

SHADOW BOXING:  
HOW THE RISK OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION SHAPES TERRORIST  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

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For a non-state terrorist group, internal communication and coordination are necessary to maintain organizational control and implement the group's strategy; but this need for interpersonal contact also makes the group vulnerable to disruption by government authorities. How then might these competing demands shape a group's organizational structure? This dissertation will examine how the presence or absence of a safe haven can interact with a group's choice of organizational structure to determine its ability to survive, conduct attacks, and mobilize supporters. Furthermore, it will look at whether and how groups change their organizational structures to adapt to their political environments. To this end, process tracing, the congruence procedure type 2, and cross-case comparison will be applied to the cases of four Western, Cold War-era groups (The Provisional Irish Republican Army, The Red Army Faction, The Red Brigades and The Weather Underground) to both identify the critical factors that impact group organizational structure and to explain how these factors exert their influence.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **Research Question and Theory**

In 1977, with the arrest of Provisional Irish Republic Army Chief of Staff Seamus Twomey, an extraordinary document came into the hands of Irish and British authorities.<sup>1</sup> This internal PIRA “Staff Report” revealed that, in reaction to mounting losses within the group brought on by successful infiltration by government informants, it would be reorganizing itself from its hierarchical, military-like structure to a structure of cells, kept independent from one another and only connected to the central leadership through anonymous contacts.<sup>2</sup> This reorganization was part of a larger strategic change for PIRA: since the loss of its Northern Irish safe havens in 1972, its ability to mount large numbers of attacks had been curtailed, and it had lost any hope of driving out the British soldiers through violence alone. But now with a cellular system, it hoped that it could survive for long enough to build up a broad-based popular movement in support of its goal.<sup>3</sup> The end result would never come to fully meet PIRA’s ambitions – but thanks to the reorganization, the group would go on to survive for another 20 years, until it voluntarily disbanded as a condition for implementing the new Northern Irish power-sharing system laid out in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Kelley. *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA* (Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland: Brandon Book Publishers, Ltd., 1982) 284.

<sup>2</sup> M.L.R. Smith. *Fighting For Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1995) 145.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, 110, 145-147.

<sup>4</sup> Brendan O’Brien. *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999) 385.

In organizing a terrorist group, terrorists face a critical dilemma: to advance one's political agenda and maintain group cohesion, one must carry out attacks, and to carry out attacks there must be communication and coordination between members of the group. However, this same communication and coordination increases the risk that the group's activities will be uncovered and disrupted by government authorities.<sup>5</sup> How then does a group both maximize their effectiveness and minimize their risk? And as the balance between these two requirements varies, how might it affect the organizational structures that terrorist movements take?

This dissertation tests whether conditions in the political environments surrounding terrorist groups interact with their organizational structures to affect their ability to carry out attacks, mobilize supporters, or simply survive.<sup>6</sup> In short, its central question is: are different organizational forms "better fits" for the political environments that terrorists are acting under?

Drawing from the literature of a school of organizational theory known as "contingency theory," this study posits that hierarchical groups, with clearer lines of command and divisions of labor, will be more efficient and effective at carrying out attacks, but will also be more vulnerable to infiltration and disruption by government authorities. Meanwhile, cellular groups, with small circles of operatives holding flexible roles and which are arranged around central leaders who may or may not be linked to other cells, will be less efficient and effective, but more difficult to infiltrate or disrupt. Thus, hierarchical groups that are protected from government interference by factors in the political environment will be able to more effectively pursue their

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<sup>5</sup> Carlo Morselli, Cynthia Giguère, and Katia Petit, "The Efficiency/Security Trade-Off in Criminal Networks," *Social Networks* 29 (2007): 144.

<sup>6</sup> Terrorism is herein defined as per Title 22 of the United States Code: "...premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." Source: "Annual Country Reports on Terrorism," Title 22, U.S. Code, Section 2656f(d), 1983.

goals than cellular groups; but in conditions where groups are not protected from government interference, cellular groups will be better able to survive due to their lower penetrability. Such environmental factors include the availability of a foreign or domestic safe haven – that is, terrorist bases inaccessible to the government due to geographic barriers or political autonomy. These predicted outcomes are summarized and illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Predicted Effectiveness of Terrorist Groups based on Organizational Structure relative to Presence of a Safe Haven**

	Safe Haven	No Safe Haven
Hierarchical	Good Fit	Bad Fit
Cellular	Bad Fit	Good Fit

## Methodology and Results

To test this theory, four historical case studies have been analyzed using three different qualitative methodologies. The four cases selected were the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) of Northern Ireland, the Red Army Faction (RAF) of West Germany, the Red Brigades of Italy, and the Weathermen/Weather Underground of the United States. In order to control for possible intervening variables, and due to the constraints on information about the internal organizational behavior of terrorist groups, these four cases are all Western, Marxist groups from the late Cold War period. They do, however, differ according to their respective combinations of organizational structure and possession of a safe haven, with PIRA having a hierarchical organization and a safe haven, the RAF having a cellular-network structure and a safe haven, the

Red Brigades having a cellular-network structure and no safe haven, and the Weather Underground having a hierarchical structure and no safe haven (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Selected Terrorist Groups by Organizational Structures and Safe Haven Status**

Terrorist Group	Organizational	
	Structure	Safe Haven
Provisional Irish Republican Army	Hierarchical	Republic of Ireland, Catholic Enclaves in Northern Ireland
Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction	Cellular/Network	East Germany
Weathermen/Weather Underground	Hierarchical	None
Red Brigades	Cellular/Network	None

The three methodologies employed in this dissertation are process-tracing, the congruence procedure type-2, and controlled comparison.<sup>7</sup> First, process tracing has been used to establish that causal linkages do indeed exist between the interaction of organization-type and presence of a safe haven (as the independent variable), and group effectiveness (as the dependent variable), as well as to uncover possible intervening variables and take into account other real-world complexities (such as changes in the group’s organizational structure and/or political environment). Second, each individual case has been tested according to the congruence

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Van Evera. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997) 56-58, 61-63.

procedure type 2 in terms of whether variance in its organizational structure (independent variable) or presence of a safe haven (condition variable) results in variance on the measures of effectiveness (dependent variable).<sup>8</sup> And third, with the cases grouped into two dyads that match according to the presence of a safe haven (the condition variable) and differ according to the type of organizational structure (the independent variable), controlled comparisons have been made for whether the cases exhibit the predicted differences in terms of effectiveness in carrying out attacks, mobilizing supporters, and survival (dependent variable).<sup>9</sup> These two dyads, respectively, are PIRA and the RAF, and the Red Brigades and the Weather Underground.

The results from these analyses show that terrorists groups' organizational structures do indeed interact with their environments to influence their effectiveness. Of dyad with access to safe havens (PIRA and the RAF), both groups demonstrated the same longevity – but PIRA, with its hierarchical structure, showed a much greater ability to mobilize supporters and carry out attacks. Meanwhile, of dyad without safe havens (the Red Brigades and the Weather Underground), the Red Brigades, with its cellular-network structure, demonstrated greater longevity, and a superior ability to mobilize supporters and carry out attacks. Also, in the individual case studies, PIRA and the Weather Underground both responded to a higher risk of government intervention by shifting their organizational structures to more cellular forms – while the Red Brigades was brought down by the fact that it had responded to higher risk by shifting to a more hierarchical form, and the RAF became isolated due to its combined possession of a safe haven and inability to mobilize supporters.

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<sup>8</sup> Van Evera. 61-63.

<sup>9</sup> A “method of difference” comparison, see Van Evera, 56-58.

# The Study of Terrorist Organizations: Bringing Environment Back In

Although a series of April 2013 Pew Research surveys showed that concern about terrorist attacks among the American public has hit its lowest point since the events of September 11, 2001, the most recent available data maintain that the annual number of incidents has continued to rise since 2004 (see Figure 3 below).<sup>10</sup> And this trend has emerged in spite of a general decrease in the frequencies of incidents of both interstate war and civil war over the same period.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to the response from the general public, the academic community has produced a boom in terrorism research over the past decade – albeit with recurrent criticisms that the field of terrorism research remains underdeveloped in a wide variety of ways.<sup>12</sup> In the literature on the organization of terrorist groups, the vast majority of research has focused simply on how a given group is organized – with far less attention paid to why they are organized the way they are, to comparisons in organizational forms between groups and over time, or to how their organizational form might influence their behavior. Much too often, when the question has been asked as to why a group has a particular organizational structure, it has been brushed away

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<sup>10</sup> Pew Research Center, *Most Expect 'Occasional Acts of Terrorism' in the Future*, April 23, 2013. Online: <http://www.people-press.org/2013/04/23/most-expect-occasional-acts-of-terrorism-in-the-future/>

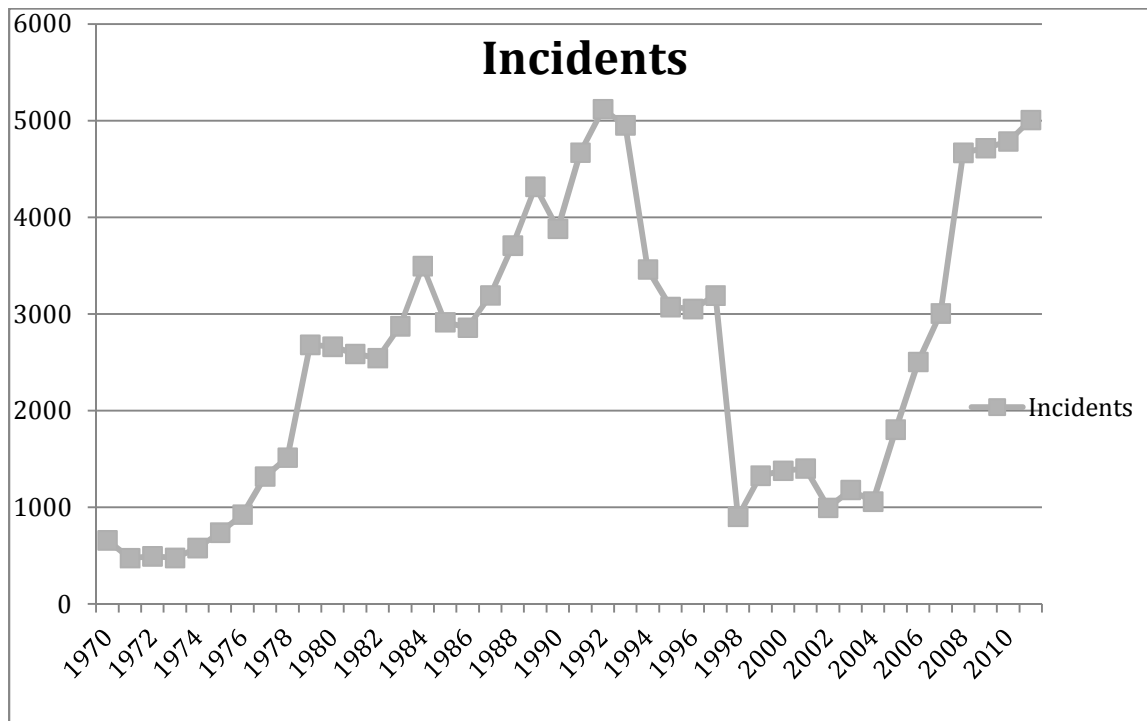
<sup>11</sup> For data on the decline of interstate war and civil war, see “Figure 3: Global Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946-2011” from the Center for Systemic Peace’s Global Conflict Trends: <http://systemicpeace.org/conflict.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph K. Young and Michael G. Findley, “Promise and Pitfalls of Terrorism Research,” *International Studies Review*, 13 (2011): 411-414.



with a superficial answer unsupported by further investigation (such as by saying that the group's structure was simply a re-creation of the structures of the groups that preceded it).<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 3: Frequency of Terrorism Incidents, 1970-2011**



Source: University of Maryland Global Terrorism Database: <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

Even the works on terrorist organization that have drawn most extensively on empirical evidence – such as Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) and *Leaderless Jihad* (2008), and Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger's studies on Jewish and Palestinian terrorist networks in Israel – have tightly limited themselves to dealing only with recent organizational forms undertaken by select subsets of terrorist groups.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Manus I. Midlarsky, Martha Crenshaw, and Fumihiko Yoshida, "Why Violence Spreads: The Contagion of International Terrorism," *International Studies Quarterly* 24.2 (Jun. 1980): 263.

<sup>14</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-*

While restricted to a particular time period (the latter half of the Cold War) and a particular region (Western Europe and the United States), this dissertation nevertheless makes a unique contribution to the literature on terrorist organizations by treating organizational form as a variable rather than fixed phenomenon. As seen in this study, organizational form is a strategic decision taken on the part of a group's leadership (with at least tacit support of its members), and which is subject to alteration as estimates regarding its security and utility change. Like many other such decisions, it affects the group's ability to achieve its short- to medium-term goals (long-term goals such as, say, overthrowing capitalism worldwide, are very unlikely to be achieved no matter what organizational form a group takes).

Furthermore, this dissertation represents a rare effort to apply the ideas of contingency theory to international political actors. Contingency theory claims that, given a community of groups in competition, environment will determine organizational structure through natural selection – and while it has been employed in the fields of business and public policy, it has been little-used for examining political violence, or even non-violent contention.<sup>15</sup> While actors in conflicts may not find themselves in precisely the same sort of market-based competition as firms do, they are in a situation where a failure to adapt can lead to their demise in much more literal terms.

As will be seen in the case studies and the cross-case analyses that follow, the demands of contingency theory indeed hold true for terrorist groups – with some groups adapting to their

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*First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, "The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective," *Social Forces* 84.4 (Jun. 2006) 1987-2008; Arie Perliger and Ami Pedahzur, "Social Network Analysis in the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence," *PS* (January 2011) 45-50.

<sup>15</sup> Danny Miller, "The Genesis of Configuration," *Academy of Management Review* 12.4 (1987, October): 688-689

environments to survive and pursue their goals, while others fail to adapt and suffer the consequences.

## **Chapter Structure**

This dissertation is divided into two parts with a combined total of eight chapters. The first part is concerned with the theoretical underpinnings of this study and its methodology. Thus, besides providing an introduction, Chapter One examines the research to date on the organizational structures of terrorist groups, provides an overview of the academic literature on contingency theory, and more thoroughly explains the theory that organizational structure and environmental risk interact to determine group effectiveness. Chapter Two, meanwhile, defines and operationalizes this study's variables, more clearly details its hypotheses, provides greater depth on its case selection, and explains the methodologies that have been employed.

The second part of this dissertation presents its results and conclusions. Chapters Three through Six provide analytical case studies for each of the four terrorist groups under examination, with information on their historical backgrounds, their organizational structures, their political environments, the interaction of these factors over time, and possible intervening variables (Chapter Three examines PIRA, Chapter Four examines the Red Army Faction, Chapter Five examines the Red Brigades, and Chapter Six examines the Weather Underground). These four, individual cases perform their analyses through process tracing and the congruence procedure type-2. Chapter Seven provides controlled comparisons of the cases, organized into two dyads according to the security of their political environments (that is, whether they possess safe havens or not) and examined on the measures of their effectiveness. Finally, Chapter Eight summarizes the conclusions of this dissertation, explains their significance for the study of

terrorism, explores their policy implications, and provides suggested avenues for further research.

## **Literature & Theory**

While earlier decades saw scattered profiles on the organizational structures of terrorist groups, it has only been in the past decade that the subject has come under comparative study – and only in the last half-decade that scholars have begun a serious examination of why groups assume the structures that they do. This section will provide an overview of the path of research on terrorist organizational structures, charting the field’s transition from attempts to describe a universal organizational structure for terrorist groups, to the recognition that structural heterogeneity exists across groups; and from the explanation of these structural forms through supposition and anecdotal evidence, to their investigation through empirical testing. The section will also address the newly emerging research on terrorist group organizational change. This will then be followed by a description of the contingency theory school of organizational theory and an explanation of how it can provide an alternative (and empirically-testable) explanation for both why terrorist groups assume the organizational structures that they do, and why this structure might change over time.

# Describing the Organization of Terrorist Groups: The Hierarchical vs. Cellular-Network Debate

In regards to how terrorist groups are organized, the initial literature was divided between two camps: those who asserted that terrorist groups are hierarchically-organized, and those who claimed that terrorist groups consist of cells (whether as individual cells, or as loosely-connected networks of cells).

For example, in Jonathan R. White's *Terrorism: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., James Fraser and Ian Fulton describe terrorist groups as being organized in pyramidal hierarchies. This structure "is divided into four levels. The smallest group is at the top and is responsible for command. [It] makes policy and plans while providing general direction."<sup>16</sup> The next largest level "contains the active cadre" which "is responsible for carrying out the mission of the terrorist organization. Depending on the size of the organization, each terrorist in the cadre may have one or more specialties. Other terrorists support each specialty, but the active cadre is the striking arm of the terrorist group."<sup>17</sup> Much larger than the active cadre is the body of active supporters, "people who work in terrorist organizations serve to keep the terrorist in the field" by working to "maintain communication channels, provide safe houses, gather intelligence, and ensure that all other logistical needs are met."<sup>18</sup> Finally, below the active supporters is the body of passive supporters. Not members of the terrorist group themselves, the passive supporters

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<sup>16</sup> Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1998) 37.

<sup>17</sup> White, 37.

<sup>18</sup> White, 38.

"simply represent a favorable element in the political climate" and may aid the terrorist group without knowing it.<sup>19</sup>

This conception of terrorist group organization was criticized by Wayman Mullins, however, in *A Sourcebook of Domestic and International Terrorism* as both "simplistic" and "inaccurate in its description of not only the terrorist organization but bureaucracies in general."<sup>20</sup> Mullins writes that not only did Fraser and Fulton err by counting supporters as part of the organizational structure (rather than outside of it), but that terrorist organizations are "circular structures" with a "leader ... at the center of this arrangement and the members surrounding him" – or, in other words, they are cellular.<sup>21</sup> In such a cellular system, there is no division between operational and support occupations – members spending most of their time in support roles must, nevertheless, expect to be called upon for operations – and all members are under the direct supervision of the leader, lest the group be penetrated by informants.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Mullins writes, leaders are personally involved in operations, work constantly to reinforce the members' devotion to group beliefs, maintain control over recruitment and members' behavior, and keep the group in close proximity.<sup>23</sup> All of this serves to "support rapid communications, speedy decision making, constant organizational change, and [the] ability to adapt to changing circumstances."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> White, 38.

<sup>20</sup> Wayman Mullins, *A Sourcebook of Domestic and International Terrorism* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Ltd., 1997) 134.

<sup>21</sup> Mullins, 134.

<sup>22</sup> Mullins, 137-138.

<sup>23</sup> Mullins, 135-138.

<sup>24</sup> Mullins, 134.

The cellular view was supported and elaborated by Martha Crenshaw, who describes terrorist groups as closed cabals held together through close, mutually-reinforcing personal contact:

Terrorists can only trust each other. The nature of their commitment cuts them off from society; they inhabit a closed community that is forsaken only at great cost. Isolation and the perception of a hostile environment intensify shared beliefs and make faith in the cause imperative. A pattern of mutual reassurance, solidarity, and comradeship develops, in which the members of the group reinforce each other's self-righteousness, image of a hostile world, and sense of mission. Because of the real danger terrorists confront, the strain they live under, and the moral conflicts they undergo, they value solidarity. Terrorists are not necessarily people who seek 'belonging' or personal integration through ideological commitment; but once embarked on the path of terrorism, they desperately need the group. Isolation and the need for internal consensus explain how the beliefs and values of a terrorist group can be so drastically at odds with those of society at large.<sup>25</sup>

Crenshaw further argues that this "need for the group" may push the organization to commit violent acts, regardless of their perceived utility toward its stated ends: "In fact, the organization's leaders may be reluctant to see purpose accomplished and the organization's utility ended. They are likely to seek incremental gains sufficient to sustain group morale but not to end members' dependence on the organization."<sup>26</sup>

But, while this cellular organization/cult approach may be well suited for explaining individual cells or small organizations, it begins to fall apart as Mullins attempts to explain the structure of larger groups. Regarding the changes that terrorist groups undergo as they grow, Mullins writes that not only will they develop specialized branches in order to gain efficiency from divisions of labor, but that their leaders will become removed from day-to-day operations,

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<sup>25</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "Causes of Terrorism," *The New Global Terrorism*, ed. Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003) 101.

<sup>26</sup> Martha Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches," *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, ed. David C. Rapoport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 22.

delegating such decisions to lower-level leaders.<sup>27</sup> In other words, after criticizing Fraser and Fulton for describing terrorist groups as bureaucratic hierarchies, Mullins essentially states that as terrorist groups grow in size and complexity, they turn into bureaucratic hierarchies.

Anthony Burton (in James White's *Terrorism: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) provides a bit more of a compromise between the cellular and hierarchical views by describing large terrorist organizations as being composed of compartmentalized cells (both handling operations and support services) which, themselves, are arranged in "semiautonomous conglomerations of cells with a variety of specialties and a single command structure" called columns that provide support to the operational cells.<sup>28</sup> But despite their use of cells, the division of labor and layers of authority still firmly classify these types of groups as hierarchical organizations (they are, after all, vertically- rather than horizontally-integrated).

However, the idea that large terrorist groups would necessarily be hierarchical finally came under a critical challenge in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the concept of "netwar" was developed and promoted by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt of the RAND Corporation. Defined as "an emerging mode of conflict (and crime) at societal levels, short of traditional military warfare, in which the protagonists use network forms of organization and related doctrine, strategies, and technologies attuned to the information age," one of the various phenomena categorized under netwar's broad umbrella is the use of information technology to organize dispersed networks of loosely-connected terrorist cells.<sup>29</sup> According to Arquilla and Ronfeldt, such networks can vary in terms of how they are configured, potentially forming a "chain" pattern (in which operatives only know those immediately above and below them), a

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<sup>27</sup> Mullins, 143, 153-154.

<sup>28</sup> White, 38.

<sup>29</sup> John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Netwar (Revisited)," *Networks and Netwars*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001) 6.



“star” pattern (in which operatives all report directly to a single, central leader), or an “all-channel network” (in which all operatives are connected to one another).<sup>30</sup> In support of these claims that terrorist groups’ organizational structures were being shaped by the rise of netwar, Michele Zanini and Sean J.A. Edwards write that in the 1980s and 1990s, the Middle East saw the rise of a new generation of terrorist groups (such as Hamas and Hezbollah) that were less hierarchical than their predecessors (such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization) and, in some cases, fit its model of network-based groups whose organizational structure is flexible, characterized by informal ties to other organizations, and held together by shared norms.<sup>31</sup>

The idea that terrorist organizations are best characterized as cellular networks gained yet more influence following Al Qaeda’s terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. While still hierarchical in that it possessed vertical layers of authority and a division of labor among its units, the organizational structure of Al Qaeda preceding its ejection from Afghanistan was highly diffuse, with local cells tied together into a far-flung international network. In *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, 3rd Ed, Cindy Combs characterizes Al Qaeda's organization in the following way:

[T]errorism in the al-Qaeda network resembles a warped mirror image of an international corporation, in its financial structure with corporate chieftains who manage lean, trimmed-down firms and bring in consultants and freelancers to perform specific jobs... In this image, too, [al Qaeda leader Osama] bin Laden is much like a terror 'mogul,' a man with the power to approve projects suggested to him, who has final veto over the content or timing, but often little to do with the project's actual creation. His most important contribution is the money.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 7-10.

<sup>31</sup> Michele Zanini and Sean J.A. Edwards, “The Networking of Terror in the Information Age,” *Networks and Netwars*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001) 31-35.

<sup>32</sup> Cindy Combs, *Terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2002) 100.

Combs then goes on to describe the features of such networking: "It appears in the form of shared members, training camps, weaponry, and tactics. It is obvious in the propaganda being disseminated by the groups. Perhaps the most obvious linkage, funding, became evident after the September 11 attacks."<sup>33</sup>

Following Al Qaeda's loss of its Afghan safe haven, the organization became even looser, characterized in Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks* as a "small-world network" of globally dispersed cells and allied groups, with little input from the Al Qaeda central leadership who were, then, laying low in Pakistan.<sup>34</sup> For Sageman, these terrorist cells (or "cliques") make up a "global Salafi jihad" that serves as "nodes connected through links [interaction such as "financial support, logistical support, or common planning for operations"]], connecting them to other more isolated nodes."<sup>35</sup> Key individuals (high-ranking operatives) in this network serve as "hubs" that, by being connected to many nodes, provide the means for providing a greater degree of inter-node coordination.<sup>36</sup> This makes the organization difficult to kill as "Unlike a hierarchical network that can be eliminated through decapitation of its leadership, a small-world network resists fragmentation because of its dense inter-connectivity. A significant fraction of nodes can be randomly removed without much impact on its integrity."<sup>37</sup> But it can be successfully crippled by attacking its hubs: "If enough hubs are destroyed, the network breaks down into isolated, non-communicating islands of nodes" and, thus "incapable of mounting sophisticated large scale operations..."<sup>38</sup> Many of Sageman's

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<sup>33</sup> Combs, 97.

<sup>34</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 139-140.

<sup>35</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 137, 139-140, 151.

<sup>36</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 137.

<sup>37</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 140.

<sup>38</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 140-141.

assertions have been supported by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger's work on suicide attacks among Palestinian terrorist groups. In looking at groups in Nablus, Northern Samaria, Jenin and Hebron, Pedahzur and Perliger found that not only were they organized according to a hybrid of Arquilla and Ronfeldt's chain and star structures; but that the suicide bombings were carried out by relatively peripheral nodes (rather than hubs, as the loss of hubs would cripple an organization); and that the more hubs a group had, the more attacks it would carry out.<sup>39</sup> Further support for the characterization of terrorist groups as cellular networks has been provided through the work of EUROPOL analyst Efstathios Mainas. Applying social network analysis software to data on an unnamed Islamist terrorist group collected by EUROPOL's Counter-Terrorism Unit and Analysis Unit, Mainas found that the group matched the characteristics of a small world network in that it was revealed to have "very low density, long geodesic distances and high clustering" between its nodes – that is, its cells had little contact with each other and high redundancy, with only certain individuals ("bridges") providing a means for communication between them.<sup>40</sup>

But while cellular networks have made up the bulk of the research in the more recent literature on terrorist organizations, there remain results supporting hierarchy's role as well. For example, Scott Helfstein notes that documents captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan "display a high level of organization and bureaucratization... [with] detailed registries of foreign fighters..., resources..., and operating requirements."<sup>41</sup> This has been supported by Jacob Shapiro and

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<sup>39</sup> Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, "The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective," *Social Forces* 84.4 (Jun. 2006): 1995-1996, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Efstathios D. Mainas, "The Analysis of Criminal and Terrorist Organisations as Social Network Structures: A Quasi-Experimental Study," *International Journal of Police Science & Management* 14:3 (2012): 276-277

<sup>41</sup> Scott Helfstein, "Governance of Terror: New Institutionalism and the Evolution of Terrorist Organizations," *Public Administration Review* 69.4 (Jul/Aug 2009): 728-729.

David Siegel's finding that extensive intra-organizational record keeping is a common activity among terrorist leaders despite the risk that these records would pose if they fell into the hands of the authorities.<sup>42</sup> Using a game-theoretic model, Shapiro and Siegel propose that the purpose of this record keeping is to allow the terrorist leaders to calibrate their use of discipline within the organization – in other words, to provide them with a sense of whether an operation failed due to circumstances beyond an operative's control or whether it failed due to an operative's incompetence (and thereby help them decide whether to deal out punishment).<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, Steven J. Brams, Hande Mutlu and Shawn Ling Ramirez have drawn attention to hierarchical patterns in the relationships between Al Qaeda operatives. Taking the network behind the 9/11 attacks and arranging it according to whether pairs of operatives had one-way influence (i.e. delivered orders from superior to inferior) or had two-way influence (i.e. were equals), and by grouping the two-way pairs into "mutual influence sets," Brams, Mutlu and Ramirez found that the network fell into a pyramidal authority structure in which superiors delivered orders to layers of inferiors, who in turn delivered orders to those below them.<sup>44</sup>

Graham Myres has likewise argued in favor of hierarchy's importance by noting that a common trait among long-lived terrorist groups is that they "have devised a division of labor related to financing that is characterized by discreet tasks and differentiated levels of responsibility....

because bureaucratic specialization facilitates effective responses to complex and multifaceted

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<sup>42</sup> Jacob N. Shapiro and David A. Siegel, "Moral Hazard, Discipline, and the Management of Terrorist Organizations," *World Politics*, 64:1 (January 2012): 40-41.

<sup>43</sup> Shapiro and Siegel, 67.

<sup>44</sup> Steven J. Brams, Hande Mutlu, and Shawn Ling Ramirez, "Influence in Terrorist Networks: From Undirected to Directed Graphs," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (2006): 703-718.

organizational activities, ultimately providing the group with flexibility and options.”<sup>45</sup> And in an analysis of the resources, planning, and preparation that went into Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba’s 2008 attacks on Mumbai, Arabinda Acharya and Sonal Marwah have demonstrated that such a sophisticated operation demanded that LeT have a formal, bureaucratic structure (and the at least passive support of Pakistan’s authorities).<sup>46</sup>

So, which represents the more accurate description of how terrorist groups are organized: a rigid, vertical hierarchy or a loose, horizontal network? The answer, as a growing body of literature indicates, is “it varies according to the group.” In a recent article, Joshua Kilberg has argued that the organizational structures of terrorist groups fall into four types: market, all-channel, hub-spoke, and bureaucracy.<sup>47</sup> In this categorization, market groups are characterized by having “no discernable leadership, are not centrally controlled and have no functional differentiation.”<sup>48</sup> All-channel groups, meanwhile, feature “rapid, dense, multidirectional communications” (as described by Arquilla and Ronfeldt) and, to quote Kilberg, “have a leader, but there is little hierarchy, no central control or functional differentiation...”<sup>49</sup> Hub-spoke groups, as in Arquilla and Ronfeldt’s words, feature a ring of units “tied to a central (but not hierarchical) node or actor, and must go through that node to communicate and coordinate with each other.”<sup>50</sup> Additionally, Kilberg notes that they “have a leader and employ functional

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<sup>45</sup> Graham Myres, “Investing in the Market of Violence: Toward a Micro-Theory of Terrorist Financing,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35:10 (2012): 695.

<sup>46</sup> Arabinda Acharya and Sonal Marwah, “*Nizam, la Tanzim* (System, not Organization): Do Organizations Matter in Terrorism Today? A Study of the November 2008 Mumbai Attacks,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 34 (2011): 4

<sup>47</sup> Joshua Kilberg, “A Basic Model Explaining Terrorist Group Organizational Structure,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35 (2012): 812-814.

<sup>48</sup> Kilberg, 814; Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Kilberg, 814; John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1996), 287.

<sup>50</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 287.

differentiation but do not have central command and control.”<sup>51</sup> As for bureaucracies, they have “clear departmental boundaries, clean lines of authority, detailed reporting mechanisms, and formal decision making procedures” (as defined via Walter Powell) and “The relationship between the agenda-setting leadership and its subordinate units is clearly defined and unidirectional.”<sup>52</sup>

But while Kilberg’s four-type categorization of terrorist groups is a major improvement over the past attempts to declare that all terrorist groups hold one type of structure (or that all modern groups hold one type of structure while all past groups held a different type of structure), it is not without its problems. For one thing, as will be addressed in the section below (“A Short Note on Terrorist Non-Organizations”), market groups are better understood as being movements rather than organizations. For another, the organizational structures of terrorist groups feature a mixture of bureaucratic and cellular-network features, and the degree of this mix can change over time. For example, Vera Eccarius-Kelly has highlighted this both in how the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Columbia (FARC) and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) are organized, and in how their structures have evolved.<sup>53</sup> According to Eccarius-Kelly, FARC is best described as a “wheel”: a very rigid, hierarchical command and control system at the center with operational “spokes” on its edges – and the group has granted these spokes greater autonomy in response to changes in its political environment.<sup>54</sup> As for the PKK, it is an “octopus” with a centralized command structure that, nevertheless, allows a degree of autonomy

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<sup>51</sup> Kilberg, 813.

<sup>52</sup> Kilberg, 813; Walter W. Powell, “Neither Market Nore Hierarchy: Network Forms of Organization,” *Research in Organizational Behavior* 12 (1990), 303.

<sup>53</sup> Vera Eccarius-Kelly, “Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24:2 (2012): 237-239.

<sup>54</sup> Eccarius-Kelly, 237.

and redundancy among its operational “tentacles.”<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the combination of hierarchical and cellular features (and their change over time) will be seen in this dissertation’s case histories of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, the Red Brigades, the Red Army Faction, and the Weather Underground.

Thus, rather than attempt to place terrorist groups into select categories, it is better to view them as falling along a continuum in which bureaucratic hierarchies and cells/cellular networks represent ideal types – that is, rather than being hierarchical or cellular, groups are better understood as being “more hierarchical” or “more cellular.” And this study will also seek to show that, where the groups fall in this spectrum between hierarchy and cellular/networked forms (whether they happen to be “more hierarchical” or “more cellular”), is influenced by their political environment.

## **A Short Note on Terrorist Non-Organizations**

Before proceeding to the literature on why terrorist groups adopt their organizational structures, an important clarification needs to be made about terrorist groups and about the scope of this study. That clarification is this: the term “terrorist group” is often applied to describe communities of people who are not arranged into organizations.

For example, as detailed in the FBI report *Terrorism 2000/2001*, the Earth Liberation Front describes their form as “an international underground organization consisting of autonomous groups of people who carry out direct action according to ELF guidelines.”<sup>56</sup> More

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<sup>55</sup> Eccarius-Kelly, 238-239.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Terrorism 2000/2001* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2002) 37.

specifically, "the ELF 'operates in groups called cells that may consist of one to many individuals working together. Each cell is autonomous not only to the public, but also to one another. This secure structure helps to keep activists out of jail and free to continue conducting actions."<sup>57</sup> In sum, ELF merely consists of a staff at the center that publishes the groups' guidelines, ideology, and techniques and an unknown number of strangers who act upon it as they see fit.

A very similar type of collectivity is reflected in the rise of what Marc Sageman has termed the "leaderless jihad."<sup>58</sup> Sageman's leaderless jihad is made up of individuals and small groups who engage in terrorism to support the goals espoused by Al Qaeda, but who are not members of Al Qaeda and receive no orders, no training, no financing, and no support from the organization.<sup>59</sup>

Neither ELF's autonomous operatives nor the leaderless jihad can be defined as making up organizations or as being parts of organizations. According to Richard H. Hall, an organization is "a collectivity with a relatively identifiable boundary [between members and non-members], a normative order; ranks of authority, communications systems, and membership coordinating systems..."<sup>60</sup> As far as these criteria go the ELF's autonomous operatives and the members of the leaderless jihad lack an identifiable boundary and cannot be coordinated or controlled by (respectively) the ELF's founders or Al Qaeda in pursuit of their strategies.

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<sup>57</sup> U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 38.

<sup>58</sup> Marc Sageman, "The Next Generation of Terror," *Foreign Policy* (March/April, 2008) 36-42.

<sup>59</sup> Sageman, "The Next Generation of Terror," 38-39

<sup>60</sup> Richard H. Hall, *Organizations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996) 30.



Instead, Sageman himself argues that the leaderless jihad is a social movement rather than part of the Al Qaeda organization.<sup>61</sup> As per Sidney Tarrow's definition, the ELF's autonomous operatives and the leaderless jihad both qualify as social movements because they each collectively challenge the actions of others, express common purposes, draw upon a sense of solidarity across a group of individuals, have maintained sustained interaction against their political opponents over time, and yet are not "under the control of a single leader or organization."<sup>62</sup> As these collectivities are not organizations, and hence do not have organizational structures, they are outside the purview of this study. Hence, all references to "terrorist groups" in this work can be considered to be synonymous with "terrorist organizations."

This is by no means an attempt to disregard the significance of such terrorist social movements – for example, in a quantitative analysis using Edward Mickolus' International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) dataset, Kent Layne Oots found that while coalitions between terrorist groups were rare, more difficult operations were being undertaken by larger groups and coalitions of groups, while more violent operations are being perpetrated by coalitions and intermediate-sized groups.<sup>63</sup>

Rather, these coalitions of organizations and loosely-affiliated individuals will likely be subject to different factors than those that influence single organizations, and will likely have different responses, and are best left to another, future study (although I hope that, by adding to

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<sup>61</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) 31-32.

<sup>62</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power In Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 4-7.

<sup>63</sup> Kent Layne Oots, *A Political Organization Approach to Transnational Terrorism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1986) 89-90, 105-106.

the understanding of terrorist organizations that might make up parts of these broader-based collectivities, it could aid future efforts at better understanding the collectivities themselves).

## **Explanations for the Designs of Terrorist Group**

### **Organizational Structures**

Up until recently, the literature regarding why terrorist groups have the organizational structures that they do has been even thinner than the literature on how they are organized – and it has been based mainly on supposition, assumption and anecdote rather than on rigorous empirical testing. Fortunately for the study of terrorism, this has begun to change. Below is a summary and evaluation of the three predominant explanations for why terrorist groups have their respective organizational structures.

#### *Historical and Cultural Context*

In an early (1980) quantitative study on the occurrence of terrorism, Manus I. Midlarsky, Martha Crenshaw and Fumihiko Yoshida found that it was subject to a “contagion effect” in which terrorist incidents in one country would be shortly followed by similar incidents in other countries.<sup>64</sup> While Midlarsky et al. focused more so on tactics than on the groups’ organizational structures (very likely due to data constraints), the underpinning of their argument held that “wannabe” terrorists studied the practices of foreign campaigns for ideas about their own – and

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<sup>64</sup> Manus I. Midlarsky, Martha Crenshaw, and Fumihiko Yoshida, “Why Violence Spreads: The Contagion of International Terrorism,” *International Studies Quarterly* 24.2 (Jun. 1980): 263.

that, while the contagion could be regional in nature (the investigators having examined its spread in Latin America), it could also be spread via ideological affinity.<sup>65</sup> In particular, they claim that Marxist groups in Western Europe were the heirs of a body of advice that began accumulating with the Bolshevik Revolution; continued building through the Chinese, Algerian, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions; was informed by the Tupamaros of Uruguay; and was finally delivered via a combination of writings by “Revolutionary intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon, Abraham Guillen, and Carlos Marighela...” and training at Palestinian-run camps in the Middle East.<sup>66</sup> This drive to learn from past example is echoed by Bruce Hoffman who, in researching the behavior of individual terrorists, concluded that “An almost Darwinian principle of natural selection thus seems to affect terrorist organizations, whereby... every new terrorist generation learns from its predecessors, becoming smarter, tougher and more difficult to capture or eliminate.”<sup>67</sup>

In contrast to this “best practices” view and its assumption of a very deliberate, entrepreneurial approach to the design of terrorist organizations, the cellular/network perspective has argued instead that the structures of these groups follow the lines of the informal social connections between their members. In *Leaderless Jihad*, Sageman wrote that because terrorists need to be able to trust one another, terrorist organizations “are often the extension of natural groups of friends and family.”<sup>68</sup> Among the groups studied by Pedahzur and Perliger, they found that hubs recruited suicide bombers from among their neighbors, friends and family members.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Midlarsky et al, 268-270, 292-295.

<sup>66</sup> Midlarsky et al, 277-282.

<sup>67</sup> Bruce Hoffman. *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 178-179.

<sup>68</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 24

<sup>69</sup> Pedahzur and Perliger, 1995.

But neither of these explanations can account for the diversity in organizational structures seen across terrorist groups. In a dataset that (among other things) collected information on the organizational structures of 228 terrorist groups, the University of Texas, Austin’s Terrorism, Insurgencies, and Guerrillas in Education and Research program showed that despite sharing goals (such as national independence or Marxist revolution) and time periods, groups still vary between hierarchical or network-based (see Figure 4 below).

**Figure 4: Numbers of Hierarchical Terrorist Groups and Cellular/Network Terrorist Groups According to Decade and Ideology**

Decade and Ideology	Hierarchical Groups	Network Groups
1860's Right-Wing	0	1
1910's Nationalist	1	0
1920's Nationalist	1	0
1920's Right-Wing	0	1
1930's Left-Wing	1	1
1940's Religious	0	1
1940's Right-Wing	1	0
1950's Left-Wing	3	0
1950's Nationalist	2	2
1960's Left-Wing	32	8
1960's Nationalist	9	1
1960's Right-Wing	3	2

1970's Anarchic	1	0
1970's Anti-American	0	1
1970's Anti-Cuban	1	0
1970's Left-Wing	28	9
1970's Nationalist	11	5
1970's Religious	1	3
1970's Right-Wing	12	4
1980's Anarchic	1	2
1980's Anti-American	0	1
1980's Left-Wing	15	4
1980's Nationalist	3	2
1980's Religious	6	5
1980's Right-Wing	6	3
1990's Anarchic	0	1
1990's Left-Wing	3	1
1990's Nationalist	2	0
1990's Religious	2	3
1990's Right-Wing	1	2
2000's Anarchic	1	1
2000's Left-Wing	0	1
2000's Nationalist	1	1
2000's Religious	0	3

Source: TIGER Dataset

Meanwhile, among the groups studied by Pedahzur and Perliger, the structure of the Nablus network (a network supported by Hamas rather than being fully independent) differed from the structures of the other four local networks in that it more closely fit Arquilla and Ronfeldt's star model rather than that of an all-channel network.<sup>70</sup> While each of these explanations point to likely influences in determining how terrorist groups are structured, they clearly fall short from capturing the full picture.

## *Technology*

The key argument of the netwar approach to terrorism is that terrorist groups have moved toward adopting network structures as a reaction to the changes in information technology that have occurred since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Zanini and Edwards argue that advances in areas such as personal computers, the Internet, satellite communications, cellular networks, and encryption software have greatly enhanced terrorists' ability to coordinate dispersed cellular networks while reducing the ability of authorities to monitor or disrupt their communications.<sup>71</sup> In *Understanding Terror Networks*, Sageman writes that Al Qaeda's rapid adoption of satellite phones, laptops, email, fax machines, and websites in the 1990s was what allowed it to move from operating on a regional basis to operating globally – particularly as it could now control cells worldwide while sheltering its central leadership in Afghanistan.<sup>72</sup>

However, Sageman also writes about how these technologies later made Al Qaeda vulnerable in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, as the United States and allied

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<sup>70</sup> Pedahzur and Perliger, 1995.

<sup>71</sup> Zanini and Edwards, 35-36.

<sup>72</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 159.

governments traced and intercepted the group's cellular and satellite communications, and gathered intelligence from captured computers.<sup>73</sup> He also writes that, due to the threat of infiltration, Al Qaeda still has to rely on personal social connections and face-to-face meetings for recruitment.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, Arquilla and Ronfeldt note the use of older technologies, such as couriers, drum codes, and ham radios for maintaining communication between insurgent cells in Somalia and Chechnya.<sup>75</sup>

The fact is that while technology has undoubtedly made it faster, cheaper, and easier to communicate between cells, it is not the reason for establishing a cellular network in the first place. Again, as can be seen in figure 1 above, a significant number of network-based groups predate the "information revolution" of the 1990s and 2000s – indeed, with 22 groups, the 1970s saw double the number of networked groups than the 1990s and 2000s put together.

## *Security*

The need for security, on the other hand, makes for a very strong reason why a terrorist group would want to adopt a cellular/network structure (although, as will be seen below, it is counterbalanced by a loss of coordination and control).

Bonnie Erickson has made the argument that the primary determinant of the structure of secret societies is the amount of risk that their members face from exposure (for example, the severity of the legal penalties were their activities uncovered).<sup>76</sup> However, Carlo Morselli, Synthia Giguère and Katia Petit have argued that as a motivator the avoidance of risk is

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<sup>73</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 159-160.

<sup>74</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 163.

<sup>75</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 11.

<sup>76</sup> Bonnie Erickson, "Secret Societies and Social Structure," *Social Forces* 60.1 (1981) 188-210.

counterbalanced by the need for efficiency, with efficiency defined as the amount of time spent between when a decision is made and when it is carried out.<sup>77</sup> Based on a comparison between the 9/11 terrorist network and the Caviar network (a Montreal-based drug importation operation) Morselli, Giguère, and Petit claim that terrorist groups' organizational structures reflect an emphasis on security at the expense of efficiency, with less communication and coordination between their members.<sup>78</sup> Scott Helfstein has characterized this dilemma as a tension between transaction costs (the expense and risk of relying on actors from outside the group to provide services) on one end and contracting and footprint costs on the other (that is, respectively, the cost of monitoring operatives and enforcing the group's rules, and the cost of risking discovery as a result of increased communication between members of a group).<sup>79</sup>

Using a game theoretic model drawn from both the rational-choice and structuralist approaches to organizational theory, Walter Enders and Xuejuan Su (2007) have further explored this security-efficiency trade-off. For example, Enders and Su posit that the chain structure described by Arquilla and Ronfeldt offers greater security against infiltration, but presents barriers to communication that will lessen the ability of a group to successfully conduct complex operations.<sup>80</sup> Meanwhile, the star structure enhances a group's ability to coordinate complex operations, but is more vulnerable to infiltration.<sup>81</sup> However, with the exception of technology (which can work, depending on the technological development, to aid terrorist groups against infiltration, to aid government infiltration efforts, to raise the input costs of operations, or to

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<sup>77</sup> Morselli, Giguère, and Petit, 144-145

<sup>78</sup> Morselli, Giguère, and Petit, 151-152.

<sup>79</sup> Helfstein, 733.

<sup>80</sup> Walter Enders and Xuejuan Su, "Rational Terrorists and Optimal Network Structure," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57.1 (2007, February): 39-40.

<sup>81</sup> Enders and Su, 38.



lower them), Enders and Su do not look at how a group's political environment might push them toward increasingly chain-like or star-like structures.<sup>82</sup>

This question of how political environment might impact organizational structure through affecting organizational security has only very recently begun to be taken up in the study of terrorism. In her study of FARC and the PKK, Eccarius-Kelly notes that both groups employ organizational structures that attempt to take into account the different political environments that their leadership and operatives are under: For FARC, the leadership at the center of its "wheel" structure is based in its safe haven in the jungles of Colombia's Meta and Caquetá departments, while its "spokes" (regional units) have been afforded greater autonomy in response to growing pressure from the Colombian government; for the PKK, its leadership in the head of its "octopus" structure is based in the southeastern provinces of Turkey, while its "tentacles" (regional branches of operatives) extend into the countries bordering Turkey and beyond, moving as they come under pressure from the local authorities.<sup>83</sup>

Likewise, in his four-type categorization of terrorist organizational structures, Kilberg argues that a combination of external and internal factors drive the decision of which structure a group chooses. Based on a multivariate regression analysis of data on 246 terrorist groups from the Global Terrorism Database, Kilberg found that groups were more likely to be bureaucratic in countries with capacities to engage in counterterrorism (measured in terms of per capita GDP), in countries with low levels of political and civil liberties (according to their Freedom House score), and in countries with low political stability (measured in terms of the number of years that the polity has held power).<sup>84</sup> In addition, groups that targeted "hard targets" (the police and

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<sup>82</sup> Enders and Su, 51.

<sup>83</sup> Eccarius-Kelly, 238-239, 245-247.

<sup>84</sup> Kilberg, 820-822.

military), groups with narrow goals, nationalist groups, and groups with state sponsorship were found to be more likely to be bureaucratic.<sup>85</sup>

While Kilberg's findings support the theory being advanced in this dissertation, his study is limited in many ways. For one, Kilberg's scheme for coding the terrorist groups into their respective four categories is less than clear, giving rise to the risk that groups may have been inaccurately coded, and strips them of much of their organizational variance.<sup>86</sup> In addition, it fails to account for organizational change within groups – which, as this dissertation will show, not only occurs but has major implications for the groups and their behavior. As will also be seen in this dissertation, per capita GDP is an exceedingly blunt measure of state counterterrorism capacity – while there is no doubt that wealthy states have more resources with which to combat terrorism than poor states, a state's capacity can be seriously impacted by factors such as its domestic political environment and the availability of safe havens. Finally, besides noting that groups face a trade-off between security and efficiency, Kilberg provides very little theoretical support for why groups choose the structures that they do.<sup>87</sup>

For this last question, though – of how the level of security (or perceived level of security) might influence the way that founders and/or leaders of a terrorist group structure their organization – the branch of organizational theory called “contingency theory” might hold an answer.

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<sup>85</sup> Kilberg, 822-823.

<sup>86</sup> Kilberg writes merely that the coding was based on the groups' “leadership type, command and control, and functional differentiation” with each of these, respectively, being the presence of a leader or leadership body, evidence that the group “coordinates its actions from a central executive,” and the presence of “at least one clearly separate department or cell... dedicated to a specialized function...” As provided, though, the presence of the first two features could hold true for bureaucratic, all-channel, or hub-spoke groups – while the presence of just one specialized cell is a very low threshold by which to judge whether a group has a high degree of functional differentiation or not. Source: Kilberg, 818-819.

<sup>87</sup> Kilberg, 810.

# Contingency Theory, Environmental Factors, Uncertainty and Organizational Structure

In his discussion of the "environmental imperative" to organizational theory, Danny Miller brings together a number of different schools of thought that emphasize the impact of external factors on organizations – but, beyond the source of their factors, they share an overarching commonality: a conviction that environment determines organizational structure by the power of natural selection.<sup>88</sup> This school of thought is better known in business literature as “contingency theory” and its reasoning runs as follows: a firm that is ill-adapted to the context in which it is operating (the reliability of demand for its product, the technical complexity required, its size relative to its competitors, etc.) will be unable to compete effectively with other firms and, thus, will be driven out of business – like a species unsuited for its environment, it will be unable to "survive." Or as Henry Mintzberg expresses it in his “extended configuration hypothesis”: “effective structuring requires a consistency among the design parameters [that make up an organization’s structure] and contingency factors [that make up the context within which the organization is acting].”<sup>89</sup> For terrorist groups, survival takes a far more literal tack – if an organization proves unable to adapt to its environment, governmental authorities will dismantle it (or, on rarer occasions, it will be dismantled by other terrorist groups).

One of the conditions theorized to have an impact on organizational structure is the degree of environmental uncertainty that an organization faces. Environmental uncertainty,

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<sup>88</sup> Danny Miller, “The Genesis of Configuration,” *Academy of Management Review* 12.4 (1987, October): 688-689.

<sup>89</sup> Henry Mintzberg. *The Structuring of Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978) 221.

according to Robert Duncan, is the sum result of the complexity of the environment (defined as the number of decision factors multiplied by the square of the number of organizational components involved) and its "static-dynamic dimension": "the degree to which the factors of the decision unit's internal and external environment remain basically the same over time or are in a continual process of change."<sup>90</sup>

Organizational theorist Tom Burns has argued that uncertainty was the determining factor in where a firm placed on a spectrum between a "mechanistic" or an "organismic" type of structure.<sup>91</sup> Mechanistic organizations fit the standard conception of the formal bureaucracy; featuring a division of labor into specialized departments, clear levels of hierarchical authority, "vertical communication," and "an insistence on loyalty to the concern and obedience to superiors."<sup>92</sup> In contrast, organismic organizations feature "a continual adjustment and redefinition of individual tasks and the contributive rather than restrictive nature of specialist knowledge is emphasized" – i.e., a fluid structure that may vary from project to project, with communication "at any level as required by the process, and a much higher degree of commitment to the aims of the organization as a whole..."<sup>93</sup>

According to Burns, what led firms to being relatively more mechanistic or more organismic was the degree of stability in their given market. Mechanistic firms thrived under conditions of stability because "not only could the actual manufacturing processes be routinized, mechanized and quickened, but the various management functions also could be broken down

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<sup>90</sup> Robert Duncan, "Characteristics of Organizational Environments and Perceived Environmental Uncertainty," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17.3 (1972, September): 315-316.

<sup>91</sup> D.S Pugh, D.J. Hickson and C.R. Hinings, *Writers on Organizations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1971) 44.

<sup>92</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 44.

<sup>93</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 45.

into specialisms and routines.”<sup>94</sup> However, this type of structure suffers under conditions of instability – facing situations that fall out of the routine, they experience difficulty determining who will make the critical decisions. They adopt "pathological systems," including the hire of outside consultants of ambiguous authority, the overwhelming of executives at the top of the hierarchy, the creation of roles or departments that depend upon the perpetuation of organizational problems, and the forging of inter-departmental committees that become crippled by the departments' competing interests.<sup>95</sup> Organismic firms, on the other hand, do not achieve the gains in efficiency brought by routinization and specialization, but do adapt readily to the uncertain conditions due to their freer flow of information and less rigidly delineated responsibility (that is, the fact that the firm's employees are held responsible for its overall success rather than the success of specific departments).<sup>96</sup>

Michael Tushman and David Nadler have argued that uncertainty's impact on organizational structure comes from the information-processing needs of organizations. They write that "a critical task of the organization is to facilitate the collection, gathering, and processing of information about how different components of the organization are functioning, about quality of outputs, and about conditions in external technological and market domains" and, thus "a basic function of the organization's structure is to create the most appropriate configuration of work units (as well as the linkages between these units) to facilitate the effective collection, processing and distribution of information."<sup>97</sup> Organizations with organismic structures are better able to handle the information- processing demands that come with

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<sup>94</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 46.

<sup>95</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 46.

<sup>96</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 50-51.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Tushman and David A. Nadler, "Information Processing as an Integrating Concept in Organizational Design," *The Academy of Management Review* 3.3 (1978, July): 614.

uncertain environments because: (1) their greater flow of inter-unit communication will "increase the opportunity for feedback and error correction and for the synthesis of different points of view"; (2) as they are less hierarchical, there is less risk that things will be hampered by a single decision-maker becoming overwhelmed; and (3) they "tend to be associated with less formality, less attention to rules and regulation, and greater peer involvement in decision making."<sup>98</sup> And, yet, the cost of all this communication is that decision-making processes in organismic organizations "consume more time, effort, energy, and are less amenable to managerial control" – making the process in hierarchical mechanistic organizations more efficient, given lower environmental complexity.<sup>99</sup>

This hierarchy-stability relationship finds empirical support in a 1958 study by Joan Woodward and the Human Relations Research unit at South-East Essex College of Technology. Woodward and her team surveyed 100 South-East Essex manufacturing firms on "specific features such as the number of levels of authority between top and bottom, the span of control or average number of subordinates of supervisors, the clarity or otherwise with which duties are defined, the amount of written communication, and the extent of division of functions among specialists" – and found that a key determinant of organizational structure was the type of technology involved.<sup>100</sup>

Specifically, the more predictable the production process – that is, the more routinized, mechanized, and easily measurable it was (such as technology used for mass production or continuous production of chemicals) – the more formally hierarchical the organization.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Tushman and Nadler, 618.

<sup>99</sup> Tushman and Nadler, 618.

<sup>100</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 36-37.

<sup>101</sup> Pugh, Hickson and Hinings, 38.

Providing further evidence is Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch's 1967 survey of the impact of environmental adaptation on the performance six chemical processing firms. Concentrating on organizational subsystems rather than entire organizations, they nevertheless found, among other things, "that subsystems tend to develop a degree of formalized [(increasingly mechanistic)] structure related to the certainty of their relevant subenvironment."<sup>102</sup> And as organizations sought to adapt their subsystems to the conditions of their environments, Lawrence and Lorsch reported that, based on executives' own assessment of their company's competitiveness in the marketplace, "subsystems in the high-performing organizations were achieving differentiation that was more consistent with subenvironmental requirements than were subsystems in less effective organizations..."<sup>103</sup> Likewise, in a 1979 study of 64 organizational units of 21 Vancouver, Canada companies, Rosalie Tung found that the amount of environmental complexity, the change rate, and the routineness of decision-making – all identified as contributors to environmental uncertainty – had statistically significant (<.005) influences on departmental structure.<sup>104</sup>

Could this stability-hierarchy relationship apply to terrorist groups? Not in strictly the same way, of course – not in economic terms – but, in the degree of uncertainty produced by the risk they face from dissolution by authorities?

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<sup>102</sup> Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch, "Differentiation and Integration in Complex Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 12.1 (1967, June): 18.

<sup>103</sup> Lawrence and Lorsch, 29.

<sup>104</sup> Rosalie L. Tung, "Dimensions of Organizational Environments: An Exploratory Study of Their Impact on Organization Structure," *The Academy of Management Journal* 22.4 (1979, December): 679, 689.

# Security vs. Insecurity: Contributing Factors

In the course of examining the strategies pursued by terrorists, Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter highlight the influence of the perceived risk of government retaliation on terrorist strategies: “Terrorist organizations almost always are weaker than the governments they target and, as a result, are vulnerable to government retaliation. The more constrained the government is in its use of force, the less costly an attrition strategy is [that is, inflicting high costs to convince an enemy to meet one’s demands], and the longer the terrorists can hold out in the hopes of achieving their goal.”<sup>105</sup>

What, then, might constrain a government’s use of force? James Fearon and David Laitin have argued that, along with unstable and/or inept governments and population size, the rise of insurgencies “is favored by rough terrain [and] rebels with local knowledge of the population superior to the government’s...” as well as “Foreign base camps, financial support, and training...”<sup>106</sup> In their research, Fearon and Laitin found that the presence of “mountainous and noncontiguous” territory had a statistically significant relationship to the outbreak of civil war.<sup>107</sup> Extending this theory to terrorism, Alberto Abadie likewise found that geographic factors contributing to the availability of safe havens (country area, elevation, and fraction of tropical area) all were significantly related to the occurrence of terrorism.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to Abadie’s conclusions, a 2007 comparative analysis of ungoverned territories around the world by researchers for the RAND Corporation found that the territories

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<sup>105</sup> Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, “The Strategies of Terrorism,” *International Security* 31.1 (Summer 2006) 61

<sup>106</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *The American Political Science Review*, 97.1 (Feb. 2003) 76.

<sup>107</sup> Fearon and Laitin, 85.

<sup>108</sup> Alberto Abadie, “Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism,” *The American Economic Review*, 96.2 (May 2006) 55 (Table 3).



most conducive to serving as terrorist safe havens were characterized by “the presence of extremist groups, supportive social norms among the population, a preexisting state of violence, the presence of informed social networks that can be exploited by terrorists, and the presence of criminal syndicates that can serve as contractors to terrorist groups.”<sup>109</sup> And in yet another study, Idean Salehyan has found that the availability of extraterritorial bases to insurgents has a significant and positive impact on the duration of internal conflicts.<sup>110</sup> Salehyan suggests that the possession of an external base increases the cost of retaliation by the targeted state due to the fact that an invasion will risk retaliation from the host state, will meet with high governance costs afterward, will present a difficult counterinsurgency operation (due to lack of local knowledge), and could possibly bring punishment from the international community.<sup>111</sup>

The belief that terrorist groups will always benefit from possessing a safe haven is not universal, however. Based on a competing risks model using data on 648 terrorist groups active from 1968 to 2006, David Carter concluded that for terrorist groups who received state sponsorship with a safe haven, the costs outweighed the benefits: The possession of state sponsorship with a safe haven was not found to significantly decrease their probability of internal dissolution (that is, members leaving the cause or for other groups) – while, at the same time, it increased their probability of forceful elimination by a state adversary.<sup>112</sup> This, Carter argues, is because state sponsors might have an incentive to use terrorist groups, but not to protect them –

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<sup>109</sup> Angel Rabasa, Steven Boraz, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Theodore W. Karasik, Jennifer D.P. Moroney, Kevin A. O’Brien, and John E. Peters, *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007) xviii.

<sup>110</sup> Idean Salehyan, “Transnational Rebels: Neighboring States as Sanctuary for Rebel Groups,” *World Politics*, 59.2 (Jan. 2007) 240.

<sup>111</sup> Salehyan, 223-224.

<sup>112</sup> David Carter, “A Blessing or a Curse? State Support for Terrorist Groups,” *International Organization*, 66 (Winter 2012): 136-137, 145-147.

when the price is right, they will provide the group's adversaries with information that will be used to target them.<sup>113</sup>

This dissertation, then, examines whether or not the availability of foreign or domestic safe havens produces the low risk environment that, in turn, will allow a terrorist groups to adopt a more efficient (but less secure) hierarchical organizational structure. The significance of safe havens will be determined both through the analyses of the cases contained in Chapters Three through Six, then further examined via controlled comparison in Chapter Seven. The next section will provide further information on this study's definitions for the factors tested, its hypotheses, and the methodologies employed.

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<sup>113</sup> Carter, 130.

## Chapter 2: Research Design and Methodology

### **Theory**

Contingency theory states that, through a process akin to natural selection, the market environments in which firms do business shape their organizational structures (as ill-adapted firms go out of business or are swallowed by rivals). Building upon this idea, this dissertation will examine whether the political environments in which terrorist groups operate likewise determine their organizational structures.

Based upon the past literature on the organizational structures of terrorist groups, there are two basic types of structure: hierarchies and cellular networks. Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger provide the following criteria for distinguishing between them (note that Pedahzur and Perliger use the terms “hierarchy” and “network” while, in this study, horizontal networks are considered to be the same as cellular groups – the latter term is used because many small terrorist groups never extend beyond a single cell):

- Hierarchical groups are vertically-organized, with clear leaders. Cellular groups are horizontally-organized, with what direction there is provided by “hubs” – individuals who are important not due to their formal authority, but due to their connection to a great many other individuals. In cellular groups, there is not a clear distinction between leaders and operatives, and even the most important hubs might not know the full extent of their organization.<sup>114</sup>
- In hierarchical groups, operatives work to fulfill goals handed down from the central leadership. In cellular groups, operatives might carry out orders from a central source,

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<sup>114</sup> Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, “The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective,” *Social Forces* 84.4 (Jun. 2006): 1989

but primarily work to achieve localized goals (such as “to gain territorial control or political dominance in a specific region for their network or family”).<sup>115</sup>

- Hierarchical and cellular groups each recruit in different ways. Pedahzur and Perliger write that “Conventional hierarchical groups generally initiate recruitment programs, select potential candidates, persuade or force them to join, and train them for various operations... Horizontal networks [(‘cellular groups’ in this dissertation’s terms)], in contrast, are formed through friendships and family relations.”<sup>116</sup>

Regarding their capabilities, hierarchical groups – with a pyramidal authority structure and a clear division of labor among their members – will be better able to carry out operations in pursuit of their strategies thanks to the quicker and easier flow of information between their decision-makers and subordinates, and the efficiency provided by their subunits’ specialization. But the same clarity of the roles in such an organization, and the volume of interactions required to carry out operations, will make it more vulnerable to dissolution, infiltration, and possibly decapitation (that is, government agents need only work their way up the pyramid from the subordinates to the decision-makers; and can take advantage of the division of labor to plant/maintain informants).<sup>117</sup> However, if terrorist groups have safe havens from which they can operate that prevent (or, at least, restrict) the government from taking actions against them, they will be able to take advantage of the benefits of a hierarchical structure without suffering from its weaknesses. These safe havens could be in the form of a single enclave within the

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<sup>115</sup> Pedahzur and Perliger, 1989.

<sup>116</sup> Pedahzur and Perliger, 1989

<sup>117</sup> Note, however, that the question of whether decapitation is an effective strategy against terrorist groups remains a matter of dispute. For an overview of the literature on the subject, as well as a large-n, quantitative test of its effectiveness, see Jenna Jordan, “When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” *Security Studies*, 18.4 (2009): 719-755.

borders of the targeted nation-state (protected from government intervention by geographic features, local autonomy, or both), an enclave outside the borders of the targeted nation-state (protected from government intervention by a sympathetic government, or even simply sovereignty's limitations on transnational law enforcement), or a patchwork of concentrated communities of supporters (such as individual neighborhoods, towns, or villages).

Meanwhile, a group that is organized in a cellular fashion – being a cell of operatives based around a central leader without a clear division of labor, or a loose network of such cells – is much more limited in its capabilities due to the restricted communication between cells and the lack of specialization of its subunits. However, the direct oversight of a cell by its leader, and the limited contact of those leaders with one another, results in an organization that is much more difficult for an enemy to dissolve, infiltrate, or decapitate. Because cellular organizations do not rely as heavily on communication between units, and because connections in these organization are narrowly restricted to ties between individual hubs (who might only know a few other members), they will be better equipped to survive in political environments where safe havens are not available; but, when they are available, will not be able to coordinate attacks as easily or as well as hierarchical organizations.

Thus, the organizational structure of a terrorist group is determined by its founders and/or leaders' perception of how high of a risk of government intervention they face, and by their calculation of how to best pursue their tactical and strategic aims given this level of risk. If the founders/leaders underestimate the level of risk, and are too reckless in coordinating their organizations, their organization will face dissolution by its adversaries. But if the founders/leaders overestimate the level of risk, and act too conservatively, they face the threat of

being ineffectual (or, at least, less effectual than they could optimally be) and will fail to mobilize supporters.

## Qualitative Tests

### *Definition and Operationalization of the Variables*

This theory suggests that a “good fit” between a terrorist group’s organizational structure and its political environment will occur when a hierarchical group operates an environment with a safe haven or when a cellular group operates without a safe haven. A “bad fit,” meanwhile, will occur when a hierarchical group operates without a safe haven or a cellular group operates with a safe haven.

The goodness of fit, then, is determined by the interaction of two factors: the group’s organizational structure (independent variable) and the presence of a safe haven (condition variable). The definitions for these two factors are provided below. They are followed by the definition for the dependent variable, effectiveness.

#### The Independent Variable: Organizational Structure

For the independent variable “organizational structure,” this study uses a definition from Peter Blau and cited by Richard H. Hall in *Organizations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition: “the distributions, along various lines, of people among social positions that influence the role relations among these people.”<sup>118</sup> Hall goes on to elaborate that:

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<sup>118</sup> From Hall, 47, citing Peter M. Blau. *On the Nature of Organizations* (New York: John Wiley, 1974) 12

Organizational structures serve three basic functions. First and foremost, structures are intended to produce organizational outputs and to achieve organizational goals... Second, structures are designed to minimize or at least regulate the influence of individual variations on the organization... Third, structures are the settings in which power is exercised..., in which decisions are made..., and which organizations' activities are carried out...

As a factor, terrorist organizational structure is herein considered to have two ideal types: hierarchical and cellular/networks. Based on Pedahzur and Perliger's definitions above, hierarchical organizations are characterized by strong vertical and horizontal differentiation: they have distinct layers of decision-making authority and they have a clear division of labor into specialized units. Cellular organizations, on the other hand, have weak vertical and horizontal differentiation.<sup>119</sup>

With "hierarchical" and "cellular" being ideal types, though, most real-world terrorist groups are posited to fall into a continuum between the two – for example, while they may formally have several layers of decision-making authority between their low-ranking operatives and their leaders, weak central control might result in decision-making being dominated by the lower operatives. Terrorist groups can also transition from being hierarchical to being cellular (and vice versa) over time.

But while the groups in this study may not be perfectly hierarchical or perfectly cellular-networked, they do nonetheless come closer to one ideal type or the other at any given time. By comparing the groups, both against one another and against their past selves, according to where they lie in the spectrum between the two models, this study highlights general trends between how their organizational structures and political environments interact to determine their effectiveness. The organizational structure of each group (and any changes in that structure over the course of its history) is discussed in the cases that follow.

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<sup>119</sup> Pedahzur and Perliger, 1989

### The Condition Variable: Presence of a Safe Haven.

The condition (antecedent) variable “presence of a safe haven” is herein defined as whether a group has access to a location in which it can securely conduct logistical and support operations (such as training or bomb-making). For the sake of this study two types of safe haven exist: domestic safe havens and foreign safe havens. Domestic safe havens are territories within the borders of a targeted nation-state that are under the terrorist group’s control (for conflicts based on ethnic, linguistic, or religious polarization, terrorist groups may find shelter with sympathetic communities). Foreign safe havens are non-targeted countries where terrorists are able to carry out their logistical and support operations (with or without the host’s permission). The presence or absence of safe havens, and any change in their availability over the course of a group’s history, is discussed in the cases that follow.

### The Dependent Variable: Effectiveness and Its Measures

The dependent variable “effectiveness” is herein defined as the degree to which a terrorist group can achieve three basic, universal goals at a low cost in comparison to other terrorist groups. As is discussed further below, these three goals are ensuring the group’s survival, accomplishing a high quantity and quality of attacks, and mobilizing supporters.

The emphasis on these three, largely tactical goals, rather than a group’s strategic goals or ultimate goals, constitutes a major limitation on the explanatory power of the effectiveness variable, but is necessary in order to facilitate comparison across the groups in this study while also providing for cross-group variation. Were the effectiveness variable based on the achievement of the groups’ ultimate, stated goals, the result would be no variation – none of the



groups in this study, and very few terrorist groups historically, have achieved their ultimate goals.<sup>120</sup> Meanwhile, were the effectiveness variable based on the achievement of the groups' strategic goals, this would introduce a wave of new factors that are currently beyond the scope of this dissertation, but would be well worth investigation in future research – factors such as the breadth or narrowness of a group's goals, the effect of competing goals within an organization, and its leadership's perception of the reactions of its intended audience and its governmental adversaries.

Furthermore, for the measurement of effectiveness, these three basic goals are being examined in terms of their relative achievement (or lack of achievement) by each group relative to the others in this dissertation, rather than against a broader, more universal measure of effectiveness versus non-effectiveness. Developing such a measure of effectiveness/non-effectiveness lies outside the scope of this dissertation but, once again, would be a worthy question for future study.

**Survival.** Part of the measurement of group survival is the duration of the period from the group's founding until its dissolution (or last attack). However, this study also measures group "health" over time through information such as the numbers of arrests of operatives relative to the estimated size of the group, the loss of key personnel and/or subdivisions and their impact, and the state of group support and funding. Finally, the counterterrorism measures that resulted in the group's ultimate demise are examined.

**Quantity and Quality of Attacks.** Besides the numbers of attacks and casualties (again, relative to estimated group strength), this variable also takes into consideration the organizational

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<sup>120</sup> See Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009) 73-93; and Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security*, 33.2 (Fall 2006) 51.

coordination and logistical complexity behind different types of operations (for example: the fact that hijacking an airliner demands far greater coordination than planting bombs in public areas), and the contribution of these operations toward achieving the group's goals. Representative operations have been detailed to show the extent of each group's capabilities at different times.

**Mobilization.** This variable takes into consideration both the terrorist group's success in recruiting new operatives and in its persuasion of others to support it in both legal and illegal ways (examples of the former being public demonstrations or praise by radical media sources, examples of the latter being the provision of resources or shelter from the authorities). Where possible, information is provided in the cases on group size, the rate of recruitment, opinion surveys, public events, and other sources of information that provide some measure of the level of support that the group enjoys among its intended population.

#### Control Variable: Historical and Cultural Context

As noted above in the review of the past literature on the organizational structures of terrorist groups, one of the posited explanations for why groups adopt the structures that they do is due to their ideological, strategic, and cultural roots. This study controls for this variable through selecting cases that share a common period in history and ideological basis, and similar cultural backgrounds.

#### Control Variable: Technological Change

Again, as noted above in the review of the past literature on the organizational structures of terrorist groups, another posited explanation for why groups adopt the structures that they do is as a reaction to technological developments. This study controls for this variable through

selecting cases that share a common period in history, when the groups examined had access to the same technologies.

#### Control Variable: Target Government

A variable that could influence the survival of terrorist groups and their ability to carry out attacks, persuade an audience, and achieve their goals is the type of government that they are targeting. Governments in poor countries, for example, will not have the same resources for counterterrorism as those in wealthy countries. And, compared to authoritarian states, democracies will be limited in both the extent of their repressive measures and their ability to censor terrorist messages. This study controls for this variable through selecting cases for which the target countries held similar types of government and similar levels of economic development.

#### Control Variable: Foreign Support

Finally, another variable that could affect group survival and the ability to carry out attacks is access to support from foreign governments. This study controls for this variable through selecting cases in which all of the terrorist groups received or were alleged to have received foreign support.

### *Qualitative Methods*

This dissertation employs three different (but complementary) approaches to qualitative research via four case studies.

First, each case has been subjected to the process tracing method of investigation. Through this method, the cases search for causal linkages that demonstrate not only that the terrorist group's organizational structure interacts with its risk of government interference, but also that this interaction impacts its effectiveness.<sup>121</sup> Causal linkages include evidence such as quotes from terrorist group members and counterterrorism officials indicating the perception that the factors were connected, the occurrence of actions that could be expected to accompany such interaction, and a timeline of events that conforms to the expected direction of causality.

Second, each individual case has been tested according to the congruence procedure type 2 – that is, they were examined to see whether variance in the independent variable (organizational structure) or condition variable (presence of a safe haven) results in variance on the dependent variable (the measures of effectiveness).<sup>122</sup> In addition, they were examined for whether changes in the risk of government interference might influence the organizational structures that groups take (that is, whether the risk of government interference might serve as an independent variable to organizational structure's dependent variable).

Third, the case studies were grouped into two dyads that match according to the condition variable (the presence of a safe haven) and differ according to the independent variable (the type of organizational structure). A controlled comparison (“method of difference approach”) was then conducted to examine whether the two cases differ on their dependent variables (the measures of effectiveness).<sup>123</sup> In other words, the two dyads under comparison were: (1) a pair of groups with access to safe havens, in which one case features a hierarchical structure and the

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<sup>121</sup> Pascal Vennesson, “Case studies and process tracing” in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, eds. Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 2008) 232-233.

<sup>122</sup> Van Evera. 61-63.

<sup>123</sup> Van Evera. 56-58.

other features a cellular structure; and (2) a pair of groups without access to safe havens, in which one case features a hierarchical structure and the other features a cellular structure.

### *Case Selection*

For these tests, four cases were used: the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) of Northern Ireland, the Baader-Meinhof/Red Army Faction (RAF) of Germany, the Red Brigades of Italy, and the Weathermen/Weather Underground of the United States.

#### Dyad I (Presence of Safe Havens): PIRA and RAF

In the first dyad, both the PIRA and the RAF were known to have possessed safe havens. For the PIRA, shelter from British authorities could be found in the Republic of Ireland (due to barriers presented by sovereignty and public opinion rather than deliberate government support) and in sympathetic Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.<sup>124</sup> For the RAF, shelter from West German authorities could be found in East Germany.<sup>125</sup>

However, the two differed substantially in terms of organizational structure. The PIRA possessed a hierarchical structure, with the group headed by a 12-member Executive elected by a General Army Convention made up of delegates from lower-level units throughout the organization.<sup>126</sup> This Executive, in turn, selected a 7-member Army Council that oversaw day-to-day decision-making and chose a Chief of Staff who was in charge of the PIRA's General

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<sup>124</sup> Ed Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002) 115, 158.

<sup>125</sup> "Red Army Faction," MIPT Terrorist Organization Profiles, currently available from the University of Maryland's START program:  
[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=163](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=163).

<sup>126</sup> Brendan O'Brien. *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999) 158.

Headquarters (GHQ).<sup>127</sup> The GHQ coordinated a number of the organization's logistical activities, such as intelligence, finance, and publicity.<sup>128</sup> Beneath the GHQ (following a 1977 reorganization), the PIRA divided into Northern and Southern Commands, with the North overseeing operations in Northern Ireland and the South overseeing international operations and support operations in the Republic of Ireland.<sup>129</sup> Finally, under these two Commands was a combination of local brigades and, again after 1977, Active Service Units (attack cells).<sup>130</sup>

The Red Army Faction, on the other hand, had a cellular network structure, having begun as individual cells (the original Baader-Meinhof Gang, The Socialist Patients Collective, and members of the Movement 2<sup>nd</sup> June), and later becoming organized into loosely-connected attack cells called "commandos" that were supported logistically by a diffuse network of sympathizers (as well as East German intelligence).<sup>131</sup>

#### Dyad II (Absence of Safe Havens): Red Brigades and Weather Underground

In the second dyad, the Red Brigades and the Weather Underground were not known to have possessed safe havens.

Regarding organizational structure, the Red Brigades possessed a cellular network structure made up of autonomous units called "columns" that were divided up by locality (that is,

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<sup>127</sup> O'Brien, 158.

<sup>128</sup> O'Brien, 158.

<sup>129</sup> O'Brien, 158; Ed Moloney. *The Secret History of the IRA* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002) 158.

<sup>130</sup> O'Brien, 158

<sup>131</sup> Jillian Becker. *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1977) 179-204, 227-253, 257-262; Jeremy Varon *Bringing The War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004) 302; John C. Schmeidel. *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party* (New York: Routledge, 2008) 142-162.

they were based in Trento, Reggio Emilia, Milan, Turin, etc.).<sup>132</sup> As the organization grew, the leaders of these columns formed a series of horizontal bodies that served to coordinate activities between them, including the handling of logistics, propaganda, and forging a common strategy (this last body was called the Strategic Direction and was in charge of selecting the Red Brigades' Executive Council, which oversaw the coordination of strategy on a day-to-day basis).<sup>133</sup> In addition, with the growth of the organization, the columns transitioned from being cells of operatives themselves to becoming hubs that each controlled a number of nodes (called "brigades") in their location.<sup>134</sup>

The Weathermen/Weather Underground, on the other hand, had a hierarchical structure in that a centralized leadership (called "The Weatherbureau") commanded cells ("collectives") of one to a dozen operatives that were distributed across a number of major American cities.<sup>135</sup> As the case demonstrates below, the Weather Underground leadership soon recognized the extreme vulnerability of this structure and shifted to a cellular-network.<sup>136</sup>

**Figure 5: Case Studies**

Terrorist Group	Organizational	
	Structure	Safe Haven
Provisional Irish Republican Army	Hierarchical	Republic of Ireland, Catholic Enclaves in Northern Ireland
Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red	Cellular/Network	East Germany

<sup>132</sup> Robert C. Meade, Jr. *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 44, 61.

<sup>133</sup> Meade, 61-62.

<sup>134</sup> Meade, 61

<sup>135</sup> Varon, 57

<sup>136</sup> Varon, 158, 172

Army Faction		
Weathermen/Weather		
Underground	Hierarchical	None
Red Brigades		
	Cellular/Network	None

### Controlled Variables and Data Availability

These groups have been chosen not just for their differences on the independent and condition variables, however. As all four groups arose from the same historical context (originating from the international student protest movements of 1967-1968), share the same ideological affinity (Marxist-Leninist), and came from Western liberal democratic cultures, their similarities provide some control over possible intervening factors (such as technology and historical and cultural context). In addition, all four groups targeted economically developed, liberal democratic governments, and received (or were alleged to have received) some degree of foreign support – factors that could impact their survival and effectiveness.<sup>137</sup>

In addition, the gap in time between these groups' formation and the present has resulted in a rich body of data sources from which their organizational behavior can be analyzed. This includes intelligence reports, historical records, journalistic investigations, court records, government documents, biographies, datasets, and even former members who could be available

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<sup>137</sup> For the PIRA and the RAF, this support came from Libya and East Germany, respectively. Meanwhile, a 1976 FBI report on the Weather Underground alleged that the organization had received training and funding from Cuba, but provides little evidence to support this claim. As for the Red Brigades, they are alleged to have received support from Czechoslovak intelligence. See O'Brien, 133-153; Schmeidel, 142-162; FBI. *Foreign Influence: Weather Underground Organization* (Washington, DC: Unpublished Report, 1976) 39-42 [Available online: [http://vault.fbi.gov/Weather Underground \(Weathermen\)](http://vault.fbi.gov/Weather Underground (Weathermen))]; Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin. *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) 298-299.



for interviewing. Given that terrorist groups are highly secretive, and that information about their internal structures is often jealously guarded (both by the groups and by their adversaries), the value of these sources cannot be overstated.

## Hypotheses To Be Tested

***H1: Given the non-presence of a safe haven, a cellular/network group will be more successful at surviving than a hierarchical group.***

Due to the direct oversight of cells by their leaders and the restricted connections between cells, which work to prevent government informers from penetrating the group and restrict the amount of information that can be gained through the interrogation of captured operatives, cellular-network groups will be better suited to survive in the event that they do not possess a safe haven. In this dissertation, this hypothesis has been tested through the controlled comparison method.

***H2: Given the presence of a safe haven, a hierarchical group will be able to carry out a higher quantity and quality of attacks than a cellular/network group.***

Due to hierarchies' advantages in terms of command and control and in terms of the division of labor, hierarchical groups are expected to be able to carry out more attacks and more sophisticated attacks than cellular/network groups when they possess a safe haven. In this dissertation, this hypothesis has been tested through the controlled comparison method.

***H3: Given the presence of a safe haven, a hierarchical group will be better able to mobilize supporters than a cellular/network group.***

In the mobilization of supporters, hierarchies will again be able to draw upon their advantages in coordinating the group members behind a common – but they will also be able to more easily support specialized units in charge of propaganda and recruitment. Even more

importantly, as the hierarchical group's members are not arranged into tightly compartmentalized cells, they are better able to interact with potential followers – this both allows them to bring social contacts into the group and allows the group to tailor its message to its intended audience. In this dissertation, this hypothesis has been tested through the controlled comparison method.

***H4: A decrease in the goodness of fit between a terrorist group's organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven negatively affect its ability to survive.***

As a terrorist group moves from a “good fit” between organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven (whether through, for example, a process of organizational change or the loss the loss of a safe haven) toward a “bad fit,” or vice versa, its ability to survive will change correspondingly (as seen in indicators such as the numbers of operatives killed or arrested, or the number of infiltrators caught). In this dissertation, this hypothesis has been tested through the congruence procedure type-2 method.

***H5: A decrease in the goodness of fit between a terrorist group's organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven will negatively affect the quantity and quality of attacks that it is able to carry out.***

Likewise, as a terrorist group moves from a “good fit” between organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven toward a “bad fit,” or vice versa, the quantity and quality of attacks will change correspondingly (whether, for example, through changes in group coordination or a change in the amount of disruption by authorities). In this dissertation, this hypothesis has been tested through the congruence procedure type-2 method.

***H6: A decrease in the goodness of fit between a terrorist group's organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven will negatively affect its ability to persuade its target audience(s).***

As a terrorist group moves from a “good fit” between organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven toward a “bad fit,” or vice versa, and its ability to carry out attacks and/or survive changes, its credibility with its target audience(s) will be influenced. As this credibility increases, the group will become more persuasive; as it decreases, the group will become less so. In this dissertation, this hypothesis has been tested through the congruence procedure type-2 method.

Throughout the individual cases to follow, process tracing will be employed (along the congruence type-2 procedure) to examine whether causal linkages indeed exist between the interaction of a group's organizational and political environment, on the one hand, and its effectiveness on the other.

## Chapter 3: The Provisional Irish Republican Army

### **Chapter Objective and Structure**

The objective for this chapter will be to test the following hypothesis through the method of process tracing: The better the fit between organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven, the longer a terrorist group can be expected to survive.

Again, regarding the “goodness of fit” between the type of organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven, hierarchical terrorist groups are predicted to be better suited to conditions where the group can rely on the protection of foreign and/or domestic safe havens. This is because their centralized, bureaucratic command and control systems provide advantages in terms of attack coordination, recruitment, and the implementation of strategy; but make them vulnerable to state intervention. Meanwhile, cellular terrorist groups are predicted to be better suited to conditions where the group does not possess a foreign or domestic safe haven. This is because, despite a decreased ability to coordinate attacks, recruit, or implement strategy, the restriction on operatives’ knowledge about the leadership and its plans provides protection from state intervention.

This case, then, employs process tracing as a means of determining whether the “goodness of fit” between a group’s organizational structure and its possession of safe havens does indeed affect its survival. Given that the determinants of group organizational structure and survival might potentially be subject to alternative explanations, intervening variables, recursive processes and other complications, the method of process tracing is particularly well-suited to testing these hypotheses due to its ability to incrementally search for the existence of proposed causal linkages between the independent and dependent variables. It also affords for the

examination of whether changes in the value of the independent variable lead to corresponding changes in the dependent variable.

Toward this end, the case will employ the following structure: First, it will present an analysis of how closely the history of the Provisional Irish Republican Army corresponds to the outcome predicted by the hypothesis. Second, in order to contextualize the case, it will feature a brief treatment of the history and goals of the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Third, it will describe the organizational structure of the Provisional IRA. As the Provisional IRA's structure changed following an official overhaul in 1977, "before" and "after" descriptions will be provided (that is, a description of the group's organizational structure from 1969 to 1976 and a description of its structure from 1977 to 1997). Fourth, the case will include a description of the degree to which safe havens were available to the Provisional IRA (as will be seen in the cases below, the relative security of these safe havens was subject to variance over time). Given that the Provisional IRA had access to safe havens in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland at points in its history, each will be treated separately. Fifth, possible intervening variables will be addressed and evaluated. Finally, the case will conclude with a summation of its findings and notes on its implications for the cases to follow.

## **Analytical Overview**

The general pattern of the history of the Provisional IRA does appear to match the results predicted for a "good fit" scenario between a hierarchical organizational structure and a secure operating environment (that is, the possession of a safe haven). As predicted, the Provisional IRA was able to take advantage of the benefits of maintaining a hierarchically-structured organization (that is, it was able to both efficiently carry out operations and to maintain sufficient

control over its operatives to keep their actions in line with the organization's strategy) while it possessed safe havens (the safe havens reduced the threat of infiltration and disruption by the authorities).

The strongest evidence in this case for supporting this conclusion comes from the sequence of events. In 1970-1972, the Provisional IRA had a hierarchical structure (based on the organization of a conventional military), and was able to take advantage of both the "no go" areas in Northern Ireland and the lack of cooperation between the governments of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.<sup>138</sup> At this time, it carried out its highest volume of attacks and accomplished (or helped to accomplish) two of its strategic goals: the replacement of the Northern Irish parliament with direct rule from London, and a meeting for negotiations with the British authorities.<sup>139</sup> During the 1972-1977 period, however, it had a hierarchical structure, but had lost some of the security of its safe havens: "Operation Motorman" had cleared out the "no go" areas, while the Republic of Ireland undertook a crackdown on the Provisional IRA through new counterterrorist legislation and increased enforcement.<sup>140</sup> The result was increased losses for the Provisional IRA and a halt in its strategic progress.<sup>141</sup> The 1977 reorganization, then, was

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<sup>138</sup> Kevin Kelley, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA* (Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland: Brandon Book Publishers, Ltd., 1982) 137; Peter R. Neumann, *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict, 1969-98* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 52; Ronan Fanning, "Playing It Cool: the Response of the British and Irish Governments to the Crisis in Northern Ireland, 1968-9," *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 12 (2001) 58.

<sup>139</sup> Regarding the level of violence, M.L.R. Smith notes that from 1971-1976, the Provisional IRA was certainly responsible for 598 deaths, compared to 298 in the 1977-1983 period; 24,319 shootings in 1971-1976 versus 4,793 in 1977-1983; and 5,232 bombings in 1971-1976 versus 2,406 in 1977-1983. Source: M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting For Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1995) 155.

<sup>140</sup> Neumann, 79-80; Brendan O'Brien, *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999) 172.

<sup>141</sup> Smith writes that "In comparison with the three week periods before and after Motorman, the statistics show a decline in explosions from 180 to seventy-three, shooting

an adjustment toward achieving a better fit: the Provisional IRA adopted an organizational structure that was more cellular/network-oriented (if still very hierarchical in vertical terms) to match its less secure environment.<sup>142</sup> The trade-offs in this adjustment were, again, as predicted: the Provisional IRA saw reduced losses, but at the cost of a lower number of attacks, more limited effectiveness, and a reduction in central control.<sup>143</sup> The following sections will provide further information regarding the Provisional IRA's origins and aims, its organizational structure (pre- and post-1977), and the shifting conditions in its safe havens.

## Background

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) was a primarily national-liberation-driven terrorist group, which also adhered to leftist ideological beliefs (albeit to varying degrees throughout its history) and had an unofficial (but undeniable) role in Northern Ireland's sectarian religious conflict. Its goal was to achieve the secession of the province of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and unite it with the rest of Ireland under a democratic socialist system of government.<sup>144</sup> Additionally, contrary to the organization's policy and its leaders' will, many of the members were chiefly driven by a desire to protect and avenge the Catholic community of Northern Ireland, seen as oppressed by the Northern authorities and threatened by Protestant paramilitary groups. Active from 1969 to 1997 (and officially renouncing violence in 2005), the

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incidents declined from 2,595 to 330 and the number of soldiers killed fell from eighteen to eleven." Source: Smith, 110.

<sup>142</sup> Kelley, 284-285.

<sup>143</sup> See footnote 2 for information on the decreased number of attacks. Regarding the number of operatives, Smith claims that it was reduced to around 300 (p. 145). Source for the reduction in control and the loss of contact with the nationalist community: O'Brien, 161-162.

<sup>144</sup> *The Green Book* (Dublin, Ireland: Provisional Irish Republican Army, 1977) 2-5. Available online: <http://therevolutionscript.blogspot.com/2007/07/green-book-of-ira.html>



organization was one of the longest-lived and deadliest groups of the Cold War period, estimated by Brendan O'Brien to have been responsible for approximately 1,776 deaths in the course of the conflict in Northern Ireland.<sup>145</sup>

While the tradition of Irish nationalist terrorist groups dates back to the formation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the process leading to the creation of the Provisional IRA can be more clearly traced to the 1919-1921 Irish War of Independence. Facing a British military that was far superior in terms of its conventional warfare capability, the IRA was organized as a guerrilla army that focused on hit and run tactics, and attacking Britain's intelligence network in Ireland.<sup>146</sup> (It is notable that, given these historical circumstances, the IRA began with a hierarchical organizational structure mirroring its adversary, the British army.<sup>147</sup>) When the war ended in 1921, with the (predominantly Catholic and pro-independence) southern 26 counties of Ireland being given de facto independence as the Irish Free State and the (predominantly Protestant and anti-independence) northern six counties of Ireland being retained within the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland, the IRA rejected this outcome and declared war on the forces of the newly created Free State.<sup>148</sup> In the Irish Civil War of 1922-1923, the IRA was defeated (albeit without formally surrendering) and became an underground organization.<sup>149</sup> From the 1920s and 1930s on, the IRA declined considerably in terms of membership and operations, being declared illegal by the government of Ireland in 1936, and being hit by a serious crackdown in 1940 (following a series of bombings in Britain).<sup>150</sup> Also starting in the

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<sup>145</sup> O'Brien, 21, 26, 385; "IRA Statement," *The Guardian*, July 28, 2005. Available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2005/jul/28/northernireland.devolution>

<sup>146</sup> Kelley, 36.

<sup>147</sup> Kelley, 137.

<sup>148</sup> Kelley, 44-45.

<sup>149</sup> Kelley, 45.

<sup>150</sup> Smith, 62-64.

mid-1920s, the IRA became increasingly influenced by socialist thinking (although this remained controversial within the organization), eventually in the 1960s adopting a neo-Marxist view that Ireland was trapped in a “neo-colonial” relationship with Britain and thus could only become truly free through the adoption of a state-centric economy.<sup>151</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the IRA staged some ineffectual attacks, questioned the degree to which it should adopt socialist beliefs, and bickered over whether to abandon its policy of “abstentionism” (the refusal to participate in the state’s political institutions – such as being elected and serving in the Irish parliament).<sup>152</sup> The political environment was to change considerably, however, in 1968. In Northern Ireland, a civil rights movement had emerged to protest provincial laws that discriminated against Catholics in terms of jobs, housing, and suffrage. But on October 5, 1968, a peaceful march by the demonstrators in Derry was blocked, and then attacked with batons by members of Northern Ireland’s Royal Ulster Constabulary, resulting in 50 hospitalizations – all captured on television and leading to two days of rioting.<sup>153</sup> More demonstrations would come under attack by police and loyalist paramilitaries in the months ahead, resulting in more rioting and an outpouring of sectarian violence.

In the South, the IRA found itself badly split over how to respond to the situation in the North. On one hand, the organization’s official doctrine held that engaging in sectarian conflict would undermine its efforts to achieve a united Ireland; not to mention that its leadership was working toward abandoning the use of force and engaging in electoral politics. On the other hand, many of the members felt that they could not stand idly by while the Northern authorities

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<sup>151</sup> Smith, 61-62, 74-75

<sup>152</sup> Smith, 67-80.

<sup>153</sup> Fanning, 59; Frank Foley, “North-South Relations and the Outbreak of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, 1968-9: the Response of the Irish Press,” *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 14 (2003) 13

allowed Protestant gangs to attack Catholic neighborhoods. Finally, an Army Convention in December 1969 over whether to end the IRA's abstention policy led to a split between the dissenters and the leadership (this split became official a month later at the Sinn Féin party convention in Dublin). These dissenters dubbed their organization "the Provisional Irish Republican Army," while the remainder of the IRA became "the Official Irish Republican Army."

The Provisional IRA mounted an effective defense of the Catholic neighborhoods of the North – providing it with safe havens that, while less secure as the conflict wore on, would nevertheless prove enduring assets throughout the conflict. Once established in these neighborhoods, the Provisional IRA soon went on the offensive – targeting commercial centers, police, government officials, and the British army through shootings and bombings (its members also engaged in revenge killings against Protestants, although this was officially forbidden by the leadership).<sup>154</sup> In 1972, during what was to be the bloodiest year in the conflict, the instability reached such an extreme level that the British government disbanded Northern Ireland's parliament and instituted direct rule from Westminster.<sup>155</sup> At this time, the Provisional IRA declared a ceasefire and met with representatives from Great Britain, but no grounds for compromise could be found.<sup>156</sup> Not long after, a major British military operation drove the Provisional IRA out of many of its safe havens, severely reducing its capabilities. Still the conflict continued and another attempt at talks was made in 1975, but once again, no progress could be made.

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<sup>154</sup> Smith, 98.

<sup>155</sup> O'Brien, 24.

<sup>156</sup> Smith, 105-109.

Facing mounting arrests, a high attrition rate, and a lack of progress toward its goals, the Provisional IRA underwent reorganization and a major shift in its strategy in 1977, adopting a more cellular-based structure and putting more emphasis on long-term popular mobilization.<sup>157</sup> And while some effects of this change were immediate (such as a decline in the number of operatives arrested), it only truly began to come to fruition with the hunger strikes of 1981.<sup>158</sup> Imprisoned members of the Provisional IRA began starving themselves to death to protest the British government's decision to strip them of their special status as political prisoners – resulting in a surprise boost in public support for the republican cause in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.<sup>159</sup> This support would falter as the 1980s continued, due to the unpopularity of the Provisional IRA's attacks, but it had a lasting effect in that it convinced key members of the group's leadership that if it were to achieve its goals, the Provisional IRA had to abandon abstentionism and allow its elected representatives (from its political wing, Provisional Sinn Féin) to serve in the British and Irish parliaments – which it did, after some internal conflict, in 1986.<sup>160</sup> Meanwhile, the Provisional IRA had begun to receive funding and massive shipments of weapons from Libyan dictator Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi.<sup>161</sup> At the same time, though, the organization faced much stiffer opposition due to a combination of dramatically improved cooperation between the British and Irish governments, tougher British counterterrorism tactics, and violence from loyalist paramilitary groups.<sup>162</sup> Once again, an attempt was made in 1988 to engage in talks – this time through contacts between Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams and John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP – the

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<sup>157</sup> Smith, 145.

<sup>158</sup> Smith, 161-162.

<sup>159</sup> O'Brien, 123-128.

<sup>160</sup> O'Brien, 118-122, 130.

<sup>161</sup> O'Brien, 129.

<sup>162</sup> O'Brien, 162, 126; Smith, 118.

largest republican party in Northern Ireland, and the nonviolent alternative to Sinn Féin). But, again, this effort did not succeed.<sup>163</sup>

It would not be until the beginning of the 1990s that progress would finally start to be made toward getting the Provisional IRA to abandon violence and pursue its goals from within the confines of the Irish, Northern Irish, and British political systems. As the British government conducted talks between the major unionist and republican parties (to the deliberate exclusion of Sinn Féin), the Provisional IRA realized that it risked being left out of the negotiations that would shape the future of Northern Ireland's political system.<sup>164</sup> Thus, in 1992, the organization began making peace overtures; and, in 1993, again reached out to SDLP head John Hume.<sup>165</sup> Hume brought Adams and the Provisional IRA into negotiations with the British and Irish governments and, after lengthy talks, the organization declared a ceasefire in 1994.<sup>166</sup> Facilitated by the United States government via US Senator George Mitchell, progress toward a peace settlement would continue until 1996, when the Provisional IRA briefly called an end to the ceasefire and staged attacks in response to a report prepared by Mitchell calling for the decommissioning of all paramilitary forces as one of the requirements of a Northern Ireland peace agreement.<sup>167</sup> The Provisional IRA was, however, persuaded by a combination of internal voices (such as Adams) and external actors (the governments and republican parties involved) to return to the table – leading to a fourth and final ceasefire in 1997.<sup>168</sup> The negotiations that followed produced the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, bringing with it a new power-sharing

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<sup>163</sup> O'Brien, 172-175.

<sup>164</sup> O'Brien, 241.

<sup>165</sup> O'Brien, 224-227, 229-231.

<sup>166</sup> O'Brien, 323-324.

<sup>167</sup> O'Brien, 353-354

<sup>168</sup> O'Brien, 375

system for Northern Ireland, the decommissioning of most of its paramilitary organizations, and, in 2005, the official end of the Provisional IRA's armed campaign.<sup>169</sup>

## Organizational Structure

### *1969-1976*

Following its split with the Official IRA, the Provisional IRA adopted its predecessor's organizational structure: a hierarchically-ranked command structure, with operational units divided according to geographic location – a structure that dated back to the 1919-1921 Irish War of Independence, and was itself based on the organization of the British army.<sup>170</sup>

In theory, the highest authority in the Provisional IRA command structure was the Army Convention, a body made up of delegates from each of the local operational units, that was to convene every other year to elect the organization's Army Executive (in reality, the Convention was only assembled in 1969, 1970, and 1986 due to the risk of apprehension by the authorities).<sup>171</sup> Originally created as the (pre-division) IRA's top decision-making body, political infighting in the mid-1920's reduced the Army Executive to a 12-member advisory group that, in turn, elected the organization's actual leadership: the Army Council.<sup>172</sup>

The Army Council was itself made up of seven members, who were the most influential O/Cs (Officers in Command) out of the local operational units.<sup>173</sup> The Council would then

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<sup>169</sup> O'Brien, 385; See note 1 for 2005 secession of Provisional IRA campaign statement.

<sup>170</sup> Kelley, 137.

<sup>171</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *IRA Tactics and Targets: An Analysis of Tactical Aspects of the Armed Struggle 1969-1989* (Dublin, Ireland: Poolbeg Press, 1990) 12-13.

<sup>172</sup> Tom Mahon and James J. Gillogly, *Decoding The IRA* (Cork, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2008) 70-71.

<sup>173</sup> Bell, 13.

choose a Chief of Staff to serve as the organization's chief executive officer, to be supported by the staff of the Provisional IRA's General Headquarters (GHQ) based in Dublin.<sup>174</sup> According to Brendan O'Brien, this staff was made up of "eight departments, comprising the Quartermaster, and Directors of Engineering, Publicity, Operations, Finance, Intelligence, Security, and Training."<sup>175</sup>

Beneath this command structure were the operational units, divided into territorially-based brigades, battalions, and companies. (Note that while the traditional British military structure dictates that brigades are composed of battalions, which themselves are composed of companies, the IRA structure was less formal, with battalions and companies sometimes existing independent of brigades. On some occasions, whether a unit was termed a "brigade," "battalion," or "company" might depend on how many members it had, rather than who it reported to.)<sup>176</sup> Kevin Kelley provides an illustrative example in his description of the composition of the Belfast Brigade, circa 1970:

The Belfast Brigade consisted of three separate battalions, each of which included several companies. The battalions were organized according to geographical area, with the First Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Provisional IRA, encompassing the Upper Falls neighbourhood, the Ballymurphy housing project and the outlying section of west Belfast around the Glen and Falls Roads known as Andersontown. The Second Battalion operated in a sector closer to the city centre – the Lower Falls and Clonard, both of which were densely populated neighbourhoods with street after street of terraced houses. The 7,000-resident Divis Flats project, a collection of high-rise apartment blocks and some multi-family houses, also fell within the area of operations for the Second Battalion. The Provos' Third Battalion in the city covered nationalist neighbourhoods that were not included in either of the other two battalions' jurisdiction. Isolated and vulnerable Catholic communities, like the Ardoyne in north Belfast and the Short Strand in the overwhelmingly Protestant eastern half of the city, were the responsibility of the Third Battalion.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> O'Brien, 106

<sup>175</sup> O'Brien, 158

<sup>176</sup> Mahon and Gillogly, 68

<sup>177</sup> Kelley, 137.

These battalions held a mix of active operatives (“volunteers”) and reserve members (“auxiliaries”) who were available for lesser tasks and neighborhood defense.<sup>178</sup> Beneath the battalion-level, each company was composed of 10-30 operatives.<sup>179</sup>

This organizational structure, with its Dublin-based leadership and military-style groupings of the operational units, served through the most violent years of the Provisional IRA’s existence, as well as the collapse of Northern Ireland’s parliament in 1972 and two rounds of talks with officials from the British government (in 1972 and 1975).<sup>180</sup> And, yet, the diminishing security of its safe havens in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland forced the Provisional IRA to make major changes to its organizational structure and general strategy in 1977 in order to avoid defeat by the British authorities.

## *1977-1997*

In 1977, with the arrest of Chief of Staff Seamus Twomey, Irish authorities came into possession of an internal GHQ document called the Staff Report that detailed a wide-ranging structural reorganization and strategic reorientation of the Provisional IRA.<sup>181</sup> In terms of organizational structure, the Staff Report called for two major changes: the creation of distinct Northern and Southern Commands; and the replacement of the geographically-divided, military-style brigade/battalion/company hierarchy with a more cellular, functionally-divided system of Active Service Units (ASUs).

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<sup>178</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys’ Rules: The SAD and the Secret Struggle Against the IRA* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1992) 30.

<sup>179</sup> Urban, 30.

<sup>180</sup> M.L.R. Smith, 155

<sup>181</sup> Kelley, 284; Smith, 145.



Placed beneath the Army Council, but above the operational units in terms of the Provisional IRA's hierarchy, the Northern and Southern Commands represented a shift away from the control of the Dublin-based GHQ and toward greater autonomy for the O/Cs based in Northern Ireland. With units in 21 counties across the Republic of Ireland (in particular, those based in Dublin), the Southern Command would provide logistical support; while the Northern Command, with units in the 11 counties of Northern Ireland would be primarily in charge of carrying out attacks.<sup>182</sup> Meanwhile, operations outside of Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland (such as in the rest of Britain or Continental Europe) would be mainly directed by the GHQ itself using operatives from either Command and/or local personnel.<sup>183</sup>

Regarding the ASUs, Kelley writes that the Staff Report called for "three- or four- person units specializing in a particular type of operation. Intelligence-gathering, sniping, bombing, executions and robberies, were among the specific tasks to be performed by the cells."<sup>184</sup> O'Brien, however, notes that ASUs tended to have five to eight members, and occasionally overlap in membership.<sup>185</sup> Regardless, the structure of the ASU was a direct response to the success of the British government in infiltrating the Provisional IRA's ranks and in interrogating its members. For the sake of organizational security, each ASU cell was to have only one member who was in contact with the rest of the organization, and the cells were only permitted to have access to weapons on a short-term basis to prevent them from undertaking unauthorized operations (particularly, purely sectarian revenge attacks).<sup>186</sup> Kelley further notes, though, that as of 1983 (the time of writing), the ASU system remained both controversial in the organization

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<sup>182</sup> O'Brien, 158.

<sup>183</sup> O'Brien, 158.

<sup>184</sup> Kelley, 284.

<sup>185</sup> O'Brien, 158.

<sup>186</sup> Kelley, 284-285.

and less than impenetrable. For one thing, while removing the units' territorial basis restricted the authorities' ability to track them down following an incident, it also meant that the ASUs were less likely to be able to draw upon local area knowledge and connections.<sup>187</sup> For another, it was impossible to fully cut the ties between the operatives in the ASUs and their fellow nationalists, their communities, and individuals in other ASUs (in fact, in some particularly pro-nationalist neighborhoods, the cellular reorganization was never fully implemented).<sup>188</sup>

The shift to the ASU system (as well as a concomitant reduction in the number of Provisional IRA operatives) resulted in a reduced frequency of attacks; lessened the control that the leadership had over its operatives; and separated the operatives from the larger nationalist community, reducing their ability to mobilize support.<sup>189</sup> But nevertheless, it did reduce the authorities' ability to apprehend Provisional IRA operatives and disrupt their activities – Smith reports that “In 1978, there were 465 fewer charges for paramilitary offenses than the previous year.”<sup>190</sup> And the Provisional IRA would continue to be active for another 20 years, only ceasing operations as a result of the Good Friday Agreement.

## **Safe Haven Conditions**

### *Northern Ireland*

The very nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland produced favorable conditions for the establishment of Provisional IRA safe havens throughout the six-county region. As Catholic civil rights protesters came under attack from Protestant police and paramilitaries in 1968, and

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<sup>187</sup> Kelley, 284.

<sup>188</sup> Kelley, 285.

<sup>189</sup> Smith 145, 155; O'Brien, 161-162.

<sup>190</sup> Smith, 145.

these attacks led to sectarian riots, Catholic communities in the North became desperate for protection from the authorities and loyalist gangs. In large part, the Provisional IRA split off from the rest of the Southern-based organization (soon to be called the Official IRA) to defend these communities – which, naturally, soon became safe havens from which their defenders could operate.

In the early part of the Troubles (1969-1972) the creation of these Northern safe havens was unintentionally aided by British government policy. While, by this time, the British government had become convinced that it was necessary to send in troops in order to stabilize the situation, it was also convinced that these troops should have as small a role as possible – serving merely as peacekeepers to stand between the warring groups. Lest they be seen as enforcers for Northern Ireland’s unionist parliament, and thereby complicate the British government’s efforts to forge a peace agreement between the unionist and nationalist factions, the troops were to generally stay out of designated “no go” Catholic neighborhoods in Belfast and Derry-City.<sup>191</sup> Peter Neumann writes that when they did venture into these areas, it was to be only with “the approval of so-called community leaders who often turned out to be the commanders of local IRA units.”<sup>192</sup>

This policy would work out exceedingly poorly for both the British troops and the effort to put an end to the Northern Ireland conflict. For the Provisional IRA leadership, the troops represented an ideal target: they were a symbol of the British state while also being separate from Northern Ireland’s majority-Protestant institutions, thus attacking them could further the group’s irredentist aims while also avoiding the unionist accusations that they were a sectarian organization bent on destroying the Protestant community. (It should be noted that, at lower

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<sup>191</sup> Neumann, 52

<sup>192</sup> Neumann, 56.

levels, the Provisional IRA could be much more sectarian than its leaders intended – throughout the group’s existence, a persistent source of tension was the leadership’s belief that a united Ireland could only be achieved by appealing to the North’s Protestants, while many of its operatives had joined out of a desire to avenge Protestant attacks on the Catholic community.)<sup>193</sup> At the same time, the “no go” areas provided places where they could hide, recruit operatives, distribute propaganda, store weapons, and plan ever more spectacular attacks – activities aided by the organization’s hierarchical structure. As a result, the number of Provisional IRA attacks increased dramatically through the 1970 to 1972 period.<sup>194</sup>

The British government quickly realized that the Provisional IRA were using the “no go” areas as safe havens, but feared that retaking these neighborhoods would alienate the Catholic population and further inflame the conflict.<sup>195</sup> This changed, however, on July 21, 1972, when the Provisional IRA set off 21 explosions in Belfast city center within a 75-minute period, killing two British soldiers and seven civilians.<sup>196</sup> While impressive from a tactical standpoint, the attack was a public relations disaster, drawing fury from both the Protestant and Catholic populations.<sup>197</sup> Taking advantage of the opportunity, the British military launched “Operation Motorman,” sending 31,000 troops to take control of the “no go” areas.<sup>198</sup> According to Smith, the Provisional IRA saw any attempt to resist the army as futile, and “Motorman... broke up the hard core of [Provisional IRA] operatives in Belfast and Derry, most of whom were dispersed

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<sup>193</sup> Smith, 98.

<sup>194</sup> According to Smith, 1970 saw 153 bombings; while 1971 saw 1,756 shootings, 1,515 bombings, and 174 deaths; and 1972 saw 10,628 shootings, 1,853 bombings, and 467 deaths. Source: Smith, 95.

<sup>195</sup> Neumann, 78-79.

<sup>196</sup> Kelley, 183; Neumann, 79.

<sup>197</sup> Neumann, 79.

<sup>198</sup> Neumann, 79-80.

into the countryside or over the border.”<sup>199</sup> As a result of the loss of these safe havens, the number of attacks carried out by the Provisional IRA quickly plummeted and would never again return to the level seen in 1972.<sup>200</sup>

But while the loss of the “no go” areas severely restricted the Provisional IRA’s freedom to operate, the group retained its role as the protector of the North’s embattled Catholic communities – and therefore could still count on some protection by the locals throughout the duration of the conflict. In a 1989 study of Belfast’s Divis Flats ghetto, anthropologist Jeffrey Sluka found that while only 46.5 percent of the residents claimed to be supporters of the Provisional IRA and/or fellow nationalist group the Irish National Liberation Army (compared to 46.6 percent not being supporters and the remainder responding “mixed feelings” or “no comment”); nevertheless 83.7 percent said that the community needed the groups to provide it with protection from loyalist paramilitaries and the authorities; 76.9 percent said that the groups were needed to police criminal behavior in the neighborhood; 69 percent said they supported the groups’ goal of a united Ireland; 55 percent said that the only means to achieve a united Ireland was armed struggle; and 69.9 percent reported that they did not feel threatened, afraid or intimidated by the groups<sup>201</sup> Following further interviews, Sluka writes that while he found some respondents to be providers of “hard support” for the groups (in that they were members or willing to actively aid them), many more were “soft supporters” who would allow them to conduct their activities in the ghetto without interference.<sup>202</sup> As noted above in the discussion of the post-1977 organizational structure of the Provisional IRA, this kind of support made it

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<sup>199</sup> Smith, 110.

<sup>200</sup> Smith, 110.

<sup>201</sup> Jeffrey A. Sluka, *Hearts and Minds, Water and Fish: Support for the IRA and INLA in a Northern Irish Ghetto* (Greenwich, CT: Jai Press, 1989) 290-291, 144.

<sup>202</sup> Sluka, 293-294.

possible for the group to survive even in those areas where the ASU model was not fully implemented.<sup>203</sup>

### *The Republic of Ireland*

Throughout the course of the conflict in Northern Ireland, the government of the Republic of Ireland refused to provide support to the Provisional IRA and the other nationalist groups, and consistently stated its rejection of the use of violence to achieve unification. But at times in the conflict – particularly during the early violence in 1968-1973 and the 1980-1981 hunger strikes – its ability to take action against Provisional IRA activities within its borders (that is, logistical operations and the preparation of attacks against targets outside the Republic) was limited by pro-nationalist public sentiment. It was the gradual, steady erosion of this sentiment by mounting violence in the North, and rising economic and human tolls for the people of the South, that eventually allowed the Republic to both undertake harsher domestic counterterrorism policies and forge the diplomatic agreements with the British government that succeeded in bringing the bulk of the conflict to an end. As regards the Republic's utility as a safe haven for the Provisional IRA, then, the group was able to take shelter in the South throughout its active life (to an extent), but found itself under mounting pressure beginning in the mid-1970s.

Even before the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland in 1968, the amount of cooperation between the Northern and Southern governments was minimal. Indeed, the very first meeting of the heads of government for the North and the South was not until 1965, between Northern Prime Minister Captain Terence O'Neill and Southern Taoiseach (prime minister of the

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<sup>203</sup> Kelley, 285

Republic of Ireland) Seán Lemass, and it was only after this meeting that a system of formal intergovernmental contacts was established.<sup>204</sup> Furthermore, these contacts were almost exclusively focused on economic relations and technocratic issues (such as installing an electricity interconnector between the North and South to make the distribution of power across the island more efficient).<sup>205</sup>

By 1967, these limited exercises in cooperation had already been stymied by pressure on the O'Neill government from loyalist hardliners, and were soon to be wiped out by 1968's attacks on Catholic civil rights protesters by the North's Royal Ulster Constabulary and pro-union paramilitaries.<sup>206</sup> In the South, the outbreak of violence saddled the government with a dilemma: on the one hand, the goal of reunification had near-universal support and the overwhelmingly (96 percent) Catholic population wished to defend its co-religionists in the North; on the other, the government desperately wanted to avoid being drawn into a military conflict (whether through a sectarian civil war, the spillover of violence into the South, or a confrontation with British forces) and had been working toward improving its relations with Britain as a means of achieving economic development and gaining membership in the European Economic Community (EEC).<sup>207</sup> The situation was particularly tense, as the leading party in the government's coalition was Fianna Fáil, which had been established by Eamon de Valera in 1926 in specific opposition to the partition of Ireland.<sup>208</sup> Further complicating matters was the British government's refusal to engage the South in any kind of diplomatic talks on the basis that

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<sup>204</sup> Etain Tannam, *Cross-Border Cooperation in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan Press, 1999) 49-50, 53-57.

<sup>205</sup> Tannam, 53.

<sup>206</sup> Tannam, 62-63.

<sup>207</sup> A.S. Cohan, "The Question of a United Ireland: Perspectives of the Irish Political Elite," *International Affairs*, 53.2 (Apr. 1977) 232, 236; Fanning, 73-74, 69-70.

<sup>208</sup> Fanning, 62-63; Kelley, 53.

the violence in the North was an “internal matter” and that such talks would worsen the problem by aggravating the Northern loyalists.<sup>209</sup>

Apart from moving some military medical personnel to the border to provide care for possible refugees, and making a failed attempt to get the United Nations to intervene in the conflict, the Southern government’s official (if unspoken) policy became to do nothing lest they worsen the crisis.<sup>210</sup> This, however, did not sit well with the more nationalist parts of the population or Fianna Fáil. First on November 8, 1968, Southern Minister for Agriculture Neil Blaney broke with the government’s policy by publicly blasting the Northern prime minister in a speech in the town of Letterkenny.<sup>211</sup> Then on August 13, 1969, a call from pro-nationalist Northern Member of Parliament Bernadette Devlin to the Southern Department of Defense begging for military protection against loyalist attacks prompted an emergency cabinet meeting where Taoiseach Jack Lynch had to talk his colleagues out of launching an intervention.<sup>212</sup> An attempt by a trio of Northern MPs to get the Southern government to provide guns for the defense of Catholic areas was turned away on August 16, 1969, but scandal would hit the administration two months later when Finance Minister (and future Taoiseach) Charles Haughey was charged with being involved in a plot to procure guns for Northern IRA members (he and his alleged co-conspirators were later acquitted).<sup>213</sup> Kevin Kelley has written that several meetings occurred between Fianna Fáil members and Northern IRA operatives about whether the

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<sup>209</sup> Fanning, 60, 62.

<sup>210</sup> Fanning, 74, 76, 67.

<sup>211</sup> Fanning, 62-63.

<sup>212</sup> Fanning, 72-73.

<sup>213</sup> Fanning, 75; Kelley, 125.



South could provide money and/or weapons for Catholic groups in the North, but that none of these appear to have come to fruition.<sup>214</sup>

However, while the Southern government refused to actively support the groups that would go on to become the Provisional IRA, in the early part of the conflict it was also reluctant to be seen to be cooperating too closely with the British in countering its operations (as long as they were not directed at targets in the Republic). For example, in 1970 the Lynch government responded to a Provisional IRA plan to kidnap diplomats in the South by threatening to suspend habeas corpus and round up its suspected supporters; while in 1971, when the Northern parliament made the exact same threat and actually carried it out, the South responded by maintaining refugee camps for the thousands of Catholics who fled across the border.<sup>215</sup>

Likewise, the South refused to extradite Provisional IRA suspects (or others accused of having committed crimes of a “political nature”) to British courts.<sup>216</sup> Illustrative of the South’s dilemma at this time: George Clarke, a former member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary’s Special Branch (intelligence) service, writes in his memoirs that he regularly exchanged information with the Republic’s Garda Síochána Special Branch as they tracked Provisional IRA members across the border, but that this cooperation had to be kept secret as it was being done without the permission of the Southern government.<sup>217</sup> The sum result was that, in the first years of the Troubles, the Provisional IRA employed the South as a base for shelter and logistical support.

As the bloodshed mounted, though, and the situation in the North destabilized, the threat of spillover and the economic costs simply became too much for the Southern government. At

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<sup>214</sup> Kelley, 125-126.

<sup>215</sup> Kelley, 149, 159.

<sup>216</sup> Kelley, 209.

<sup>217</sup> George Clarke, *Border Crossing: True Stories of the RUC Special Branch, the Garda Special Branch and the IRA Moles* (Dublin, Ireland: Gill & Macmillan, 2009) 124.

the same time, the 1972 collapse of Northern Ireland's parliament, and the reintroduction of direct rule over the North by Westminster, eliminated one of the major barriers preventing the Republic of Ireland from entering into diplomatic talks with Britain. The South responded to all of this by taking a harder line against the Provisional IRA. In 1972, Southern authorities apprehended Provisional Sinn Féin President Ruari O'Bradaigh on the grounds that he was a member of the Provisional IRA, and followed this with the arrest of the organization's Chief of Staff Sean MacStiofain.<sup>218</sup> In 1973, the South entered into talks with Britain and Northern nationalist and unionist politicians in an attempt to develop a system for power-sharing and institutionalized cooperation – the resulting Sunningdale Agreement, however, did not include a provision for cooperation on law enforcement matters, and ended up being scuttled by major loyalist protests regardless.<sup>219</sup>

However, while the diplomatic process failed, the actions of the Provisional IRA itself served to make the South less hospitable to the organization. The 1976 assassination of the British ambassador to Ireland, Christopher Ewart Biggs, in Dublin, would finally prompt the Republic to stage a major crackdown.<sup>220</sup> It enacted the Emergency Powers Act, allowing it to detain suspects for seven days without bringing them to trial, and the Criminal Law Act, which expanded the power of officials (from the army, law enforcement, or prisons) to investigate crimes against the state and which called upon the courts to deal out more severe punishments.<sup>221</sup> At the same time, the Irish and British governments were finally developing formal institutions for cooperation on security issues. A 1980 agreement between Taoiseach Charles Haughey and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher resulted in a joint study on the two states' security issues (as

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<sup>218</sup> Kelley, 192-193.

<sup>219</sup> Tannam, 68-74.

<sup>220</sup> O'Brien, 172.

<sup>221</sup> Cohan, 240.

well as studies on other areas such as economic cooperation and citizenship rights), the creation of an Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council, and a plan to eventually create representative body employing MPs from the European Parliament, Britain, Ireland, and a future elected Northern Ireland assembly.<sup>222</sup> This progress was temporarily derailed by the surge in republican support that followed the hunger strikes of 1981-1982, but as Sinn Féin began to capitalize electorally from the strikes (threatening the Republic's more mainstream political parties), this threat pushed the two governments to achieve the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.<sup>223</sup> Besides providing a common position regarding Northern Ireland's sovereignty (the territory would remain part of the United Kingdom until such time as a majority of the population wished to become part of Ireland), the agreement established a joint secretariat of civil servants to support the Intergovernmental Council, created a regular Intergovernmental Conference to deal with cross-border issues, and explicitly included security as one of the areas to be subject to regular cooperation.<sup>224</sup> This agreement would pave the way to ever-deepening forms of cooperation, leading eventually to the Joint Framework Document of 1995, the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, and the St. Andrews Agreement of 2006 that would establish the supranational power-sharing institutions that would come to govern Northern Ireland, depriving the Provisional IRA of its shelter in the South and bringing the conflict to an end.

## **Alternative Factors**

The above sections show that the declining security of the Provisional IRA's safe havens in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland produced conditions in which the group's

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<sup>222</sup> Tannam, 75-76.

<sup>223</sup> Tannam, 77.

<sup>224</sup> Tannam, 78-80.

members faced a greater danger from arrest and interrogation, which in turn prompted it to make an organizational change from a very hierarchical structure to a more cellular structure. Or, in other words, as the goodness of fit between the Provisional IRA's organizational structure and its security situation was reduced, the group was faced with a decreasing likelihood of survival – and, perceiving this, underwent an organizational change. In the course of this progression from observed change in the independent variable (goodness of fit) to observed change in the dependent variable (survival), there are some possible alternative explanations that need to be addressed. The two discussions to follow will address these factors and demonstrate that, while they had some limited impact, they do not challenge the causal linkage between the independent and dependent variables.

### *Leadership Shift and Strategic Change*

The Provisional IRA Staff Report found with Seamus Twomey in 1977 called for not just an organizational restructuring of the group, but also a major strategic reorientation. Since its entry into the Northern Ireland conflict, the Provisional IRA had operated according to the assumption that if it simply inflicted enough destruction on the British authorities, it could force them to come to the negotiating table – at which time, they would decide that Northern Ireland was not worth the ongoing cost in blood and treasure, and cut the province loose (in other words, they would completely surrender).<sup>225</sup> By 1972, two of the group's objectives had been accomplished: Northern Ireland's parliament had fallen (with Westminster establishing direct rule of the Six Counties), and British officials were prepared to meet for negotiations.<sup>226</sup> But after meeting with the British twice, first during the ceasefire of 1972, then in the truce of 1975,

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<sup>225</sup> Smith, 95-98.

<sup>226</sup> Smith, 98-102, 105-109.

some members of the Provisional IRA leadership (and of the delegation to the talks) realized that, for all the damage it has caused, the group was simply too weak relative to the British army and could never force a surrender through military means alone.<sup>227</sup> Furthermore, the Provisional IRA had been declaring that each year was to be “the year of victory” for five years straight (1972-1977), which threatened to become demoralizing for its supporters.<sup>228</sup>

The new strategy held that the secession of Northern Ireland from Britain could only be achieved by mobilizing a mass political movement – and that while staging attacks would still be necessary for the sake of keeping the province’s political situation on the minds of the public, the violence would work in conjunction with building a broader-based socialist political platform able to attract individuals beyond its core of die hard republicans. In this, the degree of support for Provisional IRA’s movement would be demonstrated through the contesting of elections (but not serving in government) via the group’s political arm: Provisional Sinn Féin.<sup>229</sup>

Acknowledging that this effort to build a mass movement would of necessity be a very slow process, this strategy was called “the long war.”<sup>230</sup>

In conjunction with the Provisional IRA’s change in organization and strategy, it was also undergoing a shift in leadership at this time. As arrests chipped away at the older, Southern-based leadership, a younger, Northern, and more politically radical group led by Gerry Adams rose quickly through the ranks.<sup>231</sup> The shift in the organization’s strategy, and likely the division

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<sup>227</sup> Smith, 146-147.

<sup>228</sup> Smith, 135.

<sup>229</sup> Smith, 146-147.

<sup>230</sup> Urban, 27.

<sup>231</sup> Smith, 144. Note: Gerry Adams denies having been a member of the Provisional IRA, but many of the historians and journalists who have researched the organization contend that this is untrue. For example, O’Brien writes that Adams served as O/C Belfast, a member of the Army Council from the Northern Command, and Chief of Staff before becoming president of Sinn Féin (p. 113).

of the organization into Northern and Southern Commands reflected the thinking of this faction (M.L.R. Smith even goes to far as to claim that the Staff Report might have been written by Adams).<sup>232</sup>

However, while these factors did influence the Provisional IRA's organization, they do not explain why it underwent a change in its structural type. Rather than preceding the change in structure, the change in strategy was simultaneous and born out of the same cause: the group's declining capabilities resulting from the decreased security of its safe havens in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. As for the creation of the Northern and Southern Commands, this was less a change in organizational structure than an institutionalization of the de facto conditions in the Provisional IRA's leadership – while it made sharper the distinction between who would be in charge of combat (the Northern Command) and logistical support (the Southern Command), this functional split was merely a recognition of the realities on the ground (particularly given that, according to “Standing Order No. 8” of the Army Council, Southern forces were not to be targeted for fear of losing popular support in the Republic).<sup>233</sup>

### *Counterterrorism Tactics*

At the beginning of the 1970s, as the Provisional IRA's campaign of bombings and shootings was starting to take off, the British and Northern Irish authorities quickly realized that not only would quality intelligence be critical to apprehending the members of the organization and disrupting its operations, but also that their means of gathering it were sorely lacking. In his memoirs, Clarke paints a dire portrait of the state of intelligence gathering in the RUC Special Branch at this time, noting that few officers were well-educated or had much experiential

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<sup>232</sup> Smith, 145-147.

<sup>233</sup> Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Fontana/Collins: Glasgow, UK, 1987) 681

knowledge of the IRA, that a desperate rush to expand the group's ranks led to the recruitment of unethical or paramilitary-affiliated officers, and that it was plagued by a deficient and poorly organized records system (later reorganized by military intelligence officers from the British army).<sup>234</sup>

The authorities responded to this shortage of intelligence by flooding Northern Ireland with intelligence-gathering bodies. Some of these were preexisting: the RUC's Criminal Investigations Department (CID, in charge of interrogations) and Special Branch (in charge of informants), standard military intelligence, the Special Air Service, the Security Service (MI5) and the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6).<sup>235</sup> Others were created specifically to deal with the conflict: the army's 12 Intelligence and Security Company, the Special Military Intelligence Unit (Northern Ireland), the Mobile Reconnaissance Force, the Northern Ireland Training Advisory Team/Intelligence and Security Group/14 Intelligence Company (the army's elite surveillance group, so secretive that they kept changing its name to prevent it from gaining notoriety), the Northern Ireland Patrol Group/Close Observation Platoons, Bronze Section (the surveillance arm of the RUC's anti-terrorist unit, the Special Patrol Group), RUC Special Branch's E4A surveillance unit, and the RUC's Beesbrook Support Unit.<sup>236</sup> Mark Urban writes that "By mid-1978 an IRA suspect might have been under observation by men or women from one of 14 Company's three detachments, one of the four SAS troops in Northern Ireland, or the seven Army Close Observation Platoons, the Special Patrol Group's Bronze Section, or one of several squads from E4A."<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Clarke, 77-79.

<sup>235</sup> Urban, 20-22.

<sup>236</sup> Urban, 20-22, 35-39, 45-47.

<sup>237</sup> Urban, 47-48.

This, however, created a serious problem with coordination between the organizations, leading to rivalries, inefficiencies, and the disruption of one another's operations. As a result, the authorities' ability to successfully employ the intelligence they gathered was severely hampered. Using the discovery of republican weapon caches as an indicator of the effectiveness of the British/Northern Irish intelligence community, Urban writes that "In 1974, 465 rifles were found; in 1976, 275 and in 1978, 188. The amount of explosives dropped from 53,214lb in 1974 to 7966lb in 1978."<sup>238</sup>

There was, however, one counterterrorism innovation that was acknowledged by the Provisional IRA itself to have had an impact. The Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1974 extended the duration for which police could hold suspects without filing charges from 48 hours to a maximum of seven days (given the approval of the secretary of state).<sup>239</sup> According to the Provisional IRA Staff Report, the three- to seven-day detention periods were allowing the RUC to effectively interrogate captured operatives.<sup>240</sup> In addition, Urban writes that the longer detentions were supplemented by a centralization of responsibility for interrogation under the RUC's CID.<sup>241</sup> This allowed the interrogators to bring more information to bear in questioning a subject (on a darker note, Urban also claims that the CID was more permissive about beating confessions out of suspects).<sup>242</sup>

Thus, while many of the British/Northern Irish intelligence-gathering developments in the 1970s were ineffectual, and therefore unlikely to have persuaded the Provisional IRA's organizational change, the change in detention periods did have an influence. This, however,

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<sup>238</sup> Urban, 24.

<sup>239</sup> "Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974," Part III, Section 2, 1974. Available online: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/56/part/III/enacted>

<sup>240</sup> O'Brien, 109.

<sup>241</sup> Urban, 29.

<sup>242</sup> Urban, 29.



went hand-in-hand with the reduced security of the organization's safe havens and followed, rather than preceded, the beginning of the decline in the number of attacks carried out by the Provisional IRA after its 1972 high-point.<sup>243</sup> While the change in interrogation policy might have helped push the Provisional IRA toward changing its organizational structure, it was merely augmenting a pattern of decline that had begun with the loss of its "no-go areas" in 1972.

## Conclusion and Notes

The case of the Provisional IRA supports the hypothesis that a causal relationship exists between the goodness of fit between a terrorist group's organizational structure and environmental security (on the one hand) and its survival (on the other). Originally established as a group with a hierarchical, bureaucratic structure based on a military model, the Provisional IRA proved to be both very deadly and (to an extent) successful at achieving its ends while it was in possession of safe havens in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. However, as the security of these safe havens decreased, the Provisional IRA found itself more vulnerable to disruption, resulting in a higher number of arrests of its operatives and a lower number of attacks. Recognizing that the group's organizational structure was ill-suited to its new security environment, the Provisional IRA underwent a structural change to a more cellular-based system, thereby dramatically reducing the number of arrests and remaining active for another 20 years. And this proposed linkage between the goodness of fit and group survival was shown to more

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<sup>243</sup> Compared to the 10,628 shootings and 1,853 bombings in 1972, 1973 saw 5,018 shootings and 978 bombings, while 1974 saw 3,206 shootings and 685 bombings. Source: Smith, 95, 129.

closely correspond to the sequence of events in the case than the possible alternative explanations of changes in leadership, strategy, and counterterrorism techniques.

The cases to follow will examine the histories of one more group predicted to feature a “good fit” between its organizational structure and security environment (Italy’s Red Brigades), and two groups predicted to have “bad fits” (Germany’s Red Army Faction and the United States’ Weathermen/Weather Underground). These groups will, likewise, be examined for possible intervening variables and organizational change, and their performance (in terms of number of attacks, goals met, and survival) will be discussed.

## Chapter 4: The Red Brigades

### **Chapter Objective and Structure**

As in the previous chapter, this chapter will use the method of process tracing to examine the question of whether the “goodness of fit” between a terrorist group’s organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven served to impact its survival and effectiveness. Toward this end, it will employ the same structure: first, by presenting an analysis of how closely the history of the Red Brigades matches the predictions of the hypothesis; second, by providing the historical context surrounding this case; third, by describing the organizational structure of the Red Brigades; fourth, by describing the Red Brigades’ access to international and domestic safe havens (or the lack thereof); fifth, by examining any possible intervening variables that should be taken into account; and finally, by concluding with a summary of its findings and some possible implications for the other cases in this dissertation.

### **Analytical Overview**

The history of the Red Brigades stands in support of many of the predicted results for a “good fit” scenario between a cellular-network organizational structure and an insecure political environment (an environment without a safe haven) – although how closely it corresponds to some other predictions only becomes apparent through comparison with the other cases in this work (see Chapter Seven). According to the hypothesis, the predicted outcome is that a cellular-network – with its compartmentalized and largely independent cells – should prove more resistant to government attempts at infiltration and disruption, but at the cost of also being more

difficult for the group's leadership to coordinate and control. The expected result, then, is that in an environment without a safe haven, the increased longevity provided by a cellular-network's greater internal security will make it far more effective at pursuing its goals than would be the case for a hierarchical group (although, in an environment with a safe haven, a cellular-network group should be less effective than a hierarchical group).

In support of this prediction, the Red Brigades, despite lacking a safe haven, and despite conducting very high profile attacks such as the 1978 kidnapping and assassination of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, nevertheless still managed to survive for 13 years (1970-1983; or 1970-1988 if one counts the smaller splinter groups that remained at large after the larger organization's demise).<sup>244</sup> Furthermore, the Red Brigades managed to survive and carry out major attacks despite repeatedly losing prominent members of the group's leadership to death or capture (including almost all the group's original leadership in 1974-1975).<sup>245</sup>

The conclusion that the Red Brigades' cellular-network structure helped it survive despite the lack of a safe haven is further supported by the fact that the group's demise was precipitated by a shift in its organization to a more hierarchical form. Following the loss of the original leadership, the Red Brigades underwent an organizational change that placed more formal control in the hands of central coordinating bodies (the executive committee and strategic management – see “Organizational Structure” for more information).<sup>246</sup> As the central bodies sought to exert more and more control over the rest of the organization, splits arose between the top leadership and lower-level commanders – the eventual results being, first, that when one of

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<sup>244</sup> Robert C. Meade, Jr. *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1990) 42, 101, 167, 233, 238.

<sup>245</sup> Meade, 60-62, 74-76

<sup>246</sup> Meade, 61-62

these commanders (Patrizio Peci) was captured by the authorities, he was able to reveal a devastating amount of information about the rest of the organization; and second, that regional units began to rebel against the top leadership, leading to the group's collapse into rival factions.<sup>247</sup>

However, there is a slight counterpoint to be made regarding the argument that being a “good fit” with its political environment made the Red Brigades more effective: While establishing a cellular-network structure made the organization more secure, the tight compartmentalization also served to distance its operatives from the masses that they were seeking to mobilize.<sup>248</sup> Also, the question of whether the combination of a cellular-network group without safe haven truly represents a better fit between organization and environment than that of a cellular-network group with a safe haven, or whether the possession of a safe haven simply benefits groups regardless of organizational structure, can only be answered through Chapter Seven's cross-case comparison.

## Background

The Red Brigades were founded in Milan, Italy in 1970 by former student activists Renato Curcio, Margherita Cagol, and Alberto Francheschini.<sup>249</sup> Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, Italy had undergone a rapid period of industrialization that brought considerably higher living standards, but also a massive migration of workers from rural and southern parts of Italy to

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<sup>247</sup> Meade, 193-194, 201-206

<sup>248</sup> Carol Beebe Tarantelli, “The Italian Red Brigades and the Structure and Dynamics of Terrorist Groups,” *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91 (2010) 555-557; Meade, 62

<sup>249</sup> Meade, 41-42

the industrial urban centers of the north.<sup>250</sup> This development not only brought major cultural changes for the migrants (disrupting traditional family networks, belief systems, and patterns of work), but also put serious strain on the capacity of the national and local governments to provide public services – particularly in areas such as higher education and housing.<sup>251</sup> By the mid- and late-1960's, the result was an intense and often violent period of political activism – whether in the form of clashes between police and striking workers, demonstrations by student activists that turned into riots, or bombings by neo-fascist terrorist groups.<sup>252</sup> Concurrent with this strife, the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) had broken ranks with the Soviet Union over the USSR's 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, announced that it would no longer seek the overthrow of the Italian government, and undertaken the process of becoming a mainstream political party.<sup>253</sup> This change led its former supporters on the far-left to accuse the PCI (and its allied trade unions) of betraying the communist cause and of selling out to the state and its capitalist interests.

In reaction to the PCI's change of policy, the persistently high amount of political violence raging around them, and a fear that fascist forces might come to power, the founders of the Red Brigades concluded that the time for a Marxist revolution was drawing near and that they would be the “revolutionary vanguard” that would build the movement to eventually overthrow the state.<sup>254</sup> To this end, they began with firebombing the car of an executive of the Sit-Siemens corporation, as well as some company trucks owned by the tire manufacturers,

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<sup>250</sup> Alessandro Orsini, *Anatomy of the Red Brigades: The Religious Mind-Set of Modern Terrorists* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY, 2011) 94-97.

<sup>251</sup> Orsini, 94-99

<sup>252</sup> Orsini, 99-108

<sup>253</sup> Roberto Bartali, “Red Brigades (1969-1974): An Italian Phenomenon and a Product of the Cold War,” *Modern Italy* 12.3 (Nov. 2007) 358-359

<sup>254</sup> Orsini, 54

Pirelli – all while distributing propaganda to attempt to mobilize the firms’ workers.<sup>255</sup> Then, starting in 1972, they began to carry out kidnappings of company officials, in order to finance the organization, and set about establishing a cell in Turin.<sup>256</sup> But, that year, they also suffered their first major setback: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, a publishing tycoon and leader of a Marxist terrorist organization called the Groups of Partisan Action, accidentally blew himself up while attempting to bomb a high-tension pylon in Milan.<sup>257</sup> While Feltrinelli was not a member of the Red Brigades, he had had regular contact with the group, and the ensuing police investigation led to the arrests of some of its members and the loss of a number of safe houses and other resources.<sup>258</sup> While most of the arrested members would only be in jail for a few months, the incident scared the leadership of the Red Brigades into adopting strict new security policies, making the organization more difficult to disrupt (but also reducing its members’ contact with the workers that they were trying to mobilize and, indeed, most of the rest of the world).<sup>259</sup>

Throughout 1973 and 1974, the Red Brigades kidnapped several more executives, as well as Mario Sossi (a right-wing judge unpopular among leftist groups for his harsh sentences).<sup>260</sup> But the group ran into a far more serious snag on September 8, 1974, when a police sting operation resulted in more arrests and the loss of more resources – most damagingly, the arrest of key members Renato Curcio, Alberto Franceschini, and Alfredo Bonavita.<sup>261</sup> These arrests would both serve to centralize the Red Brigades’ leadership into a more hierarchical form under the group’s remaining members (bringing about the formal system of columns and fronts, and

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<sup>255</sup> Meade, 42

<sup>256</sup> Meade, 43-44

<sup>257</sup> Meade, 48

<sup>258</sup> Meade, 49-50

<sup>259</sup> Meade, 50-51

<sup>260</sup> Meade, 52-53

<sup>261</sup> Meade, 58-61

the creation of the executive committee and strategic management – all described in the next section), and to harden its tactics.<sup>262</sup> In 1975, the organization took to shooting targets in the knees (“knee-capping”) as a signature technique for terrorizing those it viewed as enemies.<sup>263</sup> Also that year, the Red Brigades successfully broke Curcio out of jail and published its first Strategic Resolution (a long statement of purpose written by the strategic management) – but also suffered another severe loss when Margherita Cagol was killed in a gunfight with the carabinieri (Italian paramilitary police) during the successful rescue of another kidnapping victim.<sup>264</sup> Soon, this was followed by the re-capture of Curcio, along with another Red Brigades member.<sup>265</sup>

With 23 Red Brigadists, including much of the group’s original leadership, on trial in 1976, the group looked from the outside to be on its last legs (indeed, Meade writes that it only had “about 15 regular members left”) – but it had actually come under a new, more ruthless leadership headed by Mario Moretti.<sup>266</sup> This was soon demonstrated through the assassination of Prosecutor General Francesco Coco, along with his bodyguard and driver.<sup>267</sup> Meanwhile, the trial of the Red Brigadists had fallen into a shambles as the defendants disrupted the proceedings for political speeches inside the court, while the rest of the group intimidated potential public defenders from outside it (which, due to the rules of the Italian legal system, served to delay the trial).<sup>268</sup> Throughout 1977, the Red Brigades killed a policeman, a journalist, and the head of the

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<sup>262</sup> Meade, 61-62

<sup>263</sup> Meade, 64

<sup>264</sup> Meade, 64-67

<sup>265</sup> Meade, 68

<sup>266</sup> Meade, 74-76

<sup>267</sup> Meade, 73-74

<sup>268</sup> Meade, 77



Order of Attorneys of Turin (who was in charge of selecting the public defender for the Brigadists on trial), while also wounding 20 other public, business, and media officials.<sup>269</sup>

Next would come the Red Brigades' most famous operation, and the one that would trigger the group's eventual decline. On March 16, 1978, the Red Brigades kidnapped president of the Christian Democratic Party and former prime minister Aldo Moro, killing two carabinieri and three police officers in the process.<sup>270</sup> In an attempt to free its jailed comrades, as well as publicize its cause, the Red Brigades held Moro prisoner for 54 days before finally assassinating him (after concluding that the Italian government would never agree to a "prisoner exchange").<sup>271</sup> The incident achieved a significant boost in publicity and recruitment for the Red Brigades, but engendered the beginning of a large-scale public backlash against the group and a major crackdown by the Italian authorities.<sup>272</sup> A 1975 law had already increased the length of time suspects could be held without trial, the powers of police to search suspicious persons and vehicles, and the circumstances under which an officer could use a gun in the line of duty; and a 1977 change in prison policy had tightened the security around jailed terrorists.<sup>273</sup> But 1978 brought a law that permitted the interrogation of suspects without the presence of legal counsel, loosened the restrictions on wiretapping, and required that anyone who sold or rented a house report the identities of the buyer/renter within 48 hours after the deal was concluded.<sup>274</sup> Most importantly, the Italian government established a national anti-terrorism squad under carabinieri General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa charged specifically with hunting down the Red Brigades.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Meade, 96

<sup>270</sup> Meade, 101-103

<sup>271</sup> Meade, 132, 171, 174

<sup>272</sup> Meade, 168

<sup>273</sup> Meade, 179-180

<sup>274</sup> Meade, 181

<sup>275</sup> Meade, 55, 181-182

In 1978-1979, the Red Brigades became still more violent, carrying out a wave of kidnappings and assassinations. This, however, backfired in two important ways. First, the Red Brigades killed Guido Rossa – a factory worker, union delegate and Communist Party member who had been targeted for turning in a Brigadist who had been distributing the group’s propaganda.<sup>276</sup> The result was a huge demonstration against the Red Brigades by the very workers they were trying to mobilize (Meade estimates that 200-250,000 people attended Rossa’s funeral).<sup>277</sup> The second problem was that the increased emphasis on violence led to a split within the ranks of the Red Brigades itself, as regulars in the Rome column (and participants in the Moro kidnapping), Valerio Morucci and Adriana Faranda left the group with a handful of other defectors and a cache of the organization’s weapons, money, and documents.<sup>278</sup> Arrested shortly after leaving the Red Brigades, jail did not prevent Morucci and Faranda from airing their criticisms of the leadership’s authoritarianism and militarism following its transition to the more hierarchical organizational structure, and a war of words erupted between them and the previously imprisoned Brigadists (led by Curcio).<sup>279</sup>

This growing dissent within its ranks would lead to the Red Brigades’ ultimate (if not immediate) undoing. In 1980, a tip from an informant among the group’s irregulars led to the arrest of two more high-ranking members.<sup>280</sup> This loss would have been bad enough, but as it turned out, one of the Brigadists, former Turin column logistical head Patrizio Peci, both had extensive knowledge about the organization and had been losing faith in its mission.<sup>281</sup> Peci’s confession provided the Italian authorities with a wealth of information about the organizational

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<sup>276</sup> Meade, 187

<sup>277</sup> Meade, 188

<sup>278</sup> Meade, 106, 188-189

<sup>279</sup> Meade, 188-189

<sup>280</sup> Meade, 193

<sup>281</sup> Meade, 194

structure of the Red Brigades, the group's membership, its resources, and its operations – resulting in the arrests of 85 members, the loss of many safe houses, and the destruction or crippling of every column (territorial division) except the one based in Rome.<sup>282</sup>

The Red Brigades continued its campaign of assassinations and knee-cappings, even scoring a small victory in 1980 when the kidnapping of Ministry of Justice magistrate Giovanni D'Urso led to the closing of Asinara prison (although the Italian authorities claimed that they had been planning to close it before the kidnapping).<sup>283</sup> But the split between the Moretti-led executive committee and the critics who complained that it was emphasizing tactical operations over popular mobilization continued to grow. Shortly after being rebuilt by the executive committee (following the damage done by Peci's confessions), the new Milan column split from the rest of the organization – and in the process of building a second, orthodox Milan column in 1981, Moretti was finally arrested.<sup>284</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Naples column, led by Giovanni Senzani also broke with the executive committee, kidnapping Christian Democrat official Ciro Cirillo in an unsanctioned operation.<sup>285</sup> Lest they look weak compared to the dissenters, the original leadership had the Veneto column kidnap executive Giuseppe Taliercio.<sup>286</sup> A few months later, the rogue Milan column kidnapped an executive from Alfa Romeo; while, in Rome, supporters of Senzani's faction kidnapped Roberto Peci (in revenge against his brother Patrizio). Of these kidnappings, Cirillo and the Alfa Romeo executive were released, the former after the receipt of a large ransom from the Christian Democrats, while Taliercio and Roberto

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<sup>282</sup> Meade, 194

<sup>283</sup> Meade, 200

<sup>284</sup> Meade, 201-202

<sup>285</sup> Meade, 203

<sup>286</sup> Meade, 203

Peci were assassinated (the latter on film, and in particularly brutal fashion).<sup>287</sup> The sum result of all these kidnappings was a political loss for both factions, with Taliercio's and Peci's assassinations only further alienating the working class groups that the Red Brigades were trying to mobilize, and the outcome of Cirillo's kidnapping making Senzani and his supporters look like mercenaries.<sup>288</sup> This was capped off with each faction releasing its own strategic resolution claiming to speak for the Red Brigades as a whole.<sup>289</sup>

In an attempt to regain some measure of public support, the strategic resolution of the Red Brigades' orthodox faction declared that it was joining the growing trans-European movement in opposition to NATO and the stationing of nuclear missiles in Western Europe.<sup>290</sup> Toward this end, the group kidnapped NATO General James Dozier on December 17, 1981.<sup>291</sup> However, after only slightly more than a month, the Italian authorities managed to find where Dozier was being held, rescue him, and capture four more Brigadists without firing a shot, including then-group leader Antonio Savasta.<sup>292</sup>

In 1982, with the Red Brigades split and most of the group's leadership captured, the Italian parliament enacted a law that reduced the prison sentences of captured terrorists who cooperated with the government (with greater and more valuable cooperation, as judged by the authorities, leading to greater reductions).<sup>293</sup> In combination with the pre-existing philosophical divisions among its members, the law succeeded in shattering the Red Brigades, leading to the

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<sup>287</sup> Meade, 204-205

<sup>288</sup> Meade, 204-205

<sup>289</sup> Meade, 205-206

<sup>290</sup> Meade, 205

<sup>291</sup> Meade, 206

<sup>292</sup> Meade, 206

<sup>293</sup> Meade, 213-214

capture, surrender or desertion of most of the outstanding operatives by 1983.<sup>294</sup> By 1985, the few remaining active Red Brigades members had formally split into two competing groups: the “Fighting Communist Party” and the “Union of Fighting Communists.”<sup>295</sup> Nevertheless, despite this division and their severely reduced numbers, these rump groups managed to assassinate US diplomat Leamon Hunt, economics professor Ezio Tarantelli, former mayor of Florence Lando Conti, two policemen, Italian air force general Licio Giorgieri, and Christian Democratic senator Roberto Ruffilli in the period from 1984 to 1988.<sup>296</sup> Likewise, a small successor group called the BR-PCC (Brigate Rosse – per la Costituzione del Partito Comunista Combattente) assassinated labor consultants Massimo D’Antona in 1999 and Marco Biagi in 2002 before being arrested by the Italian police in 2003.<sup>297</sup>

## Organizational Structure

The Red Brigades were organized in a cellular-network structure inspired by Vladimir Lenin’s concept of a revolutionary vanguard (a small group of individuals whose actions mobilize the larger working class into overthrowing the capital-owner-dominated government); and were modeled on contemporaneous Marxist groups such as Uruguay’s Tupamaros, as well as the Italian anti-fascist resistance movement of the Second World War.<sup>298</sup> (An additional factor that might have contributed to this choice of model is the fact that, before the group’s creation,

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<sup>294</sup> Meade, 232-233

<sup>295</sup> Meade, 239

<sup>296</sup> Meade, 237-238

<sup>297</sup> Victor H. Sundquist, “Political Terrorism: An Historical Case Study of the Italian Red Brigades,” *Journal of Strategic Security*, 3.3 (Fall 2010) 61-62.

<sup>298</sup> Orsini, 54; Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2003) 362; Alessandro Silj, *Never Again Without a Rifle: The Origins of Italian Terrorism* (Karz Publishers: New York, 1979) 72-73.

some of its founding members were given guerrilla training by Soviet-sponsored camps in Czechoslovakia.<sup>299</sup>)

Beginning in 1970, the Red Brigades were confined to a single cell based in Milan (which later came to be known as the “historic nucleus”).<sup>300</sup> After a series of arrests and raids by the authorities on the group’s safe houses in 1972 (brought on by the death of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the cell went underground and tightened its security procedures.<sup>301</sup> By 1974, as further cells were established (or were in the process of being established) in Turin, the Veneto, Rome and Genoa, the organization developed a formal network structure for horizontal and vertical coordination.<sup>302</sup> The basic component part of this network was the individual “brigade,” a cell made up of one to five operatives, most of whom were “irregulars” (who worked part-time for the organization, as compared to the full-time “regulars”) and “legals” (individuals whose Red Brigade membership was not yet known to the authorities, and so still lived under their real identities; unlike the fugitive “clandestines”).<sup>303</sup> These brigades were then arranged according to their “column” (location) and “front” (function). At the time of Brigadist Patrizio Peci’s interrogation by the Italian authorities in 1980, the columns were based in the cities of Genoa, Milan, Rome, and Turin, and in The Veneto region.<sup>304</sup> As for the fronts, there were two: the logistic front and the “front of the masses” – the former provided equipment and operational support services, while the latter was responsible for intelligence and recruitment.<sup>305</sup> The front of the masses was further subdivided into three types of brigades: brigades based in factories,

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<sup>299</sup> Bartali, 351-354

<sup>300</sup> Meade, 61-62

<sup>301</sup> Meade, 48-51

<sup>302</sup> Meade, 61

<sup>303</sup> Sue Ellen Moran, ed. *Court Depositions of Three Red Brigadists* (RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, CA, 1986) 12-13.

<sup>304</sup> Moran, 12

<sup>305</sup> Moran, 13

brigades of “the triple” (assigned to monitoring the police, the courts, and the prisons), and brigades focused on the Christian Democrats and other political parties.<sup>306</sup> Thus, for example, a given brigade could be part of the Milan column and tasked with making fake license plates for the logistic front; or a part of the Turin column’s “front of the masses” and tasked with distributing propaganda, finding targets, and mobilizing the workers of a particular automobile factory. These brigades reported to two regulars, who would each serve as the heads of a front in a given column (so, the Turin column would be led by a logistical front regular and a front of the masses regular).<sup>307</sup> These regulars were also responsible for carrying out attacks (following their receipt of orders from the Red Brigades’ national-level leadership).<sup>308</sup>

Above the columns in terms of authority were the national fronts, made up of all the logistical regulars and masses regulars from the various columns, respectively (in other words, there was a national logistics front and a national front of the masses).<sup>309</sup> In conjunction, these bodies formulated the proposals for operations and, assuming approval from the Red Brigades’ supreme leadership (the executive committee), carried them out.<sup>310</sup> Above the national fronts, the four members of the executive committee (two from the logistical front, two from the masses front) represented the highest level of day-to-day authority in the Red Brigades.<sup>311</sup> The executive committee also, personally, carried out the most ambitious operations for the organization (such as the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro) and was responsible for conducting relations with allied terrorist groups.<sup>312</sup> Finally, a body called the strategic

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<sup>306</sup> Moran, 13

<sup>307</sup> Moran, 14

<sup>308</sup> Moran, 14-15

<sup>309</sup> Moran, 14

<sup>310</sup> Moran, 15

<sup>311</sup> Moran, 15

<sup>312</sup> Moran, 15

management served as a sort of board of directors for the Red Brigades. Made up of a selection of influential regulars representing the fronts and columns, as well as the members of the executive committee, the strategic management met every six to twelve months (or could be convened in an emergency).<sup>313</sup> According to Robert Meade Jr., the meetings of the strategic management (called “the Strategic Direction” in his history of the Red Brigades) were occasions when the organization would “discuss and formulate a single political line for the group, develop and enforce internal rules, control the budget and nominate the Executive Committee.”<sup>314</sup>

Throughout the organization, an extensive set of strict policies dictated the members’ behavior so as to prevent detection by the authorities and to limit the risk that one cell’s compromise would lead to the compromise of others. According to Alessandro Orsini, a 1974 document titled *Security and Work Rules* prescribed that not only should a clandestine operative faithfully reproduce every detail of their false identity, but even went so far as to dictate “the ‘bleak furnishings’ allowed [in your domicile]... how to file bills, the type of keys to use, the noises to avoid so as not to arouse the neighbors’ suspicions, how to do the shopping or buy newspapers, the rules for going to cafés and restaurants... [how to maintain your car]... Dressing, combing your hair, tending your beard...” and so on.<sup>315</sup> In particular, the organization’s policies prevented regulars from having personal relationships with irregulars (or, for that matter, with anyone besides other regulars).<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Moran, 15-17

<sup>314</sup> Meade, 62

<sup>315</sup> Orsini, 49-50

<sup>316</sup> Orsini, 50-51



## Safe Haven Conditions

All available evidence shows that the Red Brigades did not have a foreign or domestic safe haven. Indeed, for a Cold War-era Marxist terrorist organization, the Red Brigades had unusually weak international ties. As noted before, statements made by founding member Alberto Franceschini, as well as former Italian and Czechoslovakian officials, have revealed that Franceschini and other future Red Brigade operatives were trained in guerrilla warfare by Soviet intelligence in Czechoslovakian military camps prior to the creation of the Red Brigades (as part of an attempt to undermine the Communist Party of Italy, which had split with the Soviet Union and was working toward becoming part of the parliamentary mainstream).<sup>317</sup> However, statements from other founding members (as well as Italian authorities) also show that the KGB had relatively little contact with the group after its creation, and indeed that the Red Brigades saw engagement in Cold War competition as being a distraction from their goal of achieving a communist revolution in Italy – the founders would train the other members in Italy, rather than send them abroad.<sup>318</sup> Likewise, the Red Brigades funded themselves through kidnapping ransoms and robberies, rather than relying on KGB financial support.<sup>319</sup> The only other international link to the Red Brigades is the fact that the group would occasionally send representatives to Paris to arrange arms transfers, exchange ideological beliefs, and (late in the organization’s life) coordinate anti-NATO attacks with groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Red Army Faction.<sup>320</sup> (Note, however, that Robert Meade cites a claim that after the collapse of the Red Brigades, some of the remaining members from its daughter groups,

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<sup>317</sup> Bartali, 351-359

<sup>318</sup> Meade, 220, 225

<sup>319</sup> Richard Drake, *The Revolutionary Mystique and Terrorism in Contemporary Italy* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 1989) 147

<sup>320</sup> Meade, 219-226

the “Fighting Communist Party” and “Union of Fighting Communists,” might have had bases in France.<sup>321</sup>)

Historical records demonstrate as well that the Red Brigades did not have a domestic safe haven in Italy. The closest that the group came to possessing such an asset came early in its existence (1970-1973), when the organization could command widespread support among workers in Milan and Turin – cities that had been subject to violent conflicts between labor groups, police, fascist organizations, and leftist organizations.<sup>322</sup> However, the Red Brigades’ shift from property destruction and kidnapping to assassination (particularly the deaths of Aldo Moro and his bodyguards in 1978, and of Guido Rossa in 1979) alienated most of its working-class supporters, costing it even this modest source of cover.<sup>323</sup>

## **Alternative Factors**

Regarding the organization of the Red Brigades, the history of the group points very strongly toward internal security and the need for cross-cell coordination as being the factors that shaped the group’s structure. The adoption of strictly compartmentalized cells followed the 1972 arrests of Red Brigades members following the death of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli; while the 1974-1975 formalization of the Red Brigades’ structure (including the creation of the strategic management and the executive committee) was preceded both by the killing/capture of Renato Curcio, Alberto Franceschini, Alfredo Buonavita, and Margherita Cagol, and by the expansion of the group from two to five territorially-based columns.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Meade, 238

<sup>322</sup> Meade, 45, 245

<sup>323</sup> Meade, 104-105, 187-188

<sup>324</sup> Meade, 48-51, 58-67

Furthermore, the two possible alternative factors examined in the previous case (the Provisional Irish Republican Army) have little bearing on the organizational structure of the Red Brigades. For the first factor, “leadership shift and strategic change,” while the Red Brigades did undergo a change in leadership at the time of its 1974-1975 reorganization due to the arrests, the new leadership did not pursue a new strategy or differ markedly in terms of political views from its predecessors (although later they would come to disagree on whether the executive committee was too focused on tactical operations rather than mass mobilization).<sup>325</sup> For the second factor, “counterterrorism tactics,” the Italian government did not adopt its new antiterrorism policies until after the Red Brigades’ organizational change (with most of the new policies coming after the Moro assassination).<sup>326</sup>

## Conclusion and Notes

The history of Italy’s Red Brigades supports the hypothesis that the “goodness of fit” between a terrorist group’s organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven has a significant impact on its survival. As a cellular-network, the Red Brigades were able to survive for 13 years, despite several conditions that put the group under serious risk: the lack of a safe haven, the lost of most of its original leaders, and its use of high-profile attacks bound to invite a severe crackdown by the state. In the end, the group was undone in large part because it had gradually moved away from keeping its individual cells compartmentalized and autonomous, and toward controlling the group’s actions through a central leadership – once this central leadership came under strain through internal challenges of its control, and through the capture and

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<sup>325</sup> Meade, 62

<sup>326</sup> Meade, 179-182

confession of an operative privy to a wide range of the Red Brigades' secrets, the group soon collapsed.

The next two cases will both be examples of "bad fits" between organizational structure and safe haven presence: Germany's Red Army Faction (a group that possessed a safe haven and had a cellular-network organizational structure) and the United States' Weathermen/Weather Underground (a group that did not possess a safe haven and had a hierarchical structure). Again, these groups will be examined for possible intervening variables and organizational change, and their performance (in terms of number of attacks, goals met, and survival) will be discussed.

## Chapter 5: The Red Army Faction

### **Chapter Objective and Structure**

This chapter will use the method of process tracing to examine whether there is a “goodness of fit” between a terrorist group’s organizational structure and the political environment in which it operates. That is to say, the chapter will investigate whether the type of organizational structure that a terrorist group employs (be it hierarchical or cellular-network-based) interacts with the relative security of the group’s environment (its access to a safe haven or not) to impact its survival and effectiveness.

As with the preceding cases, this case will first provide an analytical overview of how closely the history of the Red Army Faction (RAF) matches the predictions of the hypothesis; then, second, it will provide the historical context surrounding the case; third, it will describe the organizational structure of the RAF; fourth, it will describe the RAF’s access to international and domestic safe havens (or the lack thereof); fifth, it will discuss any possible intervening variables that need to be taken into account; and, lastly, it will summarize the findings of this case and discuss the possible implications for other cases in this dissertation.

### **Analytical Overview**

The history of the Red Army Faction appears to support the predicted results for a “poor fit” scenario between a cellular-network organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven – although factors unique to the RAF and its origin present a possible alternative explanation that muddies at least part of this conclusion. According to the hypothesis, a cellular-network – given

its compartmentalized and largely independent cells – should be more difficult for government agents to infiltrate and disrupt, but should also be more difficult for the leaders of the network to coordinate and control. This should, then, make a cellular-network group more resilient in the absence of a safe haven than a hierarchical group (with its greater coordination and control, but more vulnerable linkages) would be. But what if a group has both a cellular-network structure and a safe haven? Given both the protection of a cellular-network structure and the protection of a safe haven, the hypothesis would then predict that the group would be very durable (at least, against government infiltration attempts) – but the hypothesis also predicts that, because of the limitations imposed by the cellular-network organizational structure, the group would be unable to fully capitalize on the benefits that this durability provides. This is because the same restrictions on contact between cells that prevent them from being infiltrated by the authorities (for example: the practice of only a cell's commander being in touch with anyone else in the group, and of that commander only being in communication with his or her direct superior) will also prevent them from being controlled and coordinated by the group's leadership. And this lack of control and coordination will hamper the group's ability to make and effectively execute long-term strategies (that might lead, for example, to negotiations with the target government or concessions) and its ability to take advantage of economies of scale and divisions of labor to mount a higher quantity and quality of attacks. Furthermore, the restrictions on cells' communication with the outside world, imposed by the group's need to evade detection, also reduce their ability to mobilize supporters and recruit operatives.

Regarding durability, there is no doubt that the RAF was an astounding success: the group survived for 28 years (1970-1998) and twice recovered from the arrests of its entire top leadership (first, from the arrests of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, and Jan-

Carl Raspe in 1972; and second, from the arrests of Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Christian Klar in 1982).<sup>327</sup> It was able to achieve this not only because it had a cellular-network structure, but also because it was able to utilize East Germany as a safe haven almost from the very beginning of the group's foundation (although the degree to which the East German authorities supported the RAF varied over time).<sup>328</sup>

The more difficult question involves whether being a cellular-network with a safe haven limited the RAF's capabilities beyond what they would have been had the group possessed both a horizontal organizational form and a safe haven. On the one hand, the RAF was able to carry out ambitious operations that drew the attention of large West German and international audiences: a series of successful bank robberies starting in December 1970, a wave of bombings in 1972 (the "May Offensive"), prison hunger strikes throughout the mid-1970s, seizing the West German embassy in Stockholm in 1975, and the combined kidnapping of Confederation of German Employers' Associations chairman Hanns Martin Schleyer and hijacking of Lufthansa Flight 181 in fall of 1977 (the last conducted by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in support of the RAF).<sup>329</sup> On the other, it was able to achieve almost nothing from the West German government (in terms of negotiations or concessions), its membership remained small (15-40 underground operatives and 200-1,500 above-ground supporters, depending on the time period), and the brief periods when it achieved some degree of public sympathy (during its early

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<sup>327</sup> Assaf Moghadam, "Failure and Disengagement in the Red Army Faction," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:2 (2012) 159-161, 163-165.

<sup>328</sup> John Schmeidel, *STASI: Sword and Shield of the Party* (Routledge: Florence, KY, 2006), 152, 155-159.

<sup>329</sup> Moghadam, 159-160, 165; Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and the Revolutionary Violence of the Sixties and Seventies* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 2004) 209-210, 218-221; Karrin Hanshaw, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (Cambridge University Press: New York, NY, 2012) 224-225.

bank-robbing period, and after the prison deaths of Meinhof and Holger Meins) were swiftly undone by public revulsion at the brutality of its attacks (the May Offensive and the killing of Schleyer/hijacking of Flight 181, respectively).<sup>330</sup>

While the failure of the RAF on these accounts can be attributed to the fact that the group's cellular structure cut its members off from the larger world and thereby prevented them from being able to mobilize potential supporters into a larger movement (which could, then, be used to pressure the government and find recruits) – it can also be said that other factors regarding the philosophy and personalities within the RAF prevented it from achieving this result.<sup>331</sup> The founding members' emphasis on action over theory discouraged the RAF from formulating any sort of long-term strategy or articulating a coherent ideology, and led them to only attempt to mobilize a mass movement through a “propaganda of the deed” approach (whether through attacks or hunger strikes).<sup>332</sup> Meanwhile, the founders' roots in the student protest movement and upper-class leftist (“schili” or “chic left”) communities gave it an elitist cast, narrowing its appeal.<sup>333</sup>

Arguably, however, the combination of a safe haven with a cellular-network structure created a “bad fit” due to the fact that it allowed these problems to flourish: the double-security meant that there was little pressure for the RAF to develop a long-term strategy, to consistently attempt to build a popular movement, or to make much in the way of adjustments over time. In this, it is telling that after the founding members were arrested and imprisoned by the West German government (1972-1977), the RAF focused its entire campaign on freeing them, rather

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<sup>330</sup> Hanshew, 215-217, 243-244; Moghadam, 159, 160, 163; Hans Josef Horchem, “The Decline of the Red Army Faction,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3:2 (1991) 66; Varon, 211-212, 219, 233-234, 259.

<sup>331</sup> Varon, 224-226.

<sup>332</sup> Varon, 21, 214, 228; Moghadam, 160.

<sup>333</sup> Varon, 236, 242.



than any political issue that might affect people outside the organization (although before and after this period, it did focus on things outside itself).<sup>334</sup> Furthermore, it was only in the third generation of the RAF's leadership, the one that was not connected directly to the original founders, that the group undertook efforts to reform its ideology and formalize its organizational structure (it, however, had the misfortune to be active at a time when both communist terrorist groups and communist states were going into decline).<sup>335</sup> Most notable of all, however, is the fact that, faced with internal dissent in 1979, the RAF was able to cooperate with the Stasi to purge the dissenters from its organization and have them retire under assumed identities in East German rather than attempt to reform itself.<sup>336</sup>

## Background

The Red Army Faction was founded on May 14, 1970 in the Dahlem neighborhood of West Berlin (the date and place of the first group action to involve leading members Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Ulrike Meinhof). But the events leading to the group's creation began three years earlier, on June 2, 1967, when a student demonstration against the Shah of Iran's visit to West Berlin devolved into a riot that resulted in the killing of protester Benno Ohnesorg by a plainclothes police officer.<sup>337</sup> Despite the fact that Ohnesorg was unarmed and fleeing when he was shot, a court judged the officer not guilty of manslaughter.<sup>338</sup> This incident

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<sup>334</sup> Moghadam, 160, 163-164, 169.

<sup>335</sup> Horchem, 65-71.

<sup>336</sup> Schmeidel, 155-156.

<sup>337</sup> Jillian Becker, *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (J.B. Lippincott Company: Philadelphia and New York, 1977) 38-39.

<sup>338</sup> Becker, 44-45.

not only made Ohnesorg a martyr for the student movement, it also led the future members of the RAF (most notably Ensslin) to conclude that the West German state would crush any peaceful dissent and that the student movement not only had to engage in violence to effect change, but also to protect itself.<sup>339</sup> (A common belief among leftist groups at the time was that the government of the Federal Republic was still under the sway of ideas and individuals left over from the Nazi regime and that it was only a matter of time before they reestablished an authoritarian political system.)<sup>340</sup> This view that the student movement was under attack was further reinforced when, on April 11, 1968, one of its leaders, Rudi Dutschke, was shot and critically injured by a right-wing fanatic.<sup>341</sup> The student movement blamed this attack on hostile news coverage by the publications of the Axel Springer group, resulting in a riot at the company's headquarters on that same day.<sup>342</sup>

In response to these events, and in an attempt to shake the German public's complacency regarding the United States' war in Vietnam, a group of four militants led by student activist Gudrun Ensslin and her boyfriend Andreas Baader set fire to two Frankfurt department stores through the use of timed incendiary bombs on April 2-3, 1968.<sup>343</sup> After their arrest, the militants employed their trial itself as a political demonstration against the West German government and perceived U.S imperialism (one of their nine attorneys being another future RAF leader, Horst Mahler).<sup>344</sup> This resulted in a surge of support from Germany's upper-class leftist community (the *schili* or "chic left") and brought them into contact with established leftist journalist, Ulrike

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<sup>339</sup> Becker, 41.

<sup>340</sup> Hanshew, 5-6.

<sup>341</sup> Becker, 48.

<sup>342</sup> Becker, 49-50.

<sup>343</sup> Becker, 65.

<sup>344</sup> Becker, 85-88

Meinhof.<sup>345</sup> While the group was convicted of arson, it was shortly thereafter released from prison while the verdict was under appeal.<sup>346</sup> Taking advantage of the opportunity, Baader and Ensslin established an experimental commune for orphaned boys and came into further contact with Meinhof (who was researching a story on state homes for girls).<sup>347</sup>

When the appeal was denied, three out of the four members of the group decided to become fugitives rather than serve time in prison (of these three, Baader and Ensslin remained fugitives, while the third eventually surrendered to the authorities).<sup>348</sup> While they were on the run, employing safe houses and resources provided by supporters in the schili community, Mahler had begun making the preparations to engage in armed insurgency against the state as part of a group called the Socialist Lawyers Collective.<sup>349</sup> Upon Baader and Ensslin's return to West Berlin, they were reunited with Mahler and took shelter at Meinhof's apartment.<sup>350</sup> Baader, Ensslin and Meinhof all quickly became involved in Mahler's effort to acquire guns for his underground army. It was while on an errand to get guns for the group that Baader was arrested again (a passing police patrol having recognized the Mercedes he was driving).<sup>351</sup> With his arrest, the remainder of the group shifted focus to breaking him out of jail. As Mahler had finally succeeded in acquiring guns from a criminal associate, the group devised a plan whereby Meinhof would employ her reputation as a journalist to convince the police to allow Baader to do

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<sup>345</sup> Becker, 91-92.

<sup>346</sup> Becker, 92-94.

<sup>347</sup> Becker, 92-96,

<sup>348</sup> Becker, 96, 98.

<sup>349</sup> Becker, 96-99.

<sup>350</sup> Becker, 99.

<sup>351</sup> Becker, 99-100.

research with her on “the organization of young people at the fringes of society” at the German Institute for Social Questions in Dahlem, West Berlin.<sup>352</sup>

On May 14, 1970, as Meinhof and Baader waited in the Institute’s reading room, pretending to work, a team of three other RAF members overwhelmed Baader’s guards and shot a librarian, critically injuring him. In the ensuing struggle, Baader and Meinhof escaped out of the reading room’s window to a waiting car, soon joined by the rest of the group.<sup>353</sup> Shortly thereafter, in the May 22 issue of the West Berlin anarchist newspaper, 833, the group announced its creation and called for violent, global, proletarian revolution.<sup>354</sup>

By June of 1970, the members of the group had escaped via East Germany to Beirut and, from there, to a training camp in Jordan run by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.<sup>355</sup> Cultural differences between the RAF and their PFLP hosts quickly undermined the undertaking, however, and after only two months the RAF returned to West Germany through (again) East Berlin.<sup>356</sup> Upon its return, the RAF set about establishing safe houses and cells of local supporters, stockpiled weapons, and undertook a campaign of bank robberies to finance the organization that would last through June 1972 (most famously robbing three banks in the same day on September 29, 1970 and acquiring 217,469.50 deutschmarks – or just under \$60,000 in 1970 U.S. dollars).<sup>357</sup> This success in robbing banks, though, was tempered by major losses to

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<sup>352</sup> Becker, 101-102.

<sup>353</sup> Becker, 102-104.

<sup>354</sup> Varon, 204-205.

<sup>355</sup> Becker, 179; Schmeidel, 152.

<sup>356</sup> Becker, 179-180; Schmeidel, 146.

<sup>357</sup> Varon, 65, 172; Moghadam, 159; Richard Huffman, “September 29 1970, West Berlin,” *Baader-Meinhof.com*. October 1, 2011. Online: <http://www.baader-meinhof.com/september-29-berlin/>; Becker, 185. 1970 historical deutschmark-dollar conversion rate courtesy of Lawrence H. Officer, “Exchange Rates,” *Historical Statistics of the United States, Millennial Edition*, eds. Susan B. Carter, Scott S. Gartner, Michael Haines, Alan Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright (Cambridge University Press: New York, NY,

the organization: the arrest of five members, including Mahler, on October 9, 1970; an additional three arrests on December 23, 1970; three more arrests in February-May 1971; and the deaths of Petra Schelm (July 15, 1971), Georg Rauch (December 4, 1971), and Thomas Weissbecker (March 2, 1971) in shootouts with the police.<sup>358</sup>

In July of 1971, however, the RAF received reinforcements from the membership of another group: the Socialist Patients' Collective. Established on September 30, 1970, the SPC was made up of psychiatric patients led by their doctor and leader, Wolfgang Huber.<sup>359</sup> Claiming that their mental illness was being caused by "the late capitalist performance society of the Federal Republic," Huber convinced his patients that they could only be cured through the overthrow of the state and organized them into "working circles" focused on subjects such as bomb-making and hand-to-hand combat.<sup>360</sup> On July 12, 1971, the group unilaterally declared its affiliation with the Red Army Faction.<sup>361</sup> Shortly thereafter, a shooting incident between a member and a police officer led to the arrests of seven members of the SPC, including Huber – but the remaining members escaped underground and merged with the RAF.<sup>362</sup>

Around the same time (May 1971), and despite the fact that it had already been active for almost a year, the RAF finally released a paper on its ideological beliefs, *The Concept Urban Guerrilla*.<sup>363</sup> Described by Jillian Becker as "immoderate, emotional, at times incoherent" and by Jeremy Varon as "fragmentary, sloganistic, and, on important points, contradictory," the document established the RAF's reputation for being weak on the theoretical justification for its

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2002). Available online:

<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/projects/currency.htm#tables>

<sup>358</sup> Becker, 185-186; Moghadam, 161

<sup>359</sup> Becker, 229.

<sup>360</sup> Becker, 229-230.

<sup>361</sup> Becker, 231.

<sup>362</sup> Becker, 231.

<sup>363</sup> Becker, 232.

campaign or for its actions.<sup>364</sup> It did, however, unequivocally assert that the RAF was a communist (rather than anarchist) organization and that it viewed illegal, violent action as the only way to bring about change in West German society.<sup>365</sup>

Starting in May of 1972, the RAF took this violence to a new level by engaging in a campaign of bombings, striking the U.S. Army headquarters in Frankfurt/Main on May 11, police headquarters in Augsburg and Munich on May 12, the wife of a federal judge on May 15, the headquarters of Axel Springer publishing on May 19, and the U.S. Army in Europe's Supreme Headquarters in Heidelberg.<sup>366</sup> The campaign resulted in four deaths and 50 injuries.<sup>367</sup>

But, for the first generation of the RAF, the "May Offensive" proved to be its undoing. In response to the violence (particularly the injuring of workers in the Axel Springer publishing bombing), its support from the student leftist and schili communities began to dry up.<sup>368</sup> At the same time, a sophisticated forensic data analysis program undertaken by the Federal Criminal Office provided the authorities with vital clues for tracking down the RAF and its supporters.<sup>369</sup> The result was the sweeping arrests of 10 members of the RAF in June and July, 1972, including leaders Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof, and Jan-Carl Raspe.<sup>370</sup>

Incredibly, the RAF survived these arrests, eventually transitioning into the second generation of its leadership under one of the arrestees, Brigitte Mohnhaupt.<sup>371</sup> Starting in January, 1973, the leadership of the first generation led the imprisoned RAF members in a series of hunger strikes to protest against the conditions in which they were held (alleging, for example,

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<sup>364</sup> Becker, 232; Varon, 65.

<sup>365</sup> Becker, 232.

<sup>366</sup> Moghadam, 159-160; Becker, 244-246.

<sup>367</sup> Moghadam, 159-160; Becker, 244-246.

<sup>368</sup> Becker, 246; Varon, 211-212.

<sup>369</sup> Hanshew, 120-121

<sup>370</sup> Moghadam, 161.

<sup>371</sup> Moghadam, 163.

that their being kept in isolated cells was a form of psychological torture).<sup>372</sup> The third of these strikes, begun in September of 1974, resulted in the death by starvation of RAF member Holger Meins.<sup>373</sup> The result was a resurgence of sympathy for the RAF in leftist circles and a boost in recruitment that would fill the ranks of the second generation.<sup>374</sup>

The guiding objective for the second generation, thus, was to achieve the release of the imprisoned RAF leadership – with which they remained in contact via the leaders’ defense lawyers.<sup>375</sup> On April 25, 1975, an RAF commando group organized by Siegfried Haag, one of the RAF’s lawyers, stormed the West German embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, planning to hold its staff hostage in exchange for the release of the prisoners.<sup>376</sup> The operation failed, however, after the group accidentally set off the explosives they had brought, leading to the deaths of two RAF militants (two of the hostages were also executed by the commando in the events before the explosion).<sup>377</sup>

Sometime on May 8 or 9, 1976, Meinhof committed suicide in her cell in Stammheim prison, leading to another boost in public sympathy for the RAF.<sup>378</sup> Possibly reacting to the criticism of its treatment of the RAF prisoners, in spring of 1977, the West German authorities released Brigitte Mohnhaupt.<sup>379</sup> Unbeknownst to the authorities, however, Mohnhaupt had served as the liaison between the imprisoned leaders and RAF militants in the outside world, helping to coordinate the RAF’s operations.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Varon, 216-219.

<sup>373</sup> Varon, 219.

<sup>374</sup> Varon, 219; Moghadam, 163.

<sup>375</sup> Varon, 221-222.

<sup>376</sup> Varon, 231.

<sup>377</sup> Varon, 231, 233; Hanshew, 221-222.

<sup>378</sup> Varon, 233-234.

<sup>379</sup> Schmeidel, 147.

<sup>380</sup> Schmeidel, 147.

Taking control of a second generation RAF that had improved its techniques and infrastructure in the preceding years, Mohnhaupt launched the group's "Offensive 77" – a series of operations directed, as always, at freeing the imprisoned RAF leadership.<sup>381</sup> On April 7, 1977, the RAF assassinated Chief Federal Prosecutor Siegfried Buback and his driver in retaliation for the prosecutions of the RAF.<sup>382</sup> This was followed, on July 30, with the killing of Jürgen Ponto, chairman of the board of Dresdner Bank, in a botched kidnapping attempt.<sup>383</sup>

Then, on September 5, 1977, the RAF kidnapped Hanns-Martin Schleyer, chairman of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations, killing his driver and three police bodyguards in the process.<sup>384</sup> As the RAF held Schleyer, threatening to kill him if its prisoners were not released, the group's allies in the PFLP applied further pressure on the West German government by hijacking Lufthansa Flight 181 on October 13, taking its 91 passengers as hostages (and killing the pilot on October 16.<sup>385</sup> Rather than release the RAF prisoners, however, the West German government held firm – and on October 17-18, a strike team of its GSG-9 counterterrorism unit successfully boarded the plane, killed three of the four PFLP militants aboard, and safely rescued all of the hostages.<sup>386</sup> In prison, Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe responded to the news of the hijacking's failure by killing themselves.<sup>387</sup> In turn, the RAF responded to its leaders' suicides by executing Schleyer.<sup>388</sup>

The failure of these operations and the imprisoned leaders' suicides seriously demoralized the rest of the RAF, while the brutality of Schleyer's kidnapping and murder

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<sup>381</sup> Schmeidel, 148; Moghadam, 163.

<sup>382</sup> Varon, 234; Moghadam, 163.

<sup>383</sup> Varon, 234; Moghadam, 163.

<sup>384</sup> Varon, 234.

<sup>385</sup> Varon, 197.

<sup>386</sup> Varon, 197-198.

<sup>387</sup> Varon, 198.

<sup>388</sup> Varon, 198.



demolished much of the support and sympathy that the organization had accumulated as a result of Meins' and Meinhof's deaths.<sup>389</sup> Furthermore, the crackdown following the events of what had become known as the "German Autumn," resulted in the capture of half of the group's experienced leaders.<sup>390</sup>

On November 19, 1979, a failed bank robbery resulted in the killing of a pedestrian who the RAF operatives viewed as an innocent casualty.<sup>391</sup> This proved to be the last straw for eight members of the group's core underground cell, who left the organization and retired to East Germany under assumed names (with the cooperation of the East German government).<sup>392</sup> They would be joined by two more in 1981 and 1982.<sup>393</sup> While the loss of these members reduced the size of the RAF's core underground cell by half yet again, the group was able to find some replacements by absorbing the remaining members of an allied terrorist group, the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement, including its leader Inge Viett.<sup>394</sup>

The negotiations over the resettlement of the retiring members brought the RAF into closer cooperation with the East German Ministry for State Security (Stasi), which provided the remaining members of the RAF with military training (including in heavy weapons) in 1980 and 1981.<sup>395</sup> The RAF employed this training first by bombing the U.S. Air Force base in Ramstein on August 31, 1981 (injuring 17 people), then, on September 15, by attempting to assassinate the commander of U.S. armed forces in Europe, General Frederick Kroesen through attacking his car

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<sup>389</sup> Hanshew, 243-244; Schmeidel, 155

<sup>390</sup> Schmeidel, 144.

<sup>391</sup> Moghadam, 165-166.

<sup>392</sup> Schmeidel, 155-156.

<sup>393</sup> Schmeidel, 156.

<sup>394</sup> Moghadam, 165; Varon, 301; Schmeidel, 155-156.

<sup>395</sup> Schmeidel, 157-158.

with rocket-powered grenades and machine guns (the attack failed due to his car being armored).<sup>396</sup>

During the 1978-1982 period, the RAF also underwent a change in motivation and strategy. With its founding leaders gone, the group moved away from freeing its imprisoned members and focused instead on carrying out attacks against the “Military-Industrial-Complex” and the “apparatus of repression.”<sup>397</sup> Besides the 1981 attacks on Ramstein and General Kroesen, this included a failed attempt to assassinate NATO Commander Alexander Haig in Brussels in June 1979.<sup>398</sup> In 1982, the RAF made this change in focus explicit in its strategy paper “Guerrilla, Resistance and Anti-Imperialist Front,” which also provided a formalization of the group’s organizational structure (discussed further below).<sup>399</sup>

However, despite these changes, the days were numbered for the RAF’s second generation. By 1982, the RAF and Stasi had had a falling out, reducing their cooperation – and on October 26 of that year, West German police discovered an RAF weapons cache which, among other things, contained documents with the locations of ten other caches.<sup>400</sup> Staking out the caches, the police soon arrested Monhaupt, as well as Adelheid Schulz and Christian Klar (the last being the other leading member of the group, after Monhaupt).<sup>401</sup>

And yet, even with the loss of its second-generation leadership, the RAF survived and transitioned into a third generation. By 1984, the leaders of the third-generation RAF had become Wolfgang Grams and Birgit Hogefeld, and the group announced its plan to form a “West European Guerrilla” movement through alliances with France’s Action Directe, Belgium’s

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<sup>396</sup> Schmeidel, 157; Moghadam, 163-164.

<sup>397</sup> Horchem, 65; Moghadam, 163.

<sup>398</sup> Varon, 301.

<sup>399</sup> Horchem, 65-66.

<sup>400</sup> Schmeidel, 159; Moghadam, 164.

<sup>401</sup> Moghadam, 164.

Communist Combatant Cells, and Italy's Red Brigades.<sup>402</sup> Out of these groups, the RAF did have some success in cooperating with Action Directe, a Marxist-Leninist group responsible for carrying out bombings and assassinations against United States, Israeli, and French government targets from 1979 to 1987.<sup>403</sup> A hunger strike begun by the RAF's remaining prisoners on December 4, 1984 was followed by Action Directe's assassination of General René Audran on January 25, 1985, which in turn was followed by the RAF's assassination of Motors and Turbines Union CEO Ernst Zimmermann on February 1.<sup>404</sup> The two groups also cooperated on the August 8, 1985 bombing of the U.S. Rhine-Main airbase in Frankfurt, which killed two and injured 11 – the militants having gained access to the base by killing an American serviceman on the day before and stealing his identity card.<sup>405</sup> In its effort to work with the other two groups, however, the RAF had almost no success. Cooperation with the CCC yielded only the transfer of some of the Belgians' stolen explosives into the RAF's hands (the CCC had been virtually neutralized by the arrest of its leader in December 1985).<sup>406</sup> The Red Brigades, meanwhile, were riven by conflict between the groups' two factions – one of which (the Red Brigades for the Construction of the Fighting Communist Party) openly refused the RAF's suggestion of cooperation while the other (the Union of Fighting Communists) attempted to take part in the West European Guerrilla movement through assassinating Italian General Licio Giorgiere on March 20, 1987, but shortly thereafter lost around 100 of its members to arrest by Italian security

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<sup>402</sup> Moghadam, 168; Horchem, 67-68.

<sup>403</sup> Horchem, 67-68; *Terrorist Organization Profile: Action Directe*, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Online:

[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=3498](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=3498)

<sup>404</sup> Horchem, 66; Moghadam, 169.

<sup>405</sup> Horchem, 66; Moghadam, 169.

<sup>406</sup> Horchem, 68; *Terrorist Organization Profile: Communist Combatant Cells*, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Online:

[http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data\\_collections/tops/terrorist\\_organization\\_profile.asp?id=299](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=299)

forces.<sup>407</sup> The RAF's allies in Action Directe likewise suffered a crushing blow on February, 21, 1987, when the entire leadership of the group's international faction (the group's largest and most active faction) was arrested by French authorities while meeting in a farmhouse near Orleans.<sup>408</sup>

On its own, the RAF assassinated Siemens manager Karl Heinz Beckurts and his driver on July 9, 1986, diplomat Gerold von Braunmühl on October 10, 1986, and Deutsche Bank CEO Alfred Herrhausen on November 30, 1989 – but its final end was also in the works.<sup>409</sup> The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990 both cost the RAF its primary state supporter and undermined its ideological basis. Furthermore, in June of 1990, the government of the new, unified Germany quickly arrested the RAF operatives who had retired to the East ten years earlier.<sup>410</sup> The group attacked the U.S. embassy in Bonn in February 1991 and conducted another assassination, of Detlev Carsten Rohwedder, head of a company tasked with the privatization of former state assets in East Germany, on April 1 – but otherwise accomplished little while some of the imprisoned retirees cooperated with the authorities to provide information about the organization in exchange for lighter sentences.<sup>411</sup>

Recognizing that the RAF prisoners were a major source of motivation and propaganda for the group, German Minister of Justice Klaus Kinkel announced on January 1, 1992 that the government would undertake a program that would, to quote Dennis Pluchinsky, “prematurely release certain imprisoned RAF members who were seriously ill or who had served long prison

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<sup>407</sup> Horchem, 68-69.

<sup>408</sup> Horchem, 68; Yonah Alexander and Dennis A. Pluchinsky, *Europe's Red Terrorists: The Fighting Communist Organizations* (Frank Cass and Company: Abingdon, Oxon, UK, 1992) 134

<sup>409</sup> Moghadam, 169.

<sup>410</sup> Moghadam, 169-170.

<sup>411</sup> Moghadam, 169, 172-173; Varon, 305.

sentences” as a step toward getting the group to lay down its arms.<sup>412</sup> This policy, called the Kinkel Initiative, elicited a positive response from the underground core of the RAF, who released a statement on April 10, 1992 saying not only that the group would end its policy of targeting individuals in return for the immediate release of these prisoners, but that its entire campaign of violence had been a failure (but not that it would give up on its goals or surrender).<sup>413</sup> The April statement caused a major rift within the RAF, however, as several long-serving RAF prisoners announced that they would not return to the group after being released, and in the following years, a growing number called on the RAF to disband and provided information to the authorities.<sup>414</sup> On June 27, 1993, the leaders of the third generation, Grams and Hogefeld were caught by the GSG-9 in Bad Kleinen – Hogefeld was arrested, while Grams died in a shootout with a GSG-9 officer (who was also killed).<sup>415</sup> Finally, on April 20, 1998, the few remaining members of the RAF core underground cell released a statement to the Reuters news agency announcing that the group had officially disbanded.<sup>416</sup>

## Organizational Structure

Throughout its existence, the Red Army Faction had a cellular-network organizational structure. While this structure was based on directions provided in Brazilian Marxist militant Carlos Marighella’s 1969 “Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla,” it was more so the de facto outcome of the group’s genesis and day-to-day activities rather than any sort of formal attempt at

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<sup>412</sup> Dennis A. Pluchinsky, “Germany’s Red Army Faction: An Obituary,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 16 (1993) 139.

<sup>413</sup> Pluchinsky, 136-140.

<sup>414</sup> Moghadam, 170-171.

<sup>415</sup> Moghadam, 170.

<sup>416</sup> Moghadam, 170-171.

organization (at least, until 1982 – as will be discussed below regarding the RAF’s third generation).<sup>417</sup> This lax approach to the group’s structure was a side-effect of a deliberate decision by the founding members of the RAF to focus on “taking action” rather than “debating theory” (a decision that also left the group without a clear ideology or strategy), and was facilitated by the group’s consistently small membership (estimated to be about 20 active underground members at the height of the first generation, under 40 at the height of the second, and around 15-20 in the third; with a number of above-ground, but clandestine supporting members estimated from around 1,000-1,500 in the 1970s to around 200 in the 1980s).<sup>418</sup>

Regarding the RAF’s structure, the term “cellular” is especially appropriate – besides being made up of compartmentalized circles of militants based around the nucleus-like leaders, the RAF also grew like a single-celled organism by absorbing cells from other groups (notably from the Socialist Patients Collective in 1971 and the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement in 1977) and carried out operations by dividing itself into smaller cells.<sup>419</sup> For the RAF’s first two generations, the core cell made up of the group’s leaders and other underground members would, as per the demands of a particular objective or an effort to elude the authorities, spin off smaller sub-units (with these sub-units sometimes supported by recruits who were not yet wanted by the police and still held day-jobs).<sup>420</sup> While the escape-oriented versions of these sub-units had no special name, the operation-driven ones were called “commandos,” and each commando was named in honor of a martyr for the Marxist cause (for example, the May 11, 1972 bombing of the U.S. Fifth Army’s Headquarters in Frankfurt was carried out by the “Petra Schelm Commando” –

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<sup>417</sup> Varon, 71-72.

<sup>418</sup> Moghadam, 159, 160, 163; Horchem, 66; Varon, 259.

<sup>419</sup> Becker, 229; Schmeidel, 149, 155.

<sup>420</sup> Michael W. Kometer, *The New Terrorism: The Nature of the War on Terrorism*. (Air University Press: Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 2004) 28.

composed of leading members Baader, Ensslin and Meins, and named for the first RAF member to die in a gunfight with police).<sup>421</sup> These commando groups were responsible for both the planning and execution of their operations and, while the commandos of the RAF's first generation were seen as "amateurish," former head of German domestic intelligence, Hans Josef Horchem described the commandos of the second and third generations as being exceedingly deliberate in both their planning and their decision-making:

Experience hitherto has shown that the RAF has always prepared its actions very carefully and long in advance; for example, the attack on Karlheinz Beckurts on 9 July 1986 was prepared, according to the Federal Criminal Office (BKA), at least three months in advance by the 'Mara Cargol Commando' group which was responsible for the attack.... The preparations for all the RAF actions hitherto were carried out collectively by the commando group concerned. Plans were discussed and decided on collectively, then individual tasks assigned according to the expertise of the appropriately qualified member of the group. In the case of all the actions, the deed was a communal one: successes could be claimed by each and every individual; likewise, an unsuccessful action was a failure for which each individual had to share the blame.<sup>422</sup>

Besides the commandos and the core leadership cell, Jeremy Varon has also noted that from the outset, "the RAF established small cells in cities throughout West Germany."<sup>423</sup> These local cells of operatives who had not yet been forced underground were later to be called "illegal militants," and would carry out minor attacks on their independent initiative, as well support the commando cells and serve as a talent pool for later recruitment to the core group.<sup>424</sup>

In addition to the core leadership cell, the temporarily-arranged commando cells, and the local illegal militant cells, the 1972 arrests of the RAF's first generation of leaders added another element to the group's organizational structure: the RAF prisoners. While imprisonment prevented these members from being directly involved in carrying out attacks, and limited their

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<sup>421</sup> Varon, 210, 208

<sup>422</sup> Moghadam, 163; Horchem, 62.

<sup>423</sup> Varon, 72.

<sup>424</sup> Horchem, 66; Kometer, 28 .

influence over the attacks' planning, they nevertheless exerted significant influence over the RAF's strategy, publicity, and recruitment. Facilitated by their lawyers (some of whom became active RAF militants), this influence worked through both overt and covert means: Overtly, through hunger strikes, press interviews, and the channeling of writings to leftist publications; covertly through secret communications between the prisoners and the members of the core leadership cell.<sup>425</sup> The peak of the prisoners' influence was 1972-1977, the period from the leaders' arrest until the suicides of Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe – during which the RAF's activities were focused exclusively on the prisoners' treatment and on achieving their release.<sup>426</sup> And while the RAF shifted emphasis away from freeing its prisoners after 1977, the group continued to exert a degree of influence as symbolic figureheads of the organization – so much so that a 1992 split between the RAF's underground core and many of the prisoners (these prisoners having repudiated their time in the RAF) kicked off the gradual process of dissolution that led to the group's 1998 demise.<sup>427</sup>

Despite having all these institutions in place, it was not until the rise of the RAF's third generation that its leaders announced a formal plan for the group's organization. In a May 1982 strategy paper titled "Guerrilla, Resistance and Anti-Imperialist Front," the leadership laid out a structure with the prisoners at the top, followed by "the commandos" (meaning both the underground core cell and its ad hoc sub-units), the above-ground illegal militants, and finally the "political fighters" – supporters who only engaged in legal activities (such as protests).<sup>428</sup> This structure was, however, much more of an idealized system than an accurate reflection of RAF's inner workings – since 1977, the locus of the group's leadership had been shifting back

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<sup>425</sup> Hanshew, 143, 221-222; Varon, 220-222.

<sup>426</sup> Pluchinsky, 138.

<sup>427</sup> Moghadam, 170-172.

<sup>428</sup> Horchem, 65-66.



from the prisoners to the underground core cell; there was little command or control over the illegal militants or political fighters; and, in another development resulting from the events of 1977, the number of political fighters had swiftly and significantly diminished (and would continue to do so throughout the 1980s and 1990s).<sup>429</sup>

## Safe Haven Conditions

### *East Germany*

Almost from the very beginning of its creation, the Red Army Faction was able to utilize East Germany as a safe haven. According to Ministry of State Security (Stasi) archives made available after the collapse of East Germany and its reunification with the West, shortly after the group's seminal jailbreak of Baader on May 14, 1970, Meinhof met personally with the secretary of the German Democratic Republic's Central Committee (to whom she had access thanks to contacts made via the East German government's secret subsidization of her husband's magazine) and secured for her group shelter and free passage through the East.<sup>430</sup> East Germany did not, however, create an institutionalized system of support for terrorism until 1975, with the creation of the Stasi's Department XXII, and it would not be until 1978 that the government would move from a policy of passive support (allowing RAF members to pass through the country) to a policy of active support.<sup>431</sup>

Starting in 1979, Inge Viett, a Stasi informant who had recently joined the RAF from the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement, began a process of negotiation between the group and the GDR to arrange

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<sup>429</sup> Horchem, 66; Hanshew, 243-248; Pluchinsky, 144.

<sup>430</sup> Becker, 102; Schmeidel, 146, 152.

<sup>431</sup> Schmeidel, 151-152.

the retirement of 10 disaffected RAF militants (including herself) to East Germany under new identities.<sup>432</sup> While the loss of these members was a significant blow to the RAF (they constituted approximately half the underground core membership at the time), the managed retirement provided by the GDR allowed them to purge the members without resorting to self-destructive violence or fearing that they would turn into informants for the West German authorities.<sup>433</sup>

This, however, was only the beginning of the Stasi's increased engagement with the RAF. In 1980 and 1981, the Stasi provided military training for the RAF (particularly in heavy weapons) at a paramilitary camp in Briesen.<sup>434</sup> The camp also briefly became a secure headquarters from which the RAF could make its statements and launch attacks in the West, but the group began to fall out with the Stasi starting in 1982, leading to a diminished level of engagement.<sup>435</sup> In his book, *STASI: Sword and Shield of the Party*, John Schmeidel notes that the surviving records left behind by the Stasi (many of which, of course, were destroyed before Germany's reunification), do not give an explanation for why the two fell out – instead, he provides a number of possible reasons, including that the Stasi received all the useful information that they could get out of the RAF, that the tightened security measures in the West caused by the RAF were complicating East German intelligence collection efforts, or that the RAF refused to be controlled by the Stasi and hence were deemed unreliable.<sup>436</sup>

But while the RAF and Stasi may not have cooperated quite as closely after 1982, circumstantial evidence indicates that the GDR nevertheless provided logistical support to the

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<sup>432</sup> Schmeidel, 155.

<sup>433</sup> Moghadam, 165; Schmeidel, 155-156.

<sup>434</sup> Schmeidel, 157.

<sup>435</sup> Schmeidel, 159.

<sup>436</sup> Schmeidel, 150.

RAF (in the form of weapons, money, and training).<sup>437</sup> Schmeidel points to the tactical and technical sophistication of the attacks carried out by the third generation of the RAF in the late 1980s as indications of possible GDR support.<sup>438</sup> In addition, the inability of the West German government to uncover any RAF safe houses after 1984, or solve a number of the attacks committed between then and 1998, point suspiciously toward the possibility that the RAF may have been using the GDR as a safe haven.<sup>439</sup>

### *West Germany*

Unlike in the East, there was never a strong safe haven for the RAF in West Germany. In 1970-1972, the group was able to draw liberally upon Meinhof's wide-ranging social contacts and its outlaw appeal among the *schili* to secure safe houses and some logistical support, but this support dried up considerably after the RAF's bombing campaign of May 1972 (in the end, Meinhof was arrested after the police received a tip from one of her social contacts, in whose apartment the militants intended to stay).<sup>440</sup> The RAF also had the ill fortune to come into being just after the West German government had already begun an extensive modernization of its crime fighting technology and techniques – particularly in the collection and computer-assisted analysis of forensic data, which helped bring about the rapid capture of the first generation's entire leadership.<sup>441</sup>

Furthermore, throughout the 1970s, the West German government instituted increasingly strict anti-terrorism legislation, including restrictions on communication between lawyers and

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<sup>437</sup> Moghadam, 168; Schmeidel, 160.

<sup>438</sup> Schmeidel, 160-161.

<sup>439</sup> Moghadam, 168.

<sup>440</sup> Schmeidel, 145; Becker, 189-190, 250-251

<sup>441</sup> Hanshew, 116-121

defendants (as a response to the role of the RAF prisoners' defense lawyers in both facilitating the organization's publicity and its internal communication), a ban on radicals in civil service jobs, and a criminalization of the "support of violence" and "incitement to violence" (this last move being repealed by the end of the decade for being a violation of citizens' civil liberties).<sup>442</sup> And finally, following Black September's 1972 killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, the Federal Republic created its famous counterterrorism unit, GSG-9, who would be responsible for thwarting the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's hijacking of Lufthansa Flight 181 in 1977 (and thereby close the door on the RAF's plans to achieve the release of its imprisoned leadership).<sup>443</sup>

### *Other Countries*

The RAF actively sought out cooperation with a wide variety of foreign terrorist groups (including France's Action Directe, Belgium's Communist Combatant Cells, Italy's Red Brigades, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), and its operatives carried out training and logistical support operations in a number of different countries.<sup>444</sup> John Schmeidel reports that, following the failure of the Schleyer kidnapping and the hijacking of Lufthansa Flight 181, half of the RAF core cell took shelter in South Yemen, while the other half took shelter in Czechoslovakia.<sup>445</sup> Meanwhile, in his biographical sketch of RAF operative Silke Maier-Witt, Jeremy Varon notes that she was active in both Yemen and the Netherlands.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Henshaw, 143, 132-133, 148-149, 258

<sup>443</sup> Henshaw, 122, 224-229, 231

<sup>444</sup> Horchem, 67-69; Becker, 179-180.

<sup>445</sup> Schmeidel, 155.

<sup>446</sup> Varon, 252.

Apart from its time in East Germany, perhaps the most notable trip abroad for the RAF came after the group's formation, when the first generation traveled to a PFLP training camp in Jordan.<sup>447</sup> This trip, however, turned out to be a disaster – while the female members of the group gained some education in firearms, the male members squabbled too much with their PFLP instructors to receive any new knowledge, and the whole project was undermined by cultural differences (over subjects ranging from sexual freedoms and food to discipline and firearm use).<sup>448</sup> After Baader came into conflict with RAF member Peter Homann (who accused Baader of pursuing violence for its own sake) and Ensslin tried, unsuccessfully, to have the PFLP execute Homann on the false accusation of being an Israeli spy, the group was unceremoniously sent home.<sup>449</sup> In total, the RAF's time at the PFLP training camp lasted only two months.<sup>450</sup>

## Alternative Factors

While the Red Army Faction's history clearly shows that the combination of a cellular-network organizational structure and access to safe havens made the group highly resistant to being dismantled by the authorities, the question of whether its structure hampered the group's activities is less clear.

For one thing, while the operations undertaken by the RAF's first generation were often amateurish in their planning and execution, those undertaken by the second and third generations

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<sup>447</sup> Becker, 179-180.

<sup>448</sup> Becker, 179-180; Schmeidel, 145.

<sup>449</sup> Becker, 179-180; Moghadam, 162; Schmeidel, 146.

<sup>450</sup> Schmeidel, 146.

were far more sophisticated.<sup>451</sup> Among such examples are the operations of “German Autumn” in 1977 (the combined Schleyer kidnapping and hijacking of Lufthansa Flight 181), the 1981 attack on General Kroesen, and the 1985 attack on Rhine-Main airbase.<sup>452</sup>

However, while on its own a cellular-network would have difficulty in coordination such operations, this sophistication is easily explained by the RAF’s access to safe havens and to the support of foreign actors. Most notably, the RAF had assistance from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (which, itself, was supported by the Soviet Union’s KGB via PFLP deputy leader and a KGB agent Wadi Haddad) and received resources and training from the Stasi of East Germany.<sup>453</sup> With such support and safe havens from which it could plan its operations, the RAF was able to carry out ambitious attacks despite its small membership and informal organizational structure.

More difficult to dismiss is the question of whether the RAF’s failure in the areas outside of tactics (that is, in its ability to get anything out of the West German government or to mobilize supporters) was due to the group’s organizational structure or to other factors. Jeremy Varon writes that, as with other groups organized into cellular networks, isolation (made even worse by the state-engineered isolation of its imprisoned leaders) made the RAF subject to groupthink and a distorted perception of the outside world – leaving it oblivious to the fact that its actions were alienating the very groups that it was hoping to mobilize and preventing it from pursuing realistic goals.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Moghadam, 163.

<sup>452</sup> Varon, 234; Hanshew, 224-229; Schmeidel, 157-158; Horchem, 66.

<sup>453</sup> Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (Basic Books: New York, NY, 1999) 380-382; Schmeidel, 155-159

<sup>454</sup> Varon, 225-226, 229.

At the same time, one could argue that the RAF, from the beginning, never invested much in its strategic planning or its mobilization efforts. The founding members of the group disdained of talking about “theory,” prizing “action” instead, and believed that carrying out attacks against the state would inherently mobilize larger public into a revolution.<sup>455</sup> And, likewise, in its first generation, the RAF did little to appeal to anyone outside of the student protest movement or the schili community – histories of the first generation (more commonly called the “Baader-Meinhof Gang”) frequently highlight the contradiction between its advocacy for Marxist revolution while driving expensive cars, staying in fancy apartments, and contacting rich leftists for funding.<sup>456</sup>

However, while these qualities did not prime the RAF for success, having both a cellular-network organizational structure and a safe haven does appear to have worsened them over time. It is notable, for example, how the second generation of the RAF – isolated by the demands of the cellular system, but able to draw upon a safe haven and international assistance – focused on no real political issue except for the freeing of the group’s founders during their period of imprisonment (1972-1977).<sup>457</sup> Varon writes that this obsessive, inward focus was a product of living in clandestine cells:

For the guerrillas, the imperative of survival and the simple desire to avenge fallen comrades appeared to take precedence over ideological and moral considerations. Much of the early violence of RAF and other guerrillas was therefore oddly depoliticized, driven not by any grand design but by the pressures of illegality and the intense loyalties the underground bred.<sup>458</sup>

It is likewise telling that it was not until the RAF’s third generation that the group began to undergo serious strategic and organizational reform (as seen in the May 1982 paper “Guerrilla,

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<sup>455</sup> Varon, 21, 214, 228; Moghadam, 160.

<sup>456</sup> Varon, 236, 242; Becker, 96-97, 189-190.

<sup>457</sup> Moghadam, 163

<sup>458</sup> Varon, 209.

Resistance and Anti-Imperialist Front”).<sup>459</sup> Unlike the second generation, the leadership of the third generation were neither part of the RAF’s founding group nor its direct disciples (the preeminent leader of the second generation, Brigitte Mohnhaupt, on the other hand, was both).<sup>460</sup> This new group of leaders allowed the RAF to break (somewhat) with the previous generations’ failed approaches toward formulating strategy and mobilizing supporters (although the third generation was still far from effective at either).

The most important indicator that the double-security of a cellular-network and a safe haven inhibited reform within the RAF comes from the 1979 purge of the “*aussteigers*” (“dropouts” in English).<sup>461</sup> Following the crushing failures of 1977, and a botched bank robbery in 1979 that resulted in the killing of a pedestrian (considered an innocent victim by the members of the RAF), around half of the core underground cell of the RAF had begun to question the group’s strategy and methods.<sup>462</sup> However, rather than bend to pressure from the dissenters, eliminate them, or risk having them turn themselves over to the authorities, the group’s leadership was provided with a safety valve from the Stasi: the dissenters could retire in East Germany under assumed names.<sup>463</sup> This allowed the RAF to continue along the same course without making any reforms that might improve its strategy or chances of mobilizing supporters – in fact, the old course was buttressed by the Stasi’s providing military training to the remaining members of the organization.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> Horchem, 65-66.

<sup>460</sup> Moghadam, 168; Schmeidel, 147-148.

<sup>461</sup> Schmeidel, 155.

<sup>462</sup> Schmeidel, 155; Moghadam, 165.

<sup>463</sup> Schmeidel, 155-156.

<sup>464</sup> Schmeidel, 157-158.



## Conclusion and Notes

Despite some caveats, the history of West Germany's Red Army Faction conforms to the hypothesis' predicted results. While the RAF's possession of a cellular-network structure and a safe haven made it highly durable – allowing it to survive for 28 years and endure two losses of its entire leadership – it nevertheless also made it highly ineffectual at achieving its political objectives or mobilizing supporters. Regarding the “goodness of fit” between a terrorist group's organizational structure and the presence of a safe haven, the RAF made for a “bad fit.”

The next and final case is also predicted to represent a “bad fit” between organizational structure and environmental security: the United States' Weathermen/Weather Underground, a group that had a hierarchical structure but did not possess a safe haven. As with the previous cases, the history of the Weather Underground case will be examined for possible intervening variables and organizational change, and its performance (in terms of number of attacks, goals met, and survival) will be discussed.

## Chapter 6: The Weather Underground

### **Chapter Objective and Structure**

In this chapter, the method of process tracing will be used to examine if a terrorist group's organizational structure (whether it is hierarchical or cellular-network-based) interacts with the relative security of its political environment (its access to a safe haven or not) to affect its survival and effectiveness. In other words, this case will look at whether the relationship conforms to the expectations of a "good fit" between organizational structure and presence of a safe haven, or a "poor fit."

The subject for this case is the Weather Underground (also known, at times, as "Weatherman," "the Weatherman Underground," and "the Weather Underground Organization"), an American terrorist group that was active from 1969 to 1976. The Weather Underground subscribed to two ideological motivations (the conflict between which would eventually prove to be the group's downfall): it was a Marxist-Leninist organization that sought the overthrow of the capitalist system, and it was an organization of white youth who sought to support national liberation and anti-racism movements.<sup>465</sup> Of the various issues that fell under these two umbrellas, it was most occupied with opposing the U.S. government's intervention in Vietnam and with supporting the black power movement. Initially, it sought to further these goals through mobilizing white, working-class youth into a violent revolution – but an early

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<sup>465</sup> Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (AK Press: Oakland, CA, 2006) 76-78

incident that led to the deaths of three of its members moved the Weather Underground to employ bombings that carefully avoided inflicting casualties.<sup>466</sup>

The objectives for this chapter will first be to provide the historical background for the case; second, to provide an analytical overview of how closely the history of the Weather Underground fits with the predictions of the hypothesis; third, to describe the organizational structure of the Weather Underground; fourth, to discuss whether the Weather Underground had access to a domestic or international safe haven; fifth, to look at any intervening variables that need to be taken into account; and, finally, to summarize the findings of this case.

## **Analytical Overview**

The history of the Weather Underground appears to generally support the predicted results for a “poor fit” between a hierarchical organizational structure and an environment in which a group does not have access to a safe haven. However, this conclusion is complicated by the Weather Underground’s shift in organizational type from a centralized hierarchy to a more decentralized and cellular structure (in the process of the group’s decision to go underground in December of 1970), and by a shift in its political environment toward being more secure due to an exogenous shock weakening its governmental adversaries (the Watergate scandal of 1972-1974, and its impact on both the Weather Underground’s political enemies in the Nixon administration and on the U.S. government’s counterintelligence capabilities).

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<sup>466</sup> Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2004) 51, 77-78, 174-175, 184; Berger, 130.

According to the hypothesis, a hierarchical organizational structure allows its leaders to have greater coordination and control over their group – providing it with advantages in the carrying out of operations, strategies, mobilization, negotiations, and other collective efforts – but leaves it vulnerable to government infiltration and disruption. This is because such an organization features a greater degree of communication between its higher and lower echelons, a clear authority structure, and a lower degree of autonomy among units. Given a safe haven, these vulnerabilities are reduced due to the restriction on the authorities’ ability to gain access to the core leadership of the group – but without such protection, it should prove easy for the authorities to find out about the group’s activities through informants and to target its leaders.

Such does seem to be the case for the Weather Underground for the period from June 1969 to December 1970 when it maintained a centralized, hierarchical structure. A review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s now-declassified records on the Weather Underground show that the group’s leadership, membership, and activities were well known to the FBI during this period (even if the Bureau waited until it was too late to act against the Weather Underground).<sup>467</sup> Furthermore, an informant for the FBI managed to not only penetrate the organization, but also gain access to the highest levels of its leadership – only being undone by a bungled arrest after the Bureau initiated its belated crackdown.<sup>468</sup> Even after the Weather Underground moved to a more decentralized, cellular form of organization, a very close attempt at catching the group’s West Coast leadership in the spring of 1971 indicates that the group might not have remained at liberty for as long as it did, were it not for the Watergate scandal

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<sup>467</sup> United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Foreign Influence – Weather Underground Organization*. Washington: GPO, 1976. 64-65. Available online: [http://vault.fbi.gov/Weather Underground \(Weathermen\)/](http://vault.fbi.gov/Weather%20Underground%20(Weathermen)/)

<sup>468</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 178-179.

occupying its pursuers in the FBI and leading to the curtailing of the Bureau's counterintelligence efforts.<sup>469</sup>

As for the effectiveness of the Weather Underground in conducting operations and mobilizing supporters – its relative success in these matters does support the hypothesis's predictions. While falling far short of the group's (unrealistic) goals, the Weather Underground did manage to bring together hundreds of supporters from around the country to mount a large-scale, violent demonstration in Chicago on October 8-11, 1969 (called the Days of Rage).<sup>470</sup> Even after the group's shift away from hierarchy, the central control of its leadership both restricted the group's actions to a carefully conducted series of bombings, and brought about a sophisticated effort to publicize its views.<sup>471</sup> Likewise, until it was undone by its own internal ideological divisions, the Weather Underground was able to mobilize a larger following of supporters and allied groups – particularly after the publication of its book-length manifesto *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism* in 1974.<sup>472</sup>

## Background

The Weather Underground was founded over the course of the June 18-22, 1969 convention of the Students for a Democratic Society in Chicago, Illinois.<sup>473</sup> With an estimated 100,000 members at the time, SDS was one of the most prominent public movements opposing the United States' war against North Vietnam – but it was also a movement that had fractured

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<sup>469</sup> Berger, 157-158; Tony G. Poveda, "The Rise and Fall of FBI Domestic Intelligence Operations," *Contemporary Crises*, 6:2 (April 1982), 112-113.

<sup>470</sup> Varon, 61.

<sup>471</sup> Berger, 154-155, 184-185.

<sup>472</sup> Berger, 153-154, 201-202.

<sup>473</sup> Berger, 80-88.

into competing factions.<sup>474</sup> The key source of the split was the question of whether SDS should support national liberation movements, in particular the black power movement in the United States.<sup>475</sup> The Progressive Labor Party, the SDS's largest faction, adhered to a strict Maoist view that any national or racial grievances served only to distract the working class from its conflict with the capital-owning class; by contrast, its adversaries in the Revolutionary Youth Movement felt that, in addition to working toward a communist society, it was SDS's duty to support such movements.<sup>476</sup> Leading up to the convention, the RYM argument had been made in a 10,000-word manifesto titled "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows" (from a lyric in Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues") – and the supporters of this manifesto became known as the Weatherman faction, which would eventually become the Weather Underground.<sup>477</sup>

In the conflict between RYM and the PLP, RYM emerged as the relative victor (most SDS chapters refused to join either group, and the SDS effectively collapsed – but RYM retained the organization's headquarters and newsletter).<sup>478</sup> Shortly thereafter, however, RYM itself split between one faction that sought to gradually mobilize the white working class into a more conventional communist party (called RYM II) and the Weatherman faction, who wanted to immediately engage in violence against the state and the capitalist elite.<sup>479</sup>

Led by Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Mark Rudd, and Jeff Jones, the Weatherman faction worked swiftly toward building its revolution.<sup>480</sup> The organization believed that three

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<sup>474</sup> Berger, 80-88.

<sup>475</sup> Berger, 77.

<sup>476</sup> Berger, 76-78.

<sup>477</sup> Berger, 80-81.

<sup>478</sup> Varon, 49-50.

<sup>479</sup> Berger, 87.

<sup>480</sup> Varon, 49-50.

groups would be key to this effort: third-world liberation movements, the black power movement, and a movement of white working-class youth – the third of which, they thought, would be ripe for recruitment into a revolutionary army due to their political and economic exploitation (their vulnerability to being drafted, for example) and their (assumed) greater familiarity with violence in their daily lives.<sup>481</sup> Toward this end, the central leadership in Chicago (called “the Weatherbureau”) dispatched Weatherman members to establish collectives in cities around the country, from which the local youth could be mobilized.<sup>482</sup> Among the tactics employed for this mobilization were the picking of fights with police and street thugs (to demonstrate that the organization was tough and, hence, worth joining) and the invasion and disruption of schools (called “jail breaks”) by Weatherman members.<sup>483</sup> The collectives also attempted to instill revolutionary discipline among their members, prepare them for combat, and get them to live according to countercultural ideals (to be discussed further under “Organizational Structure” below).<sup>484</sup>

In the short-term, Weatherman’s plan to was deploy these thousands of young foot soldiers at a demonstration in Chicago scheduled for October 8-11, 1969.<sup>485</sup> This event (later called “the Days of Rage”), was purposefully planned as a violent protest that would encourage more widespread rebellion against the U.S. government and take revenge on the Chicago police for their brutality against demonstrators during the previous summer’s Democratic National Convention (the Days of Rage were timed to coincide with the opening of a trial against eight

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<sup>481</sup> Varon, 51, 77-78.

<sup>482</sup> Varon, 57, 61.

<sup>483</sup> Varon, 61.

<sup>484</sup> Berger, 105; Varon, 58-59.

<sup>485</sup> Varon, 61.

leftist protest leaders accused of committing a “conspiracy to incite riot” at the Convention).<sup>486</sup> The mobilization effort was not successful due to Weatherman’s exceedingly naïve view of the motivations of working class youth, the vast majority of whom were not willing to arrest or injury for the sake of establishing a communist society, and only a few hundred hard-core Weatherman supporters arrived for the demonstration.<sup>487</sup> But armed with improvised hand-to-hand weapons, helmets, and heavy clothing, the few militants present nevertheless generated a level of violence and property damage that captured national headlines – according to Jeremy Varon, an estimated 800 automobile windows were broken along with another 600 residential or store windows; 8 demonstrators were shot; and 287 demonstrators were arrested, around a dozen of which were charged with assault or aggravated battery.<sup>488</sup> In addition, two nights before the Days of Rage, Ayers and fellow Weatherman Terry Robbins had blown up a statue dedicated to the police officers killed while clashing with workers in Chicago’s 1886 Haymarket riots – a preview of the bombing campaign to come.<sup>489</sup>

The Days of Rage alienated much the rest of the New Left (who saw the violence as counterproductive) and invited the authorities to pursue Weatherman, but the group’s leadership was undeterred.<sup>490</sup> On December 27-30, Weatherman held another large-scale meeting called the Flint War Council.<sup>491</sup> Amid a series of speeches pledging an intensified campaign of revolutionary violence, the leadership announced that the group would be going underground so as to continue its struggle in the face of the government crackdown that would inevitably follow

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<sup>486</sup> Berger, 75, 99, 107-108; Varon, 75-77.

<sup>487</sup> Berger, 109; Varon, 77-79, 82.

<sup>488</sup> Varon, 82.

<sup>489</sup> Varon, 76.

<sup>490</sup> Varon, 84-85

<sup>491</sup> Berger, 326.



future attacks.<sup>492</sup> In the aftermath of this decision, Weatherman's membership shrank by about half through a combination of disaffection with the group's course and a series of purges of members not considered to be reliable enough for its clandestine operations.<sup>493</sup> In addition, the group attempted to move to a more decentralized structure, with major collectives operating on the East Coast, the West Coast, and in the Midwest (in reality, the Weatherman leadership maintained a high degree of centralized control, shuffling personnel from one collective to another as it saw fit).<sup>494</sup>

In a twist of fate, however, while Weatherman would stay underground, its lust for revolutionary bloodshed would not last long. On March 6, 1970, an accidental explosion at the New York City townhouse serving as the headquarters of the East Coast collective killed three of the group's members, including Ayers' then-girlfriend Diana Oughton, and sent two more into hiding.<sup>495</sup> The explosion had occurred while the group was making a bomb to attack a dance at an Army base in Fort Dix, New Jersey – an operation deliberately planned to produce military and civilian casualties, in contrast to Weatherman's previously nonlethal attacks.<sup>496</sup> (Between the Flint War Council and the townhouse explosion, in late February the New York collective had firebombed the home of a judge presiding over the trial of 21 Black Panthers members – but there were no casualties.<sup>497</sup>)

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<sup>492</sup> Berger, 122-124; Varon, 158-161.

<sup>493</sup> Berger, 123-124; Varon, 171; Larry Grathwohl and Frank Reagan, *Bringing Down America: An FBI Informer with the Weathermen* (Arlington House: New Rochelle, NY, 1976), 112-122.

<sup>494</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 127-129, 152, 162, 168-169.

<sup>495</sup> Berger, 127-128; Varon, 173-174; Keith Beattie, "Radical Pedagogy: Lessons from the Sixties," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 23.2 (December 2004): 92.

<sup>496</sup> Varon, 174.

<sup>497</sup> Varon, 174.

The townhouse explosion led the group's leadership to reconsider its plans to carry out attacks against people – instead, the group decided to employ bombings only against property, and would take pains to avoid casualties.<sup>498</sup> But at the same time, the explosion also spurred the federal authorities into a frenzied pursuit of Weatherman. On April 2, the federal government issued indictments against 12 leaders of the group and named another 28 as co-conspirators for their activities in the Days of Rage (this was in addition to another 64 indictments issued in December from the local court in Cook County, Illinois).<sup>499</sup> Less than two weeks later, in the resulting scramble for arrests, the FBI blew the cover of their only undercover informant in the group, Larry Grathwohl, in the course of apprehending two mid-level operatives.<sup>500</sup>

Despite the federal manhunt against it, in the course of 1970, Weatherman managed to carry out bombings of the National Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on May 10, New York City Police headquarters on June 10, Presidio Army Base and Military Police Station in San Francisco on July 25, the police statue in Chicago's Haymarket Square (again) on October 5, San Francisco's Marin County Courthouse on October 8, New York's Long Island City Courthouse on October 9, and the Harvard War Research Center for International Affairs on October 15.<sup>501</sup> In addition, on September 15, the group helped counterculture figure and LSD-advocate Dr. Timothy Leary escape from a minimum-security prison in San Luis Obispo, California and flee to Algeria (where he was hosted by the international chapter of the Black Panthers).<sup>502</sup> By this time, starting with its communiqué on May 21, the group had also begun referring to itself as the "Weatherman Underground" – although on December 6, another, more

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<sup>498</sup> Berger, 130; Varon, 174-175, 184.

<sup>499</sup> Varon, 175; Berger, 132.

<sup>500</sup> Varon, 175; Berger, 132.

<sup>501</sup> Berger, 134, 137, 139-143, 327-328.

<sup>502</sup> Berger, 138-139.

extensive communiqué would change this to the gender-neutral “Weather Underground,” part of a broader attempt by the group to be less chauvinistic and militaristic.<sup>503</sup>

On February 28, 1971, the Weather Underground bombed the U.S. Capitol in response to the decision of the administration of President Richard Nixon to invade Laos – an attack that, in a televised address, Nixon denounced as “the most dastardly act in American history.”<sup>504</sup> The authorities, meanwhile, were drawing closer to catching key members of the group – the arrest of a lower-level member in New York City in December 1970 had given the FBI information about the false identities that the rest of the members were using, and the leadership of the West Coast collective barely slipped out of an FBI trap in the spring of 1971.<sup>505</sup> Unfortunately for the FBI, larger events would soon complicate its efforts to pursue the Weather Underground. Since 1968, the Bureau had engaged in a special counterintelligence program against the New Left (called COINTELPRO-New Left) that sought to disrupt and monitor both legal and illegal groups – but on March 8, 1971, this program was brought to an end when the FBI’s office in Media, Pennsylvania was burglarized by a group calling itself the “The Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the FBI” and the secret COINTELPRO files were released to the press.<sup>506</sup> Citing interviews with Weather Underground members and the account of an FBI whistleblower, Dan Berger claims that, despite the official death of COINTELPRO, the FBI redoubled its pursuit of the Weather Underground throughout 1971 and 1972, going so far as to use illegal measures (discussed further below under “Safe Haven Conditions”).<sup>507</sup> But starting in 1972, these efforts would be curtailed by yet another, greater shock to the functioning of the FBI: the scandal that

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<sup>503</sup> Berger, 145, 328.

<sup>504</sup> Berger, 164-165.

<sup>505</sup> Berger, 157-158.

<sup>506</sup> Berger, 159.

<sup>507</sup> Berger, 159-160.

erupted following Nixon administration operatives' effort to break into the Democratic National Committee's headquarters in Washington, D.C.'s Watergate Hotel, and the wide-ranging fallout that it would generate for the president, his advisors, the Republican Party, the Justice Department, the FBI, and the U.S. intelligence community as a whole.<sup>508</sup> Facing intense public and Congressional scrutiny, as well as a proliferation of violent groups, the authorities' pursuit of the Weather Underground gradually slackened even despite of the group's bombing of the Pentagon on May 19, 1972.<sup>509</sup> As the illegality of the FBI's techniques weakened the Justice Department's cases against the members of the Weather Underground, the Department finally dropped its indictments in October of 1973 and September of 1974.<sup>510</sup>

But even with the authorities easing off, the Weather Underground was soon to go into decline. The signing of the Paris Peace Accords between the United States and North Vietnam in January of 1973 brought about an end to direct American involvement in the war, and began to weaken the motivation that had held together Weather Underground.<sup>511</sup> The group still carried out occasional bombings in response to national liberation and civil rights matters, but increasingly shifted to legal, aboveground means for publicizing its messages.<sup>512</sup> In July of

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<sup>508</sup> Berger, 159, 162.

<sup>509</sup> Berger, 165.

<sup>510</sup> Berger, 331

<sup>511</sup> Berger, 202-203.

<sup>512</sup> Such bombings included: the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct of the New York Police Department on May 18, 1973 in response to cops' killing of an unarmed, black 10-year-old; the Latin America Headquarters of International Telephone and Telegraph in New York City on September 28, 1973 in response to that company's support for Augusto Pinochet's military coup in Chile; the federal offices of Health, Education, and Welfare in San Francisco in response to the forced sterilization of women of color; the stink-bombing of a dinner hosted by New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller on March 14, 1974; the office of the Attorney General of California on May 31, 1974 in response to the killing of six members of the Symbionese Liberation Army by police; the Pittsburgh headquarters of Gulf Oil on June 13 for its activities in Angola; the Oakland, California headquarters of the Anaconda copper company on September 11, 1974 for that company's activities in Chile; the Vietnam section of the Agency for International Development

1974, the Weather Underground released a book detailing its ideology and political positions titled *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*, and the popularity of this book among the radical left led to the establishment of an allied (but independent), non-violent, above-ground group called the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee.<sup>513</sup> The creation of *Prairie Fire* and PFOC, however, led to further questions within the organization about the Weather Underground's purpose. For one thing, in the course of writing *Prairie Fire*, the group found itself increasingly torn over the question that had caused the SDS to split five years earlier: should the Weather Underground be anti-racist group supporting national liberation movements, or should it be a Marxist group supporting the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat?<sup>514</sup> For another, given *Prairie Fire*'s success and the dropping of the federal indictments against the members of the Weather Underground, why was the group bothering to stay underground and conduct bombings at all?<sup>515</sup> And, lastly, the Weather Underground found itself divided over what, if anything, it should do to support women's liberation.<sup>516</sup>

Further efforts to publicize the Weather Underground's message only aggravated these intra-group tensions – first through the magazine *Osawatomie* (named for the Kansas town where a small group under abolitionist John Brown fought a battle against a much larger pro-slavery militia in 1856, it survived for only six issues); then through the 1975 documentary film *Underground*, in which concealed Weather Underground members were interviewed by the

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in Washington, D.C. on January 28, 1975 for continued U.S. involvement in Vietnam; the New York City branch of the Banco de Ponce on June 16, 1975 in support of a strike by cement workers in Puerto Rico; and the Salt Lake City, Utah headquarters of the Kennecott Corporation on September 4, 1975 for its support of the Pinochet regime in Chile. Source: Berger, 331-333.

<sup>513</sup> Berger, 184-191, 201.

<sup>514</sup> Berger, 194-195.

<sup>515</sup> Berger, 195-196.

<sup>516</sup> Berger, 218-221.

filmmakers.<sup>517</sup> When, under the cover of PFOC sponsorship, the Weather Underground convened a public conference of leftist groups titled “Hard Times are Fighting Times” (known retrospectively as the “Hard Times Conference”) on January 30-February 2, 1976, these tensions finally exploded – criticisms from black and feminist groups of the increasingly traditional Marxist bent of the Weather Underground and its leadership finally led the dissenters within the group to split with the organization, bringing about its collapse.<sup>518</sup> The members of the Weather Underground would go on to either join smaller, shorter-lived groups or surface from the underground and pursue non-violent activities.<sup>519</sup>

## Organizational Structure

Starting in the summer of 1969, the Weathermen constructed a hierarchical network of territorially distributed units (“collectives”) controlled by a centralized leadership based in Chicago (“the Weatherbureau”).<sup>520</sup> This structure was the product of applying the doctrines of Che Guevara’s foco theory (which, to quote Jeremy Varon, called for “small, semi-autonomous cells guided by a central leadership” – itself a more cellular form of organization) to the remains of the SDS’s hierarchical bureaucracy.<sup>521</sup> At this time, there were Weathermen collectives based in Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, and Seattle (and possibly more locations).<sup>522</sup> The sizes of these collectives varied wildly (Varon writes that they

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<sup>517</sup> Berger, 205, 209-215, 221-223.

<sup>518</sup> Berger, 227-234

<sup>519</sup> Berger, 234-243.

<sup>520</sup> Varon, 57.

<sup>521</sup> Varon, 57; Berger, 28.

<sup>522</sup> Berger, 107; Varon, 57.

ranged from “one to several dozen members”), and the overall strength of the Weathermen at this time is estimated to have been more than 500 people.<sup>523</sup>

Despite the group’s geographic distribution, the Weatherbureau exerted a strong degree of control over the behavior of the collectives, attempting to mold it according to a mix of Maoist discipline and counterculture ideals. Among the policies pursued by the Weatherbureau were the shipping of members away from their home locations to other collectives (“to encourage individual political development and... separate people from the comforts of their previous ‘bourgeois’ life,” according to Dan Berger), a “smash monogamy” campaign that sought to separate couples and promote sexual experimentation (which, critics have since argued, also facilitated sexual exploitation of female members), and “criticism/self-criticism” sessions that enforced discipline and eroded individual identities through battering individual members with hours of accusations about their alleged counterrevolutionary beliefs.<sup>524</sup> The chief purpose of the collectives at this time was to mobilize working class youth for the violent October 8-11, 1969 demonstration in Chicago (“the Days of Rage”).<sup>525</sup> This mobilization effort was not successful and only an estimated 600 people participated in the Days of Rage demonstration.<sup>526</sup>

Following the group’s decision to go underground after the Flint, Michigan “War Council” meeting in late December 1969, the Weathermen underwent a change in both organizational structure and membership.<sup>527</sup> The group shrunk to approximately 150 members (following a series of purges) and reorganized into three collectives based, respectively, in the

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<sup>523</sup> Varon, 57.

<sup>524</sup> Berger, 105; Varon, 58-59.

<sup>525</sup> Berger, 75, 99, 107-108; Varon, 75-77.

<sup>526</sup> Berger, 109; Varon, 77-79, 82.

<sup>527</sup> Varon, 158, 172

East Coast, the West Coast, and the Midwest.<sup>528</sup> In his memoir of his experiences, Larry Grathwohl, an FBI informant who spent seven months in the Weather Underground and had access to members of the top leadership, claims that as of early 1970, the group had three-to-six-person cells “in New York, Buffalo, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Denver, San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and Seattle.”<sup>529</sup>

Varon describes the general scope of the new organizational structure in the following terms:

Collectives based in San Francisco, New York City, and Chicago and Detroit were to experiment more or less autonomously in devising underground strategies. Members of the West Coast collective, headed by Dohrn and Jones, spent time in Berkeley and San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district, but avoided public political activities and quietly plotted bombings. The Midwest collective, headed by Ayers, built an arms cache and fabricated crude bombs with Grathwohl’s help.... The New York collective was the most militant. Its leaders, J.J. [John Jacobs] and Terry Robbins, thought that whites would move in a revolutionary direction only through the prompting of dramatic acts of violence, and they were dead set on providing the drama. The collective was headquartered in the fashionable Greenwich Village townhouse of Cathy Wilkerson’s father.... Though not technically underground, members of the collective virtually disappeared from public life and built a large stockpile of dynamite, purchased by Weathermen using false names from demolition supply companies in New England.<sup>530</sup>

Based on what information is available, the March 6, 1970 destruction of Wilkerson’s townhouse, and the deaths of three of the members of the New York collective, appears to have beheaded this initial East Coast branch of the Weathermen (the New York collective’s leader, J.J., was ejected from the group in a subsequent meeting of its leadership – which also decided to shrink its numbers and change its name to “the Central Committee”).<sup>531</sup> According to Grathwohl’s account, this led to yet another shift in the Weather Underground’s organization,

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<sup>528</sup> Varon, 172.

<sup>529</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 128, 138

<sup>530</sup> Varon, 172-173.

<sup>531</sup> Varon, 173-174, 181-182; Berger, 127.



with the Midwest branch being largely dissolved and dispatched to take over the East Coast (specifically, he writes that the plan was to move most of the Midwest's leadership and cells to New York, only leaving behind cells in Chicago and possibly Denver).<sup>532</sup> Arguably, Grathwohl was forced to exit the group before this plan could come to full fruition (his cover being blown on April 15, 1970), but the Weather Underground did have enough capacity to carry out operations on the East Coast throughout the rest of its existence: in Albany (September 17, 1971), Boston (October 1971), New York (in June 10, 1970; October 9, 1970; May 18, 1973; September 28, 1973; March 14, 1974; and June 16, 1975), and Washington, D.C. (February 28, 1971; May 19, 1972; and January 28, 1975).<sup>533</sup> Toward the end of its existence, the Weather Underground was composed of a few dozen members arranged in collectives on the East and West Coasts, with control over the organization being exercised through regular communication among the members of its Central Committee.<sup>534</sup>

## Safe Haven Conditions

Based on all available evidence, the Weathermen/Weather Underground never held a domestic or foreign safe haven. During the period when the group was above ground, it was geographically distributed among major metropolitan areas with its central leadership based in Chicago – and after it went underground, Dan Berger claims that the group relied on a network of supporters among the radical left to help hide the identities of the group's members from the authorities and on its own cautious tradecraft.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>532</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 169.

<sup>533</sup> Berger, 132, 142, 225, 327-333,

<sup>534</sup> Berger, 130, 154.

<sup>535</sup> Varon, 57; Berger, 154.

Furthermore, it does not appear that the group received much in the way of foreign support (although whether it received any at all is contested). Despite a concerted effort by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation to find evidence that the group was being supported by foreign governments, the most prominent international connections that they uncovered were that, before and after joining the Weather Underground, some of the group's members undertook brief trips abroad to Cambodia, Canada, Cuba, Hungary, and Yugoslavia.<sup>536</sup> Of these trips, the most notable were when Dohrn and other members of the pre-Weatherman SDS briefly met North Vietnamese officials in Bratislava, Yugoslavia in September of 1968, and when members of the Weatherman leadership met with North Vietnamese and Cuban officials in Havana, Cuba in July of 1969.<sup>537</sup> In all cases, these trips consisted of propaganda presentations by the North Vietnamese and/or Cubans to persuade the young Americans to pressure their government to end the war effort, rather than any more substantive aid.<sup>538</sup>

However, FBI informant Larry Grathwohl and former CIA counterintelligence operative Frank Rafalko have, respectively, claimed that individual members of the Weather Underground received some training in guerrilla tactics while in Cuba on "Venceremos Brigade" trips (trips sponsored by the Cuban government to promote support for the Cuban revolution among young Americans).<sup>539</sup> In both cases, though, the evidence to support this claim is not very strong.

For his part, Grathwohl says that his direct superior in the Weather Underground and then-girlfriend Naomi Jaffe received weapons and explosives training while in Cuba and North Vietnam (note that in Grathwohl's 1974 U.S. Senate testimony, he names both countries; his

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<sup>536</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, 64-65.

<sup>537</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, 66-72; Varon, 52-53; Berger, 103-104.

<sup>538</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, 66-119; Varon, 52-53, 137; Berger, 104.

<sup>539</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 116; Rakalko, 160-161, 167.

1976 autobiography, however, names only Cuba).<sup>540</sup> Rafalko, meanwhile, draws the inference that Mark Rudd and 19 other SDS members received guerrilla training when they spent four weeks in Cuba in February 1968 at the Cuban Institute for Friendship between Peoples (which he argues is a school for guerrilla fighters, without providing further substantiation).<sup>541</sup> In addition, Rafalko provides a statement before Congress by Charles Siragusa, chief inspector of the Illinois Crime Commission, who claimed that “most of the 692 Americans who had traveled to Cuba under SDS auspices received guerrilla warfare instruction.”<sup>542</sup> Further research into this statement, though, reveals that while Siragusa did make it as part of his testimony before the U.S. Senate, his claim was based on a Detroit News article reprinted in the Chicago Sun-Times that, in turn, said the information originated from “classified reports of several free-world consulates in Havana” and an anonymous, “high-ranking Canadian government source.”<sup>543</sup> In other words, Siragusa’s claim relies on unattributed, hearsay evidence.

While it is possible that members of the Weather Underground did receive some amount of guerrilla training from Cuba, it is worth noting that, given the group’s early record of profoundly clumsy, crude, and amateurish attempts at violence (fighting the Chicago police with improvised clubs in the Days of Rage, using lit cigarettes as bomb fuses, the 1970 townhouse

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<sup>540</sup> United States. U.S. Senate. *Terroristic Activity Inside the Weatherman Movement*. Washington: GPO, October 18, 1974, 108; Grathwohl and Reagan, 116.

<sup>541</sup> Frank J. Rafalko, *MH/CHAOS: The CIA’s Campaign Against the Radical New Left and the Black Panthers* (Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD, 2011) 160.

<sup>542</sup> Rafalko, 167.

<sup>543</sup> “SDS Poses Threat, Senate Probers Told.” *Schenectady Gazette*, 30 October 1970: 5. Print. Available online:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=2mgtAAAIBAJ&sjid=9IkFAAAAIBAJ&pg=708,7773401>; State of Illinois. Illinois Crime Investigating Commission. *Report on the SDS Riots, October 8-11, 1969, Chicago, Illinois to the Illinois General Assembly*. Chicago: Illinois Crime Investigating Commission, April 1970, 638. Available online: <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/isl/id/3592/show/3503/rec/4>

explosion, etc.), such training could not have amounted to much.<sup>544</sup> Grathwohl, whose tenure in the Weather Underground owed much to the fact that he had been a soldier in the U.S. Army and, hence, was thought to be an expert on explosives, confirmed the group's paucity of training in his 1974 Senate testimony: "There were people in the Weathermen who told me that they had been trained in various kinds of guerrilla-type activities in other countries, but none to the extent – well, I will put it this way, as far as military knowledge and ability, I had more than any one of them, any 10 of them."<sup>545</sup> Berger, based on his interviews with the members of the Weather Underground, claims that what training the members received came from publicly available texts such as Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*; the writings of Régis Debray, Che Guevara, and Carlos Marighella; and U.S. Army training manuals.<sup>546</sup>

In addition to claiming that the Weather Underground received training from Cuba, Rafalko also states that they received some degree of funding as well – although the evidentiary basis for this assertion is even weaker. The 1976 FBI report *Foreign Influence – Weather Underground Organization*, one of Rafalko's sources, implies that the Weather Underground received money through the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York – but does so merely on the basis of an October 1970 column from the *Chicago Daily News*, which itself states only that the Mission was funding radical groups in general, and provides no named sources for its information.<sup>547</sup> Another citation of Rafalko's is an undated, unattributed "Declassified U.S. Government Intelligence" document that allegedly came from the 1980 trial of former top FBI officials W. Mark Felt and Edward S. Miller (they had been accused, and later convicted, of ordering illegal searches against the friends and family of Weather Underground members) – a

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<sup>544</sup> Varon, 80, 83, 172-174.

<sup>545</sup> U.S. Senate, *Terroristic Activity Inside the Weatherman Movement*, 108

<sup>546</sup> Berger, 155.

<sup>547</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, 138; Rafalko, 158, 162

document that Rafalko acquired through a right-wing conspiracy theory website.<sup>548</sup> For his part, Grathwohl does not say that the Weather Underground received foreign funds in either his testimony before the U.S. Senate or in his autobiography – instead, he states that the money came from mix of larceny and fraud (for example: selling stolen goods, having male-female pairs of members marry to get wedding gifts from family members, tricking donors believing that they were giving to a non-violent anti-war group, etc.).<sup>549</sup> Again, the statement from the members of the Weather Underground themselves (channeled through Berger) is that they financed their operations through donations from supporters and their own personal funds.<sup>550</sup>

In summary, not only did the Weather Underground lack a safe haven, it also lacked much in the way of foreign support. And making the political environment even more hostile was the fact that, for the group's early years, it was confronted by an aggressive, nation-wide effort by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to monitor and disrupt all groups in the New Left (both violent and non-violent). The COINTELPRO-New Left program established in 1968 was the fifth such program created since 1956 – the others being directed against the U.S. Communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, white extremist groups (such as the Ku Klux Klan), and black extremist groups (such as the Black Panthers).<sup>551</sup> As described by the 1975 Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (called the

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<sup>548</sup> Rafalko, 308; Anonymous. *Declassified U.S. Government Intelligence information regarding the communist and foreign connections of the Weather Underground. Presented as evidence, on the agreement of the prosecution and defense counsel, in the trial of W. Mark Felt and Edward S. Miller.* America's Survival. No Date. Web. Available online: [http://www.usasurvival.org/docs/Declassified\\_docs.pdf](http://www.usasurvival.org/docs/Declassified_docs.pdf)

<sup>549</sup> U.S. Senate, *Terroristic Activity Inside the Weatherman Movement*, 143.

<sup>550</sup> Berger, 156.

<sup>551</sup> David Martin, "Investigating the FBI," *Policy Review*, 18 (Fall 1981), 113, 118-119, 121, 123, 129.

“Church Committee” after its chairman, Idaho Senator Frank Church), the CONTELPRO programs comprised a range of tactics, including:

- Anonymously attacking the political beliefs of targets in order to induce their employers to fire them;
- Anonymously mailing letters to the spouses of intelligence targets for the purpose of destroying their marriages;
- Obtaining from the IRS the tax returns of a target and then attempting to provoke an IRS investigation for the express purpose of deterring a protest leader from attending the Democratic National Convention;
- "Falsely and anonymously labeling as Government informants members of groups known to be violent, thereby exposing the falsely labeled member to expulsion or physical attack; ""
- Pursuant to instructions to use "misinformation" to disrupt demonstrations, employing such means as broadcasting fake orders on the same citizens band radio frequency used by demonstration marshals to attempt to control demonstrations and duplicating and falsely filling out forms soliciting housing for persons coming to a demonstration, thereby causing "long and useless journeys to locate these addresses."
- Sending an anonymous letter to the leader of a Chicago street gang (described as "violence-prone") stating that the Black Panthers were supposed to have "a hit out for you." The letter was suggested because it "may intensify... animosity" and cause the street gang leader to "take

retaliatory action."<sup>552</sup>

The Church Committee report goes on to say that, beyond COINTELLPRO, other illegal counterintelligence measures were employed during this period, such as the indiscriminate opening of mail, the interception of telegrams, warrantless break-ins and surveillance, blackmail, and informants engaged in violent criminal activity.<sup>553</sup>

COINTELPRO was brought to an end in 1971, after the program's memos were exposed to the press following the burglary of an FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania by a group called "The Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI."<sup>554</sup> But citing claims by Weather Underground members and the autobiography of an FBI whistleblower, Dan Berger argues that the FBI continued an intense pursuit of the Weather Underground that included warrantless wiretaps, break-ins, mail openings, and both threatened and actual violence against the members' friends, family, and acquaintances.<sup>555</sup>

As well as the FBI's efforts, starting in 1967, the CIA was tasked with examining whether dissidents within the United States were being influenced by foreign powers.<sup>556</sup> Dubbed "Operation CHAOS," this project both monitored the activities of American targets abroad and domestically (in violation of the agency's mandate).<sup>557</sup> According to the Church Committee report, this resulted in the collection of 13,000 files, 7,200 of which were on American

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<sup>552</sup> United States. U.S. Senate. *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book II*. GAO: Washington, D.C., 1976, 10

<sup>553</sup> U.S. Senate. *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book II*, 12-13.

<sup>554</sup> Berger, 159.

<sup>555</sup> Berger, 159-160.

<sup>556</sup> U.S. Senate. *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book II*, 99-100.

<sup>557</sup> U.S. Senate. *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book II*, 99-100.

citizens.<sup>558</sup> Operation CHAOS was finally ended in March 1974 due to steadily mounting opposition within the CIA itself.<sup>559</sup>

The FBI's anti-New Left efforts, meanwhile, were brought to an end in 1973-1974 as mounting fallout from the Watergate scandal embroiled the administration of President Richard Nixon, the Bureau, and the Justice Department.<sup>560</sup> After 1974, the federal government's pursuit of the Weather Underground substantially softened – but as noted earlier, this ironically helped feed into the group's 1975 collapse as one of the several arguments between its members became whether or not there was any point to remaining underground.<sup>561</sup>

## Alternative Factors

In the case of the Weather Underground, the most difficult question to answer is whether, had it maintained the more hierarchical structure of its Days of Rage period into its descent underground, would this have impacted its longevity? This is, of course, a counterfactual question and, thus, can never be definitively answered. However, the account by FBI informer Larry Grathwohl of his time in the Weather Underground seems to indicate that such a structure would have only made the group more vulnerable. Despite a lack of any sort of undercover police training or tradecraft, Grathwohl survived the group's membership purges in early 1970, including passing an LSD-fueled loyalty test through the simple ruse of only pretending to take his allotted acid capsule.<sup>562</sup> From there, he rose to be an advisor to leading members Bill Ayers and Naomi Jaffe in the Midwest collective and was poised to be a critical member of the

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<sup>558</sup> U.S. Senate. *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book II*, 102.

<sup>559</sup> U.S. Senate. *Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book II*, 102.

<sup>560</sup> Poveda, 112-113.

<sup>561</sup> Berger, 215-217.

<sup>562</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 119-121



reconstituted East Coast collective when his cover was blown – not by discovery by his fellow members, but by his mishandling by police during the arrest of two fellow members (the other members observed that the police shrugged off the discovery of Grathwohl’s Weather Underground-provided false identification papers rather than questioning him about them).<sup>563</sup> Despite Berger’s assertion that the Weather Underground was protected by the loyalty of its leftist supporters and allies, the extent of the FBI’s penetration via its work with Grathwohl indicates that had it not been for the group’s good fortune in being active during the Watergate scandal – and, possibly, had it not been for the Weather Underground’s decision, after the townhouse explosion, not to inflict casualties – the group’s longevity would have been far shorter.<sup>564</sup>

Another complication regarding the Weather Underground’s history is the question of how the group’s organizational structure relates to its effectiveness – specifically in regards to the mobilization of support for its cause. During the period from June to December 1969, when the group was at its most hierarchical and could draw upon the remaining above-ground resources of the SDS, its effort to mobilize supporters for the Chicago Days of Rage demonstration was a miserable failure – and yet, after the group had gone underground and adopted a more cellular organizational structure, its actions led to the successful creation of the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, which survived for decades after the demise of the Weather Underground itself.<sup>565</sup> Taken merely in terms of whether the Weather Underground was able to get others to take action in support of its beliefs, this would seem to run contrary to the prediction of the hypothesis that hierarchical groups will be more successful in mobilizing

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<sup>563</sup> Grathwohl and Reagan, 137-140, 178-179.

<sup>564</sup> Berger, 153-154.

<sup>565</sup> Varon, 76-77; Berger, 240.

supporters – but in comparing these two instances from the group’s history, the question of what the supporters were being asked to do makes for a critical difference. In the period leading up to the Days of Rage, The Weather Underground asked potential supporters to engage in open, hand-to-hand combat against a well-armed, professionally-trained metropolitan police force that had been accused of brutality in responding to a similar demonstration only one year earlier – this was largely regarded as suicidal not just by the non-politicized youth that the group was trying to recruit, but by its allies in other New Left organizations.<sup>566</sup> Meanwhile, the PFOC merely asked its members to engage in political activism through non-violent, above-ground channels – and, in fact, took pains to conceal and deny the direct connections between its leadership and the Weather Underground (it is also notable that, by the time of PFOC’s creation, the Weather Underground had an established record of carrying out its bombings without causing casualties).<sup>567</sup>

Again, all this leads to a counterfactual question: What if the Weather Underground had not made such extreme demands of its potential supporters before the Days of Rage? What if, rather than asking recruits to fight the cops directly, it had asked for them to carry out bombings or provide logistical support? The group’s success with organizing PFOC provides a hint that its efforts would have been more successful – and an even better indicator is the support that it received in the years in between, from 1970-1974, when support from other leftist collectives helped the group evade arrest by the authorities.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Varon, 76-78, 81.

<sup>567</sup> Berger, 201-202, 229-230.

<sup>568</sup> Berger, 154.

## Conclusion and Notes

While complicated by the Weather Underground's shift to a more cellular organizational structure, and by an increase in its environmental security as a result of the Watergate scandal, this case conforms to the hypothesis' predicted results. The Weather Underground's initial hierarchical structure and lack of a safe haven made it vulnerable to monitoring and infiltration by the authorities, while its shift to a less hierarchical structure, followed by an exogenous increase in its environmental security, extended the group's lifespan and helped provide it with time enough to build a modest mobilization effort (after its previous effort as a hierarchy had been derailed by wildly unrealistic expectations). In short, the Weather Underground moved from a "bad fit" to a "better fit" between its organizational structure and political environment.

In the analysis that will follow, the individual cases will be placed into two dyads according to their condition variable (the security of the political environment) and subjected to a controlled comparison to see how they differ in terms of their dependent variables (their longevity and effectiveness). More specifically, the two dyads to be compared will be the Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Red Army Faction (both of which possessed safe havens), and the Red Brigades and Weather Underground (neither of which possessed safe havens).

## Chapter 7: Cross-Case Analyses

### **Dyad I: Groups with Access to Safe Havens**

The first cases to be compared in this chapter are the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and the Red Army Faction (RAF). Both groups faced a low risk of government interference in that they were in possession of safe havens to which they could escape from the authorities and prepare their operations. For PIRA, from 1970 to 1972, these safe havens consisted of Catholic neighborhoods in Northern Ireland designated as “no-go” areas for the British Army (in an attempt to avoid casting the conflict as anti-Catholic) and of the Republic of Ireland (the government of which was restrained from taking action against PIRA by the group’s level of support among the public).<sup>569</sup> Even after 1972, when British forces took over the “no-go” areas and the Republic of Ireland began to cooperate with the British government against PIRA, the group was able to take shelter among staunchly republican communities in Northern Ireland, whose populations viewed the group as necessary for protection against loyalist paramilitaries.<sup>570</sup> For the RAF, from its foundation in 1970 until German reunification in 1990, the group was able to utilize East Germany as a safe haven through which it could escape the West German authorities and travel to other Soviet-aligned countries – and, for a brief period in 1980-1981, in which it was armed and trained by the East German Stasi.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Peter R. Neumann, *Britain’s Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict, 1969-98* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 52; Kevin Kelley, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA* (Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland: Brandon Book Publishers, Ltd., 1982) 209, 192-193.

<sup>570</sup> Jeffrey A. Sluka, *Hearts and Minds, Water and Fish: Support for the IRA and INLA in a Northern Irish Ghetto* (Greenwich, CT: Jai Press, 1989) 290-291, 144.

<sup>571</sup> John Schmeidel, *STASI: Sword and Shield of the Party* (Routledge: Florence, KY, 2006), 146, 152, 157.

## *Organizational Structures*

The organizational structures employed by PIRA and the RAF, respectively, could hardly have been more different. From 1970 to 1976, PIRA had a formal, centralized, hierarchical structure based on a military model: orders traveled down from the Army Council (headed by the Chief of Staff) to the functionally-differentiated departments of the General Headquarters, and from there to the brigades, battalions, and companies.<sup>572</sup> Much of this hierarchical structure remained even after PIRA's reorganization in 1977, when the leadership was divided into Northern and Southern Commands, and the group shifted from employing localized battalions/companies to cellular active service units (ASUs).<sup>573</sup>

The RAF, on the other hand, was centralized in as much as it had a few key leaders (Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Ulrike Meinhof, and Jan-Carl Raspe for 1970-1977; Brigitte Mohnhaupt and Christian Klar for 1977-1982; and Wolfgang Grams and Birgit Hogefeld for 1984-1993), but it had a far more cellular and far less formal structure than PIRA.<sup>574</sup> Structured mainly upon the social connections between its members, and the exigencies of any given time, the RAF consisted of a core leadership cell that would spin off smaller cells (called "commandos") to carry out operations on an ad hoc basis, or would split to help evade capture.<sup>575</sup> These full-time RAF cells were, in turn, supported by mostly-autonomous local cells of above-

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<sup>572</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *IRA Tactics and Targets: An Analysis of Tactical Aspects of the Armed Struggle 1969-1989* (Dublin, Ireland: Poolbeg Press, 1990) 12-13; Brendan O'Brien, *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999) 106, 158.

<sup>573</sup> O'Brien, 158; Kelley, 284-285.

<sup>574</sup> Assaf Moghadam, "Failure and Disengagement in the Red Army Faction," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:2 (2012) 159-161, 163-165, 168, 170.

<sup>575</sup> Schmeidel, 149, 155.

ground supporters (called “illegal militants”).<sup>576</sup> This structure would see some minor variations (most notably, the simultaneous existence of an imprisoned official leadership and an active unofficial leadership in 1977, a largely fanciful attempt at formal organization in 1982, and periods when the group lacked clear leadership), but it held true largely throughout the RAF’s existence.<sup>577</sup>

## *Effectiveness*

**Survival.** PIRA and the RAF were each active for just short of 28 years (December 1969 to July 1997 for PIRA, May 1970 to April 1998 for the RAF), and both ended their campaigns by choosing to disband – but of the two, the RAF undoubtedly came closer to dissolution by the authorities.

Estimates on the number of PIRA members killed ranges from 276 to 294, and journalists Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie have reported that 8,000 to 10,000 members were arrested in the period from 1969 to 1987.<sup>578</sup> Figures for the numerical strength of PIRA are scarce, but Bishop and Mallie write that in 1969 the group started with an estimated 120 operatives and 500 supporters, while post-1977 estimates of its annual membership range from 900 to 1,500

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<sup>576</sup> Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the ed Army Faction, and the Revolutionary Violence of the Sixties and Seventies* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 2004) 72.

<sup>577</sup> Schmeidel, 147-148; Moghadam, 163; Hans Josef Horchem, “The Decline of the Red Army Faction,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3:2 (1991), 65-66.

<sup>578</sup> Malcolm Sutton, *Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN): Sutton Index of Deaths*. University of Ulster, March 2013. Web. Available online: <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Status.html>; David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, and Brian Feeney, *Lost Lives: The Stories of the Men, Women and Children who Died as a Result of the Northern Ireland Troubles* (Mainstream Publishing: Edinburgh, UK, 2001) 1531; Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, *The Provisional IRA* (Corgi Books: London, 1987) 1.

members (of which, O’Leary writes, 300-500 were full-time operatives).<sup>579</sup> Former PIRA Chief of Staff Martin McGuinness has claimed that 10,000 people were members of the group at some point or another in the course of its 28-year lifespan.<sup>580</sup>

The RAF, meanwhile, saw 25 members killed, including its imprisoned leaders’ suicides.<sup>581</sup> According to a former head of the German Federal Criminal Police Office cited by Assaf Moghadam, “517 [people] were sentenced for membership [in the RAF] and 917 for supporting the RAF” – a number which includes 46 arrests of the group’s full-time members and all three generations of its leadership.<sup>582</sup> But the numbers of these losses are smaller in absolute terms than those of PIRA, they represent a far greater portion of the RAF membership – it having been estimated to have consisted of 15 to 40 full-time operatives depending on the time period, with around 200 part-time operatives and 400 supporters.<sup>583</sup> It should be noted, then, that while PIRA and the RAF survived for the same amount of time, the latter suffered losses of a far greater severity – and, given the differences in recruitment (discussed below), would likely not have survived long were it not for the availability of its safe haven in East Germany.

**Attacks.** The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism’s Global Terrorism Database (GTD) attributes 2,636 incidents to PIRA for the period from 1970 to 1997 – a tally that almost certainly falls short of the actual number of incidents

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<sup>579</sup> Bishop and Mallie, 141; Brendan O’Leary, “Mission Accomplished? Looking Back at the IRA,” *Field Day Review*, Vol. 1 (2005), 233-234; Ireland. Dáil Éireann, *Parliamentary Debates (Official Report – Unrevised)*, 65: 1 (June 23, 2005), 80. Available online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20071124230440/http://debates.oireachtas.ie/Xml/29/DAL20050623.PDF>

<sup>580</sup> O’Leary, 233.

<sup>581</sup> Moghadam, 157.

<sup>582</sup> Moghadam, 158, 161, 164, 170; Jillian Becker, *Hitler’s Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (J.B. Lippincott Company: Philadelphia and New York, 1977), 278.

<sup>583</sup> Moghadam, 159, 163; Hans Josef Horchem, “The Decline of the Red Army Faction,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3:2 (1991) 66.

carried out by PIRA due to the loss of the GTD's records for the year 1993.<sup>584</sup> Out of these incidents, the GTD reports that PIRA committed 1,134 bombings, 859 assassinations, 289 facility/infrastructure attacks, 288 armed assaults, 40 kidnappings, 8 barricade hostage-taking events, and three hijackings. And according to the University of Ulster's Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN), PIRA was responsible for 1,706 deaths over the course of the conflict in Northern Ireland.<sup>585</sup>

For the RAF and Baader-Meinhof Group (from 1970 to 1998, again without 1993), the GTD contains 123 incidents, of which there are 60 bombings, 20 assassinations, 27 facility/infrastructure attacks, eight armed assaults, two barricade hostage-taking events, and one hijacking. In the course of these operations, the RAF was responsible for 34 deaths.<sup>586</sup>

Taken on a per-capita basis (using a mean estimate of 400 full-time PIRA operatives and 27.5 full-time RAF operatives), the number of GTD incidents attributed to PIRA is almost 50 percent greater than that of the RAF (at 6.59 incidents per full-time operative vs. 4.47 per full-time operative), and the per-capita number of deaths attributed to PIRA is over three times higher (4.27 deaths per operative vs. 1.24 deaths per operative). Taken on an annual basis, the estimated numbers of attacks are 94.14 attacks per year for PIRA and 4.39 attacks per year for the RAF.

In terms of the quality of their attacks, both groups underwent a similar evolution from conducting simple bombings and shootings to carrying out highly complex operations.

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<sup>584</sup> National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. *Global Terrorism Database* (University of Maryland: College Park, MD, Accessed July 19, 2013). Available online: <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>. Note regarding the missing data for 1993 is available here: <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/about/History.aspx>

<sup>585</sup> Sutton, CAIN online: [http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Organisation\\_Responsible.html](http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Organisation_Responsible.html)

<sup>586</sup> Moghadam, 157.



Examples of sophisticated PIRA operations include the bombing of 21 locations in one 75-minute period on Friday, July 21, 1972 (called “Bloody Friday”), which resulted in nine deaths, and the conduct of an extensive campaign of bombings and attacks on the British mainland from 1973 to 1975.<sup>587</sup> For the RAF, a clear example of the group’s sophistication is the second generation’s “German Autumn” campaign of 1977, in which the kidnapping of West German Employers’ Federation President Hanns-Martin Schleyer on September 6 was timed to coordinate with the October 13 hijacking of Lufthansa Flight 181 by the People’s Front for the Liberation of Palestine.<sup>588</sup>

**Recruitment.** Although the estimates for PIRA strength vary (as seen in the “Survival” discussion above), there is no doubt that the group’s success at mobilizing supporters far outstripped that of the RAF. From attacks to casualties to arrests, the PIRA numbers are consistently more than ten times greater than the RAF’s, indicating a much larger organization. It is also notable that, while PIRA began its existence with a larger membership base than the RAF, its estimated number of full-time operatives increased 750-1250 percent, while the latter’s number of full time operatives increased only 200 percent.

## *Summary*

While the possession of safe havens helped aid the survival of both PIRA and the RAF, the former’s hierarchical structure gave it a substantial advantage in recruitment. This, in turn, allowed PIRA to mount a higher absolute volume of attacks and absorb higher absolute (but lower per capita) losses. In addition, while both groups were capable of sophisticated operations,

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<sup>587</sup> Kelley, 183-184; Smith, 125-128.

<sup>588</sup> Hanshew, 1-2, 224-225.

PIRA's hierarchical structure allowed it to mount a higher per capita number of attacks with a much higher fatality rate.

## Dyad II: Groups without Access to Safe Havens

The next cases to be compared in this chapter are the Red Brigades and the Weather Underground. Both groups faced a high risk of government interference due to the fact that neither held a safe haven (of the two, the Weather Underground was able to rely on some modest cover from its supporters in the counter-cultural community, but for most of this period the group was no longer a subject of serious pursuit by the authorities).<sup>589</sup>

### *Organizational Structures*

The Red Brigades originated in 1970 as a collection of localized, autonomous cells – first in Milan, then in Turin, the Veneto, Rome, and Genoa.<sup>590</sup> In 1974, the group's leaders created a centralized, overarching structure to coordinate the cells' activities according to location (their "column") and function (their "front," or whether they provided logics and support or recruitment and intelligence).<sup>591</sup> The two heads of each local column were responsible for carrying out attacks with support from the cells under them.<sup>592</sup> At the top of this structure was

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<sup>589</sup> Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (AK Press: Oakland, CA, 2006), 154.

<sup>590</sup> Robert C. Meade, Jr. *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1990), 61-62

<sup>591</sup> Sue Ellen Moran, ed. *Court Depositions of Three Red Brigadists* (RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, CA, 1986), 13.

<sup>592</sup> Moran, 14-15.

the Executive Committee, who also carried out the group's most sensitive operations.<sup>593</sup> Starting in September of 1974 and continuing into 1975, the loss of much of the group's top members concentrated its leadership under Mario Moretti, resulting in a more centralized organization (at least, until the group began to suffer from internal splits and defections in 1979).<sup>594</sup>

In contrast to the Red Brigades, the Weather Underground began with a highly centralized, hierarchical structure, and shifted to a less-centralized, cellular structure. Starting with the Weatherman faction's takeover of the Students for a Democratic Society in 1969, the group used the hierarchical bureaucracy inherited from the SDS – including its headquarters, records, and publication -- to coordinate local cells based on Che Guevara's *foco* concept.<sup>595</sup> Following the group's violent, but less-than-revolutionary Days of Rage protest in October 1969, the Weather Underground purged much of its membership and shifted into a cellular-network structure with three relatively autonomous, geographically-based branches (in the Midwest, East Coast, and West Coast).<sup>596</sup> This number of branches was reduced to two in 1970 when, following an accidental explosion, the then-East Coast branch collapsed and was replaced with the members and leadership of the Midwest Branch.<sup>597</sup>

## *Effectiveness*

**Survival.** The Red Brigades survived for about 13 years (August 1970 to early 1983), while the Weather Underground lasted for only seven years (June 1969 to February 1976). Of

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<sup>593</sup> Moran, 15.

<sup>594</sup> Meade, 74-76, 106, 188-189.

<sup>595</sup> Varon, 57; Berger, 28.

<sup>596</sup> Berger, 75, 99, 107-109; Varon, 75-77, 158, 172.

<sup>597</sup> Larry Grathwohl and Frank Reagan, *Bringing Down America: An FBI Informer with the Weathermen* (Arlington House: New Rochelle, NY, 1976), 169.

the two, the Red Brigades were undone by a combination of government action and internal division, while internal division alone brought down the Weather Underground.

In the course of the conflict, 61 Red Brigades members were killed (as a result of encounters with police, accidents, or suicide) and 911 were prosecuted.<sup>598</sup> The estimates for the group's numerical strength, however, vary widely according to time period and source. Robert Meade writes that, as of 1976, the number of Red Brigades regulars was down to an estimated 15 militants (with another 23 jailed).<sup>599</sup> By contrast, an oft-cited May 17, 1978 article by *New York Times* reporter Henry Tanner claims "the Red Brigades consists of 400 to 500 full-time members who are on the payroll of the organization" as well as "up to 1,000" part-time, above-ground members.<sup>600</sup> The most credible estimate, though, comes from a November 1984 report to the U.S. Senate, which described not just the Red Brigades' size, but also the fluctuation of that size: "50 militants when organized; 1,000 at the point of maximum expansion in 1978-79, plus some 2,000 external supporters; 100 at the end of 1982/beginning of 1983, plus 200 external supporters."<sup>601</sup>

The Weather Underground, meanwhile, only had three members killed (by the accidental detonation of a bomb that they were constructing on March 6, 1970).<sup>602</sup> And while the group had 287 members arrested in the October 1969 Days of Rage protest, it only had 22 members

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<sup>598</sup> Carole Beebe Tarantelli, "The Italian Red Brigades and the structure and dynamics of terrorist groups," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91 (2010): 558; Alessandro Orsini, *Anatomy of the Red Brigades: The Religious Mind-Set of Modern Terrorists* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY, 2011), 123.

<sup>599</sup> Meade, 74.

<sup>600</sup> Henry Tanner, "Red Brigades Intimidates Italians But Fails in Effort to Start Civil War," *The New York Times*, 17 May, 1978, A14.

<sup>601</sup> United States. U.S. Senate. *Terrorism and Security: The Italian Experience*. Washington: GPO, November 1984, 20.

<sup>602</sup> Berger, 127-128; Varon, 173-174.

arrested after going underground.<sup>603</sup> The numerical strength of the Weather Underground has been estimated to have been about 500 members at the time of the Days of Rage protest, 150 members at the start of its underground period (early 1970), and a few dozen members by the time of its dissolution.<sup>604</sup> Of the two groups, then, the Red Brigades suffered more losses of members and of leaders, yet still managed to survive for a longer duration due to its greater success in recruitment (see below). This comparison is complicated, however, by the fact that the rise of the Watergate and COINTELPRO scandals led the Justice Department and the FBI to drop their pursuit of the Weather Underground, and by the fact that the Red Brigades' attacks on persons generated greater public support for the Italian authorities' efforts to crack down on the group.

**Attacks.** The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) attributes 211 incidents to the Red Brigades for the period 1970-1983, of which there were 35 bombings, 56 assassinations, 19 facility/infrastructure attacks, 76 armed assaults, 13 kidnappings, nine barricade hostage-taking events, and no hijackings. In addition, according to the Domestic Terrorism Victims (DTV) dataset developed by Luis de la Calle and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca (which purports to be the most accurate dataset on fatalities in Western Europe due to terrorism for the period 1965-2005), the Red Brigades were responsible for 77 deaths.<sup>605</sup>

The GTD attributes 45 incidents to the Weather Underground for the period 1970-1976, of which there were 41 bombings, two armed assaults, and two facility/infrastructure attacks.

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<sup>603</sup> Days of Rage arrests reported by Varon, 82; Post-underground arrests calculated from Berger, 132, 156-157 and United States. U.S. Senate. *Weather Underground: Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws*. Washington: GPO, January 1975, 46-116.

<sup>604</sup> Varon, 57, 172; Berger, 130, 154.

<sup>605</sup> Luis de la Calle and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "The Quantity and Quality of Terrorism: The DTV Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, 48:1 (2011): 53.

There were no deaths as per a deliberate policy undertaken by the group's leadership following the townhouse explosion of 1970.<sup>606</sup>

Estimating an average of 400 Red Brigades operatives (a number consistent with both the mean of the Senate report's figures and those cited by Henry Tanner), the group's per capita number of incidents stands at 0.53. While lower than the per capita estimates of attacks for the groups with safe havens (discussed above), it is still higher than the Weather Underground's number if based on the estimate of 150 members in 1970 (0.27).<sup>607</sup>

Also, in regards to the quality of attacks, the Red Brigades' demonstrated greater sophistication. The clearest example of this is the group's kidnapping of former Italian president, Aldo Moro, and the assassination of his five bodyguards (two carabinieri and three police officers) on March 16, 1978.<sup>608</sup> By contrast, the Weather Underground's attacks consisted exclusively of planting time bombs – an endeavor for which the group conducted careful planning and intelligence-gathering (so as to avoid causing any deaths), but which required little coordination outside of any individual cell.<sup>609</sup>

**Recruitment.** Again, the estimated numerical strength of each group (from the above "Survival" section) shows that the Red Brigades were more effective at recruitment than the Weather Underground. This contrast is best seen in the early years of each group. From 1970 to 1974, the Red Brigades grew from one cell in Milan to multiple cells spread across five different

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<sup>606</sup> Berger, 154.

<sup>607</sup> Given that 33 of the GTD's 41 recorded incidents for the Weather Underground took place in 1970-1971, the 1970 estimate of the group's size is more appropriate than Berger's 1976 estimate (of a few dozen members). For the Weather Underground's number of incidents per capita to approach that of the Red Brigades, the group would have had to suffer a precipitous, early drop in membership – which is very unlikely given that the first major factor in the group's decline, the signing of the U.S.-Vietnamese cease-fire, did not occur until 1973. See Berger, 154, 176.

<sup>608</sup> Meade, 101-103.

<sup>609</sup> Berger, 154.

cities – and did so by complementing the group’s attacks with active recruiting and propaganda efforts in factories where the group’s cells were based.<sup>610</sup> The Weather Underground, on the other hand, inherited a significant portion of the membership and resources of the formerly 100,000-strong Students for a Democratic Society in June 1969 – but, by the time of the October 1969 Days of Rage protest, only managed to mobilize around 600 activists to take part.<sup>611</sup> From there, the Weather Underground and its number of supporters only proceeded to shrink, although it had a brief and limited period of success in 1974-1976 following the publication of its book *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism* (in as much as the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee formed to support the book’s ideas – this group, however, was independent from the Weather Underground itself).<sup>612</sup>

## *Summary*

In the comparison between the Red Brigades and the Weather Underground, the former had greater success in all three of the measures above: it lasted for more years, carried out more attacks per member, and had more members. Based on the numbers above, the key to explaining this result is the differences between the groups in terms of mobilization. Starting as a small cell from the beginning, the Red Brigades’ combination of attacks with propaganda and recruitment allowed the group to grow despite the restrictions of its cellular-network structure and lack of a safe haven. The Weather Underground, by contrast, began as a large, public hierarchy that quickly attracted the attention of the authorities – by the time the group had switched to a cellular-network organizational structure, it was already the subject of serious pursuit, and

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<sup>610</sup> Meade, 39, 41-42, 61, 95.

<sup>611</sup> Varon, 82.

<sup>612</sup> Berger, 184-191, 201.

became even more so after the 1970 townhouse explosion.<sup>613</sup> The result was that the Weather Underground was too pressed to recruit new members – and, by the time the authorities eased their chase (due to the Watergate scandal), the group was facing a new mobilization challenge thanks to the U.S.-Vietnam ceasefire removing its most obvious *raison d'être*.<sup>614</sup>

## Conclusion and Notes

As seen in Figures 6 and 7 (below), comparisons between PIRA and the RAF, and between the Red Brigades and Weather Underground, reveal that the combinations of organizational structure and environment fall into a rank order that ranges from most conducive to terrorist activities to least conducive. Of these, the situation most favorable to terrorist groups is to possess both a safe haven and a hierarchical organizational structure – this provides security from disruption by the authorities, while enhancing a group's ability to carry out attacks and mobilize supporters. The next most favorable is to possess a safe haven and a cellular-network structure – while this structure reduces a group's ability to mobilize supporters, the protection it provides from the authorities both extends the life of the group and aids its ability to carry out attacks. The next most favorable is to possess a cellular-network structure without a safe haven – while this organizational structure limits the group's ability to mobilize supporters or carry out attacks, it nevertheless extends its lifespan. Finally, the least favorable combination is that of a hierarchical organizational structure without a safe haven – in this case, the authorities can move quickly to disrupt a group, threatening its survival and reducing its ability to carry out attacks or mobilize supporters.

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<sup>613</sup> Varon, 175; Berger, 132.

<sup>614</sup> Berger, 159, 162, 202-203.



The following chapter combines these findings with those of the previous four case studies to both provide a more in-depth analysis and examine the possible theoretical implications.

**Figure 6: Measures of Effectiveness According to Terrorist Group, Part 1**

<b>Terrorist Group</b>	<b>Years Survived</b>	<b>Estimated Size</b>	<b>Members Killed</b>	<b>Members Arrested</b>
PIRA	28	120 operatives, 500 supporters (1970); 300-500 operatives, 400-1,200 supporters (1977)	276-294	8,000-10,000
RAF	28	15-40 full-time operatives, 200-400 supporters	25	46 full-time members, 517-917 others
Red Brigades	13	50 militants (1970); 1,000 militants, 2,000 external supporters (1979); 100 militants, 200	61	911

		external supporters (1982-1983)		
		500 (1969); 150		
Weather		(1970); few dozen		287 (1969); 22
Underground	7	(1976)	3	(1970-1976)

**Figure 7: Measures of Effectiveness According to Terrorist Group, Part 2**

Terrorist Group	Incidents	Deaths Caused	Estimated	Estimated	Incidents Per Year
			Per Capita Incidents	Per Capita Deaths	
PIRA	2,636	1,706	6.59	4.27	94.14
RAF	123	34	4.47	1.24	4.39
Red Brigades	211	77	0.53	0.19	16.23
Weather					
Underground	45	0	0.27	0	6.43

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### **Overview of Findings**

Both the individual histories of the four cases examined in this dissertation, and the comparison between them, indicate that a terrorist group's organizational structure interacts with its access to a safe haven to affect its ability to survive, carry out attacks, and mobilize supporters. However, they also demonstrate the limitations of the organizational structure/presence of safe haven model and point to the need for further research. This chapter will provide brief summaries of the results for each of the four cases before discussing the potential directions for future studies, and then will discuss the theoretical and policy implications of this dissertation's findings.

#### *Provisional Irish Republican Army*

One of the two longest-surviving groups examined in this dissertation, the Provisional Irish Republican Army also grew to be the largest and the deadliest thanks to its combination of a hierarchical organizational structure and access to safe havens. During the 1970-1972 period, when the group could rely upon shelter in both "no go" areas in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland, it unleashed a wave of attacks that made 1972 the bloodiest year of the conflict and pushed the British government to dissolve Northern Ireland's parliament and institute direct rule.<sup>615</sup> The importance of the interaction between PIRA's environment and its

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<sup>615</sup> Peter R. Neumann, *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict, 1969-98* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 56; Kevin Kelley, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA* (Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland: Brandon Book Publishers, Ltd., 1982), 209; Brendan O'Brien, *The Long War: The IRA and Sinn Féin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Syracuse, NY:

organizational structure is further illustrated by the progression of events that followed after the British government abolished these “no go” areas and the Republic of Ireland started to crack down on the group. After losing these safe havens, PIRA faced mounting arrests and a reduced ability to carry out attacks, so in 1977 it responded by shifting to a more cellular-network-based organizational structure.<sup>616</sup> This reorganization reduced the volume of attacks that that the group could carry out, and restricted its mobilization efforts, but successfully stemmed its losses – the result being that PIRA remained active for another two decades, and only ceased its attacks as part of a negotiated peace process.<sup>617</sup>

### *The Red Brigades*

The longest-surviving, largest, and most active of the two groups in this dissertation without safe havens, the Red Brigades successfully overcame an early loss of much of their leadership due to their cellular-network structure – but were ultimately brought down by vulnerabilities due to increasing centralization. Starting in Milan before mobilizing cells in other cities, the Red Brigades carried out bombings and kidnappings (without casualties) from 1970 to 1974, until most of their founding leadership was arrested (with yet another of the founding leaders killed in 1975).<sup>618</sup> However, the few members remaining at large managed to quickly rebuild the group up to a numerical strength far in excess of the Red Brigades’ pre-1974 size.<sup>619</sup> But the new leadership also sought to exercise tighter and more centralized control, and while

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Syracuse University Press, 1999), 24; M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting For Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (London: Routledge, 1995), 95.

<sup>616</sup> Smith, 145.

<sup>617</sup> Smith 145, 155; O’Brien, 161-162, 375, 385.

<sup>618</sup> Robert C. Meade, Jr. *Red Brigades: The Story of Italian Terrorism* (St. Martin’s Press: New York, 1990) ,48-51, 58-62, 64-67.

<sup>619</sup> United States. U.S. Senate. *Terrorism and Security: The Italian Experience*. Washington: GPO, November 1984, 20.

this allowed the Red Brigades to carry out more sophisticated attacks, it also made the group vulnerable.<sup>620</sup> The 1980 arrest of a high-ranking member, who agreed to provide information on the group in exchange for leniency, led to the capture of many other members and the exposure of their operations.<sup>621</sup> At the same time, other high-ranking members, resenting their loss of autonomy and disagreeing with the core leadership's tactics, began to split off and form their own groups.<sup>622</sup> The result was that, by 1983, most of the Red Brigades' members had surrendered, been captured, or deserted, and the remainder had split into two competing factions.<sup>623</sup>

### *The Red Army Faction*

A cellular-network-based group founded with relatively little thought as to its organization, the Red Army Faction's longevity and operational sophistication were in large part due to its access to East Germany as a safe haven and as a gateway to resources around the world.<sup>624</sup> But while this combination of a cellular-network structure and a safe haven shielded the RAF, and helped it reconstitute despite twice losing nearly its entire leadership to arrests, it limited the group's ability to mobilize supporters – with the result being that the RAF had the smallest number of full-time members of the four groups in this dissertation, and remained small throughout its existence.<sup>625</sup> With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany,

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<sup>620</sup> Meade, 188-189.

<sup>621</sup> Meade, 194

<sup>622</sup> Meade, 205-206

<sup>623</sup> Meade, 232-233

<sup>624</sup> Jillian Becker, *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (J.B. Lippincott Company: Philadelphia and New York, 1977), 102; John Schmeidel, *STASI: Sword and Shield of the Party* (Routledge: Florence, KY, 2006), 146, 152.

<sup>625</sup> Assaf Moghadam, "Failure and Disengagement in the Red Army Faction," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 35:2 (2012) 159-161, 163-165.

the group's Marxist-Leninist ideology suffered a heavy blow, and its members and former members in the East were arrested or killed.<sup>626</sup> After years of inaction, the few free, remaining members announced the group's dissolution.<sup>627</sup>

## *The Weather Underground*

Originally organized as an amalgam of the hierarchical Students for a Democratic Society and the cellular revolutionary units advocated by Che Guevara, the Weather Underground (then called "Weatherman") began as a largely hierarchical group without a safe haven.<sup>628</sup> Due to this combination of organizational structure and political environment, it quickly ran into difficulty. The group's central leadership had dispatched cells to cities around the country with the intent that they would mobilize white, working-class youth for a violent protest in Chicago that was to be the makings of a revolutionary army.<sup>629</sup> This effort failed to attract many recruits – and, instead, the violence of the protest merely motivated the authorities to pursue the Weather Underground's leadership.<sup>630</sup> The leaders of the group responded to these developments by purging much of its membership (who were seen as potential informers) and shifting to a cellular-network organizational structure.<sup>631</sup> However, while this structure helped prevent the group from being disrupted, it also hampered any efforts to mobilize new supporters – and an accidental explosion at a New York City townhouse in 1970 both reduced the Weather

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<sup>626</sup> Moghadam, 169-170.

<sup>627</sup> Moghadam, 170-171.

<sup>628</sup> Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 2004) 57; Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (AK Press: Oakland, CA, 2006), 28.

<sup>629</sup> Berger, 75, 99, 107-108; Varon, 75-77.

<sup>630</sup> Berger, 109; Varon, 77-79, 82;

<sup>631</sup> Varon, 172

Underground's membership and intensified the pursuit by the authorities.<sup>632</sup> In 1973, this pursuit slackened due to the fallout from the Watergate scandal – but this development in the Weather Underground's favor occurred at the same time as the signing of the U.S.-Vietnam ceasefire, costing the group one of its major motivating factors.<sup>633</sup> Despite the popularity of its self-published book, *Prairie Fire*, in activist circles, the group was unable to mobilize further support and collapsed due to internal fracturing.<sup>634</sup>

## Limitations and Directions for Future Study

While the results of the above cases support some predictions of the organizational structure/presence of safe haven model, they also reveal some important limitations. Chief among these is the performance of the RAF relative to that of the Red Brigades. While the results for PIRA and the Weather Underground conform to the predictions of the model across all three of the indicators of effectiveness – that is, PIRA dramatically outperforms the Weather Underground in terms of survival, quantity and quality of attacks, and mobilization – the results for the RAF and the Red Brigades run counter to the model in two of the three categories. While, as predicted, the Red Brigades demonstrated greater success in mobilizing supporters than the RAF, the RAF nevertheless survived for considerably longer and carried out a higher number of attacks relative to its membership. Based on the case histories, this result is due in large part to advantage that the latter had due to its safe haven in East Germany, which provided an equivalent of life support to the RAF for more than a decade after its defeat and the suicides of its original leaders in 1977. Throughout the 1980s, the few remaining, active members of the

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<sup>632</sup> Berger, 331

<sup>633</sup> Berger, 202-203

<sup>634</sup> Berger, 194-195

RAF would occasionally emerge from their safe haven in East Germany, carry out an attack, and return again, with little achievement in terms of building greater support or advancing the group's cause. On the other hand, while the original organization of the Red Brigades was decimated and split by the mid-1980s, its splinter factions remained intermittently active all the way up to 2003 – albeit, with only 19 incidents recorded by the Global Terrorism Database over the period from 1983 to 2003, compared to 53 incidents for the RAF in the period from 1983 to 1991.<sup>635</sup> This rather muddy result calls into question a number of aspects of the model that will need to be explored through further research. These directions for future study are described below.

### *Re-defining Effectiveness*

The case of the RAF, in particular, shows the need to develop a more powerful and nuanced measurement for group effectiveness. Despite the group's ability to evade the authorities and stage deadly, sophisticated attacks, its dramatic weakness in mobilizing supporters and its isolation within its East German safe haven made it utterly ineffectual at influencing West German politics or public opinion. During its existence, the group's statements became well known for being incoherent to anyone except those most steeped in Marxist theoretical jargon.<sup>636</sup> Furthermore, the group was most effective at mobilizing supporters and

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<sup>635</sup> Based on a search of the Global Terrorism Database for incidents with the perpetrator “Baader-Meinhof Group” and “Red Army Faction” during the period 1970-2011 and a search for incidents with the perpetrator “Red Brigades,” “Red Brigades Fighting Communist Party,” and “Red Brigades Fighting Communist Union” during the period 1970-2011. Full source citation: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, *Global Terrorism Database* (University of Maryland: College Park, MD, Accessed September 4, 2013). Available online: <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

<sup>636</sup> See, for example: Bowman H. Miller, “Terrorism and Language: A Text-Based Analysis of the German Case,” *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, 7:1 (Winter 1987), 36



influencing public opinion during the 1972-1977 period when its imprisoned leadership turned to hunger strikes rather than bombings or assassinations.<sup>637</sup> Hunger strikes in the early 1980's likewise provided PIRA with its most politically influential period since the crushing of its Northern Ireland safe havens in 1972.<sup>638</sup> And, for a brief period, the Weather Underground too saw its greatest boost in popularity through the legal, non-destructive publication of its *Prairie Fire* manifesto rather than its (non-violent) bombings.<sup>639</sup> All these examples point to a gap between the amount and sophistication of a group's attacks and its ability to exert political influence.

In order to more robustly examine the effectiveness of terrorist groups, then, it will be necessary to abandon the parsimony of measures such as years of survival, numbers of attacks carried out, and group size, in favor of a messier but more robust measure that takes into account groups' stated strategic and ultimate goals and whether these are being furthered by their actions. This will require taking into account variations such as they breadth or narrowness of a group's goals, the existence of competing goals within a group, its (or rather its leaders') perception of its intended audiences and opposition, and the extent to which these serve to influence its organizational structure in turn.

### *State Counterterrorism Policies and Public Support*

The need to take on a longer-term, more strategic view of terrorist group goals in evaluating effectiveness highlights another limitation in the model employed by this dissertation: the treatment of government counterterrorism policy as fixed, rather than the product of an

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<sup>637</sup> Varon, 218-220.

<sup>638</sup> Smith, 151-152.

<sup>639</sup> Berger, 201

adaptive process of interaction between terrorist groups and the government that they oppose. The four cases studied in this dissertation all exhibit examples of shifts in government policy that served to raise or lower the level of risk in a group's environment. For PIRA, the decision of the British government to abolish its "no go" areas in 1972 helped to force the group to undergo a change in organizational structure, while its eventual moves to both engage the Republic of Ireland, to improve the state of civil rights in Northern Ireland, and to bring Northern Irish Republicans into the political mainstream all helped lead to the end of the conflict. The Red Brigades, on the other hand, suffered its major losses in the early 1980s thanks, in part, to the Italian government's adoption of its *pentiti* policy – that is, considerably reduced prison sentences for Red Brigades members who surrendered to the authorities and provided information on the organization.<sup>640</sup> For the RAF, the capture of its original leadership and its defeat in 1977 were aided by the German government's adoption of tougher and more technologically-advanced counterterrorism tactics – in particular, the creation of the GSG-9 commando unit and the use of computerized data analysis to predict the locations of RAF safe houses.<sup>641</sup> And finally, the Weather Underground saw its level of risk decrease as the Justice Department and FBI dropped their pursuit of the group as they came under pressure for abusing their powers in the wake of the COINTELPRO and Watergate scandals. All of these indicate that a new model is needed in which a terrorist group does not merely adjust its organizational structure to the level of risk, but also in which the level of risk also adjusts in response to the effectiveness of the terrorist group.

A key trigger for the authorities' adjustment to the level of terrorist effectiveness would appear to be the state of public opinion regarding the group. Across all four of the cases,

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<sup>640</sup> Meade, 213-217.

<sup>641</sup> Hanshew 116-121.

particularly violent and/or high profile incidents provided the authorities with the public's permission to adopt more aggressive counterterrorism policies – incidents such as such as PIRA's July 21, 1972 wave of bombings in Belfast and its 1976 assassination of the British ambassador to Ireland in Dublin, the Red Brigades' 1978 abduction and killing of Aldo Moro, the RAF's 1977 abduction and killing of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, and the Weather Underground's townhouse explosion of 1970 were all met with crackdowns. At the same time, incidents in which terrorist members were perceived as victims, such as PIRA's and the RAF's hunger strikes, and COINTELPRO's revelations about the FBI's pursuit of leftist and civil rights groups, created public pressure against the use of aggressive counterterrorism policies.

The potential role of public support in encouraging and limiting state counterterrorism policies has recently been addressed in an article by Bart Schuurman, whose findings support the connection in both the cases of PIRA and the Red Brigades, as well as with Canada's Front de Libération du Québec.<sup>642</sup> Although, the fact that Schuurman is able to cite relatively few public opinion polls in his three cases also highlights the potential difficulty in developing a model that includes public opinion as a spur to changing government counterterrorism policies. Nevertheless, the value of a model that managed to incorporate the interactions between terrorist organizational structure, government counterterrorism policy, and public opinion would make the effort a worthy endeavor.

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<sup>642</sup> Bart Schuurman, "Defeated by Popular Demand: Public Support and Counterterrorism in Three Western Democracies, 1963-1998," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 36: 152-175, 2013.

## *Domestic vs. Foreign Safe Havens*

One more limitation on this dissertation that could yield future material for study is the potential differences between domestic and foreign safe havens. In the organizational structure/presence of safe haven model, these two types of safe havens have been combined due to the shared limit they impose on government efforts to infiltrate or disrupt terrorist groups – but an issue that has not been addressed is their potential difference in terms of mobilization. A domestic safe haven could exist because it is in a weak state whose government is unable to exert full control over its territory – but much more likely for the types of states under analysis in this dissertation (and certainly the case for PIRA), it is due to sizeable, territorially-defined populations of supporters. These supporters do not merely block the authorities from intervening in the terrorist groups' activities within their territories, they also provide a pool of recruits and resources – thus enhancing not just a group's survival potential, but its ability to mobilize and carry out attacks as well.

Meanwhile, while a foreign safe haven could, on some occasions, serve as a source of recruitment and resources – in the case of refugee camps, for example – it is more likely to exist because the host government has agreed to shelter the group as a tool for use against the target government. This, then, means that while the safe haven adds security, it does not provide a bonus to mobilization – although the group's ability to carry out attacks might be bolstered by host government support (as was the case of the RAF). A future avenue of research, then, will be incorporating these delineations between safe havens into the model – most likely by broadening the selection of cases under examination – and observing whether the type of safe haven available encourages a group to be more or less hierarchical due to the potential gains for its mobilization and ability to carry out attacks.

## Theoretical Significance

The findings in this dissertation clearly support the argument put forward by Morselli, Giguère, and Petit that the organizational structures of terrorist groups are shaped by the dilemma posed by the conflicting needs of security and efficiency – much more so than they do the claims that group structure is determined by technology or historical and cultural context.<sup>643</sup> Despite the fact that all four of the groups shared the same technological background, similar cultural and ideological beliefs, and the same collection of historical precedents, they exhibited surprising variation in terms of organizational structure. Furthermore, behaviors such as PIRA's and the Weather Underground's organizational shifts to more cellular forms, as well as the Weather Underground's and Red Brigades' strict control over the behavior of their members, demonstrate a strong preoccupation with achieving this balance.<sup>644</sup>

In addition, the variation and change in organizational structures seen across the four groups in this dissertation fit with a growing trend in the terrorism literature to move away from sweeping generalizations about the organizational form of terrorist groups and to a recognition not only of heterogeneity of these organizations but also their deviation away from strict organizational types. That is, rather than being purely hierarchical or purely cellular-network based, terrorist groups fall into a spectrum between these two poles. The cases in this study include a hierarchical organization that adopted cellular structures in response to its loss of its safe havens (PIRA), a cellular-network organization that adopted hierarchical structures to achieve greater coordination (the Red Brigades), an organization that went from being a mainly

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<sup>643</sup> Morselli, Giguère, and Petit, 144.

<sup>644</sup> Orsini, 49-50; Berger, 105; Varon, 58-59.

hierarchical hybrid to being a cellular-network (the Weather Underground), and a group made up of a single cell that would absorb and spin off other cells (the RAF). This finding that terrorist group structures fall along a spectrum between hierarchy and cellular-network is supported by the differences in cellular structures among the Palestinian suicide groups studied by Pedahzur and Perliger; the centralized record-keeping among a far-reaching number of groups studied by Helfstein and by Shapiro and Siegel (respectively); Brams, Mutlu, and Ramirez's discovery of the degree of hierarchical centralization within the 9/11 network; Kilberg's attempt to categorize terrorist groups into a four-type system; and Eccarius-Kelly's findings regarding the organizational structures of FARC and the PKK.<sup>645</sup>

This dissertation also provides provisional, albeit incomplete evidence that terrorist groups' political environments might influence their organizational structures, as predicted through contingency theory. In both the PIRA and Weather Underground cases, the groups responded to heightened levels of risk by shifting from hierarchical organizational structures to cellular-network structures, even though this cost each of them in terms of their ability to mobilize supporters. Meanwhile, in the Red Brigades case, the group adopted increasingly hierarchical organizational conditions despite a growing level of risk from the authorities, and ultimately paid the price for it. And, lastly, despite possessing a safe haven, the RAF adopted a cellular-network form, with the result being that the group stayed limited to just a few dozen full-time operatives despite its longevity and resources.

Once again, this evidence comes with the caveat that it does not fully conform to the predictions of the organizational structure/presence of safe haven model, as the "bad fit" RAF was found to survive longer and carry out more attacks than the "good fit" Red Brigades. The

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<sup>645</sup> Pedahzur and Perliger, 1995-1996, 1998; Helfstein, 728-729; Shapiro and Siegel, 40-41; Brams, Mutlu, and Ramirez, 703-718; Kilberg, 812-814; and Eccarius-Kelly, 237-239.

finding, instead, is that the groups fell into a rank order of threat, with the most dangerous, PIRA (hierarchy/safe haven), having high scores on the survival, attack, and mobilization measures; the second-most dangerous, the RAF (cellular/safe haven) having the next-highest scores on survival and attack, but a low score on mobilization; the third-most dangerous, the Red Brigades (cellular/no safe haven) having lower scores on survival and attack than the RAF, but a higher score on mobilization; and the least dangerous, the Weather Underground (hierarchy/no safe haven), having the lowest scores on all three categories. Also, as mentioned previously, the argument that organizational structure is shaped by environment will need to be further examined in comparison to a number of alternative explanations, including the possibilities that structure is shaped by the nature of the groups' goals, state counterterrorism policies and public opinion, and the nature of the safe haven available to a group.

## **Policy Significance**

### *Denial of Safe Havens*

The results of this dissertation provide yet more evidence for why it is important that, if all possible, terrorist groups are denied safe havens from which to operate. As is seen in comparing PIRA with the three other cases, a group with a safe haven can utilize a hierarchical organizational structure that significantly increases the volume and deadliness of its attacks, and that provides a greater ability to mobilize supporters. Furthermore, as is seen in the case of the RAF, a safe haven increases the quantity and quality of a group's attacks even when the group lacks a hierarchical structure. How best the denial of a safe haven should be achieved, however, is a question that will need to be addressed through a closer examination of the types of safe

havens available to groups – for example, the degree to which coercive action needs to be balanced against the addressing of popular grievances and development of political institutions.

### *Tailored Response*

Despite coming from the same time period, the same cultural background, and having similar ideological beliefs, the four groups in this dissertation show a high degree of variation in their organizational structures. This demands that, in crafting a counterterrorism strategy, careful attention must be paid to the individual strengths and weaknesses of a group's organization. In both the cases for PIRA and the RAF, it was only through drying up their safe havens that the groups' activities could be fully ceased. In the case of PIRA, this came through a political process that answered the concerns of the aggrieved population that supported the group; and in the case of the RAF, it came through an exogenous event (the collapse of East Germany) – although the latter group had been considerably limited through its isolation in the East. For the Red Brigades, the answer came in exploiting the weaknesses created by the group's increasing centralization – namely by offering captured and surrendered members leniency in exchange for information on a group whose cells were no longer effectively compartmentalized or autonomous. (The Weather Underground, however does not offer much in the way of tips for counterterrorism, as the group collapsed entirely due to internal divisions and little was done on the part of the authorities to pursue it after 1973.)



## **Final Note**

These four cases represent just a small sample of terrorist groups from one region in one time period – and yet even in such a modest grouping, the variation and mutability observed across their organizational structures point toward the need for closer and more sophisticated research into terrorist organizational forms. For all the tremendous difficulty of getting fine-grained information on the structure and workings of terrorist organizations, this dissertation indicates the need for such micro-level approaches and cautions against the use of hasty generalizations in attempting to understand these increasingly dangerous actors.

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### Education

- Ph.D, Political Science, Indiana University (September 2013)
- International Business Program, Institut Européen d'Études Commerciales Supérieures de Strasbourg, Université Robert Schuman (Strasbourg, France), June 2003
- Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, The College of Wooster (Class of 2001)
- Bowling Green State University, summer classes (1998, 1999, 2001)
- University of Aberdeen (Scotland), 1999-2000 academic year abroad

### Graduate Program

- Major: Political Science
- Concentrations:
  - International Relations, with emphases on Conflict and International Political Economy
  - Comparative Politics, with emphases on Advanced Industrialized Democracies (Canada, Europe, Japan, and the United States) and intra-state conflict.
- Minor: International Business and Public Policy
- Tool Skills: French and Statistics
- Dissertation Topic: Shadow Boxing: How the Risk of Government Intervention Shapes Terrorist Organizational Structures.
  - Topic: For a non-state terrorist group, internal communication and coordination are necessary to maintain organizational control and implement the group's strategy; but this need for interpersonal contact also makes the group vulnerable to disruption by government authorities. How then might these competing demands shape a group's organizational structure? This dissertation will examine how the presence or absence of a safe haven can interact with a group's choice of organizational structure to determine its ability to survive, conduct attacks, and mobilize supporters. Furthermore, it will look at whether and how groups change their organizational structures to adapt to their political environments. To this end, process tracing, the congruence procedure type 2, and cross-case comparison will be applied to the cases of four Western, Cold War-era groups (The Provisional Irish Republican Army, The Red Army Faction, The Red Brigades and The Weather Underground) to both identify the critical factors that impact group organizational structure and to explain how these factors exert their influence.
- Dissertation Committee: Sumit Ganguly (Chair), Timothy Hellwig, Michael McGinnis, Matthew Semadeni.

### Work Experience

- Graduate Assistant, Center on American and Global Security, Indiana University (December 2012-present)
  - Specific duties included conducting research for the chair of the Center, communicating and coordinating with officials internal and external to Indiana University, organizing the CAGS network file system, arranging meetings and talks by visiting scholars, designing and implementing the publicity for CAGS events.
  - Achievements: Conducted research for projects on Naxalite violence in India, Indian defense policy, Indian foreign policy, Indian economic development, and insurgencies in India. Helped write and edit a proposal that earned CAGS a \$25,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Conducted research on fundraising opportunities and visiting speakers. Aided in hosting speakers

- from Notre Dame, Harvard, and Northwestern University, as well as 3 panel seminars on recent security issues. Created the CAGS poster template, listserv, and Facebook page.
- Supervisor: Dr. Sumit Ganguly. Phone: 812-855-1363
- Copyeditor, Current History (summer 2007-spring 2013)
  - Specific duties included finding errors in spelling and grammar, ensuring Current History's consistency with New York Times publishing style guidelines, suggesting alternatives for difficult-to-understand text.
  - Achievements: Edited 54 issues of Current History. Improved the efficiency of the copyediting process by digitizing the process for delivering proofed pages. Was awarded for efforts by having name added to the Current History masthead.
  - Supervisor: Alan Sorensen. Phone: 215-482-5465
- Instructor, School of Continuing Studies, Indiana University (Y109 Introduction to International Relations, Y200 Political Terrorism, spring 2006-summer 2010)
  - Specific duties included grading lessons and exams, posting the grades to the Continuing Studies website, corresponding with students via email or telephone.
  - Achievements: Instructed and corresponded with hundreds of students. Proposed improvements and corrections to Continuing Studies' course websites (which were subsequently carried out).
  - Supervisor: Paul Bickley. Phone: 812-855-6504
- Columnist/Editor/Reporter/Reviewer, Indiana Daily Student, (May 2003-October 2009)
  - Duties at various times included writing opinion columns and reviews, writing and researching news stories, conducting interviews, team management, copy editing, communicating with the public.
  - Achievements: Awarded "Best Editor" in Fall 2006, "Best Reviewer" in Spring 2007, and "Best Column" 11 times in 2006-2007 alone. Had columns reprinted twice by the New York Times, and once by the Huffington Post.
  - Supervisor: Ruth Witmer. Phone: 812-855-0763
- Instructor, Department of Political Science, Indiana University (August 2001-December 2005)
  - Instructor for: Y200 Globalization, Y376 International Political Economy, Y200 Non-State Actors in International Relations, Y335 West European Politics, Y200 Politics and Film
  - Teaching assistant for: Y100 American Political Controversies, Y200 Globalization
  - Duties included writing and delivering lectures, writing and grading assignments, interacting with students, writing syllabi, complying with IU administrative policies.
  - Achievements: Taught hundreds of undergraduate students. Comprehensively redesigned the Y200 Globalization and Y200 Politics and Film courses, created the Y200 Non-State Actors in International Relations.
  - Supervisor: Dr. Jeffrey Hart (2001-2003), Dr. Jeffrey Isaac (2004-2005). Phone: 812-855-6308

### **Skills and Abilities**

- Knowledge of international security issues, international relations, terrorism, inter- and intra-state war, international political economy, and comparative politics.
- Experience in open-source research methods, quantitative and case research, and the conducting of interviews.
- Administrative and organizational proficiency with experience in team management and problem solving.
- Strong oral and written communication abilities, as well as familiarity in Associated Press and New York Times publishing style guidelines.
- Experience in conducting public presentations.
- Proficiency with Mac and PC operating systems, Microsoft Office, web browsers, Adobe Acrobat, and Photoshop.
- Advanced proficiency in French, basic proficiency in Spanish.