

Abstract

Terrorism can carry transnational effects, or terrorism can be emerged as a violence model in a domestic conflict to challenge the target state for desired purposes by rebel groups. Due to the nature of terrorism, it can be used by different actors and in different conflicts as a strategy. In the article, terrorism is assessed as a strategy in civil wars. The article evaluated a wide range of terror strategies which are intimidation, attrition, provocation, outbidding, and spoiling in the context of civil war. As result, terror strategies are ineffective to reach long term success for rebel groups. Thus, it can be argued that terror strategies in civil war only achieved limited goals on target audiences.

Keywords

Terrorism, Strategy, Civil War, Rebel Groups, Security

ÖZET

Terör, ulusötesi etkiler taşıyabilir veya terör, isyancı gruplar tarafından istenen amaçlara ulaşmak ve devlete meydan okumak için iç savaşlarda bir şiddet modeli olarak ortaya çıkabilir. Terörizm doğası gereği farklı aktörler tarafından farklı çatışma türlerinde bir strateji olarak kullanılabilir. Bu makalede bağlamında terör iç savaşlarda bir strateji olarak değerlendirildi. Bu makale, isyancı grupların iç savaş bağlamında sindirme, yıpratma, provokasyon, ihmal etme ve bozma yoluyla uyguladıkları çok çeşitli terör stratejilerini incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak görülmektedir ki, terör stratejileri isyancı gruplar için uzun vadeli başarıya ulaşmak için etkisizdir. Dolayısıyla, iç savaşta terör stratejilerinin yalnızca hedef kitlelerde sınırlı hedeflere ulaştığı söylenebilir.

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Both terrorism and civil war have been the violence forms that were used by non-state actors to achieve their political purposes. Mostly, these two concepts have been classified separately as the distinct fields that require two different approaches by scholars. While these scholars reached a conceptualization that recognizes terrorism and civil war as a distinctive phenomenon, recent studies demonstrate the overlap between usage of terrorism in civil war conditions (Polo and Gleditsch, 2016, s. 815). Indeed, both civil war and terrorism surged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The overlapping features between the two concepts require comprehensive approaches to improve an understanding of the role of terrorism as a strategy in conflicts, especially the internal conflicts rising after the end of the Cold War.

Terror strategies are applied by various actors in various conflicts. However, most of terror actions are observed in an environment that the possibility of civil war is higher or if already a civil war exists. As a recent example, Syrian civil war can be shown.

In international security literature, there is only limited research that studies the relationship between two types of violence. Although terrorism and civil war has been considered as two different phenomena, their rising relationship, especially after the end of the Cold War, requires scrutiny. Both terrorism and civil war have been the political violence methods that desire to coerce an opponent to obtain a political purpose or a concession (Boulden, 2009, p. 7). Both types of violence can be observed within the same country on a dispute between the parties. Both types of violence are

generally differentiated from transnational or international scale, when rebel groups' behaviors are limited with the territorial concerns. Moreover, one should keep in mind that it is hard to define a political organization whose motivations is only terrorist impulses. Therefore, terrorism is often regarded as a strategy by groups to achieve their goals, especially in the context of civil war.

In this article, by taking into consideration the overlapping features and differences between these two phenomena, I discussed the role of terrorism as a strategy of civil war. First part of the article, I explained both concepts, stating their main features to reach a clear reference point of them for this article. The differences between the definitions of them, civil war and terrorism, give an idea about the overall role of terrorism as a strategy. Then, the possible strategies of terrorism have been assessed in civil war with reference to the Kydd and Walter and Findley and Young studies. In the third section, the terrorism as a strategy has been elaborated, the reasons of using terrorist action, the purposes of these actions, the likely response of governments and which environment is suitable for the occurrence of terrorism and civil war together. Finally, I evaluated the effectiveness of the terrorism to achieve political aims, whether it is successful to reach long-term desires of rebel groups. If not, what the reason of failure is.

Civil War

Civil war basically can be described as an armed conflict that lasts over a period between a state actor and a domestic non-state organization in the state territory. Although, there is an increasing trend in the occurrence of intra-state

conflicts after the collapse of the Soviet Union, an absolute definition of civil war has not been agreed yet. According to Sambanis, the disagreement mainly stems from three questions: In which degree of a violent act differentiate civil war from other forms of internal armed conflict? How does the observer know when a civil war launch or end? How can intra-state, extra state and interstate wars be distinguished? (2004, p.815)

According to Small and Singer (1982), civil war is any armed conflict that involves three main elements; these are "military action internal to the metropole", "national government as active part of armed conflict", and "effective resistance by both sides". The measurement of violence density in that conflicts vary in different studies. For example, in their studies Small and Singer used the battle related deaths measurement (COW Corrolates of War Project) and they used the criteria of annual death threshold of 1,000 deaths per year to differentiate civil war from other types of violence. However, this research does not provide information about the goals of the parts, the length of war or the estimation of life loss (Sambanis, 2004, p.816).

On the other hand, PRIO offers another definition; "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths" (Gleditsch, 2013, p. 1) In this definition, the death criteria on battle-related deaths is quiet lower than the previous one. These studies are very important in terms of providing quantitative framework for

determination of the battle type.

However, they do not help determine the type of conflicts or do not provide the information about the intentions or purposes of the groups. In addition to the above definitions on civil war, there are other definitions recognized by international law on civil war. These definitions in international law recognized civil wars as the non-international armed conflict. The important point here is that in international law, civil war is assessed regarding its scale by accepting it among the non-international armed conflicts and international law prohibits the use of terrorist strategies. Despite various definitions of civil war, all definitions, one way or another, consist criteria of violence that differ civil war from other levels of domestic or international armed conflicts.

In contrast to definitions of civil war, determining the degree of violence is not a criterion to define terrorism (Sambanis, 2008, p.175). As we will see in the next chapter, terrorism is basically defined in terms of its purposes rather than casualties that emerges from it. Therefore, the definition of terrorism helps us understand the role of terrorism as a strategy and give comprehensive information about the relationship between these two types of conflicts. Indeed, similar to civil war, the definitions on terrorism vary, and there is no concrete definition of it.

Terrorism

Terrorism is a controversial concept that is too hard to build standards of. There is no consensus on the ultimate definition of terrorism among the scholars, mostly because of the inclusion and exclusion of different organization in the context of terrorism due to differ-

entiation of perspectives of analyzers or scholars or agendas of political elites. Nevertheless, the action that contains the six major elements of violence is generally accepted as a terrorist action; these are “the use of violence or threat of violence, an organized group, a desire to achieve political objective by this group, violence that targets civilians and perpetrator must be a non-state actor, finally this group must be weaker than target state”. (Collins, 2007, p.292) Terrorism is generally considered as a strategy due to the fact that its perpetrators are mostly related to broader conflicts as groups who carry various ideas and purposes beyond terrorism. Significantly, civil war as an environment gives an opportunity to rebel groups to reach their goals, therefore, civil wars present a convenient environment for terror strategies (Sambanis, 2008, p. 174). The terror strategies may appear at different times of a civil war; before, during and after the civil war. The article discussed the role of terrorism as a strategy in civil war in next part, the rest of this part of the article focuses on the terrorism as a strategy.

Generally speaking, the groups applied terrorist violence because they are too weak to enforce their political aims by arms force (Kydd and Walter, 2006, p.50). Even though some of the terrorist organizations are strong enough to make desired impact on audiences, the unpredictability in their violent actions allows them to conduct their terrorist campaigns and impose the desired costs. According to Kydd and Walter, the violent campaign of terrorism involves five principal strategies, respectively, attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling, and outbidding (2006, p.51).

In the context of attrition strategy of terrorism, terrorists aim to induce enemy that terrorist are capable of imposing significance burdens for the enemy if enemy insist on its policy, in similar vein, the intimidation strategy is based on the persuasion of the population that terrorist are capable of imposing penalty on any objection, in this way, they try to affect the population’s behavior (Kydd and Walter, 2006, p. 51). The provocation strategy contains the tactics which can radicalize the population and try to increase their supporters. Spoiling strategy is to induce enemy that reconciliatory side of terrorists are incapable of processing a peace dialog, by doing so, they aim to reach a peace solution that undermine the ultimate political objective of the terrorist group. Finally, outbidding is another strategy which offers the population that terrorist group are more determined to fight and obtain their desires, in this way they try to convince the population to gain more support (Kydd and Walter, 2006, p.51). All these strategies are important to determine the main dynamics of terrorist organization in their actions, whatever conflict types in which terrorist organizations is a part of. These five main strategies can be observed in a civil war as terrorist tactics that are used.

Consequently, terrorism is a violent strategy that can have various degrees of harm and that can exist in various types of conflict. To assess the terrorist strategies in the context of civil war more broadly, the next part of this essay focused on why, in what period, and how these strategies are used by rebel groups in civil wars and finally, examines the effectiveness of this strategy.

Terrorism as a Strategy of Civil War

As a stated above, the consensus on the definition of terrorism, many authors define a feature of terrorism as usage of violence against civilians to compel to the opponent to achieve their political goals. Thus, in the context of this article, I will assess the terrorism as a strategy in civil war by taking the similar reference point of terrorism with Stanton, saying that terrorism “is the deliberate use of violence against civilians by a non-state actor with the aim of achieving a political objective through the intimidation or coercion of the government” (Stanton, 2013, p.1010).

Although the main actors of a conflict can be classified as rebels, insurgent or terrorist, generally all these actors preferred the same logic while they determine their types of violence against civilians (Findley and Young, 2012, p. 287). As a part of a longer civil war, insurgents or rebels can use the strategies of terrorism. The use of terrorism in a civil war can vary according to conditions and period of civil war. Firstly, why do some groups use terrorist strategies to compel opponent?

Some research on civilian casualties in wars and transnational terrorism was based on assumption that rebel groups target civilians because they are too weak against the opponent (Crenshaw 1981; Hultman 2007; Pape 2003, 2005). By doing so, weaker non-state actors can cause higher cost on opponent government than their conventional attacks. Other researches state that rebel groups target civilians when they desire to gain more support by outbidding rivals (Bloom 2005; Chenoweth 2010; Kydd and Walter 2006). Terrorist attacks pro-

vide non-state actors a reputation that allow them to resolve the opponent and target audience more successfully than declarations (Polo and Gleditsch, 2006, p. 817). Moreover, when taking into consideration that civil wars are often asymmetric and the significance of vagueness in actors’ actions in that kind of war to achieve a progress, the degree of uncertainty and how this uncertainty stem from terrorism affects the resolution process between actors can be understood. On the other hand, it is generally supposed that interstate wars end with the victory of one side, however, victories in civil war are too sparse. Thus, in civil war, rebel groups are more prone to the use of strategies that can increase their benefits by gaining concessions or causing remarkable costs on the belligerent (Polo and Gleditsch, 2016, p.817)

When it comes to the question that in what period of an internal conflict rebel groups used terror strategies, Findley and Young provide the information on it by taking the starting point of Kydd and Walter’s assessment on terrorist strategies. Findley and Young stated that terrorist strategies can be seen before, during and after the civil war (2012, p.287). The provocation strategy can be observed generally at the beginning of civil war or before civil war to provoke the facts by the way, it enhances the capabilities of terrorist groups. This strategy is directly related to the fact that terrorism is the tool of the weaker. Similarly, the attrition strategy can be observed before and during the civil war. For example, suicide terrorism can cause enormous cost on the opponent state, especially the sensitive regimes to civilian loses. The strategy of attrition might be

applied to launch or sustain a conflict, but ultimately its usage after the civil war is too rare (Findley and Young, 2012, p.287). According to this study, outbidding is another strategy that is applied during civil war to enhance the terrorist groups' effects in a conflict environment. Additionally, spoiling generally occurs during and after to civil war to spoil peace process negotiations that are designed by moderates. According to Findley and Young, "terrorism is likely to occur during ongoing civil wars in four of the five strategic reasons for terrorism" (2012, p. 287). Briefly, while two of the strategies are used before the civil war, only the spoiling one are used after the civil war. One should keep in mind that the using of these strategies are changeable in accordance with the main purposes of non-state actors.

The purposes of rebel groups vary and according to Stanton, one the most significant explanation on use of terrorism in civil war is that rebel groups rational strategic calculations (2013, p. 1010). Rebel groups take into consideration the effects and response of governments before they launch a terrorist strategy, regarding whether the attack can cause the possibility of concession or benefits for their purposes. Indeed, rebel groups assess the pros and cons considering the alternatives to terrorist action. For example, rebel groups assessed the possible achievements of a terrorist attack by considering the regime type. Indeed, the regime type of a state would encourage or discourage of use of terrorism and the type of political institutions determine the degree of vulnerability when a terrorist action occurred. In the democratic states, rebel groups tend to think they

would gain political concessions. The reason for this idea is that political system in democratic states are susceptible the public demands, this feature makes these political institutions more fragile to civilian losses (Stanton, 2013, p.1010). Not only due to sensitiveness of political institutions towards public demands, but also press freedom in democracies allows terrorists to increase fear on audience. A freer press means to be more freely reported of casualties inflicting terrorist attacks, thus, one can suggest that press freedom ultimately helps terrorism to achieve its intents and become 'a more effective strategy' for concessions in civil wars (Polo and Gleditsch, 2016, p. 81) In contrast to democratic states, rebel groups consider autocratic states less sensitive to domestic public response. In this vein, the autocratic states are less affected from a pressure demanding by domestic public (Stanton, 2013, p.1012) At the same time, autocratic states are more inhibitory and restrictor on press, and this prevent the spread of fear and provocative ideas of terrorism. Thus, it can be argued that terrorism as a strategy in civil war whose part in an autocratic government is less effective strategy.

Another calculation made by rebel groups before conducting terrorist attacks is the calculations of the costs. Rebel groups who need more public support may avoid the use of the types of terrorism that cause civilians casualties, while other rebel groups whose demands do not require civilian support are more prone to the use of the types of terrorism that affects civilian losses (Stanton, 2013, p.1010). When both state and non-state actor conflict each other militarily in a civil war, they also seek

and compete for support of domestic civilian and international society. The group ideology also affects the determination on target choices. The group ideology forms what actions and strategies are significant and counterproductive when choosing the soft and hard targets in civil war. The specific targets determined by the group represent a balance between the relative ease of targets and political will (Polo and Gleditsch, 2016, p.819). These factors such as the degree of support rebel groups needed, international condemnation, ideology of rebel groups and competing can affect the decision of choosing terrorist strategy for rebel groups.

Finally, the effectiveness of terrorist strategies in civil war is also elusive debate in the literature. There is no consensus on the question whether terrorism is an effective strategy to achieve political purposes of terrorists or not. The reason behind this distinction between the camps is mostly about the determining problems of the degree of achievements. For example, according to Pape, terrorism as a strategy is effective, because when the rebel groups use the suicide terrorism tactic, the groups gain policy changes nearly half of the time (2013). However, in his findings, Pape assessed the success of terrorism regarding limited goals of terrorists rather than long-term political concessions. In contrast to Pape, Abrahms considers terrorism as an ineffective strategy because terrorism is unsuccessful to get political concessions for terrorists. According to him, when compared to guerrilla tactics that targets the government facilities, terrorism is too ineffective because of its nature that targets civilians (2012). As seen in

the arguments above, the distinction stems from determining the organization achievement to extract what kind of concession.

However, it can be argued that there are other outcomes of terrorist actions that can affect the success of the actions. According to Thomas, although the success of terrorists' strategies could be assessed in a variety of ways such as spoiling a peace deal, the empirical research are mostly about evaluating force for concessions (2014, p. 806). For some groups, becoming a part of negotiations for peace process is a higher success as well, by the way, some groups get the chance to be recognized and advertise their demands. Although states tend to be more reluctant while negotiating the groups that used terrorist strategies because these negotiations are a way to legitimize terrorism in civil wars, the states often launched negotiations. Thus, it can be argued that even though most of terrorist actions do not lead to reach ultimate purpose of perpetrator of terrorism, terrorism can be considered as effective to state actor's compliance at some points. (Thomas, 2014, p. 806)

After the examination of terrorist strategies and its effectiveness, it is obvious that these strategies mainly provide an explanation on some actions of rebel groups in civil wars. Additionally, no matter what the degree of harm it affects, in a civil war, Tilly argues that terrorism as a strategy "sends signals -signals that the target is vulnerable, that the perpetrators exist, and that the perpetrators have the capacity to strike again" (2004, p. 9). Consequently, when taking into consideration, terrorism works as a strategy and its core purpose is that coerce oppo-

nents in an internal conflict by sending concrete and threatening signals.

Conclusion

Both terrorism and civil war have been complex concepts to draw exact boundaries for. Due to its nature, terrorism has been observed in various conflicts and in various times of conflicts. Terrorism can carry transnational affects in international arena, or terrorism can be emerged as a violence model in a domestic conflict to challenge the target state for desired purposes by rebel groups. Some of terror strategies only demonstrate a symbolic meaning, or terrorism can cost enormous price for target audiences. The nature of terrorism clearly shows that it can be used by different actors and in different conflicts as a strategy.

In the context of this article, I assessed terrorism as a strategy in civil war. In the first part of this article, I explained the conceptual frameworks of both concepts to understand how to these concepts differentiate from each other. The important point from the definitions of two concepts is that while civil war conceptualization focuses on the type of definition that based on cost-related measurements, terrorism is mostly defined in terms of its purposes and its tactic capability by scholars. Indeed, this distinction between them gives a significant idea about the nature of terrorism as strategy.

The second part of this article focused on terrorism in the context of civil war as a whole part. Indeed, the examination of this part was the actor-oriented examinations assessing the terrorist strategies in terms of how, when and why they applied terror strategies. The significant

points from this part of the article are, firstly, rebel group determines the terror as a violence form strategically after the assessment of pros and cons of the terror action or whether this action would cause a concession or not by the governments. Indeed, this determination demonstrate a rationalist approach by rebel groups in the use of terrorism as strategy. Secondly, most of the studies assume that rebel groups are more likely to use terror strategies in civil war due to the vulnerability of a democratic system from civilian losses and public demands (Stanton, 2013).

Additionally, rebel groups use a wide range of terror strategies through the methods of intimidation, attrition, provocation, outbidding and spoiling in the context of civil war before, after and during the conflicts (Findley and Young, 2012). When it comes to how governments respond to these strategies, more use of costly terrorist strategies means the less concession or reconciliation steps by government (Thomas, 2014). Indeed, this means the less effectiveness as a strategy for terrorism. Abrahms' findings demonstrates that terror strategies are ineffective to reach long term success for rebel groups (2012). Thus, after the assessment of its effectiveness, it can be argued that terror strategies in civil war only achieved limited goals on target audiences.

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