1998), with a group of Yemenis and foreign militants (Cook, 2006). It is notable that in this first process of *actor constitution*, al-Mihdar focused most clearly on military means. Rather than for example, spending time establishing an ideologically committed group of followers or generating a broader support base, he concentrated on more tangible outcomes, hoping to produce a contingent of fighters.

Al-Mihdar’s failure to first establish local support meant that the training camp caused a little local difficulty, as residents complained that it interfered with their agricultural and farming activities (Whitaker, 1998). Relatively soon after these complaints, in May 1998, the government moved against the camp, attacking it with helicopter gunships and heavy artillery (Al-Hayat, 1998; Whitaker, 1998). Before this however, there had been an attempt to co-opt al-Mihdar and his fighters into the political system. Tribal intermediaries attempted to mediate an agreement (Al-Hayat, 1998; Whitaker, 1999b), as did Islah’s radical cleric, al-Zindani (Saeed & Faqhi, 2012). Negotiations broke down and the government responded by offering a one million riyal reward for al-Mihdar, and breaking up the camp (Whitaker, 1999b). After the attack, the men dispersed only to reconvene again at another much smaller temporary camp, in September 1998 (Whitaker, 1999d).

It is here two of Saleh’s favoured counter-terrorism tools are first revealed: *co-optation* into the political system, or *violent repression*. Co-optation was common in Yemen: the political culture had developed such that accommodating political rivals and reaching mediated agreements, was a trusted way of resolving conflict (Caton, 2005; Clark, 2010). By dismissing this, al-Mihdar was not only rejecting government and tribal efforts to reach a mutually agreeable arrangement, he was rejecting business as usual. His uncompromising ideological position precluded this method of politics, and was informed by his belief in the illegitimacy of the government.

A few months after the attack on the camp, in October 1998, the AAIA reportedly carried out Yemen’s first attack using a ‘donkey bomb’, directed at a
military officer in al-Dali’ (Agence France-Presse, 1998). A statement from the group followed (Whitaker, 1999e; 1999f), as did claims of responsibility for a spate of attacks against oil pipelines in the region (Whitaker, 1999f). Despite these events and the bounty on al-Mihdar’s head, attempts at negotiation continued throughout November (Middle East Economic Digest, 1999; Watkins, 1999). A final effort to reach a mediated solution was reported to have taken place in early December 1998, including by members of al-Qaeda (Whitaker, 1999g). Early indications were that the mediation efforts had succeeded, however the army and the AAIA clashed again the following week (Whitaker, 1999g). In the course of these confrontations, a number of AAIA members were captured, including one Shaykh Salih Haidara al-Atwi, who was later sentenced to seven years imprisonment for carrying out a number of bomb attacks (AFP, 2000).

In his first months as a militant leader, al-Mihdar largely failed in the process of actor constitution. Despite briefly establishing a training camp, local opposition and government repression, meant that after a little over a year, they were without a base and significantly depleted in numbers. Nevertheless, al-Mihdar had marked himself out from the rest of Yemen’s Islamist militants. Not only was he more ideologically committed than most, subscribing to a more global agenda, he also attempted to instantiate the process of internationalisation. Faced with the problem of how to publicise the activities of a marginal group, al-Mihdar used a London based actor as a conduit for his messaging – Abu Hamza al-Masri.

**Ansar al-Sharia**

Al-Mihdar was isolated in Yemen. According to Al-Suri (2005) he had tried to gain the backing of the ‘Awakening scholars’ in Saudi Arabia, but was rebuffed. Nevertheless, he did manage to find some international backing. In reaching out to Abu Hamza al-Masri, al-Mihdar found a source of logistical and – albeit less legitimate – theological support. This mechanism of brokerage seems to have begun in the crucible of the Afghan-Soviet war, where the men first met (Feldner, 2001). However, when al-Masri secured a position at Finsbury Park Mosque in 1997, he was afforded a more solid foundation from which to fundraise and recruit for the AAIA (O’Neill & McGrory, 2006; Whitaker, 1999h).
Al-Masri believed that Yemen was ripe for Islamic revolution (Basharaheel, 1999; Whitaker, 1999h) and via his London-based group, Ansar al-Sharia (Supporters of Sharia, SOS), he styled himself as the AAIA’s ‘media advisor’ (Bergen, 2006). In this capacity, al-Masri disseminated their statements, held press conferences presenting their views and otherwise facilitated the AAIA’s communication efforts (Whitaker, 1999a; 1999i). He is also reported to have supplied arms. For example, al-Atwi claimed to have received weapons including RPGs and missiles from al-Masri (Agence France-Presse, 1999b). Through connecting these previously weakly connected sites, al-Mihdar gained practical support and widened his reach. As we shall see a little later, this support was to take an altogether more personal turn when ten men, including al-Masri’s son and stepson, travelled to Yemen to join al-Mihdar.

**Osama bin Laden**

As well as connections in Europe, al-Mihdar had developed other international links through participating in the Afghan jihad, including with Osama bin Laden (Webman, 1999). Al-Suri (2005) reports that al-Mihdar and bin Laden met to discuss opening a front in Yemen, but that the two men could not reach an agreement. This failure to coordinate their activities is interesting. A plethora of primary accounts describe bin Laden’s interest in Yemen, both in a desire to defeat the southern socialist regime, and also as a potential base for his global jihad (Bergen, 2006; Bin Laden, 1994; United States v. Arnaout, 2003). As another important militant ideologue, Abu al-Walid al Misri explained, bin Laden’s primary aim was to “Islamize the cause internationally ... It is for this purpose that he established the al-Qaeda organisation to internationalise jihad. He meant specifically the internationalisation of jihad in Yemen” (cited in Bergen, 2006, p.109).

However, as al-Mihdar was preparing to launch the AAIA in Yemen, bin Laden was pursuing his own initiatives in the region. From Afghanistan, he was grooming a number of men, who would soon be dispatched to the Arabian Peninsula (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004). Bin Laden himself was also trying to set al-Qaeda on a more permanent footing in Yemen, meeting with as many as 30 tribal shaykhs, requesting protection and an agreement that he could operate in the country, a request which was turned down (Bergen, 2001; Burns, 2000). That bin Laden did not include al-Mihdar in any of these initiatives (Burns, 1999), suggests he didn’t consider him suitable for his global campaign. We
can’t be certain, but al-Mihdar’s interest in toppling the Yemen regime – an aim bin Laden was by this time less committed to – might help explain this failure to broker another set of connections to considerably more powerful actors.

In al-Mihdar’s attempts to establish a foundation for armed jihad in Yemen, the interplay between this thesis’ three organising frameworks comes into view. Background conditions characterised by a repressive state unafraid to put down its opponents with force if its efforts at co-optation failed, meant al-Mihdar’s attempts at *actor constitution* were quickly degraded. In confronting the first problem any actor wishing to promote political faces – of trying to generate support for his claims – he rejected traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, whilst trying to develop a more international network of support. However, he was only successful in *brokering* a working relationship with al-Masri, failing in all of his other attempts to gain support, a feature which helps to explain their position in the ‘limited network’ aspect of the typology. As we shall now see, the connection he forged to al-Masri was to have far-reaching consequences for al-Mihdar and the AAIA.

**Al-Mihdar’s brief reign**

The AAIA was implicated in a number of attacks, claiming several bombings in Abyan and Shabwah (Al-Ittihad, 1999), and in and around the port of Aden (Sfeir, 2007). General Ali Mohsen (then head of the First Armoured Division, and Saleh’s chief military advisor) also accused the AAIA of assassinating the Commander of the Security Directorate in Shabwa (Saeed & Faqhi, 2012). However, the operation for which the AAIA is most famous is the kidnap of 16 Western tourists, which would lead to the death of four members of the party. To understand the reasons behind the kidnapping, it is instructive to first look at one of the outcomes of the relationship between al-Masri and al-Mihdar: the arrival of ten men in Yemen in the latter part of 1998.

**The ‘Aden Ten’**

Al-Masri was the main link between the ‘Aden Ten’ (al-Jazeera, 1999), a group which included al-Masri’s son, Muhammad Kamil Mustapha, and his stepson, Muhsin Ghailan (Whitaker, 1999j). After arriving in late 1998, the men would only leave Yemen after being imprisoned for “membership of an armed group and possession of weapons, explosives and unauthorised communications devices, as well
as starting to commit acts of sabotage against Yemeni and foreign interests in Yemen” (Carroll, 1999a, para. 51). The details, indeed, the very presence of the plot at the root of these convictions, are still contested. Allegations of torture make the men’s confessions unreliable (Whitaker, 1999c), and Yemen’s poor record on judicial independence and competence makes their guilty verdicts an untrustworthy measure of actual culpability (Freedom House, 2002).

Despite this, it is perhaps possible to say something about the chain of events that led to their arrest. At around midnight on December 23, 1998, the police stopped a hire car driven by one of the men after it drove the wrong way round a roundabout in Aden (Carroll, 1999b). Fleeing the police, the car crashed, its occupants escaping into Aden’s backstreets. Within hours the three men from the car and two other Britons had been arrested at their hotel, several others would be arrested three weeks later in the desert, apparently trying to escape into Saudi Arabia (Carroll, 1999a). According to the Yemeni police, searches of the car, their hotel room and a rented villa uncovered weapons, computers and communication equipment, SOS media, and a list of targets said to include the Mövenpick hotel in Sana’a, the city’s Christian church, British Consulate, a restaurant and nightclub (Agence France-Presse, 1999c). The authorities claimed the men were to carry out attacks against these targets, under the AAIA’s guidance, on Christmas Day (Carroll, 1999a; Whitaker, 1999i). On their arrest, the links between Al-Masri and al-Mihdar would only become more concrete when the Yemeni demanded the ten men’s release after taking a party of Western tourists hostage.

An unusual kidnapping

Kidnapping in Yemen had a particular tenor, most captives were well taken care of, often enjoying entertainment and good food while negotiations for their release took place (Day, 2012; Dresch, 2000). Day (2012) describes the history of kidnapping in Yemen as a form of traditional politics, most often employed by tribes trying to force action on generally local issues (Hales, 2010). Given the widespread absence of institutional forms of mediating with central government, taking foreign captives was an effective way of getting the state’s attention and forcing concessions (Baron, 2013). Kidnapping was also quite commonplace – between 1996 and 2001, 157 people were taken in 47 incidents (Whitaker, 2009b), all but one of which was resolved without fatalities (BBC, 2000). This statistic remained true until 2010 (Al-
Omari, 2010), largely because of a law making kidnapping foreigners an act of terrorism carrying the death penalty (Bonnefoy & Detalle, 2010).

The story of the AAIA’s kidnapping differs from this pattern, and is both short and tragic. A group of British, American and Australian tourists, travelling from Habban in Shabwah to Aden were ambushed on the highway near Lahma, by 15 to 20 men. After almost 24 hours of captivity, over 200 Yemeni soldiers raided the camp (Boggan, 1998). Using the hostages as human shields, the kidnappers tried to repel the approaching army. They failed, and after the camp had been overrun, two kidnappers and three hostages lay dead, a fourth would die later of her injuries. Al-Mihdar and two other kidnappers were captured, and several more would be arrested or killed in the following months (Whitaker, 1999d).

According to statements made by the kidnappers, the abduction was organised at a rapidly convened meeting the previous evening (Whitaker, 1999d). The professed aims of the operation were to force the release of their ‘English comrades’ (Quin, 2005) and al-Atwi and the other AAIA men captured two weeks earlier (Agence France-Presse, 2000). Al-Mihdar also demanded an end to the sanctions against Iraq, and said he was protesting against ‘Operation Desert Fox’, an American bombing campaign targeting Iraq (Quin, 2005). Whilst these more international aims were undoubtedly important to al-Mihdar, given the timing of the kidnap, and its hastily arranged nature, the main purpose seems to have been to ransom the tourists for the men in Yemeni custody.

The links between the British captives and the kidnap became clearer through the trial, at which it transpired that al-Mihdar had made several calls from a satellite phone brought into Yemen by al-Masri’s stepson (Whitaker, 1999a). Amongst other people, al-Mihdar called al-Masri in London, (United States v. Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, 2004), and contacted General Ali Mohsen, from whom he demanded the release of the British and Yemeni detainees. At the end of the short trial, the judge handed down the death penalty to al-Mihdar, prompting threats from al-Masri of “vindictive operations, namely killing without kidnapping” if al-Midhar was not released (Al-Jazeera, 1999, para.4; Whitaker, 1999c). He also warned Westerners to leave Yemen, and called for the overthrow of the regime; a threat he followed up with
a warning to British and American ambassadors to leave the country (Agence France-Presse, 1999d; Associated Press, 1999a; Whitaker, 1999c).

Al-Mihdar’s kidnapping violated the norms that had developed around hostage taking in Yemen in a number of ways. Most obviously, its aims were explicitly geopolitical, in contrast to the usual roll call of demands for service provision or employment (International Crisis Group, 2003). Second, the state’s decision to use force almost immediately after the hostages were taken was unprecedented (Clark, 2010; Whitaker, 2009b). A final peculiarity was al-Mihdar’s rejection of efforts for a tribally mediated solution, the preferred method of resolving such disputes. On the morning after the hostages had been taken, a tribal elder visited the camp with soft drinks and biscuits offering to negotiate. Al-Mihdar sent him away, telling him he did not intend to negotiate with local leaders, as he had ‘contacts at a very high level’ (Whitaker, 1999a).

A number of possibilities for this last difference are possible. Al-Mihdar may have been hoping to mediate with someone higher up the food chain, perhaps believing he was likely to gain a more favourable outcome this way. Or perhaps, as General Ali Mohsen has recently suggested, he was in collusion with the government (Saeed & Al-Faqhi, 2012), opening up the (largely unverifiable) possibility of a double-cross. A second, and more likely possibility is al-Suri’s (2005) proposition that the government used the kidnapping as ‘an opportunity to quell the movement’. After its efforts to co-opt the AAIA, it is plausible they lost patience in what they came to believe was an intransigent group of jihadists who would never be satisfactorily incorporated into Yemen’s political, social or military system.

**Repression and quiescence**

In the wake of al-Mihdar’s arrest, the AAIA slowly fractured. A number of men had already been arrested, whilst according to al-Suri (1999; 2005), a good many more had been persuaded out of further militancy by ‘preachers and brothers’. With al-Mihdar in detention, and their numbers dwindling, there was some confusion over who was responsible for the group’s messaging. Two names were repeatedly associated with statements distributed in the AAIA’s name. In London, al-Masri declared the 23 year old Abu al-Muhsin (also known as Hatem Ben Farid), the new emir (Al-Hayat, 1999a; Associated Press, 2000), distributing his statements to the
press, and also reportedly furnishing him with £12,000 (Yemen Times, 2001). In the meantime, one Abu Bassam was releasing statements, which increasingly focused on the state as the primary object of contention, claiming the government had “sparked off the seeds of sedition” (Al-Hayat, 1999b, para. 5). Whether or not this represented a genuine schism in the remnants of the AAIA is difficult to tell, the two men’s arrest in late October 1999 seemingly put an end to their involvement with the AAIA (Al-Sharq al-Awsat, 1999). It also led to a seven year prison term for al-Muhsin (Albawaba, 2001).

In between al-Mihdar’s arrest and those of his successors, the AAIA took responsibility for a number of attacks. In August 1999 it claimed to have used a suicide bomber to bring down a helicopter carrying 17 senior military personnel, claims firmly denied by the government (Associated Press, 1999b). The same month, it took responsibility for a series of explosions targeting the courthouse in Zinjibar where al-Mihdar had been tried, a supermarket in Sana’a, a bank in Aden (Agence France-Presse, 1999d), and the British Embassy (Al-Hayat, 1999c). The AAIA were demanding the release of al-Mihdar, shari’a law to be implemented across Yemen, and an end to operations directed at the group. Whilst it is difficult to know whether they were in fact responsible for the spate of attacks (Whitaker, 1999k), it is noticeable that their demands prioritise more local goals. Without al-Mihdar, and with the pressing problem of organisational security, the ‘global’ aspect of the repertoire became less clearly articulated.

The year after al-Mihdar’s execution saw more trials of AAIA members and further threats from those claiming affiliation with them (Al-Hayat, 2000). Meanwhile, Saleh firmly denied the AAIA’s existence, claiming it “was only one person, Abu al-Hassan. He was executed. [The] Aden-Abyan Army does not exist at all” (MBC TV, 1999). The government also continued its policy of trying to incorporate jihadists into state institutions wherever possible. It reportedly gave an AAIA member the job of Commissioner of Police in Mudiyah (Vick, 2000), an approach openly acknowledged by officials, and one which would herald the more formal methods of the ‘Dialogue Committee’, Yemen’s ‘deradicalisation’ programme. They were not always successful, and the growing ambition of the jihadists in Yemen would become clear with the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000.
Most analysis of the AAIA stops here, generally concluding they were a failure, having not achieved any of their stated objectives and being relatively quickly wiped out by the security forces. However, al-Mihdar did achieve a number of things which marked a shift in militant Islamism in Yemen. He expanded the scope of Yemen’s jihadist discourse by enunciating aims that were more geo-strategic and expansionist than those who had gone before. He also targeted the Yemeni government in a way few previous Islamists had, and although when faced with death, he did offer to renounce violence in return for clemency, up until that point, al-Mihdar resolutely refused to be co-opted by Saleh. Finally, he attempted to internationalise his militancy by working with al-Masri in London, again something unprecedented in the Yemeni context. He also provided something of a legacy for the militant Islamists who would follow in his wake, to which attention now turns.

**Yemen’s global jihadists**

Al-Mihdar’s advocacy of both local and global goals illustrates one of the problems for militant groups trying to mobilise local support for a transnational campaign. That is, the increased salience of national issues, and more localised identities for potential supporters and members. In terms of the global-local continuum, the next wave of jihadists in Yemen was more firmly global than perhaps any of those before or since. The first indication of this, was the attack on the USS Cole in October 2000. Conceived by Abd al-Rahim Husayn Muhammad Ali al-Nashiri, a Saudi who had sworn bay’a to bin Laden in Afghanistan, it would represent bin Laden’s first attack on America from Yemen (Department of Defense, 2008; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004). After an attempt to target the USS Sullivans ended in failure when the overloaded skiff sank, the attack on the Cole was all too successful, killing 17 American seamen, and injuring more than three-dozen more.

The Cole operation brought to the surface an important factor that aids understanding of the AAIA, highlighting the different ways in which the various jihadist currents were treated by the security services in Yemen. Whilst al-Mihdar and his group were violently repressed after failing to negotiate on the government’s terms, others benefitted from a far more permissive environment. Close links existed between members of Yemen’s internal security organisation, the Political Security
Organisation (PSO) and a number of the ‘Afghan Arabs’ (Higgins & Cullison, 2002; Tyler, 2002). Al-Nashiri in particular, was protected by then Interior Minister, Hussein Arab, who instructed security personnel to provide “safe passage to [al-Nashiri] … to cooperate with him and facilitate his missions” (Watkins, 2005, para.3). Although there could have been personal relationships facilitating this relationship, the most obvious difference between al-Nashiri and al-Mihdar was one of targeting: al-Mihdar directed his invective at the state, whilst al-Qaeda was by now overwhelmingly focused on attacking America.

However, the political opportunity structure facing the jihadists would change with the events of September 11, 2001. Although Yemen had come under pressure to act against militant Islamists following the East Africa embassy bombings in 1998 (Peterson, 2009; Whitaker, 1999b), this increased exponentially after 9/11, in the face of which, Saleh chose to cooperate with the ‘Global War on Terror’ (Bonner, 2001; Day, 2012). One of the first people America demanded from Yemen was Abu al-Harithi. A long-standing part of bin Laden’s operations in the region, al-Harithi had fought in Afghanistan and was considered the ‘godfather’ of al-Qaeda in Yemen (al-Hammadi, 2005; Johnsen, 2012; muslm.net, 2007). Before his death he would direct the second maritime martyrdom operation in Yemen against the MV Limburg, resulting in one fatality, and over 90,000 barrels of oil spilling into the Gulf of Aden (BBC, 2002; al-Hammadi, 2005). He was also deeply embedded in the wider militant milieu in Yemen, including with the AAIA: the drone strike that would eventually kill him in November 2002 would also kill four members of the AAIA travelling with him (Al-Haj, 2002; al-Sahwah, 2003a).

With growing cooperation between Sana’a, Washington, and increasingly London (Lamb, 2002), arrests followed, and by the end of 2002 al-Qaeda’s operations in Yemen were in disarray. Al-Harithi was dead, al-Nashiri had been detained in the UAE, years later to end up in Guantanamo, and despite the escape of several jihadists who had been involved in the USS Cole attack from a jail in Aden, many more of al-Harithi’s cohort had been rounded up by the security services (Combating Terrorism Center, 2011; Johnsen, 2012). As al-Bahri, bin Laden’s once bodyguard, who was imprisoned in Yemen following the USS Cole attack put it in 2004: “there is no Al-Qaeda presence in Yemen now … The presence ended with the martyrdom of Shaykh

The Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’s last stand?

Before al-Nabi came to attention, al-Masri was still promoting the group from London. On the AAIA’s behalf, he claimed responsibility for both the USS Cole and the MV Limburg operations, even going so far as to chastise bin Laden for his failure to attack Yemen (Aden-Abyan Islamic Army, 2002; Murphy, 2000). Given the evidence suggesting it was bin Laden, via al-Nashiri and al-Harithi, who was ultimately responsible for the two maritime attacks (Al-Hammadi, 2005; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004), most analysts discount these claims of responsibility (e.g. Combating Terrorism Center, 2011). Nevertheless, there was evidence of longer-standing ties between the two groups of militants. Not only did al-Harithi die alongside four members of the AAIA, one of the AAIA men arrested following the kidnapping said al-Harithi was in contact with al-Mihdar as he was constituting the group in 1997 (Whitaker, 1999c). Moreover, just before al-Harithi was killed, al-Masri made a largely neglected announcement that the AAIA had joined al-Qaeda and was ‘fighting under its banner’ (al-Zaman, 2002). It seems likely therefore, that there was a degree of cooperation between the militants, which could indicate a crossover of membership, aims, or of al-Harithi incorporating those AAIA members still at large into his ranks.

Following al-Mihdar’s demise, Khalid al-Nabi is widely cited as assuming the leadership of the remnants of the AAIA. The relationship between the two incarnations of the AAIA is disputed. Although al-Nabi denied the existence of the AAIA, he acknowledged he knew al-Mihdar, describing their relationship as fraternal rather than organisational (al-Hammadi, 2008). Characterising the AAIA as a very small group, whose capacity was widely overstated, he claims to have been in contact with al-Mihdar in 1998, but that al-Nabi and his men ‘moved on to other regions’, after which they lost touch (al-Hammadi, 2008).

Six months after al-Harithi’s death, in June 2003, al-Nabi and his men (which he estimated to be less than 20 in number, and which the government put at closer to
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100), were accused of an attack on a medical convoy in Abyan’s Hutat mountains (Hull, 2011). A camp which seems to have been used to train men heading for Iraq (Mudabish, 2006). Dozens of men were reported to have attacked the convoy in an operation which saw six killed and up to twenty captured (Hull, 2011). Yemen’s Central Security Forces, fresh from training with US security personnel seconded to Yemen, mounted a substantial operation against al-Nabi’s camp using helicopters and combat vehicles (Ain-al-Yaqeen, 2003; Hull, 2011). Amidst reports of dozens of arrests, several dead and up to 60 on the run (allegedly including 10 men involved in the USS Cole attack), al-Nabi was initially believed to be among the dead (al-Sahwah, 2003a).

Several months later however, he and a number of his men returned to Ja’ar, replete with arms, a police escort, and a commendation from religious leaders to be given their old jobs, and that the unemployed be offered work (Al-Hayat, 2003a). After apparently handing himself in to the authorities in Sana’a, Khalid along with his brother Ahmad Adb al-Nabi, came to an accommodation with the government. Reports suggest that after weeks of negotiation, al-Nabi agreed to relinquish violence in exchange for a range of incentives including cars, government salaries, and the release of some detainees (al-Hayat, 2003b).

Unpicking the ‘truth’ about events leading up to al-Nabi’s reincorporation into society is extremely difficult. Several reports suggested that he had, in fact, been a double-agent (al-Hayat, 2003b; al-Sahwah, 2003b). In this well-publicised version of events, al-Nabi had been relaying information about al-Qaeda, and the AAIA to the security authorities, motivated in part by his ‘anxiety’ about rivalry between al-Harithi and himself over leadership of the group. Al-Harithi’s death presented an opportunity for al-Nabi to assert his leadership and turn away from the government. Subsequent negotiations with the authorities failed, and al-Nabi and his men refused to surrender (al-Sahwah, 2003b). Al-Nabi’s intransigence finally led to a crackdown in February 2003 resulting in sporadic clashes with the military. The attack on the medical convoy was the final event that precipitated the military confrontation in June. Al-Nabi’s version of events blamed the clash on persecution by socialist forces (al-Hammadi, 2008) and a misunderstanding between his men and the medical convoy at a checkpoint (al-Hayat, 2004).
Yemen’s ‘Committee for Dialogue’

To put these contrasting narratives in context, it is useful to situate them in the wider landscape of Yemeni and international politics. Saleh’s commitment to the ‘War on Terror’, subjected him to competing demands. On the one hand, America expected unequivocal support for its effort to counteract ‘Islamic extremism’ (WikiLeaks, 2003). In response, Yemen’s security agencies arrested large numbers of alleged militants, keeping them in poor conditions, very often without trial (Human Rights Watch, 2002). On the other hand, internal pressures from the tribal leaders who made up much of Saleh’s support base were agitating against these arrests (Johnsen, 2012). Balancing these competing claims became even harder with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, as public opinion in Yemen aligned firmly against their president’s on-going support of the United States (Al-Qadhi, 2003).

Several analysts argue that the ‘Committee for Dialogue’ was one solution Saleh felt might ease the growing tension between competing demands from America, tribal leaders, and NGOs agitating because of the human rights violations that many of the detainees were subject to (Johnsen, 2012; Schanzer, 2004; Worth, 2008). Initiated in 2002, it represented one of the earliest ‘deradicalisation’ programmes, it also perhaps reflected the further institutionalisation of the ‘catch and release’ tactic the government regularly employed.48 The aims of the programme appeared laudable, detainees underwent religious instruction and dialogue with Supreme Court Judge Hamoud al-Hitar; if he believed they had changed their ways, they were released.49

Of the first tranche of 104 men who participated in the programme, 36 were set free, some of whom were reportedly re-arrested after returning to the Hutat camp (WikiLeaks, 2003). The next round would see far more released – a total of 92 in December 2003 (Johnsen, 2012). Alongside these releases, Saleh pardoned a further 54 ‘al-Qaeda suspects’ who had surrendered. Amongst these were a number of AAIA cadre who had recently turned themselves in (Agence France-Presse, 2003). Al-Nabi was one of those who recanted and was pardoned (Agence France-Presse, 2003; Al-

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48 Periodically, often large numbers of detainees were released, frequently as part of a deal struck between Saleh and whomever he was negotiating with. For example, as many as 170 alleged militant jihadists were released in July 2002 as part of an amnesty, including three AAIA members (Yemen Times, 2002). Right up until his last months in power, Saleh was releasing large numbers of ‘al-Qaeda suspects’ from custody (Phillips, 2011).

49 Success was judged according to whether the detainees agreed not to carry out any further violence in Yemen, in particular against Western interests, and that they committed to recognising the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Yemeni government (Boucek, Beg & Horgan, 2009).
Sahwah, 2003c). In his position as the nominal head of the AAIA, he also negotiated
the release of dozens of prisoners (al-Hayat, 2004) and signed a pledge on behalf of
his followers to revoke violence and commit to unity and religious tolerance
(Mukarram, 2003). Despite al-Hitar’s claims that he personally persuaded al-Nabi to
change his ways in less than an hour (Mareb Press, 2013), the agreement was actually
reached after ‘personal discussions’ with the President. Subsequently, Saleh offered
the head of the FBI, Robert Meuller, a 75% guarantee al-Nabi would relinquish
violence (al-Hayat, 2004; Wikileaks, 2003). This would mark the second process of
demobilisation for the AAIA, this time one which was negotiated rather than the
result of the organisation’s decapitation.

Al-Nabi’s perceived betrayal of the jihadist cause did not go unnoticed by
others in the militant milieu in Yemen. ‘Al-Qaeda in Yemen’ published statements
disowning al-Nabi, declaring him an apostate (Buamr, 2003; Movement for Islamic
Reform in Arabia, 2003), events which sparked debate about al-Nabi’s loyalties on a
newly minted Internet forum for the jihadists in Yemen (Al-Shafi’i, 2003). This was
to mark the beginning of a complex relationship between al-Nabi, the ‘AAIA’, al-
Qaeda, and the authorities; one which is still being played out today. A number of
mechanisms are also discernable in this complex interaction between state and non-
state actors: extreme but intermittent repression by the state; subsequent
demobilisation by al-Nabi and his men; and the signs of polarisation between the
various Islamist currents in Yemen. We can also see the dynamic process of
competition between militant groupings, played out against the backdrop of a regime
which often approached the administration of criminal justice as a tool to resolve
political exigencies rather than as a way of deterring crime or sanctioning criminals.
Again, we can see the interplay between background conditions of low civil liberties,
an organisational make-up characterised by experienced fighters and limited wider
networks, and the action of particular mechanisms and processes determined by state-
group interaction.

Interlude
The next few years would see relative calm on the Islamist front in Yemen.
The main leaders were in prison or had been killed, whilst those interested in jihad
had travelled to Iraq to fight. Al-Nabi seemed similarly quietened, he gave interviews describing peaceably farming mangos and lemons, characterising the situation in Abyan as “disciplined and quiet” (Mudabish, 2006, para.18). The deal with the government had been effective in encouraging al-Nabi to relinquish political violence. Importantly however, he remained committed to a rigid interpretation of Salafism, promoting hisba and encouraging greater adherence to the tenets of Salafism from his base at the Hamzah bin-abd-al-Muttalib Mosque in Ja’ar (Mudabish, 2006). This period of quiescence was not entirely without incident, and in late 2005, cracks began to show in the deal Saleh and al-Hitar had reached with the AAIA.

Amidst reports that the rewards promised for relinquishing violence were not materialising, a number of (ex)AAIA men were arrested on suspicion of facilitating the jihad in Iraq (Mudabish, 2006; Yemen Observer, 2005). Widely perceived as an effort to appease American demands for action over Yemenis travelling to Iraq, the arrests prompted threats the AAIA would reform (Yemen Observer, 2005). The following year, al-Nabi was back in the news claiming the government was trying to assassinate him, reports which the authorities vehemently denied (Mudabish, 2006). Despite this, there is no evidence that he was involved in political violence over this period.

Before exploring al-Nabi’s next period of contention, it is worth comparing his focus on local issues of ‘promoting virtue and preventing vice’, and that of the young jihadists jailed in 2002 as part of the crackdown on al-Qaeda in Yemen. From prison they reconstituted themselves, coalescing around several men who had fought with and sworn bay’a to bin Laden in Afghanistan. Culminating in an ambitious jailbreak of 23 men, the eventual leader, al-Wihayshi, would establish a viable and robust organisation in Yemen, adopting the same ‘centralisation of decision, decentralisation of execution’ bin Laden had practiced (al-Hammadi, 2005; Johnsen, 2012). Following an alliance with Saudi exiles in 2009, these men would become

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50 See Felter and Fishman (2007), and Fishman (2008) for discussion of foreign fighters – including Yemenis – in Iraq.
51 These men include: Nasir al-Wihayshi (bin Laden’s personal secretary in Afghanistan); Fawaz al-Rabì’i (sent by bin Laden to Yemen to work on his behalf), Qasim al-Raymi (trainer in camps in Afghanistan, AQAP’s military commander), Jamal al-Badawi (coordinated logistics for the USS Cole attack) and Jabir al-Banna (central to the Lackawanna Six case in America) (Combating Terrorism Center, 2011; Johnsen 2012).
AQAP, and would go on to be responsible for some of the most innovative al-Qaeda operations in recent years. During this period, tensions within the jihadist current in Yemen would become more apparent, events al-Nabi and his militants were at the heart of and which would mark an end to the AAIA’s second apparent demobilisation.

**Shifting alliances**

By 2007, Saleh was facing two internal uprisings. In the north, the Huthi rebellion had been going on for nearly three years,\(^\text{52}\) whilst in the south, *al-haraka al-salmiyya lil-junub* (The Peace Movement of the South), better known as *al-Hirak*, was beginning to coalesce.\(^\text{53}\) In the first half of 2007, discontent spilled over into protest, when southern Yemenis organised peaceful sit-ins initially demanding jobs, equality with the north and greater autonomy (Day, 2010). In the face of government repression the opposition movement grew, organising daily rallies throughout the south and by March 2008, some of the protests had turned violent (Day, 2010). It was in this context that a complex web of political actors were constituting their political identities in the face of widespread instability.

**A new generation**

Several militant Islamist factions were engaged in *boundary formation and activation* during this period, trying to set out their own ideological position in the rapidly changing social and political landscape. In doing so, a number used al-Nabi as a reference point. For example, an attack by up to 40 militants on a police station in Abyan was claimed by the AAIA, but under new leadership (Mareb Press, 2007). In taking credit for the attack, apparently prompted by the attempted arrest of the AAIA’s ‘new leader’ – Basil al-Naqaz (Abu Abdul Rahman) – on his wedding day, their statement denounced al-Nabi for working with the government and ‘misleading the youth’. The next generation of al-Qaeda in Yemen were also beginning to make their presence felt, carrying out increasingly lethal and ambitious attacks.\(^\text{54}\) However, they were also engaged in an effort to draw a boundary between themselves and other militant Islamists. For example, in their first official statement, they warned against

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\(^{52}\) Initially led by Zaydi leaders, the Huthi rebellion evolved to incorporate a wide range of actors, demanding changes related to religious freedoms, economic development and basic services, as well as an end to political and religious discrimination (Boucek, 2010a; International Crisis Group, 2009).

\(^{53}\) See Day (2012) for a review of the movement’s aims and origins, which centre on a legacy of inequitable treatment following the 1994 war, and the growing feeling that political change in Yemen was possible.

\(^{54}\) See International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (2010) and Curran et al. (2012) for list of attacks.
allying with the tyrants, explicitly rejecting the possibility of deals or negotiating with the government (Middle East Research Institute, 2007). A none-too-subtle reference to those jihadists who had abandoned the cause, this was considered indicative of conflict between the new generation and al-Qaeda’s old guard in Yemen (Johnsen, 2007).

Al-Nabi was feeling the effects of the thin lines that delineated the boundaries between the various Islamists. Amidst more reported assassination attempts (al-Sahwah, 2008), he was involved in violent confrontations with the security forces (Belaquood, 2008). Caught in the dragnet trying to capture al-Qaeda members, al-Nabi was arrested and five of his men killed (Abdul-Ahad, 2010; Agence France-Presse, 2008), although he was quickly released (CBS News, 2008; Shafie, 2008). In positioning himself in relation to other political actor’s claim-making al-Nabi employed a familiar series of identity boundaries, blaming his arrest on hostile socialist elements, and firmly denying any connection to al-Qaeda (Alkamim, 2009). Meanwhile, al-Qaeda’s new leader was trying to neutralise the tensions between the various Islamists, suggesting that the jihadists should resolve their conflict with al-Nabi (al-Wasat, 2008). In this period, we see political contestation which did not directly involve al-Nabi draw him into conflict with the state. American pressure on Yemen as a result of the ‘War on Terror’ was impacting al-Nabi due to his past association with violent Islamism, and al-Hirak was having an increasing impact across the south, including where al-Nabi lived. These tensions would only grow as al-Qaeda in Yemen continued to attack foreign and Yemeni interests in the country.

Instability and Fracture
To combat the growing political movement in the south, which was by now calling for secession (Day, 2010), Saleh attempted to co-opt some of the first generation jihadists. In January 2009, General Ali Mohsen convened a meeting requesting their help in putting down the southern secessionist movement (Yemen Nation, 2012). In return, he offered to release large numbers of Islamists from jail.55 In addition, these negotiations led to the creation of ‘Committees to Defend Unity’,

55 A substantial number of prisoners were released as a result of this deal, many of whom were active jihadists (Associated Press, 2009). Gregory Johnsen (2009) crosschecked the names of those released against a list of al-Qaeda detainees on al-Ikhlas— a jihadist forum – of 112 released, 34 were listed on the forum. The prison releases were described by one human rights activist as ‘emptying the jails of Islamists’ (Wikileaks, 2009).
militias formed in part from the released detainees, who were financed and armed by the state (Wikileaks, 2009). Others were effectively paid not to foment or engage in further violence. In these cases released jihadists were offered salaries in return for a commitment to stability (al-Nedaa, 2009).

Some reports put al-Nabi at Mohsen’s meeting, accounts which he denied. Whether or not he did enter into a ‘peace deal’ with Saleh, it did not prevent further unrest and by March 2009 Ja’ar was becoming increasingly violent (Mareb Press, 2009). In the ensuing security crackdown, dozens of Islamists were arrested, among them several ‘AAIA’ men. As the security situation deteriorated between the southern movement and the security forces, the various actors in the region were being forced to pick sides, with some surprising results. In April 2009 Tariq al-Fadhli (once Islamic Jihad leader, turned parliamentarian) announced his support for the southern movement and has since become one of its more visible voices (al-Ayyam, 2009). The following month al-Qaeda issued a statement expressing support for the southern movement, calling for an Islamic state in a newly liberated country (Yemen Times, 2009), although stopping short of supporting secession (Phillips, 2010).

By the end of 2009, al-Nabi had set out his own position on the conflict in the south, informed by the same identity boundaries he had been preoccupied with for many years. Calling for an Islamic state in Yemen, he warned against secession, and against the socialist party, which he framed as leading al-Hirak, calling on the student leaders to ‘return to God’ (muslm.net, 2009). Moreover, he blamed external forces for the southern movement, claiming that the UK and the US were behind the calls for secession (Alkamim, 2009). He also distanced himself both from al-Qaeda, and from the Yemeni state. In an interview following the bombing of an ‘al-Qaeda’ camp at al-Majalla on December 17, 2009, al-Nabi took the opportunity to deny any relationship to the alleged militants killed in the operation and al-Qaeda more generally (Mudabish, 2010a). Instead, he focused on blaming the United States for the strike (Mudabish, 2010a). He was soon proven correct, despite denials from the Yemeni and American governments, the attack, which killed 55 people and caused widespread anger throughout Yemen, was a US cruise missile strike (Scahill, 2012; Wikileaks, 2010).

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56 See Hales (2010) for details of violence in Abyan during this period.
Whilst the various non-state actors in the south were trying to differentiate themselves from one another, Saleh was trying to muddy the waters. For some time Saleh had deliberately conflated the threat from ‘al-Qaeda’, the southern secessionists and the Huthi rebellion in the north. His aim, amongst other things, was to frame the conflicts as a fight against terrorism, trying to leverage the perceived threat from al-Qaeda as an excuse to crack down on the security threats he was facing and gain international support (Blumi, 2011; al-Qadhi, 2010a).

Notwithstanding Saleh’s efforts to portray his various enemies as a homogenous threat, the jihadists in Abyan were far from united. In particular, the inter-generational struggle was preoccupying al-Nabi, who told one reporter ‘the shabab’ (youth) were causing problems, explaining: “yes they are true jihadis with good intention, [but] they lack the knowledge” (Abdul-Ahad, 2010, para.28).

Amongst the intra-Islamist competition, al-Qaeda announced its intention to form its own ‘Aden-Abyan Army’ (al-Mosawa, 2010) to “liberate Yemen from the Crusaders and their apostate agents” (Mareb Press, 2010, para.1). The announcement is perhaps best understood as a recruitment tool, trying to capitalise on the apocryphal hadith to boost numbers, rather than the creation of a new fighting unit. It also perhaps represents an effort to take ownership of the AAIA’s name, suggesting that despite accusations al-Nabi was in collaboration with the government, the name retained symbolic value.

As AQAP tried to position itself in the jihadist milieu, the security situation in Ja’ar deteriorated even further. A full-scale military operation began in Abyan (al-Qadhi, 2010b), and clashes between the security forces and what were described as ‘al-Qaeda affiliated elements’ grew more deadly (Mudabish, 2010b). Against this backdrop, two mechanisms were at work. First, the various political actors were trying to activate boundaries between themselves, and second, they were engaging in a more limited level of competition for ideological space. These mechanisms were to become even more important when, in 2011, we see AQAP’s first attempt at controlling territory, events which al-Nabi was at the centre of.

**A resurgent Aden-Abyan Islamic Army**

At the start of 2011, just before the governments of Tunisia, Egypt and finally Libya succumbed to popular protest, Saleh fuelled further dissent in Yemen by trying
Chapter 8: The Aden-Abyan Islamic Army

to push through legislation removing constitutional limits on his presidential term (al-Qadhi, 2011a). Subsequent conflict between protesters and security forces reached a peak on ‘Bloody Friday’, when government snipers killed at least 52 people at a protest at the University in Sana’a (Amnesty International, 2012). In the south, things were no less stable, as the security forces lost control of some of the security apparatus (Agence France-Presse, 2011a) and state control became increasingly sporadic. Given the deteriorating security situation, local ‘popular committees’ were formed to police their neighbourhoods (al-Haj & Hensawi, 2011). In Abyan, the situation was deteriorating with its own particular tenor as the jihadists began to assert more control. Reaching its peak in the first few months of 2011, the Islamists took control first of Ja’ar, (al-Haj & Gamel, 2011), then two months later in May, Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan fell (Al-Arabiya, 2011).

This period of violence marked a definitive end to al-Nabi’s quiescence and was perhaps the only time he supported al-Qaeda, at the very least endorsing some of their ideological claims (al-Ghad, 2011). Although he may have been involved in some militancy before this point, by now he was fully engaged in violent political contestation. Two main factors help explain al-Nabi’s remobilisation: the proximity of other political actors making claims impacting on his local area, and the possibility this brought with it for pursuing his Islamist agenda. These two points explain why claims he may have worked with al-Qaeda, and with the state, less surprising than they at first might appear, something considered in more detail a little later.

In the midst of the unrest in the region, many distrusted the explanation for the Islamists victory against the military, believing instead that Saleh had allowed them to take over the towns in Abyan (Agence France-Presse, 2011b; Yemen Times, 2011). There were fears Saleh had manufactured an opening for the jihadists to bolster his argument that he was the only one capable of counteracting the forces of terrorism and chaos which would prevail if he was deposed (Day, 2012; al-Haj & Gamel, 2011). A more pragmatic explanation for the relative ease with which the Islamists claimed territory, was given by some from the army, as one lieutenant put it: “[t]he truth is much simpler: the army leadership is rotten and corrupt. Why would a soldier fight if the army is split in Sana’a?” (Abdul-Ahad, 2012, para. 58). Whichever explanation is closer to the ‘truth’, the lack of internal security represented a shift in
the political opportunity structure, which afforded the jihadists the opportunity to assert their own version of governance. A situation al-Nabi was involved in maintaining. Following the seizure of territory, he framed his actions in much the same way other ‘popular committees’ and local militias did – as an effort to maintain security in the absence of state control. As he put it:

The state has fallen here. If we don’t take over, others will take over … We have tried secular rule and we have tried socialist rule. Now we need to try Islamic rule because we have no hope but through the Quran and the (Prophet’s teachings). (al-Haj & Gamel, 2011, para. 18).

**The Islamic Emirate of Abyan?**

As the remaining government soldiers stationed in Ja’ar fled, al-Jazeera (2011) streamed pictures of heavily armed men driving around the town in armoured cars, captured from the fleeing army. Al-Nabi and the jihadists’ purported efforts at providing security were not however, enough to prevent disaster striking the town. In the wake of the army’s retreat, al-Nabi was accused of first plundering an ammunitions factory on the outskirts of Ja’ar, and then leaving it open to the local population. In the rush to loot the factory, an explosion killed over 120 people (Finn, 2011). According to al-Nabi’s own account (al-Hammadi, 2011), he sent men to protect the factory, but given the size of the compound, the arrival of so many people, and despite their efforts to advise people of the dangers, they were unable to stop them from entering; the result was a catastrophic accident.

In the same interview, al-Nabi set out his vision for Ja’ar and the surrounding area, declaring the government ‘finished’, the local council and services ‘unwanted’ and the army thrown out. He proclaimed that from then on ‘popular committees’ would be responsible for the people’s needs (al-Hammadi, 2011). He also utterly rejected the suggestion that an ‘Islamic emirate in Abyan’ had been declared in the area,57 and that the presence of ‘al-Qaeda’ was merely a rumour. This last is demonstrably untrue, and is perhaps best understood as an effort to avoid attacks from the US, as well as an attempt to portray himself as the primary force in the district.

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57 Soon after the army lost control of Ja’ar, there were reports that al-Qaeda, and by implication al-Nabi, had seized a local radio station and announced an ‘Islamic Emirate’ (Islam Memo, 2011). Refutations soon began, blaming amongst others, Saleh’s regime for spreading the story in an attempt to inflate the threat from the jihadists.
Al-Qaeda in fact, had a substantial presence in Ja’ar and the surrounding area. In an online question and answer session, a week after al-Nabi’s interview, AQAP’s then chief religious cleric, Adil al-Abab declared that al-Qaeda “control Ja’ar and call on the concept of monotheism while trying to meet the demands of the people” (al-Abab 2011, para.8).

These two public accounts by al-Qaeda and al-Nabi offer an opportunity to compare their aims. Their priorities – beyond trying to garner support – were the social, economic and security needs of the local population. Both spoke of the need for basic services and a return to stability and security, although al-Abab recognised that al-Qaeda’s presence brought with it the increased risk of aerial bombardment. Both wanted shari’a law, although interestingly in somewhat different ways: al-Abab’s explicit message was that those for whom he spoke would be the ones to administer it. Al-Nabi on the other hand, laid no claim to power, saying: “[w]e are not claiming that we want to dominate mankind, they [unspecified] can come and take over the country, but they must rule over us according to the Holy book and the Sunna of the Prophet (PBUH)” (al-Hammadi, 2011, para. 40). Not only does al-Nabi relinquish a claim for control, by emphasising that he did not want to ‘dominate mankind’, he also appears to be marking himself out from al-Qaeda’s more ambitious agenda, and perhaps even acquiescing to them.

Briefly, the men’s vision was realised. In Ja’ar, the jihadists tried to implement some forms of social provision for those who had not fled, distributing water, providing electricity and coordinating with aid agencies to provide food and shelter (Abdul-Ahad, 2012; Bezziou et al., 2011; al-Jamal, 2011). They also implemented their version of shari’a law – a shari’a court dispensed justice, prayer times were rigorously enforced, and land cruisers flying the ubiquitous black flag drove around the town ‘promoting virtue and preventing vice’ (Abdul-Ahad & al-Ahmad, 2012; Bezzio et al., 2011). After the first lashing administered to a drunken thief in April 2011, the administration of hudud laws increased, several men had their hands amputated for stealing, and a number were executed (Amnesty International, 2012; Khashafa, 2011; Madaraden, 2012). Although interestingly, they were less stringent on other behaviours often outlawed by jihadists such as qat,

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58 Which al-Qaeda renamed Waqar, meaning dignity or majesty in Arabic (Madaraden, 2012).
59 An aspect of shari’a, hudud laws set out specific punishments for different types of crime.
moving the *qat* market to the outskirts of the town rather than banning it altogether (Coombs, 2012).

Two processes were implicated in these events: *involution* and *self-representation*. Demand for social provision meant the jihadists had to address the needs of the people they had claimed the right to rule over, something made easier by the government’s ongoing failure to do so (Simcox, 2012). The result was involution, a shift towards the supply of social services, and one which bin Laden (2010) had argued was sufficiently difficult that AQAP should not attempt to administer territory in Yemen. Alongside this, the militants had to demonstrate their own worthiness and commitment through the process of self-representation. In doing so, AQAP in particular recognised the need to project a positive message, releasing videos of smiling jihadists driving round handing out water and food to local children (Al-Malahem, 2012). Al-Nabi had a less ambitious agenda, however he was still concerned with presenting himself as both one of the people, and one of those able to deliver a better reality for those living in the region. In his words: “we only want goodness, safety, security, well-being for the nation to secure people’s lives, dignity, money, homes and shops” (Al-Hammadi, 2011, para. 29).

**The jihadist milieu in Abyan**

The jihadists could not so easily resolve the security problem their presence caused. Aerial bombings continued to target the town, including al-Nabi’s farm, which was reportedly destroyed towards the end of 2011 (Xinhua News Service, 2011). That al-Nabi was targeted casts doubt on widespread accusations of collusion with the government. Either the armed forces were divided, al-Nabi was being warned of the raids and they were for show, or he was in fact considered an enemy of the state. The head of security in Zinjibar, Qasem bin Hadi, firmly believed that al-Nabi was the enemy, but differentiated him from al-Qaeda. As he put it: “[w]ho said that only al-Qaeda is a terrorist group in Yemen? These militants [including al-Nabi] are causing as much problems for Yemen as al-Qaeda” (Almasmari, 2011, para. 12).

The question of the relationship between the various militant actors in the south of Yemen is inevitably complex and difficult to determine. One particular division, much discussed by analysts, is that between Ansar al-Sharia and AQAP. Ansar al-Sharia has been described by some as an al-Qaeda ‘subsidiary’ (Swift,
2012); as ‘distinct units’ working closely together, sharing some of the same aims, but different organisational structures (Wilkinson, 2012); and by others as one and the same (Johnsen, 2012). This last interpretation accepts al-Abab’s description of Ansar al-Sharia as the name they use “to introduce ourselves in areas where we work to tell people about our work and goals” (2011, para. 5) employed because of the ‘al-Qaeda’ brand’s negative image. It is also one reflected in the interchangeable way in which both al-Qaeda/Ansar al-Sharia leaders and their nominal constituents describe them (Abdul-Ahad & al-Ahmad, 2012; Fursan al-Balagh Media, 2011).

A recent report by the Abaad Studies and Research Centre (2012) suggested Ansar al-Sharia was also adopted as an umbrella designation to mask the conflicts between the various jihadists in the area and widen its appeal. Despite the disagreement in Western circles, a number of independent local sources paint a similar picture. Splitting members of Ansar al-Sharia into a central cadre of around 300-500 al-Qaeda members, and a wider circle of up to 700 more who joined for economic or security reasons (Almasmari, 2011; Al-Qadhi, 2011b; Scahill, 2012).

As for al-Nabi, he professed to share some of the same beliefs as al-Qaeda, but denied working directly with them (al-Ghad, 2011), denials supported by independent accounts (Jumayh, 2011). Whatever their shared beliefs, they were not sufficient to prevent them coming into conflict, the result of which was al-Nabi’s withdrawal from Ja’ar to the Yafa’a area in neighbouring Lahij governorate (Abaad Studies & Research Center, 2012; Mohammad, 2011). Several independent accounts set the conflict between the Islamists and the role of the government in context, suggesting that al-Nabi had briefly controlled Zinjibar after government forces ‘abandoned’ the town (Madaraden, 2012; Mohammed, 2011; Sultan, 2012). Within a matter of days however, AQAP had fought and overcome al-Nabi who, according to one account was put under effective house arrest, losing as many as 100 of his men who switched to fighting for al-Qaeda (Sultan, 2012). In the coming months, there were reports that al-Nabi was getting state support for a campaign against al-Qaeda (Alwahdawi, 2012; Madaraden, 2012).

60 Al-Nabi also expressed support for bin Laden, on hearing of his death in May 2011, he reportedly said, “a thousand Osama bin Laden’s will take over to fight the Jews and Christians” (AFP, 2011c, para.17).
**Political change**

In the capital, Saleh clung to power, surviving a bomb attack, increasingly violent protests, the defection of ministers and army leaders, as well as the loss of some of the major tribal confederation’s support, until finally, towards the end of 2011, he agreed to step down. In the meantime, the militants in Abyan continued to hold territory, bombarded by American, and now Saudi, aerial attacks. They withstood a major operation against them begun in June, until in September 2011 Qasim al-Raymi – al-Qaeda’s military commander – ordered a ‘strategic withdrawal’ and the army regained control of Zinjibar. Ja’ar and a number of other areas however, remained beyond state control (Khashafa, 2011). Increasingly, a diverse group of popular committees joined the military in fighting the jihadists (Coombs, 2013). With their support the army pushed further into Abyan in April 2012 (al-Jazeera, 2012a), eventually regaining control of all the towns in the region by mid-2012 in operation ‘Golden Swords’ (Coombs, 2013; Gordon, 2013; Zimmerman, 2012).

The most recent denouement in al-Nabi’s militant career came in mid-2012. In the offensive against the militants in Abyan, al-Nabi’s brother, Ahmed, was killed (al-Jazeera, 2012b), some of his close associates were arrested (Mudabish & Rahbi, 2012), and ultimately al-Nabi surrendered to the authorities (Barakish, 2012). However, by October 2012, in a case of history repeating itself, al-Nabi was free. After agreeing to renounce violence against the state, and reading out a ‘political oath’ he and other ‘al-Qaeda elements’ were released with a monthly salary of 20,000 Yemeni riyals (£60) per month (Barakish, 2012). In January 2013, he was back in Ja’ar giving interviews to visiting journalists, seemingly a free man, and according to one reporter who met him, in the pay of the PSO (Mareb Press, 2013).

**AAIA: Violent specialists**

A number of insights from al-Nabi’s most recent period of contention are worth reviewing and setting in the context of the typology, and the mechanisms and processes implicated in his claim-making. Most obviously, the recent episode in Abyan marks a substantial polarisation of the militant Islamists in Yemen. There have always been differences between al-Nabi and al-Qaeda, but recent events have further consolidated a boundary between the global jihadists and those with primarily local concerns. This makes the point that assessments suggesting existing networks of ‘jihadists’ makes it easier for al-Qaeda to operate in particular areas are overly
simplistic. Ideologically, we again see that al-Nabi’s primary aims were administration of shari’a law, and local security, primarily for himself but also for the local population, although on his terms. Finally, although it remains to be proven whether it is more accurate to describe al-Nabi as a proxy actor for the Yemeni state, so far, he has not openly acknowledged this relationship. His legitimacy and autonomy as an independent political actor are seemingly more important to him than many of the other ‘popular committees’ who openly acknowledged gaining support from the government (Coombs, 2013).

What is clear, is that al-Nabi and AQAP demonstrate quite different levels of ambition. Beyond demanding shari’a, al-Nabi did not present an agenda for change, there was no manifesto and little effort to create a broader social movement. He was, in Tilly’s (2003) terms, far more of a violent specialist than a political entrepreneur, as was his predecessor, al-Mihdar. Both men’s history of militancy, their embeddedness in local social and cultural networks, and subsequent ability to draw on experienced cadre and the tools of violence, amidst the widespread absence of state control, has seen the AAIA maintain a presence in Yemen. It has also seen al-Nabi in particular, emerge as one of the more resilient militants in Abyan, but not a political leader. Notwithstanding his apparent retreat from Ja’ar, more than anything, he has demonstrated that those wishing to engage in contestation in Abyan must contend with him and his political and violent claim-making.

The AAIA’s position in the typology, characterised by relatively limited infrastructure and networks, but more substantial resources, informs the conclusion that the AAIA’s leaders were more focused on violent contestation than political entrepreneurship. However, in interpreting these organisational features, it is important to remember that typologies need to be combined with more detailed analysis. As we have seen, the AAIA had two incarnations, both demonstrating similar characteristics but sometimes for different reasons. They both had relatively limited networks, al-Mihdar because he failed to consolidate links to theological and militant allies, al-Nabi because his interest was primarily local. Developing

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61 For example, Robin Simcox has argued “Ja’ar was a perfect target. Its historical involvement with the Afghan mujahideen and the Aden Abyan Islamic Army ensured there were already veteran jihadis living in the area who were familiar with its history, culture, traditions, tribal characteristics and who held influence locally” (2012, p.69).
transnational links or strong militant networks would not necessarily have helped further al-Nabi’s aims.

The two incarnations of the AAIA do however, share some of the reasons which elucidate its position on the two other defining characteristics, both of which are heavily influenced by the external political opportunity variables. Al-Nabi and al-Mihdar’s more substantial resources stemmed from their, and their men’s, history of fighting in Afghanistan and in al-Nabi’s case, in the 1994 war. It is also informed by their ability to maintain some territorial presence, even if only via semi-permanent training camps, made possible by the lack of state control in some areas of Yemen. The absence of any official wing and low levels of popular support explain the AAIA’s low level of infrastructure. Again there are similarities between al-Nabi and al-Mihdar; neither man courted widespread popularity, and they actively avoided engagement in more mainstream politics, believing for slightly different reasons that doing so was not a legitimate form of contestation. Moreover, had they attempted to do so, it seems unlikely they would have been able to progress their aims in any meaningful way given the closed nature of the political system in Yemen. We now carry forward these insights to look in more detail at the political and organisational outcomes of the AAIA over its history.

Outcomes: The Aden Abyan Islamic Army’s Achievements and Failures

In the literature on terrorism’s decline, the AAIA seems to be covered by most of the models by which terrorism might end, including decapitation, negotiation, repression, and factionalisation (Cronin, 2009). However, none of these have been sufficient to completely destroy the idea of the AAIA and it has continued to be discussed as a viable entity by the media, local population, politicians, commentators and analysts. Since al-Mihdar’s execution, it seems the AAIA has remained at the very least, a robust construction. It appears to have a visible leader, has engaged in violent political contestation up until very recently, and is understood to have been part of the militant milieu in Yemen for many years. Despite this, there have been repeated attempts to deny its existence from its putative leader.

Perhaps this disjuncture is best understood as reflecting the need to label and categorise organisations in order to understand and present them in a parsimonious way. They are also a way of constructing and interpreting particular security threats.
In this sense, ‘the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’ becomes shorthand for a group of men, intermittently engaged in political violence, understood to subscribe to a broadly ‘jihadist’ ideology, based in southern Abyan, most recently led by Khalid al-Nabi. Organisational or ideological continuity are therefore constructed and reproduced despite: the apparent efforts of the ‘AAIA’s leader’ to deny its existence; a somewhat different set of ideological aims to its earlier incarnation; and seemingly a different group of sponsors. Of course this does not invalidate them as an object of study, it does suggest however, that the different incarnations of the AAIA should be approached separately if we are to understand their outcomes and effects. What follows begins therefore by examining the failure of al-Mihdar’s AAIA, moving on to review the outcomes of al-Nabi’s political contestation.

A native interpretation: Al-Suri and Yemen’s first generation jihad

We are in the somewhat unusual position of being able to consider a native interpretation of why al-Mihdar’s AAIA failed, in the shape of al-Suri’s interpretation of why the first iteration of jihad in Yemen petered out. Al-Suri (2005) sets out two primary reasons. First, the failure of scholars to support the jihad, going further, he accused them, and a number of older ‘Afghan Arabs’ and ‘Yemeni jihadist brothers’, of undermining al-Mihdar’s effort by portraying his movement as rushed and immature. Second, al-Suri blames the ‘ignorance and alienation of the common people’ who are more interested in worldly goods and fear of death than religious fulfilment. These are, of course, common jihadist complaints, who regularly blame ‘sultans’ scholars’ and a failure of the Ummah’s collective will. Al-Suri’s comments nevertheless reveal some interesting tensions within the different Islamist currents in Yemen, in particular, between the scholars – he is especially critical of al-Zindani and al-Wadi’i – and al-Mihdar’s movement, and between the different generations of jihadists.

The implications of these problems are threefold, first, it meant al-Mihdar’s group lacked theological legitimacy. Without the support of the scholars, and lacking any religious schooling himself, his agenda was ideologically weak. Given the marginal position of ‘jihadism’ in the Islamic landscape, al-Mihdar needed religious support, a point reflected in his efforts to gain support from the Saudi ulama. Second, because many of those who may have been sympathetic to al-Mihdar’s agenda had
been incorporated into the political system – primarily via the Islah party – he was competing with powerful and well-established Islamist leaders and networks. He struggled to access this potential recruitment pool, unable to syphon off the public support afforded to the Islamists. Third, without a united front, and as long as the older generation of ‘Afghan and Yemeni Arabs’ were critical of his endeavours, progress would stall. These arguments rest on a number of assumptions: that those who may have felt attracted to more fundamentalist forms of governance were either content with the Islah’s milder Islamism; were unaware of the options available because of the dearth of jihadist leaders; or were insufficiently convinced by al-Mihdar’s programme. All these represent a failure to satisfactorily frame the aims of the global jihad and achieve a scale shift in the scope of collective action.

Notwithstanding the external spoilers al-Suri identifies, in an earlier critique (al-Suri, 1999), he implies that much of al-Mihdar’s failure resulted from a lack of ideological and personal leadership. Divided, and without a clear programme, al-Suri characterised the movement as one of ‘spontaneity and emotion’. Al-Suri therefore suggests the most important lesson from al-Mihdar’s failure is the necessity of “making a general da’wa to gather jihadist youths and the Muslim public in Yemen and the Islamic nation as a whole behind them” (1999, para. 14). Echoing another jihadist ideologue, Abu Walid al-Masri, who advocated the use of radio propaganda in Yemen, describing it as more powerful than atomic bombs (al-Masri, 1994/2007). Inevitably, these are not problems exclusive to Yemen, the subject of how to incite the Ummah to rise up in support of al-Qaeda’s vanguard is central to much jihadist literature. Given al-Mihdar’s relative inexperience and inability to marshal sufficient theological or practical support, it is perhaps not surprising that the first incarnation of the AAIA ended in the death of its leader and little or no progress towards its stated goals.

**Negotiating local interests and identities**

Nevertheless, these shortcomings do not mean al-Mihdar’s failure was inevitable. Looking again at the specific mechanisms implicated in the AAIA’s demise, his failure to successfully complete the process of actor constitution, his refusal to be co-opted by the state, and the subsequent and unusually swift and heavy repression all contributed to his imprisonment and ultimately, his execution. Whilst
al-Suri is correct that, had al-Mihdar spent more time growing the movement, the AAIA would have stood a better chance of surviving the setbacks it faced, he would still have had to overcome a number of problems specific to the Yemeni context.

Al-Mihdar was operating in an environment characterised by a number of different identity boundaries, central to which are the various tribal and patronage networks that inform social and political interaction in the country. Negotiating these to best effect, and successfully brokering new connections between different sites, would demand diplomacy and skill. Even bin Laden, who so successfully brokered and managed relationships between the different identities at work in Afghanistan (Lahoud, 2012) was unable to do the same in Yemen. Related to this, are the particular local interests of the tribes. Sarah Phillips (2010) interprets this localism in two ways, first, a desire for tribes to maintain local autonomy, and second, the effort to achieve local stability. Trying to activate a broader global jihadist identity, which transcends these local and more embedded identities challenges these traditions. Alongside the problems associated with beginning any kind of social movement, those trying to instigate jihad in Yemen therefore face particular issues in successfully achieving the process of actor constitution, because strong identity boundaries already exist.

Nevertheless, the most important feature of al-Mihdar’s contestation informing his swift demise was his focus on the Yemeni state. It was this, coupled with al-Mihdar’s refusal to reach an agreement with Saleh, which led to the state’s violent repression of the group. Support for this interpretation can be found in the way other ‘jihadists’ have been treated in Yemen, both before and since. Tariq Al-Fadhli was more concerned with attacking the socialist regime in the south and securing his own interests, and was relatively quickly co-opted into the state apparatus. Al-Nashiri benefited from the relatively permissive environment facilitated by the PSO and was wholly committed to attacking the far enemy. Al-Harithi was killed only after the US

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62 For more on the tribes of Yemen see Carapico (1998); Caton (2005); Combating Terrorism Center (2011); Dresch (1989); and Phillips (2010).
63 Having failed to reach a deal with tribal leaders, despite apparently spending considerable financial and personal capital in the attempt (Bergen, 2001; Burns, 2000; al-Suri, 2005), bin Laden tried to relay this lesson to the current incarnation of al-Qaeda in Yemen, warning that without the support of the tribes, they were liable to fail (bin Laden, 2010). Scholars of AQAP have argued that this is where they have been particularly successful, spending time and effort reaching an accommodation with tribes to facilitate their activities and develop a more robust network (Johnsen, 2012; al-Shishani, 2010).
exerted substantial pressure on Saleh, and it is arguable whether Yemen would have allowed lethal action to be taken against him in its absence (Johnsen, 2012). AQAP on the other hand is a group that Hegghammer (2009b) describes as “almost fully hybridized” (p.34), attacking both government and Western targets in equal measure and has faced considerable military degradation. Al-Mihdar’s similar (although less ideologically well-developed) focus on the near and far enemies preceded this by almost a decade. Alongside the government’s willingness to use extreme force to put down any opposition threatening the state, this is perhaps the most compelling reason al-Mihdar failed.

**A legacy of jihad**

Looking beyond this organisational failure to the wider outcomes of al-Mihdar’s political contestation, in the short term after the AAIA’s kidnapping, political relations between Yemen, the US and the UK were significantly strained (Chetwynd, 1998; Gardner & Sengupta, 1999). Britons were urged to leave the country, and the nascent tourism industry stalled, negatively impacting Yemen’s economy (Whitaker, 1999c). Whilst in line with al-Mihdar’s antagonism towards the West, this was not his main aim. As we have seen, al-Mihdar’s explicit goal regarding the release of the British and Yemeni detainees was not realised. Nor did his claim-making have any impact on the West’s campaign in Iraq, America’s foreign policy aims, or bring the overthrow of Saleh’s regime any closer. These failures are reflected in what is probably the clearest indictment of al-Mihdar’s failure – al-Suri’s use of al-Mihdar’s efforts as an example of ‘how not to do jihad’.

Perhaps al-Mihdar’s only impact in line with his broader aims was to accentuate the identity boundary between Westerners and Muslims in Yemen. Rooting his contestation in a primarily Muslim identity meant that he brought this boundary into stark relief. The overall result was a substantial drop-off in tourism and its concomitant revenue, and a growing reputation that Yemen was a hostile environment for Westerners (Callaway, 1999; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1999).

Moreover, al-Mihdar left a legacy for the jihadists who followed. At the very least they have become part of the genealogy of jihadism in Yemen. For example, in a statement reprinted in AQAP’s Arabic language magazine, *Sada al-Malahim*, al-
Chapter 8: The Aden-Abyan Islamic Army

Wihayshi references al-Mihdar, along with a number of other jihadists, as the forebears of his own militancy (al-Wihayshi, 2009). In an interview in Inspire – AQAP’s English language magazine – al-Wihayshi draws a direct line from the jihadists in Yemen active in the 1990s to his own organisation (al-Malahem, 2010). Such referencing suggests there are advantages to placing themselves in the same canon as al-Mihdar, despite his failure. Reflecting an attempt to construct a history of jihad in Yemen, this assumes greater continuity, and suggests a more clearly linear development of jihad than might otherwise be the case. It also affords greater legitimacy and suggests a more deeply embedded jihadist movement. This history is not however, al-Mihdar’s only legacy, as we will see as we turn our attention to the outcomes of the next incarnation of the AAIA.

Useful enemies

Much coverage of al-Nabi’s political contestation raises the question of whether he was in the pay of the state. If so, might this change our decision calculus concerning outcomes? Rather than examining the extent to which al-Nabi achieved his own stated goals, should we not instead take Saleh’s goals as our measure; or perhaps look at the extent to which he achieved non-political goals such as levels of financial reward? Doing so would perhaps understate al-Nabi’s agency in pursuing particular outcomes. It would also neglect the complex, often transitory relationships between non-state and state actors, and the unintended outcomes such interactions sometimes produce. For example, the ‘popular committees’, which recently fought with the government against al-Qaeda in Abyan, do not necessarily wish to completely eradicate the jihadist threat (Coombs, 2013). Their financial security is dependent on having an enemy to fight, consequently some wish to prolong that threat as long as possible. Such examples serve as a reminder to look beyond the explicit aims of a conflict to consider the web of vested interests at work.

Looking at the synergies between the government and al-Nabi, both remained committed to a united Yemen, and neither were sympathetic to al-Qaeda’s global ambitions. The state because it constituted an attack on the country, and al-Nabi because of his differing ideological priorities, and the threat it posed to his own autonomy in Abyan. Despite this, AQAP’s presence in the country offered an opportunity for Saleh and, to a lesser extent, to al-Nabi. America and the West’s
concern over al-Qaeda meant that Saleh was granted far more diplomatic, economic, and military support than would otherwise have been the case. Some have gone as far as calling AQAP a ‘cash cow’ for the Saleh regime (Seahill, 2012). Al-Nabi on the other hand, had the opportunity to capitalise on al-Qaeda’s fight against the regime to extend his own influence, progress his vision for greater Islamic adherence in day-to-day life, and undermine Yemen’s notional democratic system. As we have seen however, AQAP would eventually threaten al-Nabi resulting in an increasing convergence of interests as Saleh’s power weakened, and al-Nabi came into open conflict with AQAP.

Amongst others, Sarah Phillips (2011) and Isa Blumi (2011) have written of Saleh’s technique of deliberate destabilisation to consolidate his grip on power. Phillips calls this the ‘politics of permanent crisis’, whilst Johnsen suggests “it’s just how [Saleh] played politics: solving one crisis by creating another” (2012, p.178). However, the precise mechanisms by which Saleh produced this destabilisation are left under-specified. Analysts generally list examples such as Saleh’s release of Islamist prisoners, rather than tracing exactly how Saleh tried to prompt particular problems. One of the ways our study of the AAIA suggests this came about, was through the process of temporary actor coordination between al-Nabi and government actors. This enabled al-Nabi to create facts on the ground that Saleh and his cohort could capitalise upon.

We can perhaps therefore speak of one of al-Nabi’s outcomes as contributing to the commodification of jihad. Yemen’s jihadists were treated as a resource to gain military, political and financial resources most obviously from the United States, something al-Nabi described as ‘an old game’. As he put it: “the media inflated the issue [number of AAIA] because, as you know, more media coverage means more US support and aid in the name of fighting terrorism” (al-Hammadi, 2008). For example, Saleh was reportedly surprised when the US substantially reduced aid to Yemen in 2005-6 (Johnsen, 2012). He believed he had successfully destroyed al-Qaeda and anticipated financial and diplomatic rewards. Because of his failure to tackle corruption however, America actually withdrew much of its funding, leaving Saleh with the impression that without the threat from al-Qaeda, Yemen lost its privileged status as an ally of the US and was subject to far greater scrutiny than had previously
been the case (Johnsen, 2012; Phillips, 2011). It was an opinion which seemed to be confirmed when the economic taps opened again as AQAP emerged as a more coherent threat to America a few short years later (Haykel, 2010). One diplomat described the result as ‘selling al-Qaeda to the highest bidder’ (Phillips, 2011, p.140).

Of course, AQAP was performing its function relatively well; as they continued to target America, so Saleh was awarded increasing levels of support. As the crisis in Abyan deteriorated in 2011, Saleh appeared to have a stronger case that only he could manage the violence afflicting the country. In the midst of this, covertly supporting al-Nabi offered Saleh a number of further advantages, most notably he facilitated what Phillips (2011) has called ‘managed chaos’, arguing that “Saleh had built his power on an informal system that runs on crisis, and al-Qaeda are agents of crisis” (2011, p.139). By coordinating with state actors al-Nabi contributed to this chaos, whilst offering Saleh a putative degree of control. Al-Nabi was therefore implicated in this commodification process, at the same time pursuing his own ends. Because of his history of militancy and the degree of deniability he afforded Saleh he became, to employ Keen’s (2012) terminology, a ‘useful enemy’. Just as al-Qaeda was a ‘useful enemy’ for Saleh, and now fulfils a similar role for the ‘popular committees’, we can see how apparently antagonistic political actors are able, with some creativity, to benefit from the actions of their supposed foes, prolonging instability and exacerbating levels of violence.

**Constituting an Islamic state**

Al-Nabi’s main aim was for Yemen to reject its (admittedly skin deep) commitment to democracy and submit to shari’a law (Alkamim, 2009). Judged by this measure, he seems to have demonstrably failed. Yemen is further away from implementing shari’a law than perhaps at any time in its recent history. Thinking more about why he has failed to progress these aims, notwithstanding the very great practical difficulties of creating a movement in support of an ‘Islamic Republic of Yemen’, we might perhaps also look to a lack of motivation. As discussed, he is far more of a violent specialist than a political entrepreneur, and seems to have made

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65 Keen (2012) argues that as well as looking at the explicit aims of a conflict, we should also look to a war’s unexpressed goals, some of which may not be furthered by resolving the conflict. Hence political actors may seek to prolong conflict in order to pursue particular objectives beyond the scope of ‘winning’ or avoiding defeat; in the process enemies become ‘useful’.
little effort to institute the process of scale shift, that is, trying to develop a broader base of support to progress his aims. It is also important to take into account the realities of living in what is, as the typology demonstrates, an ‘unfree’ state (Freedom House, 2012). Whilst he was operating with some degree of local autonomy in Ja’ar, he was still subject to state interference, complaining of harassment from local security forces, most of whom he described as socialists (al-Hammadi, 2008). As such, any concerted effort to challenge state control is likely to have been met with repression in the shape of arrest or sanction, as was the case with al-Mihdar.

Beyond these more pragmatic explanations, it is instructive to look at the role his professed ideology played in constraining his political contestation, and in doing so try and assess whether he was indeed little more than a proxy for the state. Whilst it is still possible that al-Nabi’s political contestation was informed by the wisdom of a time-served Yemeni militant fighting for personal gain, the consistency of his discourse and his violence suggests he has maintained some commitment to his ideological principles. He has retained a consistent position on the scope of jihad, understood to be an individual duty when threatened by external enemies, invoked when fighting non-Muslim aggressors in Muslim-majority countries. Similarly, his Salafist principles saw him promote hisba, engage in da’wa, and reject democracy (al-Hammadi, 2008), whilst avoiding directly attacking the state, especially after reaching an apparently mutually agreeable arrangement with Saleh in 2003.

On the basis of this apparent consistency, without assuming al-Nabi was an ideological puritan, it seems possible to accommodate al-Nabi’s behaviour in the context of his self-professed principles. With this conclusion come implications for the scope of his political contestation. As we have seen, this has largely been confined to helping others train for jihad elsewhere, trying to enforce particular forms of behaviour at the local level, and using violence to repel threats in his immediate area. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge the primarily local nature of al-Nabi’s contestation. His foray into Afghanistan appears to be the only case where he fought beyond the scope of Abyan or its neighbouring governorates. Even in the 1994 war he fought locally. According to interviews he remained in Ja’ar ‘liberating’ the town before the northern army arrived (Abdul-Ahad, 2010).
Efforts beyond these local activities would present a number of problems, beyond the practical issues already discussed. The first is theological and political. In the absence of a top-down Islamic state, he could have tried to instantiate a similar model at the local level, creating an ‘Islamic emirate of Abyan’, as al-Qaeda is accused of attempting. However, there is tension between the centrality of the unity of the *Ummah* and establishing an ‘Islamic state’ in a small part of one particular country (Phillips, 2010). Something al-Nabi seems to recognise when he made clear that he did not support the apparent declaration of an Islamic emirate in Abyan, nor southern secession, repeatedly referring to the importance of the *Ummah*’s unity (Alkamim, 2009).

Nevertheless, the lack of state control in some areas of Yemen – tacitly acknowledged by the government in its efforts to formally ‘decentralise’ control to the local-level (Boucek, 2010b) – presents an opportunity structure that offers an alternative to the notion of a regional Islamic emirate. That is, a bottom-up process involving the practical reality of enforcing Islamist principles at the local level. Al-Nabi was well placed to capitalise on this, as we have seen, enforcing *hisba* and engaging in *da’wa* through control of the local mosque (Mudabish, 2006). When the army and government were evicted/retreated from Ja’ar and Zinjibar, al-Nabi was afforded a perhaps unique opportunity to build on this, to demonstrate local level Islamic rule and try and promote Ja’ar as a model of ‘security, goodness and cleanliness’ (al-Hammadi, 2011). This is not to suggest that al-Nabi merely took advantage of the circumstances. He was, as we have seen, involved in the violence that took place, and pursued his own, and to a lesser extent, Saleh’s agenda through armed confrontation. However, he seems to have done so in a way that was consistent with his ideological position and longstanding aims.

The situation in early 2011 offered al-Nabi the opportunity to enforce his particular ideological vision, and presumably his own authority and control of local resources, in a way which avoided explicitly antagonising the state, and which did not require him to engage with some of the more knotty theological problems associated with declaring an Islamic emirate. That Saleh was perhaps helping support his violent contestation, for very different reasons, does not negate any of these ambitions. These points help explain why al-Nabi reengaged in violent political contestation after
agreeing to relinquish arms in 2003. As it turned out, despite returning to arms to defend his interests, al-Nabi had very little time to enjoy or pursue his aims, as through the process of competing with al-Qaeda, he quickly lost the little control he had.

It is perhaps possible to go even further and propose that these two outcomes are related. Because al-Nabi had not been involved in more concerted militancy in the years running up to al-Qaeda’s involvement in Abyan, he perhaps did not have the resources that would have enabled him to confront the global jihadists. Whilst it is important to remain cautious about drawing conclusions on the basis of limited and sometimes contradictory information, it seems plausible to suggest that al-Nabi’s original agreement with Saleh meant he was less well prepared to engage in violent intra-Islamist competition in the years to come. It does however seem to have enabled him to reach a deal with the government, which means that despite all of the violence with which he has been involved, he is once more free to pursue his local agenda.

Conclusion

Having surveyed the AAIA’s evolution and decline, let us revisit the broader questions with which this thesis is concerned to review the AAIA’s political and organisational outcomes, and the utility of the methods used to explore them. Most straightforwardly, the problem both incarnations of the AAIA were concerned with is no closer to being resolved than when they began their claim-making 15 years ago: neither of their interpretations of the role of Islam in daily political life is closer to being realised. Nevertheless, by looking at the problems they faced in responding to this goal, several other interesting outcomes were revealed, informed by a number of mechanisms mediating the relationship between the state and the group.

The way these mechanisms and processes played out was put into context through the typology, which described background conditions of low intensity conflict and a political system characterised by low levels of political freedom and civil liberties. Hence, when comparing the outcomes of the two incarnations of the AAIA, we saw that the primary determining factor was their response to three state-initiated processes made possible by this type of governance: negotiated demobilisation, co-optation and repression. Almost right up until the end of his life, al-Mihdar refused to be co-opted by the government, and experienced military and
state-sanctioned repression as a consequence. That al-Nabi has remained largely a free man, despite repeated episodes of militancy, speaks both to Saleh’s reliance on negotiated demobilisation, and al-Nabi’s apparent willingness to be co-opted by the state when it suited his needs.

Again, beginning with the typology and its categorisation of the AAIA’s organisational characteristics, the way these state-led processes impacted the group, was informed by a failure to instantiate the process of scale shift. Al-Mihdar failed because he prioritised creating a cadre of fighters rather than generating a broader support base, and because he did not secure sufficient theological or logistical help. Al-Nabi similarly failed, partly because of a lack of motivation after reaching a détente with the government, but also because his ideology precluded directly opposing the state. Instead, he prioritised local level action. The result was a small organisation, with relatively weak networks and only limited infrastructure.

However, informed by the AAIA’s militants’ history, and because of the intermittent state control of territory in Yemen, its leaders had access to a cadre of experienced fighters and space to operate. With the growing unrest in the south from 2008 onwards, al-Nabi was afforded the opportunity to employ these resources in responding to the conflict on his doorstep. However, it seems likely that al-Nabi’s previous period of quiescence and his focus on local level religio-political action limited his ability to respond to the threats this instability brought. As relations between the identity boundaries in the Islamist milieu became more entrenched and the AAIA came into competition with AQAP, al-Nabi was unable to defend his interests. Nevertheless, al-Nabi’s apparent willingness to be co-opted by the state seems to have mitigated some of the risks this presented. Not only did it allow him to pursue his local goals after agreeing to relinquish arms in 2003, it also saw him achieve a final process of negotiated demobilisation in 2012. We therefore see an interaction between al-Nabi’s local level political goals, a wider setting characterised by conflict and an inconsistent commitment to the rule of law, and the AAIA’s organisational characteristics as described in the typology. Moreover, these organisational and contextual features influenced the operation of a number of primarily state-led processes which help explain the AAIA’s organisational outcomes.
From one perspective the AAIA seems to be an example of a failed reintegration effort, after reaching a much lauded agreement to renounce political violence, as we have seen, al-Nabi has since been involved in violent contestation. Looked at a different way, cognisant of the wider context, the AAIA has come to symbolise far more than the sum of its parts, contributing to a discourse which portrays Yemen as a place of violence and instability, afflicted by warring militants which threaten the West. It is of course not a major actor in the field. AQAP is still the main violent Islamist grouping in the country, whilst Saleh’s regime held the central role in creating, maintaining and capitalising on this discourse. Nevertheless, al-Nabi had a part to play in the violent political contestation in southern Yemen by contributing to the commodification of jihad and becoming a ‘useful enemy’ for Saleh. In identifying and acknowledging this role, we are better placed to interpret and understand the causes and effects of the conflict in Abyan.

Finally, that the AAIA is still imputed as a viable entity is, on its own, an interesting outcome, which owes much to the social construction and manipulation of particular threats. Both as a political tool, but also in the wider social discourse, which in trying to make sense of a confusing and dynamic picture employs labels to describe, but also inevitably over-simplify, a complex picture. Ongoing discussion of an ‘Aden-Abyan Islamic Army’ therefore reflects and inevitably reproduces the difficulty of understanding and interpreting the complex network of political actors making claims in the south of Yemen. One made all the more difficult given the deliberate efforts of many of the actors to obfuscate who their allies are, and the often transitory nature of these relationships. The final chapter pulls together these insights and compares them with the Israeli case, to set both in the context of the typology and discuss how the mechanisms and processes identified in the case studies compare with the explanatory models used to date in understanding terrorism’s outcomes.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

This final chapter pulls together the insights and arguments made so far, reviews their limitations and considers how they contribute to the literature on how terrorism ends. There is also a final piece of analysis comparing the two case studies, setting them in the framework of the typology. Before that, it is worth reviewing some of the main propositions on which this thesis rests.

In seeking to explain complex social phenomena, students of contentious politics have to select those elements they wish to prioritise, and those they neglect. The choices in this thesis were guided by three key arguments. First, that understanding why terrorism ends and what it achieves demands a more flexible and comprehensive approach than using the strategic, organisational or policy outcomes which have dominated the literature to date. In response, Neil Gross’ (2009; 2010) insights into pragmatist thought were useful in conceptualising militant group aims as culturally and socially mediated problems, rather than means-ends calculations based on rational choice models. Moreover, in understanding outcomes, Tilly’s (2003) relational approach helped interpret how political contestation changes relations between people. Second, that typology can be a useful tool in mapping the most discriminative characteristics of militant groups and their environments. Using Social Movement Theory (SMT) provided a valuable way of identifying and interpreting these characteristics. Alongside a novel statistical technique, this made it possible to conceptualise and present those defining features in a more accessible and concise way than had previously been the case. Finally, that the outcomes produced by combinations of actor-context-problem interactions can be usefully interpreted via a range of mechanisms and processes, to produce more cogent explanations about terrorism’s outcomes.

One of the aims of this thesis has been to demonstrate the utility of taking a mid-level approach to understanding terrorism’s outcomes. In developing and applying this approach, the intention has been to go beyond individual case studies, whilst avoiding higher-level interpretations often unable to satisfactorily explain complex phenomena. In this approach, generalisation is at the level of mechanisms and processes, rather than theoretical proposals. The typology is the means by which it is possible to combine insights about group characteristics and socio-political
context with mechanisms and processes to develop better explanations. Importantly, this makes no claim to have identified an objective set of types which ‘exist’ in any ontologically secure way. Rather, it hopes to provide a set of clues which can be mined to develop better explanations about terrorism’s outcomes, and a parsimonious framework for presenting a highly complex, embedded set of phenomena.

Despite this complexity, using Multidimensional Partial Order Scalogram by Coordinates drew out three factors which interpret the ways in which the groups varied. Drawn from SMT, these were the level of resources the group secured, the extent of their networks and the degree of infrastructure they had developed. Moreover, most of the eight resulting ‘types’ were associated with particular levels of three external variables: political stability, civil liberties, and level of conflict. Generally speaking, those groups in countries characterised by high levels of political stability and rights, and low levels of conflict demonstrated lower levels of resources and infrastructure, whilst those in contexts of civil war, and low levels of political rights and stability secured higher levels of resources and infrastructure. These relationships were interesting in their own right, and invite further study as to why and how the political opportunity structure influences the resource mobilisation of militant groups. However, this was not the main aim of the thesis. Rather, focus was on how these background conditions and organisational characteristics impacted the way particular mechanisms and processes produced organisational and political outcomes, and helped explain how terrorism ends. To explore this further two militant organisations were explored in depth: Kach and the Aden-Abyan Islamic Army (AAIA). It is now possible to reflect a little further on how this approach elucidated their outcomes, and offer a comparative perspective on the two groups.

**Comparative Perspective**

Kach and the AAIA operated in very different political contexts. Indeed, one of the reasons for selecting them was to understand how these differences impacted violent political contestation. Yemen is a country characterised by low levels of democracy, civil rights, and intermittent political stability, whilst Israel, although a ‘composite regime’, is deemed largely politically free and generally stable. What both countries have in common are sporadic periods of low intensity conflict. This context impacted not only how the state responded to the two groups’ claim-making, but crucially informed the problems the groups sought to resolve. Hence, in Israel,
saw that the primary problems Kahane was concerned with, were how to remove the presence of a hostile other, how to constitute particular notions of Jewishness, and how to demonstrate his own legitimacy as a political actor. In responding to these issues, we saw the importance of contextual factors in determining the nature and impact of particular mechanisms and processes. Hence, the ability to voice political dissent through access to the democratic system meant Kahane could instantiate the mechanism of *actor constitution*, first forming Liga and then Kach. These efforts were eventually recognised in the process of *institutionalisation* as his claim-making was incorporated into the political system. A number of outcomes came from this. Firstly it enabled the process of *self-representation*, allowing Kahane to demonstrate his commitment to his goals, going some way to addressing his legitimacy as a political actor. It also facilitated the *diffusion* of his response to the problem of two people inhabiting one land, giving his ideas greater exposure.

The AAIA’s leaders confronted a somewhat different set of problems informed by the relative lack of political freedom in Yemen. Their main concern was finding a way of setting their Islamic understanding at the heart of political and social life in Yemen. However, this presented both incarnations of the AAIA with a further set of problems, most consequentially, how to avoid state repression as a result of their claim-making. Intermittent political stability, including limited state control of territory, allowed al-Nabi to pursue local level political claim-making, for example in the enforcement of *hisba*. Implicated in this are the processes of *self-representation* and *involution* as al-Nabi tried to resolve the problem of maintaining legitimacy in the face of first, agreeing to a détente with the government, and second, al-Qaeda’s more assertive efforts at social provision. The low levels of infrastructure and social service provision in southern Yemen made the supply of social services via the process of *involution* an attractive way of trying to demonstrate legitimacy and gain support through self-representation. These same tools would have been less useful to Kach given the more secure supply of social services in Israel. A point which demonstrates the importance of appreciating how socio-political context provides opportunities for specific mechanisms to be invoked, and the way political actors exploit that context to resolve particular problems related to their claim-making.

It is instructive to look to the mechanism of *repression* to compare how regime-group interaction impacted the groups’ political contestation. The state’s
response in both cases was determined by the particular activities it forbade, and those it tolerated. In Yemen, political claims attacking the state invited swift and violent repression, whereas militancy directed beyond its borders, between non-state actors, or in ways that serve the state’s interests were often tolerated. This meant that although it twice cracked down on the group, at various other times the state allowed the AAIA to continue low-level militancy, most notably in the context of the conflict in Abyan. With Kach, the Israeli government’s decertification of Kahane forced an end to its involvement in mainstream politics, whereas the vigilantism of the ‘Kachniks’ towards Palestinians attracted only limited repression. The result is that Kahane’s ideas, symbols and tactics are still openly employed. Interestingly, we therefore see the same mechanism of inconsistent repression operating in very different settings, producing a similar outcome: ongoing violence between non-state actors in a low intensity conflict setting. The categorisation of the groups in the typology directed attention to these issues and raised the question of how background conditions impacted state responses to their claim-making.

The differences in background conditions described by the typology also informed conclusions about how the process of boundary activation operated across the two settings. Intermittent inter-communal violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), meant that as well as the deeply embedded boundary between Palestinians and Israelis which Kahane sought to further entrench, he was better able to impute and reinforce a number of other identity boundaries, between legitimate and illegitimate Israelis, secular and religious Jews, and crucially within the right-wing itself. Responding to the problem of trying to mobilise a constituency in support of his claims in a crowded marketplace, he proscribed more extreme solutions to the conflict, thereby activating a new boundary in the right-wing and further polarising the political spectrum. However importantly, the ultimate arbiter of the claim-making associated with these different identity groups was the state. Hence, competition between actors in the right-wing in Israel was largely mediated through political discourse. There was not, for example, violent conflict on any scale between Gush Emunim activists and Kahanists. The outcome of this interaction between the political system and Kahane’s claim-making was important in determining two of Kach’s major outcomes: breaking some of the taboos over invoking the concept of racism, changing the boundaries of acceptable discourse, and redefining what is
tolerated and forbidden in mainstream Israeli politics by precipitating the law banning racist parties.

In Yemen, the complex conflict in the south of the country compelled a range of actors, including the AAIA, to position themselves by setting out their own ideological and identity claims, most notably, activating a boundary between themselves and AQAP. However, rather than repressing this boundary, the state actually exploited it. A somewhat capricious attitude to the rule of law meant that boundary activation between the Islamists was seen as an opportunity to exacerbate the conflict to pursue Saleh’s goals. The difference in the states’ response to the groups’ identity claims saw Kahane lose political legitimacy, whilst it seems likely that al-Nabi increased his resources after being defeated by AQAP, and perhaps even became co-opted into the state’s security apparatus.

Examining the interaction between political setting – in particular, levels of access to the political process – and the groups’ ideological claims, offers insight into their organisational characteristics. Whilst leaders of both groups believed the existing state structure to be an illegitimate tool of governance, Kahane was able to engage with it to promote his aims in a way that was not open to al-Mihdar and al-Nabi. It is not possible to know whether they would have engaged with the political process had it been possible. However, the AAIA’s leaders’ prioritisation of militant mobilisation and low-level activism, suggests they believed this was the best way of furthering their goals, rather than trying to gain more widespread social support to attack the government. The closed nature of the political system seems to be an important determining factor in their approach. The result was a group characterised by low levels of resource mobilisation with little in the way of official organisation, or efforts to mobilise more widespread support. Both because al-Mihdar failed, and al-Nabi was less motivated to develop wider networks, and because challenging the state in any meaningful way would have invited violent repression. It also seems likely their history of violent militancy was what Gross (2009) might describe as a ‘habitual’ way for them to respond to particular problems.

Whereas with Kach, we saw how Kahane’s leadership principle, and his belief that the state was the primary tool of Jewish self-defence, alongside access to mainstream politics, meant he focused far more on leading an overt political
organisation than developing an underground militant group. Using the repertoire of contention and the fundraising networks he had developed in America, Kahane focused on developing Kach’s political legitimacy, rather than planning or instigating large-scale violence. The way Kahane pursued these goals produced a number of further outcomes. His failure to reproduce the structures that would have created a more robust organisation meant that with his assassination, there was no clear leadership. The crackdown following Baruch Goldstein’s attack was the final factor contributing to the group’s decertification, yet despite this, Kach’s longevity was already uncertain because of the precepts on which it had been established.

Looking to the way background conditions impacted group outcomes, in Israel, we can see the process of radicalisation as a result of the wider conflict. Hence, the Kahanist’s second, and most serious period of violence, was influenced by the First Intifada. This violence, along with the political level propagation of Kahane’s ideas, and his efforts at boundary activation has seen the diffusion, not only of his ideas in the form of ‘Kahanism’, but also the spread of tactics and symbols which have come to connote particular subject positions. Moreover, background conditions in the OPT characterised by intermittent political stability, and the limited way right-wing vigilantism is sanctioned and controlled by the state, enabled ‘Kahanism’ to become a lived reality. Providing an environment where particular Jewish identity claims can be promoted and exercised.

In Yemen, background conditions characterised by a weak and inconsistent commitment to the rule of law, meant two processes impacted their organisational outcome: violent repression and co-optation, generally by paying ‘government salaries’ or offering political positions in return for renouncing violence. The outcome for al-Mihdar was forced demobilisation and ultimately death, because of his refusal to reach a mediated agreement. However, al-Nabi’s greater willingness to engage with the process of co-optation meant he survived two government crackdowns. Further, in his most recent period of contestation, where there is some evidence he brokered an agreement with the state, two interesting outcomes were identified. First, al-Nabi contributed to the commodification of jihad, and second he became a ‘useful enemy’ for Saleh. Both outcomes depended on al-Nabi’s ability to promote further instability in Abyan whilst offering Saleh a putative degree of control and deniability. The desired outcome for al-Nabi was the chance to pursue his own ideological goals and
respond to increasing competition from al-Qaeda. It also seems plausible that the AAIA’s previous period of quiescence, and subsequent lower level of resource mobilisation, meant it was unable to compete with AQAP and, alongside a final process of co-optation, led to its most recent demobilisation.

It is here, in the interaction between background political context, organisational characteristics, and leaders’ ideological and political claim-making, that the various methods set out in this thesis help progress our understanding of particular outcomes. The three tools of typology, mechanisms and processes, and conceptualising goals as special types of problems, enabled both the exploration of individual groups in depth, but also offered cogent comparative insights across quite different groups. One led by a political entrepreneur interested in mobilising political support, legitimating violence to provide support for his identity claims. The other, violent specialists, who focused on exploiting the opportunities presented by a relatively weak state to progress their religio-political goals and avoid state repression. Taking this approach has made it possible to reach more informed conclusions about how and why terrorism ended and what it achieved, than simply assessing success and failure or describing group factionalisation or decapitation.

**Limitations**

Reflecting on the limitations of the research, we can look to issues related to the research design, the application of typologies in the social sciences, as well as some more conceptual issues. By choosing to build the research around a typology, there are inevitably challenges associated with the shifting nature of political contestation. The case studies demonstrate that goals, organisational characteristics, background conditions, and notions of success and failure are dynamic. As the late Paul Wilkinson wrote over three decades ago: “[p]olitical violence is particularly difficult to classify and analyse because it frequently involves the interaction and effects of the actions of many persons and collectives involving a multiplicity of motivations, psychological effects and subjective evaluations, among those involved” (Wilkinson, 1977, p.31). This carries the risk of reducing highly complex, context specific phenomena to hollow categories, and is a criticism that runs throughout the typological literature.
The risks of abstraction and reduction need to be weighed against the utility of parsimony and identifying more generalisable characteristics to help generate explanations for social phenomena. Typologies offer a range of advantages, not least in the way they facilitate more structured investigation of phenomena at lower levels of analysis (Doty and Glick, 1994). However, they face the challenge of oversimplification. In responding to this problem, this thesis explored the data using more detailed case-study analysis and building on a well-established sociological theory. Nevertheless, the problems of ‘freezing’ what are dynamic social phenomena remains. The challenge of interpreting what can be a swiftly changing picture was illustrated in the AAIA’s most recent campaign. When the typology presented in this thesis was first developed, the AAIA still appeared to be adhering to the agreement reached with Saleh. However, as the research progressed, and the unrest in the south escalated, this changed. It was only with al-Nabi’s most recent demobilisation that the AAIA became suitable for inclusion in the study, offering a further valuable example of how groups can reengage with, and then cease violent political contestation.

It is also important to remain aware of the potential biases that are built into the research design. By using Western databases, those groups considered important in that context are inevitably the main focus, and may neglect relevant phenomena not captured by these databases. It may also skew the findings. As we have seen, groups lower on all levels of resource mobilisation seem to appear more consistently in countries characterised by higher levels of political stability and rights, and vice versa. Rather than reflecting an empirical finding, this may be an artefact of the data. Smaller groups in states with lower levels of political rights, often without a free media, may be less likely to come to the attention of Western analysts until they reach larger levels of mobilisation and begin to represent a threat to the state. This is perhaps a particular issue for this study, as it focuses on older groups. Data collection and analysis has improved considerably in recent years, but it is unwise to assume the same level of comprehensiveness in historical accounts. In particular given the far greater amounts of information about political phenomena from all over the world available now, compared with only 10 years ago.

There is also a valid question about using the group as the primary unit of analysis. Although it is still the most common way of approaching terrorism, taking a more critical look at the typology in light of the case studies, using the group as the
main focus is not without problems. As we saw, small groups of individuals affiliated to Kach, yet acting largely independent of the wider organisation were responsible for much of the violence that emerged from that milieu. Moreover, we saw two of the most consequential acts of political violence in Israel carried out by individuals who were influenced by the ideology of Meir Kahane, but who were not organisationally linked in any meaningful way. Similarly, with the AAIA, its most recent ‘leader’ has denied the very existence of the group, and it is perhaps better understood as a robust social construction rather than an organisationally coherent, linear phenomenon. Recent work has begun to explore whether the group is the most accurate or useful way of understanding terrorism (Taylor, 2011), and it is an agenda which demands conceptual and empirical attention.

There also needs to be caution about causation. The background conditions and organisational characteristics that make up the typology are themselves influenced by mechanisms and processes initiated by violent political contestation. It would be unwise to assume a static set of background conditions onto which relevant causal mechanisms can be easily superimposed. Careful scholarship using case studies is needed to understand how these interact. Measures of, for example, political stability are at a relatively high level of abstraction, which means the action of individual militant groups is less likely to impact them. Nevertheless, it is important to remain aware that the action of mechanisms and processes is best understood as an interaction, something the typology is less well equipped to reflect.

Finally, it is worth asking if such a complex framework of analysis was necessary. Was the development of a typology necessary to reach valid insights about outcomes? Was it necessary to use complex statistics to portray organisational characteristics and political opportunity measures? Could the thesis not have just taken the various features of SMT and used them alongside the mechanism and process led account to produce explanations about organisational and political outcomes? Possibly. The process of data collection, analysis and idea generation is iterative and cumulative, making it difficult to determine whether the same or better explanations might have come about had the research design not included a typology.

There is a valid case that using a novel statistical technique, in a new way, on a research question not previously considered using this approach, with a new set of
data, has intrinsic value. The utility of the approach in deconstructing and representing complex social phenomena in a parsimonious way has been demonstrated, and seems to have uncovered some interesting findings worth exploring. In so doing, two of our research questions have been examined in depth, exploring the nature of a statistically derived typology of militant groups, and identifying their most discriminating features and how they relate to political opportunity variables. Moreover, the use of MPOSAC in typology building has been moved a step further, adding to the very small number of studies to use the technique in this way, and offered the first in the terrorism field.

Nevertheless, was this necessary in order to reach valid and useful conclusions about how terrorism ends? A number of arguments speak in its favour, in particular by the way it helps respond to a number of criticisms of the study of terrorism (see Gunning, 2007; Jackson, 2009). Specifically, that much work in the field is ahistorical and decontextualised, that it fails to apply theory and demands greater interdisciplinary work. In addition, failure to interrogate state behaviour and a state-centric bias in analysis, have been held up as criticisms. The typology responds to some of these challenges by placing the groups firmly in their socio-political context, incorporating state support as a measure, interpreting the use of terrorism in the context of other forms of political violence such as civil war, and highlighting the range of types of organisation which use terrorism – from small cells to guerrilla armies.

These features of the typology do seem to offer a strong foundation from which to develop explanations of terrorism’s outcomes. They have provided a useful starting point for enquiry, and suggested questions prompting explanations about why and how particular organisational and political outcomes came about. For example, the typology provided a valuable lens by which to interrogate the groups’ ideology and leadership characteristics to explain how and why their organisational structures evolved as they did, which in turn, had important implications for explaining their demise. Overall, reflecting on the research process, there seems to be support for George and Bennett’s argument that: “[u]sing validated social theories to build typological frameworks, together with the use of process-tracing and other methods of within-case analysis, can strengthen inferences that would otherwise have been made on the basis of comparative methods alone” (2005, p.255). Nevertheless, it is
important to remain mindful of typology’s limitations in representing highly complex social phenomena.

**Understanding Outcomes: Implications and Looking Ahead**

At the start of this thesis, a wide range of measures by which we might understand terrorism’s outcomes was discussed. On the basis of this review, the review of the literature concluded that although our knowledge of what terrorism achieves and why it ends is expanding, it is still limited. How then, has this thesis contributed to this effort? By critically evaluating the applicability of rational choice models to interpreting terrorism’s frequent failure to achieve positive political or organisational outcomes, it has suggested a new way of interpreting, not only how terrorism ends, but also why it is used. Moreover, by demonstrating the utility of understanding militant group goals as socially and culturally mediated problems, an alternative framework for interpreting outcomes has been set out.

For example, the strategic model of terrorism perhaps epitomised by Neumann and Clark (2005; 2008), assumes terrorism is used to wrest power from the state, using violence to achieve particular political goals. Neither of these assumptions hold for the two case studies we examined. We saw Kahanists use violence for expressive ends related to particular notions of Jewish identity, rather than in any effort to challenge state power, which if anything was pursued through the political process. With the AAIA, violence was as likely to be directed at other militant groups than towards the actual object of contention (i.e. the state) for reasons of ideology and organisational security.

Similarly, work which looks primarily to the organisational goals of violence, for example Abrahms (2008) contention that those using terrorism do so because they are seeking social solidarity, was not particularly helpful when held against our two cases. Taking just two of the seven ‘puzzles’ about terrorism which Abrahms argues are resolved by employing the organisational model: that groups continue their militancy despite the opportunity to engage in the democratic process, and reject negotiated settlements, neither seem to apply to our groups. Kach was involved in the political process, but Kahane’s followers continued to engage in violence, and al-Nabi has entered into a negotiated settlement on two occasions.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

The organisational and strategic approaches are just two examples of the various models reviewed when looking at the goals people seek to achieve when using terrorism. The point is not to critique each one in relation to the outcome of this analysis, but rather to make the case that the goals people seek to achieve when using terrorism are far more complex, nuanced and dynamic than these models take account of. Using a single lens, be that organisational, strategic, or policy-oriented, risks imposing a top-down interpretation of militant group goals which simply does not hold up to close examination of individual cases. Rather, we need to look far more closely, from the bottom-up, at the specific problems with which the group is concerned. These almost always stretch further than mono-dimensional constructs such as strategic interaction with the state, continued organisational survival, or achieving specific policy concessions. It is really only in this way, that we are likely to understand what political actors wish to achieve by using terrorism, and therefore how to assess outcomes.

Turning to the implications of this thesis’ methodological and theoretical approach. We saw in chapter 3, that a number of thinkers have made the case for SMT to be applied to the study of terrorism. Using it to develop the typology provided a solid theoretical framework to select observations to study in more detail. Moreover, that the techniques used drew out three clusters of resource mobilisation variables which appear to be linked to a number of important political opportunity variables, provides empirical support for the underlying theoretical structure. By combining SMT with a novel statistical technique this analysis demonstrated it is possible to parsimoniously present complex organisational and contextual features in a way that facilitates further enquiry. Importantly however, this needs to be combined with case studies to explore the interactions between macro level context, meso level organisational characteristics, and micro level factors such as leadership style. Such mixed-method approaches offer scope for developing more cogent explanations about terrorism’s outcomes. Moreover, cross-fertilisation of ideas, findings and research methods between disciplines enables scholars of terrorism to learn from a broader field with a greater empirical knowledge base.

This thesis has placed significant emphasis on understanding terrorism in its social, historical and political context, as both part of, and sometimes a variant of, other forms of political contestation. Without this, it may not have possible to
understand the reasons why both the case studies failed in the process of scale shift. For example, in appreciating the role of the wider right-wing in determining Kahane’s increasingly extreme position on the ‘Palestinian question’, and his struggle to affirm his legitimacy given the more deeply embedded right-wing ideological proponents in Israel. Or, for instance, how state repression of the AAIA was not an inevitable outcome of political militancy, but was crucially mediated by the target of their claim-making and the historical ties between the militant Islamists and the state, going back to the 1994 war.

Methodologically speaking, approaches employed to date have included a limited number of individual case studies, or analysis of large numbers of groups looking at broad level organisational and political outcomes. Building on this work this thesis offered greater depth, by looking beyond measures such as success/failure, and afforded greater breadth, by demonstrating an approach enabling us to make comparative assessments at the level of mechanisms and processes. Given the evidence presented by Cronin (2009), Weinberg (2012), and supported by this study, that terrorism is largely ineffective at achieving political goals, it is now time to move on from debates about whether or not terrorism ‘works’ using bald measures of success and failure against policy measures (e.g. Abrahms, 2012). Now, we need to think more deeply about how and why terrorism fails, indeed, we need to consider whether militant actors understand their political contestation in these terms: some will, many will not, and yet others will change their mind. It is only by appreciating this complexity, that we will identify those measures most appropriate for understanding terrorism’s outcomes. Hopefully, this thesis has contributed to this necessary shift in focus, opening the door for more comparative work looking at militant groups and the problems they seek to solve by using terrorism.

One particular element of this complexity seems particularly important to pursue, namely, the importance of understanding the state’s role in providing facilitative environments for militant actors. Approaches to interpreting the state’s role in facilitating terrorism and political violence tends to take one of two approaches, either examining structural attributes such as ‘state failure’ or the strength of democracy, and the impact this has on non-state actors’ political violence. Or, looking at the agency of state actors in either instigating ‘state terrorism’, for example via proxy actors, or facilitating non-state actors’ violence. These approaches often
neglect the interaction between structure and agency, and the way in which states can exploit or maintain facilitative conditions by which the violence of non-state actors can tangentially or directly further state aims. It also overlooks the tensions and occasional contradictions between different levels of both state and non-state actor goals. These were all issues identified in the case studies and invite further study as to how this interaction between structure and agency informs the state’s role in terrorism and political violence.

Finally, this thesis has put forward the case that we need to focus more clearly on how terrorism changes relations between people, not only at the political level, but at the social and perhaps even at the cultural level. It is by interrogating how these changes are affected through political violence that we might find better ways of mitigating the impact of terrorism. It seems unrealistic to think that terrorism can be eradicated, which suggests that alongside the efforts of security services to disrupt particular plots and limit the damage they can do, we also need to focus more concertedly on developing resilience and thinking more carefully about how we respond to terrorism. Understanding how terrorism can change relations between people for the worse, by learning how militant groups seek to do so, enables us to combine more traditional counter-terrorism measures with those focused at the social level. For example, by defining illegitimate identities very tightly, as opposed to the monolithic ‘either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists’ form of rhetoric which epitomised the ‘War on Terror’ era. Or, brokering relationships across identity boundaries which militant political entrepreneurs seek to make conflictual. As Tilly suggests, given the relational nature of much political contestation: “[r]educing violence therefore depends on transforming relations between groups rather than destroying bad ideas, eliminating opportunities, or suppressing impulses” (Tilly, 2003, p.6). It is perhaps in this way we can mitigate further political violence and reduce its impact on social and cultural relations.
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Appendix A

Social Movement Theory Coding Definitions

General notes:

Location: Where groups are based in a number of different countries, data is drawn from the country where they spent most time and generally with which they were in conflict.

Date: The mobilisation measures are judged by the most representative status of the group over its lifetime. Because groups are dynamic and change over time, this can be a challenging and to some extent subjective judgement to make. To respond to these challenges, rigorous content analysis was used, which involved thorough cross-referencing of independent data sources which aims to capture the essence of the groups’ levels of mobilisation. Measures of political rights, civil liberties and political stability are taken from the final year the group used violence. Again, the political situation on the ground can change, however, given that the data used does not always go back to the year when many of the groups formed, for the sake of consistency the final year of the group’s life is used. To ascertain whether this was a representative data point, the years surrounding the chosen data point were examined, overall levels of political rights/civil liberties/political stability are generally consistent over time. There are also challenges associated with identifying when a group stops using violence, or ceases operations entirely (see Jones & Libicki, 2008 for more on this). Again, as far as possible, information was cross-referenced to try and be as accurate as possible in determining this information.

Political rights

Taken from Freedom House (2010) figures

Political rights are defined by Freedom House as those which “enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate” (Freedom House, 2012, para. 1). Ten questions assessing political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: electoral process (3 questions); political pluralism and participation (4 questions); and functioning of government (3 questions). Two further discretionary questions refer to monarchies or occupying powers. These are aggregated to produce a single political rights score for the country/territory.
Civil liberties

Taken from Freedom House (2010) figures

Civil liberties are defined by Freedom House as those which “allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.” (Freedom House, 2012, para. 1). Four subcategories containing 15 questions go towards producing the final score on civil liberties: freedom of expression and belief (4 questions); associational and organisational rights (3 questions); rule of law (4 questions); and personal autonomy and individual rights (4 questions. Together these are combined to produce the final country/territory score on civil liberties.

Political stability and absence of violence

Taken from World Bank (2010) figures

This measure is defined as assessing “perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism” (World Bank, n.d., p.1). It is based on information from 30 existing data sources including surveys, commercial business providers, non-governmental and public sector organisations. Using 22 indicators, from level of armed conflict, to ethnic tension, a single score is calculated annually for each country (no data are available for 2001; in this case, 2000 is used). To standardise the integers across all variables, the scores were converted from a range of -2.5 (least stable) to +2.5 (most stable) as follows: -2.5 to -1.5 = 1; -1.49 to -.5 = 2; -.49 to +.5 = 3; +.51 to +1.5 = 4; +1.51 to 2.5 = 5

Popular support

The group is considered to have substantial support in the civil population for its aims and/or methods:

(3): Confirmed, group enjoys substantial support from a constituency
(2): Limited or intermittent, the group has pockets of support within the wider population
(1): Largely absent

Other group support

The group is in receipt of aid from other militant groups in the form of arms, infrastructure, logistics or other practical assistance:

(3): Confirmed, substantial practical support offered by another group
(2): Limited; a group offers intermittent support, or only vocal support
(1): Largely absent
**Territory/safe haven**

The extent to which the group controls an area for a reasonable period of time (months – years) from which to operate and plan:

(3): Confirmed, substantial safe operating area in the country
(2): Limited, intermittent control of areas, or safe regions/villages/towns where they have support and are protected for limited periods of time
(1): Largely absent

**Official wing**

Whether the group has an official, non-violent wing, most often a political party:

(3): Confirmed, obvious front organisation affiliated to the group
(2): Limited, front organisation may be banned or only operate intermittently
(1): Absent

**Develop networks**

The extent to which the group develops networks other than with militant groups to aid in operations, logistics, finance, arms and human resources. These may be in country, or transnational and may involve links to legitimate organisations, criminal groups/networks, or civil society:

(3): Confirmed, substantial network developed
(2): Limited/intermittent network development
(1): Largely absent

**Pre-existing fighters**

The extent to which the group is made up of those with combat experience:

(3): Confirmed, a significant number of the group have fighting experience at inception
(2): Limited, only the leaders, or a small number of militants have fighting experience
(1): Largely absent

**Training**

The extent to which the group establishes and maintains a training infrastructure:

(3): Well-established training infrastructure with camps and trainers that operates for extended periods
(2): Limited, training run by the group, but without extensive infrastructure or sustained operation
(1): Absent
**Membership numbers**

Number of active members; the average size of the group is based on fighting members, not wider support:

(4): 10,000s; (3): 1,000s; (2): 100s; (1): 10s

**State sponsorship**

Richardson’s (2005) scale of levels of state sponsorship was used:

(5): Complete state control: state-directed terrorism, often more akin to undercover operations by states than non-state proxies
(4): Close control: government provides direction and specific guidance, directing their operations
(3): Provides training, finance and safe haven: an autonomous group benefits from significant state protection and support
(2): Financial support alone: states provide money, but no further practical support
(1): No state support
Appendix B

Original List of Social Movement Theory Variables

~ Support from local population
~ Support from other groups
~ External religious/moral justification
~ Manifesto/official literature/website
~ Alignment with other causes
~ Support from other groups
~ Religious/political/local leader endorsement
~ Involvement with schools/youth organisations/social organisations
~ Endorsement from other groups
~ Network development
~ Found an official organization
~ Join with other groups
~ Mobilizing local population
~ Pre-existing group of fighters
~ Membership levels
~ Active recruitment
~ Fighters/members allied from other groups
~ Fighters/members donated/forced to join
~ Members contribute finance/material
~ Fundraising
~ Selling expertise/knowledge/resources/logistics
~ Territory/safe haven
~ Political openness
~ Political stability
~ State sponsorship
~ State repression
Appendix C

Supplemental Bibliography of Literature on Groups used in Content Analysis

**Abu Nidal Organisation**


**Aden Abyan Islamic Army**


**Amal**


**Andres Castro United Front**


**Armed Islamic Group**


**Bodo Liberation Tigers**


**Committee for the Security of the Highways**


**Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist**


**First of October Antifascist Group**


**Free Aceh Movement**


**God’s Army**


**Irish National Liberation Army**


**Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front**


**Japanese Red Army**


**Kach**


**Kosovo Liberation Army**


Kurdish Democratic Party


Loyalist Volunteer Force


Movement of the Revolutionary Left


**Muttahida Quami Movement**


**Patriotic Union of Kurdistan**


**Pattani United Liberation Organization**


**Polisario Front**


**Revolutionary Organization 17 November**


**Revolutionary United Front**


**Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement**


**United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia**


UNITA


Appendix D
Inter-rater reliability raw scores and SPSS output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Rater</th>
<th>Popular support</th>
<th>Other group support</th>
<th>Territory/safe haven</th>
<th>Official wing</th>
<th>Develop networks</th>
<th>Pre-existing fighters</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>State support</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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Note: differences between raters highlighted in grey
Nonparametric Correlations

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### Correlations

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| Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| N | 63 | 63 |

| Rater_2 | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
### Appendix E

**Raw Data on Groups**

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*Note: No data are available for Kosovo*
Appendix F
Exemplar content analysis: Abu Nidal Group

The data used to develop the typology was identified and analysed via a four-step process:

1. Initially, the most comprehensive information on the group was identified, determined by the level of first-hand knowledge exhibited in the sources (see Appendix C for full list). Along with the group profiles in Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism, this formed the data which generated the typology.

2. Using content analysis, information on the groups was coded according to the definitions drawn from the Social Movement Theory literature set out in Appendix A.

3. Each indicator was assessed cross-referencing the sources to reach a view on each of the measures. As much of the data was secondary literature, where necessary and where possible, the primary literature cited in the sources was investigated to confirm specific points.

4. The weight of evidence was assessed and a score assigned to each of the measures.

The following offers a discursive illustration of how the literature on the groups was assessed, using the Abu Nidal Group as an exemplar. It sets out how the literature determined the coding of each of the measures.

**State support (4):** close control, government provides direction and specific guidance directing their operations

Abu Nidal’s primary sponsor changed over the years, and it is notable that the main source of the group’s support was the state. Over the lifetime of the group, ANO received backing from Iraq (1974-1983), Syria (1981-1987), then Libya, and finally Iraq again. The relationship with these states was reciprocal, ANO carried out operations on behalf of its sponsors, and in return, they were offered safe houses, embassy protection, freedom to train, plan and operate (Jane’s, 2005), and substantial financial subsidies, reportedly running into the tens of millions (Seale, 1992; Wege, 1991). Abu Nidal acted on behalf of the Iraqi regime for a number of years, including
carrying out his first act of terrorism when a cell of his men took 13 hostages from the Saudi embassy in Paris and flew them to Kuwait after threatening to throw them out of the plane over Riyadh (Seale, 1992). These links to Iraq were informed by the relationships he developed when operating as Fatah’s representative in Iraq before he broke with the organisation (Seale, 1992); a break which was seemingly at the behest of the Iraqis (Jane’s, 2005). However, this relationship soured forcing him to seek refuge in Syria, where he was invited to act as a proxy for the state against the Muslim Brotherhood and Jordan (Seale, 1992). Again, this relationship broke down and Abu Nidal sought support from Libya, which saw him operate on behalf of Gaddafi, targeting dissidents and defectors as well as pursuing his own ends (Seale, 1992). This lasted until his relationship with the Libyans deteriorated following the torture and killing of up to 150 of ANO cadre in a somewhat paranoid attempt to remove more moderate and potentially disloyal voices (Wege, 1991). The result was Abu Nidal’s return to Iraq where he remained until his death (Moubayed, 2002).

**Popular support (1):** largely absent

Abu Nidal enjoyed some limited support in the Palestinian refugee camps in the very earliest days of his campaign (Jane’s, 2005), attracted by his willingness to criticise Arafat’s leadership (Seale, 1992). However, most sources agree that the ANO’s excessive violence and their increasing reputation as a ‘gun for hire’ in the service of foreign governments quickly denuded the support they had (Seale, 1992). Moreover, there is little evidence that Abu Nidal managed to gain wider support in the Palestinian diaspora, and his conflict with Fatah prohibited any substantial presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, precluding the development of support there (Seale, 1992; Wege, 1991). The result was that his main focus remained organisational and personal survival, via state sponsorship, rather than rallying popular support.

**Other group support (2):** limited, a group offers intermittent or only vocal support

Abu Nidal was perhaps the most isolated of the Palestinian militant groups, enjoying little support from the other groups which shared their professed aims of an independent Palestinian state and the destruction of Israel (Jane’s, 2005). However, they did receive some limited support, notably, the leader of Black September, Abu Ali Iyad, was an early advocate (Wege, 1991), and some of Black September joined
the ANO following the group’s degradation after the Munich Games attack (Jane’s, 2005; Seale, 1992). Another group from which early ANO recruits were drawn was the National Arab Youth for the Liberation of Palestine (NAYLP) (Wege, 1991). A little later, in the mid-1980s, ANO received support from the Marxist Kurdish Workers Party and from Action Directe in the form of safe houses and logistical help (Wege, 1991). However, these were relatively transitory relationships, and ANO did not court other organisations, preferring to operate in isolation, primarily to maintain organisational security (Seale 1992; Wege, 1991).

**Territory/safe haven (3):** confirmed, substantial safe operating area in the country

The group’s close relationship with the Syrian, Libyan and Iraqi governments meant they were afforded considerable scope to operate within these territories (Jane’s, 2005). This was most clearly evidenced in their ability to travel freely within the country and abroad, and in the training and organisational infrastructure they were able to amass, all of which was generally developed with the knowledge, and often explicit support, of their sponsors (Seale, 1992; Wege, 1991). Similarly, much of their militant activities were carried out in plain sight of the regimes under whose patronage they operated, for example, ANO members were allowed to carry arms and transport weapons freely to facilitate their aims (Seale, 1992). Moreover, ANO set up front companies, received support from government officers to establish their organisational and militant infrastructure, as well as gaining significant financial support (Jane’s, 2005; Seale, 1992). In all of the countries he operated in, Abu Nidal set up, often substantial areas where his men could train and from which they could launch operations (Seale, 1992).

**Official wing (1):** absent

After breaking with Fatah, Abu Nidal focused primarily on militancy and made few efforts to develop a wider non-violent infrastructure (Jane’s, 2005). However, the organisation did include a political department (Seale, 1992). It was split into two committees, the purpose of the first was to publish periodicals and produce propaganda (Wege, 1991). The second was the political relations committee, which engaged in wider diplomacy efforts with Arab and foreign governments (Seale, 1992). However, the focus remained on achieving their organisational and political objectives via violent means (Seale, 1992). The political department hence fell some
way short of an official wing. Rather than constituting any real attempt to gain political power or establish a political party, it worked to garner support for the group’s militant activities.

**Develop networks (3):** confirmed, substantial network developed

Largely due to the level of state support the ANO received, for much of the time, the group was relatively well financed, amassing millions of dollars by the late 1980s (Seale, 1992). As well as illegal activities such as blackmail and extortion, Abu Nidal developed commercial operations, including trading arms and goods from Eastern Europe to Iran and Iraq (Seale, 1992; Wege, 1991). This financial infrastructure meant they were able to develop wider support networks in Europe as well as the Middle East, which provided logistical support for their operations (Jane’s, 2005; Seale, 1992). They had a range of front organisations, and links to government personnel, as well as legitimate companies and banks across the Middle East, and in Eastern and Western Europe (Seale, 1992). These networks were robust and well-maintained, offering Abu Nidal and the wider organisation significant support.

**Pre-existing fighters (3):** confirmed, a significant number of the group have fighting experience at inception

Before breaking with Arafat, Abu Nidal cultivated a core of loyal supporters drawn from Fatah’s ranks (Jane’s, 2005), in particular amongst those stationed in Iraq. These men were experienced fighters and provided some of the operational depth Abu Nidal used in the years to come (Jane’s, 2005; Seale, 1992). Abu Nidal also welcomed members of other Palestinian militant groups with militant experience, including Black September, NAYLP, members of al-Asifah (a militant unit of Fatah), and the largely Iraqi-based Palestinian Liberation Army’s Qadisiyah Brigade (Wege, 1991). Although Abu Nidal lost much of this experience over the years as he fired, killed or demoted his more senior lieutenants, at its inception, the ANO had a core of experienced militants (Seale, 1992).

**Training (3):** well-established training infrastructure with camps and trainers that operated for extended periods

Given the levels of state support the ANO enjoyed, they were able to establish and maintain semi-permanent training and camp infrastructure in several countries, which
moved around as Abu Nidal himself changed sponsor (Seale, 1992). Abu Nidal’s initial infrastructure was ‘inherited’ from Fatah; when he broke from them, the camps, property and infrastructure Fatah had maintained in Iraq were handed over to Abu Nidal by the Iraqis (Seale, 1992). On his move to Syria, Abu Nidal set up camps in Lebanon, specifically in the Bekaa valley and on the Syrian-Lebanese border, as well as inside Syria, for a period even having a presence inside a Syrian military base (Wege, 1991). When Abu Nidal began attacking Syrian targets, at the behest of the Iraqis, and with the shifting political situation following the 1990 Iraq war, these training facilities were largely transferred to Habbaniyah and Hit in Iraq (Seale, 1992; Wege, 1991). ANO also had a large training facility near Rabta in Libya (Wege, 1991). Training consisted of a 45 day programme of weapons and explosives training as well as political instruction, a further course on hijacking was also given to recruits (Wege, 1991).

**Membership (2): 100s**

At the height of their strength in the mid-1980s ANO were estimated to have between 300-500 members, (Jane’s 2005; Seale, 1992; Wege, 1991), as well as militia in Lebanon, and an overseas support structure. However, none of the sources suggest the group regularly maintained more than a thousand men.
# Appendix G

## Original MPOSAC Output

```
*********************************************
* MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PARTIAL ORDER SCALOGRAM *
* ANALYSIS WITH BASE COORDINATES            *
* MPOSAC                                   *
*********************************************

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Number of read cases ........... 28
Number of rejected cases ..... 0
Number of retained cases ..... 28

There are 29 different profiles

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*Extreme profile added by program

Balancing weight power ...... 1 for incomparables
1 for comparables
DIMENSIONALITY 2

Number of iterations ......... 10
Time of last iteration ...... .000 seconds

Proportion of profile-pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP coefficient ........... .8940 (= 388 / 434)

Proportion of comparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP1 coefficient ........... 1.0000 (= 209 / 209)

Proportion of incomparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP2 coefficient ........... .7956 (= 179 / 225)

SCORE--DISTance weighted coefficient
SCODIS coefficient ........... .0000

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J (i.e. X1+X2+...) , X1, X2, ...

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Diagram of Item number 7: Fighters
Number of iterations ........ 10
Time of last iteration ...... .000 seconds

Proportion of profile-pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP coefficient .......... .9355 (= 406 / 434)

Proportion of comparable pairs CORrectly REPPresented
CORREP1 coefficient .......... 1.0000 (= 209 / 209)

Proportion of incomparable pairs CORrectly REPPresented
CORREP2 coefficient .......... .8756 (= 197 / 225)

SCore--DISTance weighted coefficient
SCODIS coefficient .......... .0000

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Coefficient of weak monotonicity between each observed item and the factors:
J (i.e. X1+X2+...), X1, X2, ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>X1</th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>X3</th>
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<td>State_su</td>
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<td>.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop_sup</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.93</td>
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<td>Gp_sup</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<td>.92</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.70</td>
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<td>.31</td>
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<td>Fighters</td>
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<td>.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.83</td>
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<td>Members</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.87</td>
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Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 1 versus Axis 2.
Diagram of Item number 3: Gp_sup
Diagram of Item number 7: Fighters
Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 1 versus Axis 3.
Diagram of Item number 5: Off_wing

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Diagram of Item number 7: Fighters
Space Diagram for Dimensionality 3. Axis 2 versus Axis 3.
Diagram of Item number 3: Gp_sup
Diagram of Item number 5 : Off_wing
Appendix H

MPOSAC Goodness of Fit Measures

The programme gives a number of indices of goodness of fit and sets out how many of the variable pairs were correctly represented in the array:

Proportion of profile-pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP coefficient ........... .9355 (= 406 / 434)

Proportion of comparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP1 coefficient ........... 1.0000 (= 209 / 209)

Proportion of incomparable pairs CORrectly REPresented
CORREP2 coefficient ........... .8756 (= 197 / 225)

These are calculated as follows (taken from Amar, 2005):

$M_c$: number of comparable profile pairs
$M_i$: number of incomparable profile pairs
A similar notation holds for output (x,y):
$mc$: number of comparable (x,y)-profile pairs
$m_i$: number of incomparable (x,y)-profile pairs
If $N$ is the total number of profiles in the scalogram then:
$M_c + M_i = \frac{1}{2} N(N - 1)$: number of profile pairs.

This gives the following definitions of the coefficients:

CORREP $\frac{mc + mi}{M_c + M_i}$

CORREP1 $\frac{mc}{M_c}$

CORREP2 $\frac{mi}{M_i}$
Appendix I

Item Diagrams

*Figure G1*. Item diagram for ‘members’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G2. Item diagram for ‘popular support’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G3. Item diagram for ‘state support’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G4. Item diagram for ‘territory’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G5. Item diagram for ‘training’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G6. Item diagram for ‘official wing’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G7. Item diagram for ‘pre-existing fighters’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 3.
Figure G8. Item diagram for ‘group support’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 2.
Figure G9. Item diagram for ‘develop network’ variable showing score for each group on this measure. Axis 1 vs. axis 2.
Appendix J

Definitions of Mechanisms and Processes
Adapted from Tilly and Tarrow (2007), pp. 202-203.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
<td>Events that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution of similarity</td>
<td>Identification of another political actor as falling within the same category as your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary de/activation</td>
<td>Increase/decrease in the salience of the us-them distinction separating two political actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary formation</td>
<td>Creation of an us-them distinction between two political actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary shift</td>
<td>Change in the persons or identities on one side or the other of an existing boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>Production of a new connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>An external authority’s signal of its readiness to recognise and support the existence and claims of a political actor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decertification</td>
<td>An external authority’s signal that it is withdrawing recognition and support from a political actor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-optation</td>
<td>Incorporation of a previously excluded political actor into some centre of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defection</td>
<td>Exit of a political actor from a previously effective coalition and/or coordinated action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>Spread of a contentious performance, issue, or interpretive frame from one site to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emulation</td>
<td>Deliberate repetition within a given setting of a performance observed in another setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repression</td>
<td>Action by authorities that increases the cost-actual or potential-of an actor’s claim making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>Combinations and sequences of mechanisms that produce some specified outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor constitution</td>
<td>Emergence of a new or transformed political actor - a recognisable set of people who carry on collective action, making and/or receiving contentious claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition formation</td>
<td>Creation of new, visible, and direct coordination of claims between two or more previously distinct actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective action</td>
<td>All coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialisation</td>
<td>Shift of an organisation toward more extensive sale of its services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Pursuit of rewards or outcomes in mutually exclusive ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contention</td>
<td>Making claims that bear on someone else's interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate action</td>
<td>Two or more actors’ mutual signalling and parallel making of claims on the same object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De/democratisation</td>
<td>Movement of a regime toward or away from relatively broad, equal, and protected binding consultation of the government's subjects with respect to governmental resources, personnel, and policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusionment</td>
<td>Decline in commitment of individuals of political actors to previously sustaining beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalation</td>
<td>Displacement of moderate goals and tactics by more extreme goals and tactics (usually applied to mutual interactions among political actors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>Adopting and broadcasting a shared definition of an issue or performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globalisation</td>
<td>Increase in the volume and speed of flows of capital, goods, information, ideas, people, and forces connecting actors across countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity shift</td>
<td>Emergence of new collective answers to the questions 'who are you?' 'who are we?' 'who are they?'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalisation</td>
<td>Incorporation of performances and political actors into the routines of organised politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalisation</td>
<td>A combination of (1) increasing horizontal density of relations amongst states, governmental officials, and non-state actors with (2) increasing vertical ties between these and international institutions or organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involution</td>
<td>Shift in social movement organisations toward increasing emphasis on supply of social services to their constituencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>De/mobilisation</td>
<td>Increase/decrease in the resources available to a political actor for collective making of claims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New coordination</td>
<td>Coordination produced by the combination of brokerage and diffusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polarisation</td>
<td>Increasing ideological distance between political actors and/or geographic range of coordinated claim making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radicalisation</td>
<td>Shift of social movement organisations toward increased assertiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale shift</td>
<td>Increase/decrease in the number of actors and/or geographic range of coordinated claim making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-representation</td>
<td>An actor's or coalition's public display of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social appropriation</td>
<td>Conversion or incorporation of previously existing non-political groups and networks into political actors.</td>
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