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Radical Beliefs and Violent Actions Are Not Synonymous: How to Place the Key Disjuncture Between Attitudes and Behaviors at the Heart of Our Research into Political Violence

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Research Note

Radical Beliefs and Violent Actions Are Not Synonymous: How to Place the Key Disjuncture Between Attitudes and Behaviors at the Heart of Our Research into Political Violence

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This article develops and elaborates on three core points. First, as with research into other social science themes, it is argued that it is necessary to apply the logic of correlation and causality to the study of political violence. Second, it highlights the critical disjuncture between attitudes and behaviors. Many or most individuals who support the use of political violence remain on the sidelines, including those who sympathize with insurgents in Afghanistan (reportedly 29 percent in 2011), and those supportive of "suicide attacks" in the Palestinian Territories (reportedly reaching 66 percent in 2005). Conversely, those responsible for such behaviors are not necessarily supportive of the ostensible political aims. Third, it is argued that the motives that drive these attitudes and behaviors are often (or, some would argue, always) distinct. While the former are motivated by collective grievances, there is substantial case study evidence that the latter are commonly driven by economic (e.g., payments for the emplacement of improvised explosive devices), security-based (i.e., coercion) and sociopsychological (e.g., adventure, status, and vengeance) incentives. Thus, it is necessary for the research community to treat attitudes and behaviors as two separate, albeit interrelated, lines of inquiry.

The concept of "terrorism" is notoriously problematic, with high profile debates revolving around the suitability of the "state terrorists" label and the issue of moral relativity often presented as "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The latter arises as terrorism is a pejorative term, regularly utilized to vilify opponents. Beyond these headline disagreements, a lack of consensus is also apparent regarding other key definitional issues, including whether the term is applicable to violence directed at civilians only, the broader category of non-combatants, or also military targets. Agreement is also lacking over whether the targeting of infrastructure and economic objectives qualifies as terrorism, and if the term should be reserved solely for "spectaculars" such as 9/11 and the Bali, Madrid, and London

bombings. While certain authorities seek to downplay the relevance of such inconsistencies, ambiguities clearly matter as these varied acts are undertaken with different ends in mind, and require distinct policy responses.

The concept of radicalization is a relative newcomer to the lexicon of political violence, but it has similarly collected considerable terminological "baggage," including a contested meaning. To many authorities the term refers to the development of a belief system that advocates far-reaching changes in society, without necessarily implying support for violence in pursuit of such ends (see, for instance, Bartlett and Miller in Figure 1).[1] In contrast, a more common understanding specifies that the concept (often, but not always, preceded by "violent"), in the words of Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun, refers to "the active pursuit or acceptance of the use of violence to attain the stated goal."[2] With its emphasis on process, an additional concern is that the concept implies, or may be used to suggest, an unwarranted degree of consistency in the trajectory that individuals take from being "non-radical" to "radical." This is apparent, for instance, in the "phased models" of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and Danish Security and Intelligence Services.[3]

In light of these definitional issues, the analysis in this article relies on two novel concepts:

- **Behaviors contributing to Political Violence (BPV):** A set of activities applied by non-state actors that directly (e.g., explosive detonation, mortar attack) or indirectly (e.g., explosives manufacture, reconnaissance, attack logistics) further violence against non-military targets ostensibly in pursuit of stated political (including ideological, ethno-nationalist, and religious) objectives.
- **Attitudes supportive of Political Violence (APV):** Values or beliefs that condone or support BPV in pursuit of these same stated objectives.

A critical weakness of terrorism studies is in its failure to satisfactorily comprehend the relationship between attitudes and behaviors, as is apparent, for instance, in the simplistic

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'[Radicalization is a] growing readiness to pursue and/or support—if necessary by undemocratic means—far-reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a threat to, the democratic order.' (Dutch Security Services, AIVD, 2005)[4]

'[Radicalization is] the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism.' (European Commission, 2006)[5]

['Violent radicalization is] a process by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective.' (Danish Intelligence Services, PET, 2009)[6]

'[Radicalization is] the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.' (UK Prevent Strategy, 2011)[7]

'[Radicalization is] the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then to join terrorist groups.' (UK Contest Strategy, 2011)[8]

'Radicalisation is simply the process by which "individuals are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views." To be a radical is to reject the status quo, but not necessarily in a violent or even problematic manner.' (Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, 2012)[9]

Figure 1. Selected definitions of radicalization.

and vague attempts to connect "radicalization" and "terrorism" in the existing European, Danish, and U.K. definitions (see Figure 1). The first of three key points in this article is that there is a critical disjuncture between these variables, in that:

- **APV mostly do not translate into BPV:** As observed by Marc Sageman, "ten years of counterterrorism practice has taught us that many people say very violent things, but very few follow up with violent actions."[10]

And, conversely:

- **BPV may occur in the absence of APV:** As noted by John Horgan and Max Taylor, not all "'terrorists' are necessarily 'radical' in the sense of 'holding politically or religiously extreme views.'"[11]

To be clear, while various authorities do highlight the importance of this disjuncture, it is invariably not incorporated into the heart of theory and research programs. Put simply, it is necessary for research efforts to enquire separately and simultaneously: "What factors drive APV?" and "What factors drive BPV?"

The second core point is that our comprehension of these phenomena is undermined by a widespread failure to grasp that the drivers of attitudes and behaviors are often (or, some would claim, always) distinct. Specifically, this article argues that APV are motivated by collective drivers, such as an absence of "voice," socioeconomic inequality, and repression, whereas individual-level incentives are often responsible for BPV, including material enticements, fear, status, adventure, and vengeance (as discussed in greater detail below). For instance, it is widely reported that community members are often paid by insurgents in both Afghanistan and Iraq to place Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Also functioning as an incentive at the individual level, Eamon Collins claims that the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) cadre had "considerable status" in certain communities, and that there was "no shortage of women willing to give more than the time of day to IRA volunteers."[12]

The framework outlined in these pages draws heavily on rational choice theory (RCT) and the collective action problem. While RCT has thus far not permeated terrorism studies to any great extent, its impact on the parallel insurgency literature is pronounced. Indeed, Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Kocher, assert that "recent studies invoke canonically the assumption that rebels face a collective action problem that must be overcome."[13] Given the commonly voiced hostility to RCT (which is often seemingly based on intuition, rather than a comprehension of its logic and limitations), it is worth noting that this theory is critiqued in the latter sections of this article. Yet, irrespective of the extent to which the reader elects to absorb or reject its logic, it is concluded that insights from RCT serve as an important corrective in a literature that often overlooks the problematic nature of the relationship between collective incentives and political violence.

The policy implications of this specific focus on individual-level incentives are substantial. While efforts to combat political violence routinely incorporate a wide range of responses, of critical importance is the relative weight placed on these varied initiatives in each specific location. Thus, for instance:

- Where BPV is driven to a large extent by material incentives (e.g., cash for emplacing IEDs of Afghanistan and Iraq), substantial emphasis must be placed on livelihoods programs and efforts to cut insurgent/ terrorist funding channels.
- Where BPV are often coerced by non-state actors, the policy response must focus on protecting the local community.

- Where BPV is driven largely by the pursuit of vengeance, efforts may revolve around preventing future acts of "collateral damage" (to apply that repulsive term) and/or mediation.
- To the extent that BPV are undertaken to gain status it is necessary to reduce the degree to which this social reward is bestowed through undermining community support for such activities (i.e., APV) by redressing the genuine grievances that are invariably found in such locations. In cases where the regime is "part of the problem," substantial state reforms may be required or even policies that advocate regime change.[14]

While the emphasis in this article is primarily on "challenging environments," including Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and the Palestinian Territories, the framework is adaptable to political violence in "the West." In particular, this may involve an increased focus on foreign policy decisions as a driver of APV, and a reduced emphasis on economic incentives and coercion as drivers of BPV. Irrespective of location, however, the third key point of this article is that efforts to comprehend political violence are routinely undermined by basic research design errors relating to correlation and causality, and this forms the subject of the following section.

From Correlation to Causality

To place this article into context it is necessary to highlight the uninspiring record of existing research in the field. In 1988 Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman claimed that "there are probably few areas in the social science literature in which so much is written on the basis of so little research."[15] That same year Ted Robert Gurr asserted that "most of the terrorism literature consists of naïve description, speculative commentary, and prescriptions for 'dealing with terrorism' which could not meet minimum research standards in the more established branches of conflict and policy analysis."[16] Marc Sageman more recently maintained that "most analysts rely on sensationalistic and often erroneous press accounts of terrorists that collapse time, eliminate any information deemed irrelevant to the commission of the crime, and give a sense of linearity and intent to the path based on prosecutorial claims."[17] Michael King and Donald M. Taylor similarly argued that "many theories purport to describe the exact stages involved in the radicalization process, yet paradoxically, very little empirical data exists on the psychology of those who become radicalized."[18]

With research participants often likely to offer misleading or false information (as discussed below), the reliability of field data also presents a specific concern. An additional issue routinely overlooked is that much of the existing research is undermined by its failure to incorporate control groups, a basic design error known as "selecting upon the dependent variable."[18] While research in a specific location may indicate that individuals displaying APV lack employment opportunities, this may only provide explanatory power if evidence also reveals that the unemployment levels differed among control subjects not displaying APV. Similarly, no analytical value is offered by findings indicating that BPV are often driven by a desire to avenge deaths through drone attacks if control subjects who do not contribute to such acts have suffered similarly. Simply put, it is necessary for researchers to first determine whether there is a correlation between APV/BPV and these hypothesized "independent variables."

Once correlations have been identified it is possible to conduct analysis on causality. For instance, as indicated in Figure 2, if a correlation is found between a lack of employment
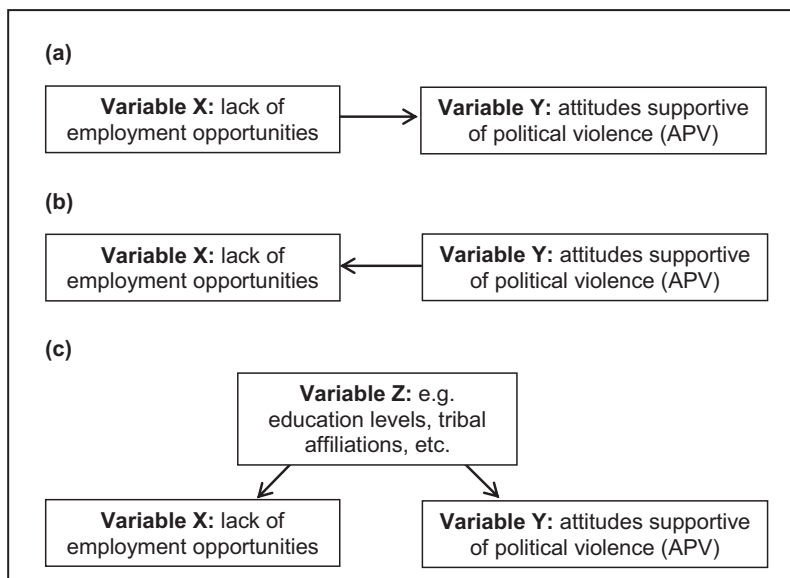
Figure 2. Potential directions of causality (example one).

opportunities (*Variable X*) and the extent to which residents from a specific geography demonstrate APV (*Variable Y*), causality may run as follows:

- A lack of employment opportunities may lead individuals to develop APV (i.e., *X* "causes" *Y*).
- APV may drive a lack of employment opportunities (i.e., *Y* "causes" *X*), perhaps because individuals become tainted by the former.
- An external variable (e.g., education levels, tribal affiliations) may drive both a lack of employment opportunities and APV (i.e., *Variable Z* "causes" *X* and *Y*).

Similarly, as demonstrated in Figure 3, if a correlation is identified between the deaths caused by drone attacks (*Variable A*) and BVP (*Variable B*), then causality may flow as follows:

- Deaths caused by drone attacks lead to a desire for vengeance through BPV (i.e., *A* "causes" *B*).
- BPV undertaken by specific communities lead to drone attacks and resultant deaths (i.e., *B* "causes" *A*).
- An external variable (e.g., belonging to a community that historically has been involved with political violence) may drive both deaths through drone attacks and BVP (i.e., *Variable C* "causes" *A* and *B*).

Given both the substantial issues with data reliability in such challenging research environments (as is discussed below) and the complexity of the themes under investigation, rather than attempting to "prove" causality, the more modest objective of the study of political violence should be to draw caveated findings to support or contest a predetermined list of hypotheses. While beyond the scope of this review,[20] this is achieved through a focus upon sequencing (i.e., if *A* tends to precede *B*, or *vice versa*), and techniques that control for external factors (e.g., through randomization when it is possible to draw on sufficiently large
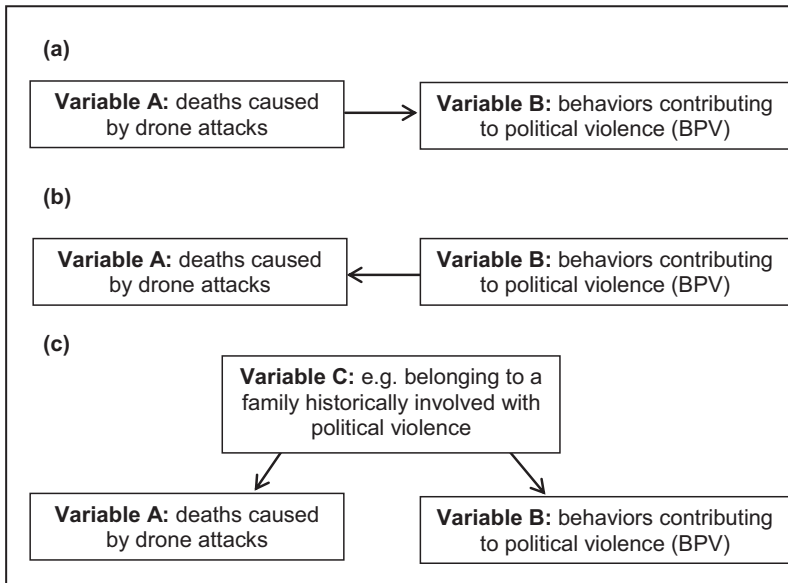
Figure 3. Potential directions of causality (example two).

samples). Complexity is added, however, as casualty may simultaneously run in multiple directions (e.g., *A* "causes" *B* and *B* "causes" *A*), and additional challenges arise as a result of tipping points, disproportionate feedback loops, and other complex effects.

Of course, the logic of correlation and causality is far from unique to political violence. If a correlation is found between locations that support the Karzai regime and those where development initiatives are being undertaken in Afghanistan, it is necessary to determine whether this occurs because development efforts lead to support, and/or the regime rewards loyal communities, and/or an external variable (e.g., relative levels of insecurity) enables both factors. Similarly, if research reveals an association between time spent incarcerated and links to criminal networks, it is necessary to establish the extent to which this results from linkages with such groups resulting in an increased propensity to commit crime, and/or prison placing individuals in the company of such networks, and/or an external variable (e.g., socioeconomic background) that drives both factors. While this logic is incorporated as standard into other areas of social science research, this is not yet the case with terrorism studies.

Separating Attitudes from Behaviors

Prior to focusing in detail on the various factors that may drive APV and BPV, it is necessary to elaborate upon the relationship between these two variables. Figure 4 indicates that each individual in a specific geography may be located on a continuous scale along the x-axis according to the extent to which they support or oppose BPV in pursuit of the ostensible aims of this violence. While context specific, those toward the far right of the scale (e.g., *Individuals B* and *F*), for instance, may advocate the use of force against a broader range of potential targets, or continue to back its application during periods when a settlement seems plausible. The y-axis also represents a continuous scale, relating to the frequency and intensity of involvement in BVP (e.g., whether individuals are involved, for instance,
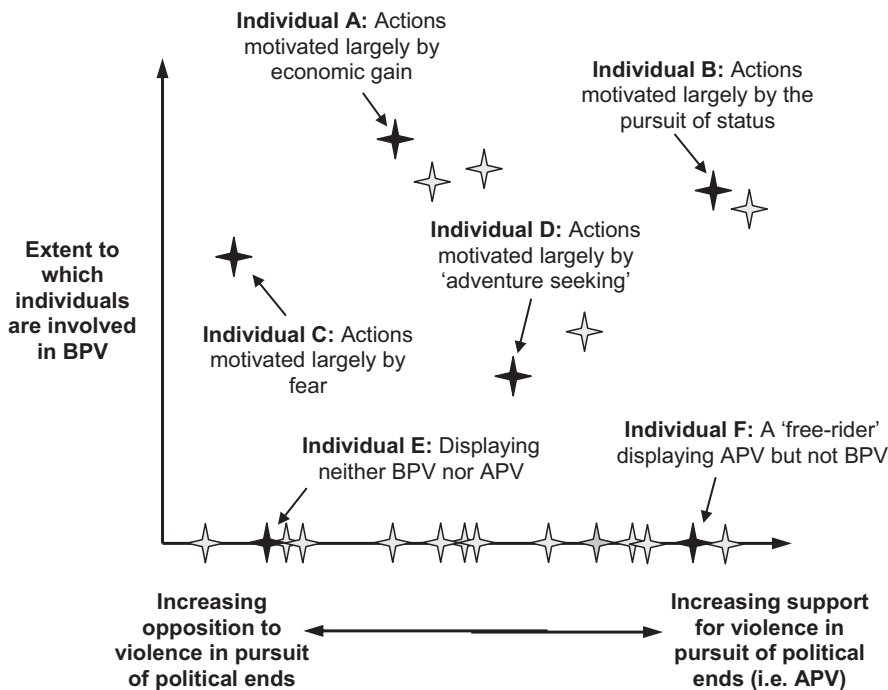
Figure 4. The relationship between APV and BPV with example individuals.

in the detonation of explosives, or only "lesser" activities such as reconnaissance). Rather than focus on all BPV under one umbrella, the framework outlined in this article may also be adapted to focus more narrowly on defined acts within BPV, such as "suicide attacks."

Figure 4 also demonstrates the disjuncture at the heart of this article, with *Individual F* displaying APV, but not BPV. While it is often only possible to speculate on the numbers directly involved in creating political violence, in many or most cases the majority of sympathizes (i.e., *Individual F*) remain on the sidelines. For instance, the manpower estimates for the Taliban and other insurgent organizations in Afghanistan represented a minute fraction of the 29 percent of the population said to be sympathetic toward such groups in 2011.[21] Similarly, those who support "suicide attacks" in the Palestinian Territories, reportedly reaching 66 percent of the population in 2005,[22] far outnumber those actually involved in producing this violence. Conversely, driven, respectively, by economic benefit and fear, *Individuals A* and *C* undertake BPV without subscribing to the ostensible political causes. Put simply, case study evidence routinely suggests (as shown below) that APV occurs in the absence of BPV, and *vice versa*, and thus it is necessary to treat these as separate, albeit interrelated, variables.

For the purposes of demonstration, a limited list of factors that reportedly explain APV and BPV has been draw from the literature and formulated as hypotheses in Figures 5 and 6. It should be observed that the framework presently outlined is primarily intended to assess "enabling" and "motivating" factors at the aggregate (i.e., community) level at a given point in time, and that in its present form it does not capture the evolving relevance of these drivers as they pertain to specific individuals. A number of candidate enablers, including contacts with charismatic leaders and "radicalized" individuals from existing social networks, may
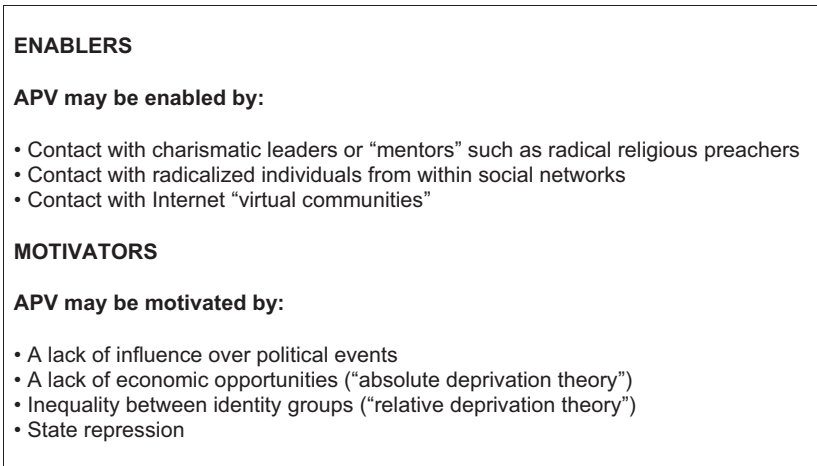

ENABLERS

APV may be enabled by:

• Contact with charismatic leaders or "mentors" such as radical religious preachers
• Contact with radicalized individuals from within social networks
• Contact with Internet "virtual communities"

MOTIVATORS

APV may be motivated by:

• A lack of influence over political events
• A lack of economic opportunities ("absolute deprivation theory")
• Inequality between identity groups ("relative deprivation theory")
• State repression

Figure 5. Selected hypotheses relating to APV.

facilitate BPV *and* APV and are thus common to both lists. Potential motivators of APV include state repression, an absence of political voice, and socioeconomic inequalities across religious, ethnic, and tribal cleavages. Of course, these factors vary substantially between locations and over time, for instance, with drone attacks undoubtedly being of specific relevance in Yemen and Pakistan, and Israeli settlements being pertinent in the case of Palestine.

According to rational choice theory (RCT), however, such collective drivers are unable to explain BPV on the grounds that "rational" individuals elect to "free-ride" on the contributions of others (i.e., *Individual F*). This stance is summed-up by James DeNardo, who states that:

ENABLERS

BPV may be enabled by:

• Contact with charismatic leaders or "mentors" such as radical religious preachers
• Contact with radicalized individuals from within social networks
• Contact with Internet "virtual communities"
• Access to weaponry, explosives, and so on
• Security "vacuums"

MOTIVATORS

BPV may be motivated by:

• Material enticements ("selective economic incentives")
• Fear of repercussions in response to non-compliance ("selective disincentives")
• Revenge ("humiliation-revenge theory")
• "Excitement"/"adventure" ("novelty-seeking theory")
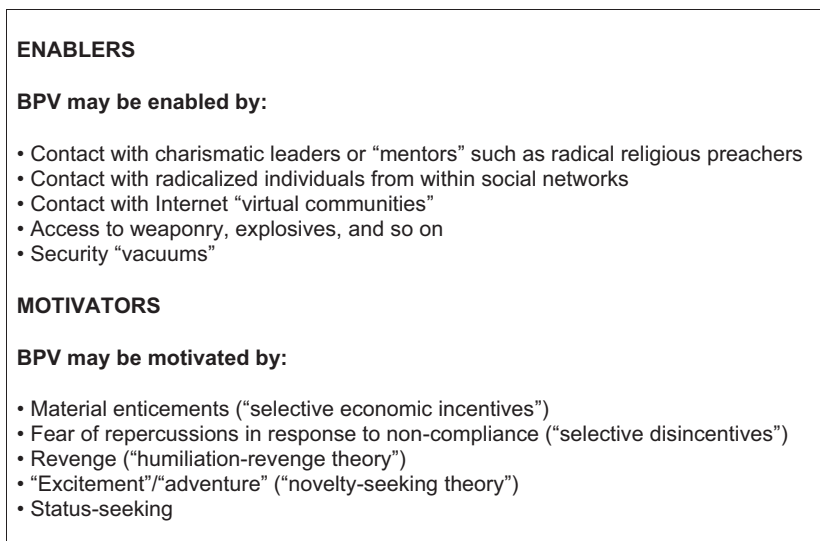• Status-seeking

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Figure 6. Selected hypotheses relating to BPV.

> Because single individuals typically have a negligible impact on the outcome of
> large-scale collective activities, and because public goods cannot be withheld
> from those who do not join in their creation, it is argued that participation in
> strikes, elections, and revolutions is "irrational" whenever personal sacrifice
> is required. Instead, the "rational" person will take a free ride, first allowing
> others to absorb the cost and then sharing freely in the benefits.[23]

Put another way, this theory argues that "rational" individuals free-ride as they will benefit
from the envisaged rewards (which may range from an end to drone attacks to revolution)
without personally having to absorb the potential costs (e.g., expenditure of own resources,
injury, death, imprisonment).[24] Thus, non-participation is taken to be the default position
and accounts from the RCT school compete to explain how the free-rider hurdle is overcome.

Overcoming the Free-Rider Hurdle

What most of the proposed "solutions" to the free-rider hurdle share is that they act *at an
individual level* (see the Motivators presented in Figure 6), rather than collectively. While
the selected drivers discussed in this section are routinely identified within the case study
literature, their broader relevance requires substantiation.[25] These are also not exclusive in
the sense that individuals may be driven, for instance, simultaneously by both a desire for
vengeance and economic enticements. The two most commonly referenced "solutions" are
perhaps:

- **Selective Economic Incentives:** For instance, in Afghanistan there is abundant ev-
  idence that community members receive funds in exchange for their contributions
  to violence. As expressed by Antonio Giustozzi, "the Taliban sometimes paid vil-
  lagers cash (reportedly US$15–55) to harass foreign and government troops with
  occasional rocket attacks and shootings."[26]
- **Coercion:** Threats of retaliation are also used selectively in certain locations to
  "encourage" specific behaviors. Mia Bloom and John Horgan, for instance, note that
  in Northern Ireland a number of individuals were "coerced to drive vehicle-bourn
  improvised explosive devices into military targets."[27] Allegations of coercion also
  exist with regard to certain Hamas "suicide attacks."[28]

However, while these motivators may provide important solutions to related free-rider
problems,[29] their explanatory power appears to be limited with regard to BPV. While
RCT theorists tend to gravitate toward economic and security-based solutions, the concept
of "rationality" is sufficiently elastic to also incorporate sociopsychological motives, as
stressed by the "father" of the free-rider problem, Mancur Olson.[30] The candidate drivers
are numerous,[31] but it is worth focusing in particular on:

- **Vengeance:** Within this context this refers narrowly to the sensation of personal
  retribution experienced by participants in an act of revenge, rather than that sensed
  indirectly by those not involved (i.e., thus supplying the individual-level benefit
  to overcome the free-rider hurdle). It has been reported that suicide attacks in the
  Palestinian Territories, for instance, are often motivated by a desire to avenge spilled
  blood.[32]
- **Adventure-Seeking:** David Kilcullen claims that local farmers in the province of
  Uruzgan assisted the Taliban during a 2006 confrontation as "this was the most
  exciting thing that had happened in their valley in years."[33] Regarding the case of

Colombia, Marcella Ribetti similarly asserts that "fundamentally, combat appears to have been an exciting experience for many."[34]

- **Status-Seeking:** Drawing from first-hand experience in the Provincial IRA, Eamon Collins claims that foot-soldiers fought as "by doing so they gave themselves power, status and influence which they could never have achieved otherwise."[35] It is also widely reported that status is gained by "suicide bombers" in the Palestinian Territories and other such locations,[36] suggesting that for certain individuals this benefit (commonly alongside financial assurances for family members) is valued more than life itself.

It is at this juncture that the concept of APV reemerges, providing a crucial determinant of whether communities, or more narrowly defined social groups, elect to bestow status on those undertaking BPV. Put another way, APV indirectly drive BPV through provoking communities/groups to offer social rewards. This is arguably of particular relevance in "traditional" societies, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, Somalia, and so on, with an enhanced sense of community. It also places in context the considerable efforts made by many insurgents to generate APV through nationalist rhetoric, ethnic empowerment, welfare/development provisions, and so on. Insights from the "constructivist" school are of critical relevance in this light as identities (religious, ethnic, tribal, caste, etc.) and grievances are at least partially "constructed" by movement leaders aiming to provoke APV, and thus BPV.

However, RCT does not insist that solutions to the free-rider problem are based upon the above, and other, individual-level incentives. For instance, the "efficacy solution" (which overlaps substantially with the "locus-of-control theory" from psychology) suggests that individuals who believe in the importance of their own contribution are more likely to act. This may be particularly applicable to those with relatively rare attributes, such as an ability to manufacture hi-tech explosives, or an uncommon ability to provide leadership. Put simply, the efficacy solution is based on the idea that such individuals contribute as they calculate that the collective rewards (revolution, independence, an end to Israel's settlement policy, etc.) are far less likely to be achieved without their personal involvement, and this overrides the potential costs of imprisonment, injury and death.

Limitations and Critiques of RCT

Needless to state, the RCT framework and the logic on which it is based does not go unchallenged, and this section reviews a number of limitations and common critiques. First, a critique targeting the RCT pillars of rationality and self-interest stems from findings that suggest that individuals may act in pursuit of perceived group, rather than personal, objectives. As expressed by Jerrold Post et al. with regard to members of various Middle Eastern insurgent groups, for instance:

> As the individual and group fuse, the more personal the struggle becomes for the group members. . . . Subjects were unable to distinguish between personal goals and those of the organization. In their discussion of group action, the success or failure of the group's action was personal—if the group succeeded, then as an individual they succeeded; if the group failed, they failed.[37]

Of course, theorists from the RCT tradition may counter this claim through asserting that those who seemingly act to further collective objectives are actually motivated by personal

benefits such as comradeship and status, and that research that fails to uncover such motives has failed to ask the "right questions" or has been misled by interviewees who neglected to concede selfish aims. Ultimately, however, this maximalist RCT stance rests upon a theoretical assumption, and it cannot be shown empirically that individuals *never* act purely in pursuit of group ends. Indeed, the threat is that this theoretical assumption is elevated to an article of faith.

Second, critics of RCT also observe that the incentives sought by "rational" individuals are not universal, but are contingent on context and culture. Perhaps most obviously, the extent to which material gain is pursued varies notably both between and within communities, and this translates into an inability to understand, for instance, why only certain community members in Afghanistan accept payments to plant IEDs. Indeed, more broadly, RCT in isolation cannot explain why only specific actors are driven by all candidate motivators, including fear, vengeance, and status. While this argument is correct, it misses the point that key insight of direct relevance to policy can also be gained through the more modest objective of understanding *what* drives BPV, rather than *why*. For instance, irrespective of whether certain ethnic or tribal communities are "predisposed" toward material incentives, the fact that these enticements commonly drive the placement of IEDs in areas where they reside suggests the need to undermine this motivator through providing alternative livelihoods and/or attempts to cut insurgent access to funds.

Third, issues with data reliability apply in particular to research into individual-level incentives. Research into political violence is notoriously problematic, with respondents potentially offering false or misleading information to be viewed favorably by the interviewer (a phenomenon often referred to as Social Desirability Bias), out of fear, to aggrandize their role in events, or to distance themselves from certain behaviors and attitudes. Those unsympathetic to the armed actors in question may unduly stress to researchers the importance of self-serving drivers such as status-seeking and material gain. And, such biases are likely to be reversed during interviews with those involved in BPV, either intentionally or (drawing insight from cognitive dissonance theory) as a process of unwitting self-deception. Thus, given such issues, and taking into consideration the wider complexity of the phenomena under investigation (as discussed above regarding the issue of causality), the modest aim of research into individual-level incentives should be to present caveated evidence to support/contest specific hypotheses.

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, this article aims to develop and elaborate on three key points. First, as with research into other social science themes, it is argued that it is necessary to apply the logic of correlation and causality to the study of political violence. Studies in this field are still often guilty of "selecting on the dependent variable" through the basic design error of not incorporating control groups. Only once correlations between variables have been identified can researchers consider potential causal routes. As was observed, is not sufficient to simply assume that a lack of employment opportunities leads to APV when the reverse may also be true, or a third variable (e.g., levels of education, tribal affiliations) may drive both factors. While recognizing that the study of political violence presents almost uniquely challenging hurdles, researchers will continue to "grasp in the dark" until they become sufficiently attuned to the importance of such considerations.

Second, this article highlighted the key disjuncture between attitudes and behaviors. As noted, many or most individuals who support political violence remain on the

sidelines, including those who sympathize with the Taliban in Afghanistan, and those supportive of "suicide attacks" in the Palestinian Territories. Conversely, those who contribute to the creation of this violence are often not supportive of the ostensible political objectives. Third, it was argued that the motives that drive APV and BPV are often (or, some would argue, always) distinct. While the former are motivated by collective grievances, there is substantial case study evidence that the latter are often driven by economic (e.g., payments for the emplacement of IEDs), security-based (i.e., coercion), and sociopsychological (e.g., adventure, status, and vengeance) incentives. On this basis the research community must enquire separately: "What drives APV?" and "What drives BPV?"

The arguments presented in this article draw heavily on RCT and its central logic that "rational" individuals elect to free-ride on the contributions of others. Those who reject this logic rightly note that it cannot be demonstrated that individuals are *never* motivated into BPV by collective drivers, and point to findings that indeed suggests the relevance of factors such as inequality and state repression. Nevertheless, free-riding is an empirically demonstrable reality (e.g., in Afghanistan and the Palestinian Territories), and therefore it is necessary to determine what separates the few who typically act from the many who only support. The individual-level enticements discussed above, including material gain, fear, vengeance, adventure, and status-seeking, are candidate solutions to this free-rider hurdle. They are routinely cited in the case study literature and are awaiting systematic analysis.

As noted earlier, this focus on individual-level incentives has key policy implications. While efforts to combat political violence routinely incorporate a wide range of responses, of critical importance is the relative weight placed upon these initiatives in each specific location. In geographies where BPV are regularly coerced by insurgents, policy prescriptions should aim to provide security to vulnerable communities. Where BPV are driven by the pursuit of vengeance, efforts may revolve around mediation. Where BPV is motivated to a large extent by material incentives, a focus should be placed upon alternative livelihoods programs. However, while it is necessary to combat factors that directly motivate BPV, these efforts should not replace indirect attempts to counter such acts through undermining the genuine grievances that are invariably found in such locations. In targeting, for instance, the lack of economic opportunities, inequality between identity groups, and state repression, the objective will be to reduce APV and thus the extent to which communities bestow status on those personally involved in BPV.

Notes

1. See Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun, *"Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model,"* Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael (2009). Available at http://www.diis.dk/graphics/_IO_indsatsomraader/Religion_og_social_konflikt_og_Mellemosten/Islamist%20Radicalisation.Veldhuis%20and%20Staun.pdf (accessed 23 July 2013).

2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. As critiqued, for instance, in ibid.

4. Cited in Randy Borum, "Radicalization into Violence Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories," Journal of Strategic Security 4(4) (2011), p. 12.

5. Cited in Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun, Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael (2009). Available at http://www.diis.dk/graphics/IOindsatsomraader/Religion og social konflikt og Mellemosten/Islamist%20Radicalisation.Veldhuis%20and%20Staun.pdf (accessed 23 July 2013).

6. Cited in Borum, "Radicalization into Violence Extremism I," p. 12.

7. HM Government, Prevent Strategy, Cm 8092 (London: The Stationary Office, 2011), p. 108.

8. Cited in Borum, "Radicalization into Violence Extremism I," p. 12.

9. James Bartlett and Carl Miller, "The Edge of Violence," Terrorism and Political Violence, 24 (2012), 2, incorporating quotes from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Radicalization: A guide for the Perplexed (Ottawa: Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2009), 1.

10. Marc Sageman, "The Turn to Political Violence in the West," in Rik Coolsaet, ed., *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), p. 117.

11. John Horgan and Max Taylor, "Disengagement, De-Radicalization and the Arc of Terrorism: Future Directions for Research," in Coolsaet, *Jihadi Terrorism,* p. 174.

12. Eamon Collins, *Killing Rage* (London: Granta Books, 1998, 2nd ed.), p. 164.

13. Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How 'Free' is Free Riding in Civil Wars?: Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics* 59 (2007), p. 178.

14. It is necessary to stipulate this point in light of the (mostly welcomed) critiques from the *Critical Studies on Terrorism* literature. This article is not based on an assumption that state actors are the "lesser of two evils."

15. Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 177.

16. Quoted in Teun Van de Voorde, "Terrorism Studies: A Critical Appraisal," in Coolsaet, *Jihadi Terrorism*, p. 46.

17. Sageman, *Turn to Political Violence,* p. 117.

18. Michael King and Donald M. Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23(4) (2011), p. 616.

19. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

20. The topic of causality is covered at greater length, for instance, in Alan Bryman and Duncan Cramer, *Quantitative Data Analysis for Social Scientists* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 8–16; and Catherine Marsh and Jane Elliott, *Exploring Data* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008, 2nd ed.), pp. 235–253.

21. Manpower estimates are available from Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 33–37; and David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 48–49. The cited survey results are from Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2011: A Survey of the Afghan People*. Available at http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/TAF2011AGSurvey.pdf (accessed 23 July 2013).

22. Jeroen Gunning, *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2007), p. 127.

23. James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 52.

24. The term "free-riding" is actually a misnomer within this context as it implies that all community members hold APV. Thus, it is inaccurate to treat political violence as a collective endeavor as many of the individuals from the communities that non-state armed actors supposedly represent actually oppose their stated objectives and/or methods. Nevertheless, the critical inference remains that non-participation is the default option.

25. This is certainly not to suggest that no research has been undertaken into these themes. The focus on material incentives is most commonly associated with the "greed and grievance" research of Collier and Hoeffler (see, for instance, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4) (2004), pp. 563–595), but this relies on macro-level proxy variables, rather than data collected from field research. Research into a range of sociopsychological variables is summarized in Randy Borum, "Radicalization into Violence Extremism I: A Review of

Social Science Theories," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4(4) (2011), pp. 7–36; and Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of a Terrorist," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(1) (2005), pp. 3–42.

26. Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 41.

27. Mia Bloom and John Horgan, "Missing their Mark: The IRA's Proxy Bomb Campaign," in Michael Innes, ed., *Making Sense of Proxy Wars* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), p. 33.

28. See, for instance, Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 110–111.

29. For instance, for an account of how insurgents overcome the free-rider problem in relation to the concept of behavioral support, see James Khalil, "Insurgent Populace Relations in Nepal," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23(2) (2012), pp. 221–224

30. Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 61.

31. While referring to joining/collaborating with a rebel movement, as opposed to BPV, Stathis Kalyvas claims that motivations may include "curiosity and the prospect of excitement and adventure, the lure of danger, the acquisition of a new and more rewarding individual identity or moral worldview, the pleasure of acting as one's own agent, [and] the response to emotions such as anger, moral outrage caused by public humiliation, and the desire to take revenge." Stathis Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 96–97. As with all candidate drivers of APV and BPV, it is necessary to define sociopsychological variables *ex ante* to avoid tautology as noted in Margaret Levi, "A Model, a Method, and a Map," in Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 19–41.

32. See, for instance, Assaf Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26 (2003), p. 72.

33. Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. 40–41.

34. Marcella Ribetti, "The Unveiled Motivations of Violence in Intra-State Conflicts: The Colombian Guerrillas," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 18(4) (2007), p. 712.

35. Collins, *Killing Rage*, p. 214.

36. See, for instance, Levitt, *Hamas*, p. 85.

37. Jerrold M. Post, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita M. Denny, "The Terrorists in their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15(1) (2003), p. 176.