Rethinking Repression: Exploring the Effectiveness of Counterterrorism in Spain

by

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Chapter One: Introduction

Combating terrorism is one of the most pressing and difficult issues facing modern governments. Nations around the world, ranging from the most developed to those struggling to exist, are forced to contend with domestic and international terrorist organizations that strive to alter the current political framework. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet to defeating terrorism; policies that were successfully implemented by one nation have utterly failed in another. The general nature of terrorism and terrorist groups present even more problems: governments are dealt crippling disadvantages as terrorists enjoy the luxuries of maneuverability, blending in with civilians, informational advantages and minor resource needs.

Amnesty, conciliation, repression, restriction: all are forms of counterterrorism strategies that are available to states. But which policies – or combination of policies – should states choose? An examination of modern history shows that states often attempt a variety of strategies, mixing conciliation with repression, or restriction with discriminate violence.

I argue that legal, nonviolent forms of counterterrorism are the most effective at reducing the frequency of terrorist attacks. More precisely, arrests, restrictive policies that make it harder for terrorist to carry out attacks, and judicial policies that increase the punishment for terrorism are the most effective counterterrorist measures. Conciliatory policies can also be effective when there is no public involvement or referendum; for example, a general amnesty policy will be effective, but a regional referendum may cause terrorists to increase attacks in an attempt to
influence civilian and government voting behavior. These findings suggest that
government legitimacy is more important to deterring terrorism than previously
believed. Overall, the results from my study show that counterterrorism policies are
most effective when they abide by preexisting legal boundaries, and that fighting fire
with fire – in other words, fighting terrorist violence with state violence – can either
instigate further terrorist attacks or simply be insignificant.

**Central Question**

The goal of this thesis is to provide a quantitative assessment of the relative
ability of counterterrorist tactics to reduce the likelihood of terrorist incidents. This
information is largely missing from modern political science literature, but its value
cannot be underestimated. Understanding the most effective means to combat
terrorism would be enormously helpful to modern governments facing threats from
non-state actors.

There are four main categories of counterterrorism tactics: conciliation,
repression, restriction, and legal reform (Miller 2007). Conciliation generally
includes amnesty policies and regional political referendums. Repression
incorporates the violent methods of counterterrorism such as bombing group
headquarters and camps and assassinating terrorist leaders. Restriction refers to
methods that make it difficult for terrorists to plan and carry out attacks; these include
arresting terrorist suspects, and hardening important targets (e.g. rerouting traffic
away from government buildings). Lastly, legal reform is often used in conjunction
with other policies. For example, legal reform can be implemented to increase police
powers. Another example is altering domestic law to increase political representation.

These tactics are further affected by the manner in which states proceed with their implementation. First, states can either choose to act through legal or nonlegal channels. This decision often has serious implications, both for the terrorists and for the populations that support them. Legal actions are important in demonstrating the legitimacy of the government, especially vis-à-vis the terrorists. Legal actions can also inspire citizens on the fringe of supporting terrorism to side with the government. Illegal actions, on the other hand, often do just the opposite: such actions might demonstrate that the government’s will to defeat terrorism at all costs is credible, but they can also influence anti-government sentiment within the population causing citizens to instead side with the terrorists. Unfortunately, defining state actions as “legal” or “illegal” is not always straightforward. For instance, states may alter laws in order to legalize their anticipated actions. However, in this study the term “legal” will be used to describe those actions that would be considered legitimate by democratic and international norms.

Second, governments can choose to enact discriminate or indiscriminate policies. This debate is well demonstrated by the use of repressive violence. For example, states may choose to implement violent policies that either impact specific terrorists, or the policies can affect the greater population beyond the terrorists. The repercussions of this decision are generally the same as those discussed above; policies that affect innocent citizens can turn them towards terrorism, while discriminate actions are more difficult but can generate support for the government.
However, some states may instead argue that discriminate policies are useful in deterring citizens from supporting terrorism – by targeting the general population, states clearly demonstrate the repercussions of siding with the terrorists.

**Significance of the Study**

In general, recent studies of counterterrorism have been ineffective at determining which policies tend to be most successful at reducing the number of terrorist incidents. Most analyses exhibit one of two common flaws that I attempt to avoid in my own examination.

First, many studies fail to provide a comprehensive assessment of counterterrorism. Scholars often choose to examine the effectiveness of conciliation, for example, but they fail to include restriction, amnesty, and repression. This leads to further problems where policy combinations are often completely ignored. Combining restriction with discriminate violence, for example, could potentially be an effective strategy, yet the myopic nature of many studies will preclude such findings.

The second flaw common to most studies is over aggregation of the dependent and independent variables. With regards to studies of terrorism and counterterrorism, the dependent variable is often the number of terrorist attacks. Most scholars, however, choose to aggregate this variable into a given time period in order to facilitate their analysis. For example, it is common to see the number of attacks

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grouped by month so that a regression or other model can be estimated. Over-aggregating the independent variable is another common flaw.

In this study, the independent variable will be the counterterrorist actions. In order to analyze these actions at the most granular level possible, I will employ a new research design that generates a record of each individual state counterterrorist action: thus, it will provide each individual arrest, killing, deportation, and new law that the Spanish government enacts. By generating such granular data, I can also group the actions into useful categories to test even more dimensions of counterterrorism, such as indiscriminate and discriminate or legal and illegal actions.

Over-aggregation is a serious problem for researchers because it can easily lead to faulty models and misrepresented findings. By doing so, it is impossible to account for complex statistical nuances that event-specific data provides. Even worse, aggregating at different levels has been shown to yield different results. Effective studies can remedy this flaw by performing as little aggregation as possible.

This thesis utilizes new techniques and presents a comprehensive assessment of counterterrorism, which means that these two flaws are effectively avoided. Instead of focusing on a fraction of counterterrorism policies, I analyze a wide range of government actions in my study. I also employ a research design that does not require me to aggregate the dependent variable; instead of analyzing the combined number of terrorist incidents in a certain time period, my analysis will examine the time between each individual terrorist attack. In the following section, I detail the design of this study and how it will enhance my analysis.
Research Design

In this study, I present a new methodology to study counterterrorism that avoids the common flaw of overaggregation. I have chosen to focus my study on the terrorism of Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) – a domestic Spanish terrorist organization that has been active since the mid 1950s. I will perform a multi-level analysis for this study: first, I will examine the impact of six broad counterterrorist policies enacted by the Spanish government since 1976. Next, I will perform a more focused study in order to gauge the effectiveness of specific tactics on a day-by-day basis. For this portion of the study, I have chosen to examine the time period from 1988 to 1992. These 5 years have been selected in order to minimize confounding factors that could potentially affect the levels of terrorist incidents. For example, during this time period Spain operated under a democratic form of government and the organization of the state with respect to regional autonomy remained unchanged. Additionally, both of these analyses will examine the entire spectrum of policies and tactics available to governments, thereby providing a comprehensive analysis of Spanish counterterrorism efforts.

While the first evaluation will study the impact of broad strategies and government policies, the second analysis is centered on the use of TABARİ software. TABARİ, which stands for Textual Analysis by Augmented Replacement Instructions, is an automated text-coding program used to analyze and code news articles. TABARİ was used to code nearly 1,200 Reuters articles between 1988 and 1992, giving a day-by-day view of Spanish efforts to combat ETA. This facet of the
study is unique for its analysis of individual actions and for its creation of a granular counterterrorist database.

By combining a tactical and strategic analysis, this paper presents a comprehensive analysis that has yet to be performed. As I have mentioned, studies often focus on overall strategy or a specific set of tactics, such as repression. However, in this study I will analyze the entire spectrum of available actions.

Both studies will be performed using the Cox Proportional Hazard Model – a method of survival analysis – in which the dependent variable is the time between attacks. This method was chosen for its ability to analyze data at the most granular level possible. The dependent variable in such analyses, for example, is the time between ETA attacks. Thus, the common problem of over-aggregation has been avoided as much as possible.

Why Spain?

This study analyzes the counterterrorism choices of the Spanish government, and the subsequent attacks of the aforementioned ETA terrorist organization. ETA is primarily a domestic terrorist organization that was founded in the late 1950s in response to the social and political oppression of Francisco Franco – a dictator who ruled Spain from nearly 1940 until his death in 1975. The ultimate goal of ETA terrorists is autonomy for the País Vasco – the Basque region– that borders France in the north of Spain.

There are several reasons why Spain was chosen for this analysis. First, Spain represents a Western, democratic nation that faces threats from a domestic terrorist
organization. Thus, the implications of this study will be applicable to other Western nations that are dealing with similar threats. While the general findings of this study can surely be applied to nations around the world, it is the primary goal of this thesis to study how countries like the United States, Great Britain, Spain, Ireland and France can combat homegrown terrorists threats.

Second, the study is most concerned with the effectiveness of counterterrorism against a domestic terrorist organization. Modern terrorism is predominately domestic by nature, and it is therefore the goal of this study to determine the best strategy to combat such threats. While some of the lessons will be applicable to the fight against international terrorism, it would nonetheless require a broader study that investigates cooperative international action in addition to unilateral state action.

Third, a within-case study of Spain is useful because it can shed light on a variety of other factors associated with terrorist proliferation. For example, the extant literature on terrorism often discusses the impact of civil liberties, political rights and democracy on the prevalence of terrorism. Spain is useful because all of these variables can be tested: for example, until 1978 Spain was under the control of the dictator Francisco Franco, and the levels of political and civil rights have substantially changed since that time. Therefore, a longitudinal analysis will provide the opportunity to study how regime-type and civil liberties affect the prevalence of terrorism. Thus, not only does this study analyze the impact of counterterrorism instruments, but it also measures the impact of a wide range of variables beyond state actions that are thought to influence the frequency of terrorist events.
Fourth, and finally, Spain was chosen for several practical concerns. The research design of this study requires extensive archives of Reuters news stories, and these archives are more readily available for Western nations that have historically received greater news coverage. This is important because this study depends on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the news articles to relay valuable information – namely, government interactions with ETA. If a country were chosen where news articles and other information was limited, then the findings of the study would be severely impaired.

**The First Step: Defining Terrorism**

Prior to conducting research or examining counterterrorist policy, it is necessary to develop a working definition of “terrorism” and “terrorist incidents.” For example, what is the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist? What differentiates civil war from an armed insurgency? Not only is the construct of terrorism important to researchers, but the word itself has important social and political connotations that often go unnoticed. For instance, Martha Crenshaw notes that “when people choose to call the actions of others terrorist…[the] choice often has a prescriptive policy relevance a well as moral connotation” (Shabad and Llera Ramo 1995, 9-10). Similarly, popular reactions to terrorism often involve images of extremism and fanaticism, while failing to associate any other qualities and motivations – such as liberators or of oppressed peoples – that may exist (Shabad and Llera Ramo 1995, 8-9). Thus, a formal definition of terrorism is critical to an unbiased, objective understanding of the phenomenon.
Walter Laqueur proposes that terrorism is something that an observer would recognize when s/he saw it (Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoeffler 2004). Unfortunately, this definition is far from adequate, and it poses serious problems to anyone attempting quantitative analysis. To get a grasp on the term, it may helpful to look at varying institutional and scholarly definitions.

The FBI uses a very broad definition of terrorism: “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (Baltimore FBI). This is an interesting definition because it acknowledges the social as well as political objectives of terrorists. However, one problem with this definition is that it does not differentiate between state and non-state actors, which many believe to be a critical element of the term. Although the debate over whether or not states themselves can engage in terrorism is a topic unto itself, it should nonetheless be mentioned in a comprehensive definition.

The CIA, on the other hand, employs an alternate definition: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents” (Terrorism FAQs). Here, they have opted to forgo the possible social or religious motivations of terrorism. The CIA definition also only accounts for noncombatant targets of terrorism, thereby limiting the scope of attacks that are included in the definition.

Where the US government has failed to craft a comprehensive definition of terrorism, academia has been similarly unsuccessful. For decades, scholars have been
intrigued by the possibility of devising an inclusive yet selective definition of terrorism. A good place to begin is with Martha Crenshaw’s early definition of the term from 1981: “Terrorism is the premeditated use or threat of symbolic, low-level violence by conspiratorial organizations” (Crenshaw 1981, 379). One of the important elements of this encompassing definition is its mention of symbolic or low-level violence. With a few exceptions, terrorist violence generally focuses on either symbolic or otherwise militarily unimportant targets. The obvious example of this is civilians, which can be considered both low-level and symbolic. Other nationally significant targets such as the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower would also fall under this category. However, many critics would argue that this definition lacks many features that typify modern terrorism, and it leaves the door open to incorporating guerilla warfare and general military strategy under its banner. For example, an al Qaeda attack using a dirty bomb would not fall under this definition as it is surely not “low-level violence.”

One common school of thought surrounding the definition of terrorism hinges on the presupposition of political motivations behind the attack. The aforementioned CIA and FBI definitions of terrorism clearly point out the associated political undertones. Likewise, Austin Turk argues that terrorism is simply “organized political violence,” and that the tactic is “designed to deter opposition by maximizing fear” (Turk 1982, 122). Bruce Hoffman similarly notes that it is “ineluctably political in aims and motives” (Hoffman 2006, 40).

However, even the association between terrorism and politics, which may seem universal, may not be so; social and environmental terrorism are quite common
in modern society. An Environmental Liberation Front (ELF) attack on a ski resort cannot qualify as political when it is solely aimed at the proprietor of the hotel. Similarly, groups such as the Ku Klux Klan may be driven more by social goals than political goals.

Even though a terrorist organization may not be motivated by politics per se, Donatelle della Porta proposed a novel understanding that depicted terrorist organizations themselves as forms of political organizations. “Terrorism is defined as the activity of these clandestine organizations that, by a continued and almost exclusive use of illegal forms of action, aim to obtain their political goals through profound transformations of state institutions” (Della Porta 1995, 107). Della Porta’s definition is also unique for its suggestion that the goal of terrorism is the transformation of state institutions and not merely policy. However, there are several downsides to such a definition: while this may apply to Italian and West German terrorism of the 70s and 80s, it is not wholly transferrable to other nations and other terrorist groups. For example, Al Qaeda’s objective of killing Americans and driving the US out of Saudi Arabia would not suffice to qualify them as a terrorist organization according to these criteria. Nonetheless, I believe it is an interesting concept to consider terrorist organizations as political units, and this theory represents the multitude of directions from which one can approach the subject.

The target(s) of terrorism is another highly debated topic within the academic community. Schmid and Jongman (2005) simply proposes that the “direct targets of violence are not the main targets.” This makes sense, as often the targets of terrorism are civilians or military personnel whose deaths are intended to coerce the political
elite or motivate voters. Caleb Carr (2003) likewise notes that the terrorism is “deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will.” Even the aforementioned CIA and FBI definitions denote the universally noncombatant status of terrorist targets. But once again, while trying to limit the definition of terrorism, these definitions unintentionally rule out the possibility of direct political intimidation or assassination that may in fact be the goal of a terrorist act. Thus, these sorts of actions would fail to qualify as a terrorist act.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, scholars have struggled for years to construct a definition of terrorism that can on one hand encompass the entirety of actions associated with it, and on the other be specific enough to differentiate it from other forms of political, social, or religious violence. The definition that I find most appealing, and consequently the one that I will be employing for this analysis, comes from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). In the first database (GTD1), which includes attack information from 1970-1997, the definition was “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” For attacks ranging from 1998 to 2007 (GTD2), the definition was replaced with a set of criteria that allowed for individual users to choose for him or herself which incidents would qualify as terrorism. First, the act must qualify as an “intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor.” Second, it must meet two of the following three criteria:

1. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;
2. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims; and

3. The violent act was outside the precepts of International Humanitarian Law (START Data Collection Methodology).

Thus, all acts of violence perpetrated by ETA throughout the time period investigated in this study are encompassed within the GTD1 and GTD2.

**Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study are relevant both to the policy and academic communities. With regard to policy, I find that legal, nonviolent forms of counterterrorism are most effective. These sorts of policies were nearly always effective at reducing the frequency of terrorist attacks. Additionally, my findings support the strategic model of terrorism at the group and individual levels. My analysis suggests that terrorist groups strategically respond to domestic political events, and that individual terrorists are often deterred by the threat of imprisonment and punishment. These findings would be helpful to any government facing threats from domestic terrorism.

A further implication of this study involves the academic community. The methodology behind this study – primarily the time series analysis of TABARI – demonstrates how researchers can avoid overaggregation. While this study uses TABARI to create a 5-year database of Spanish counterterrorist actions, the program can be used to study a wide range of questions.
Thesis Layout

In the second chapter of this paper, I will provide a theoretical background necessary to understanding the dynamics of counterterrorism, including an analysis of most common actions that governments tend to enact when combating terrorism. This section also will contain a review of much of the current literature surrounding the study of terrorism and counterterrorism, and it will subsequently detail my hypotheses emanating from this literature. I will end this section with a discussion of two flaws common to previous studies of counterterrorism efficacy, and how this thesis overcomes them.

The third and third chapters detail the quantitative analysis of this paper. In the third chapter, the longitudinal study of Spanish counterterrorism - which analyzes counterterrorist policy from 1970 to 2004 - will be discussed. The methodology, data, variables, and results will be presented.

The fourth chapter, which is devoted to the tactical study of Spanish counterterrorism using TABARI software, will contain similar information to the third chapter. This chapter will present the research design and results from this portion of the study.

Finally, the fifth and final chapter will discuss the overall conclusions that can be drawn from both analyses. Additionally, it will include the theoretical and practical implications of this study as they relate to the academic and policy communities.
Chapter Two: Literature Review and Extant Findings

What defines effective counterterrorism?

Before outlining the different options available to states to combat terrorism, it is important to understand how successful counterterrorism is defined and what measurements exist to quantify success. In this section, I will discuss how effectiveness can be measured and the limitations of each method.

There are a variety of ways to measure the success of counterterrorist policy. The most common method used by political scientists involves analyzing the number of attacks before and after the initiation of a certain policy (Reid and Chen 2007). This method has been used in numerous studies and is very effective. Using this method of analysis, scholars have performed case studies on Northern Ireland, Spain, Peru, Colombia, Israel, Libya, Germany, Italy, and nearly every other country that has been studied with regards to terrorism (Miller 2007). However, this method is plagued by several problems. Most notably, there is another dimension to the success of counterterrorist policy that is not measured here: the severity of attacks. Therefore, a policy may be successful at decreasing the number of attacks, but if the existing attacks are substantially more severe then it is unclear whether or not this policy is truly successful. Lastly, this sort of analysis relies on information that is not always available. Although databases such as the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) have largely nullified this problem, not all terrorist attacks are easily documentable. For example, terrorist attacks in remote locations or in authoritarian countries will be difficult to document: attacks in remote locations are unlikely to be reported in major
newspapers and similarly, attacks in authoritarian regimes are likely to be kept from the public as their acknowledgement would weaken the perception of the government (LaFree and Dugan 2007). Therefore, while relying on the number of attacks is the most common indicator of success and it is probably the best option available to researchers, it is far from perfect.

Several other lesser-used methods also have been employed to quantify the success of counterterrorism policies. For example, researchers have used the number of mortalities caused by terrorist attacks to measure terrorist activity. However, as one can imagine, mortality does not always correlate directly to terrorist activity. A scenario is plausible where one large attack in June kills a great deal of citizens but no other attack occurs during the same month. Then in July, a dozen attacks take place but kill very few people. If a researcher aggregates the data by month, then it will appear that June was the most active of the two, when in reality it was July. While this method can be used to draw inferences about terrorist attack severity, it is difficult to use this information to gauge the overall success of counterterrorist policies.

Other approaches that could certainly work might gauge the strength of terrorist groups, which could then be analyzed alongside policy timelines to see which have been effective. For example, measurements of group numbers and recruiting would certainly be helpful, but such figures are nearly impossible to generate. Taking all of this into consideration, analyzing the number of terrorist attacks appears to be the most reliable and accessible method to analyze the effectiveness of counterterrorist policy.
Overall, states are likely to use the number of attacks as the primary indicator of policy success. After all, their main goal is to eradicate terrorism so that attacks no longer occur. With all limitations and other measurements considered, this appears to be the best way to determine which policies are most effective at combating terrorism.

Understanding Counterterrorism

Counterterrorist efforts can take many forms. Conciliation, repression, restriction, judicial changes and even inaction are all common governmental responses to terrorist threats. But with each action having inherent merits and downfalls, how do states know which policies to enact? And moreover, which are most effective at reducing the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks?

From the extant literature on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, I find that government legitimacy is essential to effective counterterrorism. By abiding by their own laws and democratic norms, and by respecting human rights, governments appeal to the broader population and can thereby reduce the domestic support for terrorism. While this limitation of legality will surely limit the scope of potential counterterrorist tactics, countries around the world have found success utilizing similar actions. This theory suggests several observable implications: first, illegal, repressive policies will be ineffective at deterring terrorism. These policies will demonstrate the government’s brutality toward its own citizens, and this will in turn increase domestic support for terrorism and also the frequency of attacks. Second, legal restrictive measures will be the most effective. This category includes actions
such as border control, police powers, arrests, judicial changes to increase
punishment, target-hardening, and other security legislation. These policies will
either make it harder for terrorists to plan and execute attacks (target-hardening,
security laws, arrests), or they will simply deter terrorists by the possibility of
punishment and jail time (arrests, judicial changes). With regard to government
conciliation to appease terrorists, I argue that such actions will be counterproductive.
They will either embolden the group to seek further rewards, or they will radicalize
the group by drawing moderates away from the organization and subsequently
leaving more dangerous members in charge.

The literature regarding the effectiveness of different counterterrorist
instruments is unfortunately quite varied\(^2\); there is little consensus regarding which
policies governments should use. In the following pages I provide a critical review of
the extant literature regarding these actions. Specifically, I discuss the three main
categories of counterterrorism – repression, conciliation and restriction – and I
examine the impact of whether they are either discriminate or indiscriminate by
nature. Lastly, I provide an overview of additional considerations that must be taken
into account prior to enacting a policy.

\(^2\) See figure 2.1 for a summary of findings from the extant literature.
### Figure 2.1: Summary of Findings from Counterterrorist Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective?</th>
<th>Repression</th>
<th>Restriction³</th>
<th>Conciliation⁴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective?</td>
<td>LaFree, Dugan and Korte 2009; Brophy-Baermann, and Conybeare 1994;</td>
<td>Miller 2007</td>
<td>Bueno de Mesquita 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminate policies effective?</td>
<td>David 2002</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminate policies ineffective?</td>
<td>Jordan 2009</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate policies effective?</td>
<td>Lyall 2009; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate policies ineffective?</td>
<td>Downes 2008; Lafree, Dugan and Korte 2009; Enders and Sandler 1993</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Options: What do governments have to choose from?

Available to governments are a wide range of counterterrorist actions that fall into several main categories. Gregory D. Miller (2007), in his study of counterterrorist policies across a variety of cases, proposes five categories of counterterrorism: doing nothing, conciliation, legal reform and restriction, and

³ The impact of indiscriminate/discriminate restriction is not discussed because restriction is generally discriminate by nature. While some restrictive actions are indiscriminate, they did not occur in Spain during the time of analysis.

⁴ Arguments regarding the effectiveness of discriminate/indiscriminate conciliation do not exist, as the majority of conciliatory policies do not substantially affect the general population.
violence (also called repression). However, governments are often forced to consider political risks, social backlash, and collateral damage in their decisions. For instance, following most attacks the public desire for revenge is often so great that politicians are forced to enact repressive policies or instead run the risk of incurring a political loss (Nevin 2003). Nonetheless, state policies that are too repressive or too kind towards insurgents will likely result in a drop in the government’s approval ratings. States are also forced to contend with simple resource availability; troop strength and defense budgets can limit the scope of available options.

Some scholars, such as Miller, argue that inaction is a common government response to a terrorist threat. However, this analysis will not examine this approach for several reasons. First, it would be difficult if not impossible to measure the impact of state inaction. Numerous policies and security arrangements are always in effect, so a state is never actually doing nothing. Second, inaction is nearly impossible because it comes at such an enormous political risk. Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (2007, 11) writes that “Politicians engage in security spending for at least two reasons: in order to increase security and to serve their political interests.” The political loss from doing nothing, especially following an attack on civilians, would suffice to make inaction highly unfeasible.

Repressive Policies

Governments are likely to enact repressive policies following terrorist attacks. “It would be emotionally and politically difficult for any leader to refrain from revenge attacks after innocent civilians or government troops were killed by
terrorists” (Nevin 2003). Numerous actions fall under the category of repression, including bombing terrorist headquarters, killing group members, and raiding terrorist training grounds and facilities. Therefore, repression may seem like the obvious choice to deter terrorism, but it is not always the best option.

In order to determine what outcomes states are expecting from repressive policies, one can look to Ronald Reagan’s justification of the US bombing raid on Libya in 1986 following a terrorist attack on a popular American club in Berlin. “We believe that this preemptive action against (Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi’s) terrorist installations will not only diminish Colonel Qadhafi’s capacity to export terror, it will provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal behavior” (Malvesti 2002, 19). Thus, there are two main goals: one, diminish attack capacity, and two, provide incentives to give up terror. A bombing raid on terrorist facilities would surely diminish attack capacity as weapon stockpiles, plans, and other equipment would be lost.

Repression is also used for its potential to deter future terrorist recruits, and also to scare current members to disarm (Malvesti 2002). “According to this conception of deterrence, people are rational beings who will commit a crime only if the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs. Thus, a criminal act is more likely to be deterred under conditions where punishment is certain, swift and severe” (Ginges 1997, 172). Gregory Miller (2007) expands on this idea, and notes that the development of a state’s tough, forceful reputation may deter future acts of terrorism. Regardless of how it is perceived by terrorists, numerous scholars agree that repression is an effective form of deterring terrorism.
H1: Repressive counterterrorism will decrease terrorist attacks.

Although it is clear what states are attempting to achieve with repressive policies, such actions often yield mixed results. While some policies may be successful at temporarily disrupting the organization, empirical studies have demonstrated that backlash effects in response to indiscriminate violence are common and actually escalate terrorist violence (LaFree, Dugan and Korte 2009). “The logic here is that violent state responses encourage more of the population to support terrorism” (Miller 2007, 332). Therefore, it may be unwise to rely on repressive policies to deter political violence as it is possible that the opposite effect will occur.

H2: Repressive counterterrorism will increase terrorist attacks.

Within counterterrorist literature, there is often a debate concerning the use of discriminate and indiscriminate repression. First, I will examine the effects of indiscriminate repression in the past, and how it has affected the levels of terrorist incidents.

In their study of British counterterrorist efforts in Northern Ireland, LaFree, Dugan and Korte (2007) found evidence of increased violence following three of the six policies which all happen to involve indiscriminate acts of violence. Similar studies have been performed with regards to Spain, Algeria, Morocco, Palestine, Sri Lanka, and Peru, and they have confirmed the theory of backlash violence following indiscriminate acts of repression by the government (Nevin 2003; Brophy-Baermann and Conybeare 1994; Enders and Sandler 1993).
The Gibraltar incident is one example of a failed Northern Ireland policy involving indiscriminate violence. It was seen as an unnecessarily brutal attack on the IRA, and it consequently facilitated recruitment and helped group members portray their fallen comrades as martyrs for a unified Ireland. It also reinforced the perceived brutality of the British government that intensified negative feelings toward Parliament (LaFree, Dugan and Korte). Furthermore, Robert White argues that indiscriminate violent repression in Northern Ireland, including actions like the Gibraltar Incident, may have decreased attacks in the short term, but the effects may wear off over time and even lead to increased levels of violence (White 1989).

This is not a phenomenon limited to Northern Ireland. Enders and Sandler, in their study of government interventions and terrorist incidents, found that “the retaliatory raid on Libya [following a terrorist attack on a popular American nightclub in Berlin] … did not have a significant long-run effect” (Enders and Sandler 1993, 843). The raid involved indiscriminate bombing of several suspected terrorist encampments throughout Libya, some being in close proximity to civilian homes.

The main element that produces backlash effects from indiscriminate repressive policies is civilian involvement. With indiscriminate policies, normal citizens are often affected both directly from bombing raids and other assaults, and indirectly when infrastructure and industrial sites are destroyed. Alexander Downes (2008), in Targeting Civilians in War, writes that targeting civilians is a poor strategy: “it rarely helps the perpetrator achieve its goals and can even be counterproductive by strengthening an adversary’s will to resist.” The extant
literature on this subject suggests that the negative externalities associated with indiscriminate repression are worse than the potential benefits.

\textbf{H3: Indiscriminate, repressive counterterrorism will increase terrorist attacks.}

While large amounts of information point to the ineffectiveness of indiscriminate repression, there is still other evidence that supports its use. Most notably, Jason Lyall’s study of indiscriminate violence at the hands of the Russian Government attests to its efficacy. Lyall found that when used against the Chechen rebels, indiscriminate violence decreased terrorism by 24%. However, Lyall attributes this finding to Russia’s one-sided policy: by only using indiscriminate, repressive violence and allowing no concessions, the citizens caught up in the violence were not permitted to associate or even sympathize with the terrorists.

Lyall’s findings suggest that the indiscriminate violence in Chechnya decreased the support for terrorism, and it demonstrated that the only viable option was to support the government out of fear of retribution.

\textbf{H4: Indiscriminate, repressive counterterrorism will decrease terrorist attacks.}

It is also relevant to consider the implications of discriminate violence – targeting individual terrorists leaders and group members – and how the death of key leaders could affect the terrorist organization and the frequency of attacks. In 2003,
the Bush administration released their “National Strategy for Combating Terrorism,” in which they argued in favor of assassinations to weaken terrorist groups:

The terrorist leadership provides the overall direction and strategy that links all these factors and thereby breathes life into a terror campaign. The leadership becomes the catalyst for terrorist action. The loss of leadership can cause many organizations to collapse (Bush 2003).

The Bush administration appears to believe that group leaders are essential to a functioning terrorist organization. This theory is supported by Stephen David, for example, who argues that discriminate tactics aimed at taking out terrorist leaders are effective. Although David found that targeted killings of group leaders in Israel may not have “appreciably diminished the costs of terrorist attacks,” he nonetheless argues that “providing retribution and revenge for a population under siege and may, over the long term, help create conditions for a more secure Israel” (David 2002).

\[H_5: \text{Discriminate, repressive counterterrorism will decrease terrorist attacks.}\]

Even the effectiveness of discriminate repression is not agreed upon by all scholars. Other studies have found that discriminate repression is ineffective for several reasons. First, as noted in the White House Strategy for Combating Terrorism, new leadership can quickly emerge, and groups can decentralize in order to avoid repercussions caused by the loss of key leadership (Bush 2003). Second, targeting terrorist leaders would be futile against groups that are already decentralized, like ETA for example, that operate from small cells around the country. The majority of individual members are insignificant to the group as a whole, and their deaths would be unlikely to influence the hazard of an attack beyond any individual attack they were currently planning.
Jenna Jordan performed a comprehensive study of discriminate repression, and specifically targeted assassinations in Israel, and found that overall the policy was ineffective. Two of her findings are especially relevant to this debate: first, “decapitation does not increase the likelihood of organizational collapse beyond a baseline rate of collapse for groups over time…It is actually counterproductive, particularly for larger, older, religious, or separatist organizations” (Jordan 2009, 723). Second, after examining several cases Jordan finds that there is neither a consistent increase nor decrease in attacks following targeted assassinations. Therefore, from her findings one would assume that discriminate repression is not an advisable counterterrorist tactic.

\[ H_0: \text{Discriminate, repressive counterterrorism will increase terrorist attacks.} \]

Overall, the extant literature suggests that repression is an unreliable form of counterterrorism. As I have demonstrated, it can often result in a backlash effect of increased violence, or it can have no effect whatsoever. However, with groups that have identifiable training grounds and camps, repression could potentially be successful. Nonetheless, it is important for states to maintain repressive strategies in their arsenal as they serve important political functions following attacks on civilians. For instance, politicians can use repressive policies to demonstrate their will and capability to combat terrorism, as well as to placate the public’s desire for revenge. Therefore, while they cannot be completely ruled out, the literature suggests that repressive policies are most productive in certain circumstances and when potential negative externalities are limited.
Conciliatory Policies

Despite the common political rhetoric that governments do not negotiate with terrorists, such negotiations are actually quite common and may be useful in certain situations (Neumann 2007). However, conciliatory policies do not refer solely to negotiations between the state and terrorist leaders. While this is certainly part of it, conciliation can also take the form of decentralization, social or policy change, or troop withdrawal. For example, the Spanish policy of amnesty in 1976 that freed political prisoners detained under the Franco dictatorship would be considered a form of conciliation. Previous findings suggest that these sorts of policies, however, should not be used at random or as the entirety of a state’s counterterrorist arsenal.

States hope to appease terrorists through conciliatory policies or negotiations. “States use conciliation to resolve a crisis, or to forestall future crises by negotiating with terrorists” (Miller 2007, 335). Change, or the promise of change as Miller notes, is hoped to deter terrorists as well as their supporters. Through the prospects of appeasement, change, and negotiation, states hope that terrorists will give up violence. By simply giving them what they want, states believe they will forgo the use of violence to achieve their goals.

As Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (2005) finds, conciliation can also help to end terrorist violence because of the valuable information that it provides to counterterrorism efforts. The information gained from the testimonies of terrorists who have voluntarily exited the group would provide a tremendous advantage to government and military leaders alike. Useful information could, for example,
divulge the location of terrorist operatives or even reveal the timing and location of upcoming attacks. As terrorists generally enjoy the advantages of an informational asymmetry vis-à-vis the state, this information would be tremendously beneficial.

Conciliatory policies and negotiations have been successful in a variety of cases. Northern Ireland, for example, demonstrates how the state and terrorist leaders can reach a mutually agreeable arrangement that ended in nearly full disarmament of the Provisional IRA. Similar success occurred in Quebec where the Canadian government succeeded against separatists; the government improved conditions for native French speakers and allowed a referendum to take place concerning secession (Sederberg 1995).

\( H_7: \text{Conciliatory policies will decrease terrorist attacks.} \)

Despite its potential benefits, there is still disagreement concerning the use of conciliatory policies against terrorism. The biggest argument against conciliation does not even address its effectiveness; instead, opponents argue that “negotiations give legitimacy to terrorists and their methods and undermine actors who have pursued political change through peaceful means. Talks can destabilize the negotiating governments’ political systems, undercut international efforts to outlaw terrorism, and set a dangerous precedent” (Neumann 2007). Therefore, giving in to terrorist demands could easily put the negotiating government, and even the international struggle against terrorism, in a dangerous position. And at their worst, negotiations could encourage other groups to take up violence.
There are many cases where conciliation has proved useless. In Chechnya and Israel, for example, conciliation has been completely ineffective (Neumann 2007). Miller (2007) similarly found that attempts by both the Russian and Israeli governments failed to impact the frequency of terrorist attacks in their respective regions. Furthermore, scholars such as Karen Rasler (1996) in her study of the Iranian Revolution, found that conciliation decreased protests in the short term but proved to increase terrorism in the long run, therefore leading to even more concessions.

Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (2005) proposes an explanation of why terrorism increases following government conciliation. He theorizes that conciliatory policies draw moderate members away from the group, leaving more radical members in charge and creating an overall more violent group. In this scenario, government efforts to appease terrorists would merely worsen the situation.

An example of this occurred in Spain in the 1980s when ETA split into ETA \textit{polитico-militar} (ETA-pm) and ETA \textit{militar} (ETA-m). Following a Spanish amnesty policy, many ETA members decided that their violent behavior was detrimental to their goal of Basque autonomy, and they broke off to form ETA-pm – a more moderate group that wanted to utilize political action. Unfortunately, this left the most radical members in charge of ETA, and they soon formed ETA-m in order to achieve Basque independence through violence. It was the Spanish amnesty policy that initiated ETA’s fracture and unintentionally established the more violent ETA- \textit{militar} (Watson 2008).
Legal Reform and Restriction

Legal reform and restriction refer to the state’s non-military actions to deter terrorism, including new counterterrorist laws, hardening targets, new police initiatives, arrests, and enhanced border security. The goal of these policies is to arrest terrorists and make planning and executing attacks more difficult. It is necessary to consider these two tactics together, as one often affects the other – for instance, new laws regarding the rights of suspected terrorists (legal reforms) would undoubtedly influence police activity and information gathering (restriction). These two tactics are much more complex than mere retaliation or concessions, but they have proven to be very effective in some cases.

As previously mentioned, the ultimate goal of legal reform and restriction is to hinder a group’s capacity to plan and execute attacks. Strengthening domestic policies on border control, arms proliferation, and governmental authority will increase a state’s ability to deter terrorism. Likewise, international policies regarding cooperation and population movement are useful in the battle against international terrorism.

Charles T. Eppright (1997, 343) writes that “the legal apparatus possesses an effect on terrorism that the military never will.” Legal reforms and restriction can do many of the same things that repression can do – disrupt the organization, remove key leaders, and dissuade recruits – but is virtually immune from the backlash effects common with repression. Examining effective policies against the IRA sheds great
insight. The only policy that was found to significantly reduce the number of IRA attacks was Operation Motorman – a massive troop deployment within dangerous areas of Belfast. This severely limited the IRA’s ability to launch an attack in this area, and its success could be contributed to the fact that “it succeeded in raising the perception that acts of rebellion and violence would be met with an immediate response” and “it was not a particularly violent operation” (LaFree, Dugan and Korte 2009, 37). Likewise, scholars have found the importance of international cooperation in judicial matters and counterterrorist efforts. In Fernando Reinares’ (2000) study of counterterrorist efforts throughout Western Europe, he notes that France’s restrictive policies combined with their increased cooperation with Spain severely limited ETA’s ability to launch attacks. Therefore, although they may be more difficult and require much diligence, restrictive policies and legal reforms can significantly reduce terrorist attacks.

There are numerous examples of effective legal reform and restriction. An excellent example of both legal reform and restriction comes from Canada’s fight against the Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ). Following a series of bombings in Montreal, the Canadian government passed the War Measures Act that suspended civil liberties and allowed the military to patrol parts of the city. These policies proved to be effective and decreased the number of attacks (Miller 2007). Germany used a similar approach in the 1970s and was also successful. “The German government increased police personnel from 1969 to 1977, and passed antiterrorism laws in 1971, 1976, and 1978” (Miller 2007, 339). Miller notes that numerous scholars consider these measures a success.
**H$_0$: Legal, restrictive counterterrorism will decrease terrorist attacks.**

Although the precedent for effective legal reform and restriction has been set, some states still have failed at implementing successful legislation. For example, Greece was notably unsuccessful despite passing a number of counterterrorism laws in 1978 and 1990. Terrorist incidents in Greece actually reached their peak in 1991 following the passage of the second counterterrorism law in 1990. Similar results have been reported in Colombia and South Africa as well. Miller found that both of these nations were unable to pass laws that could effectively deter terrorists from executing violent attacks (2007). Therefore, it is not always true that restrictive policies will be effective at reducing terrorist incidents.

**H$_{10}$: Legal, restrictive counterterrorism will increase terrorist attacks.**

**Discriminate vs. Indiscriminate Actions**

Although I have previously discussed the potential effects of indiscriminate and discriminate repression on the frequency of terrorist attacks, it is also important to consider the consequences of discriminate and indiscriminate policies in general. For instance, many of the policies studied in this thesis are inherently discriminate by nature – such as arrests, individual killings, and deportations. On the other hand, many policies like condemnations, security legislation, and altering regional political representation are indiscriminate and affect the general population. Therefore, it is important to review the literature concerning these two types of actions.

The ineffectiveness of indiscriminate violence has already been discussed. Scholars such as LaFree, Dugan and Korte (2009), Miller (2007), and Enders and
Sandler (1993) and Downes (2008) have demonstrated the increase in terrorist attacks following these types of policies. Conversely, others have found discriminate tactics to be much more effective. For instance, Peroff and Hewitt’s analysis of Northern Ireland indicates that between 1968 and 1973, only internment policies (a discriminate tactic) significantly reduced the level of rioting, while an increased British troop presence (an indiscriminate tactic) increased rioting (1988). Kalyvas and Kocher (2008) similarly found that when citizens expect indiscriminate repression from their government, they are like to side with the terrorists.

\[H_{11}:\ \text{Discriminate counterterrorism reduces terrorist attacks,}\]
\[\text{while indiscriminate actions increase terrorist attacks.}\]

However, the opposite has also been argued. Lyall (2009) found that indiscriminate repression was effective in reducing terrorist attacks in Chechnya. His explanation of this finding reveals that discriminate actions would have been ineffective during this campaign.

\[H_{12}:\ \text{Indiscriminate counterterrorism reduces terrorist attacks,}\]
\[\text{while discriminate actions increase terrorist attacks.}\]

Additional Policy Considerations: Group Motivations, Structural Factors, Institutional Restrains and Information Asymmetries

“One particular problem with much of the recent research is the tendency to treat terrorism as a monolithic threat…In many ways, this is reminiscent of the early Cold War tendency to treat all communist countries as one solid bloc” (Miller 2007, 331). Even though there is a great amount of evidence presented in this study that
attests to the theoretical efficacy of different counterterrorist policies, one must consider a number of factors prior to the implementation of any government policy. Each terrorist group must be approached uniquely, taking into account their motivations, group dynamics, and relevant structural factors. In this section, I will analyze these factors with respect to the application of counterterrorist policy.

The motivations of a terrorist group must be considered when deciding upon a course of action to combat terrorism. There are a number of different motivations for groups to resort to political violence, a few of which being territorial independence, sociopolitical change, and religion. Even groups with apocalyptic goals exist. It is therefore important to consider these motivations when crafting counterterrorist policy as some tactics will be more effective (or not effective at all) against certain groups. Gregory Miller studies the effectiveness of different policies against a range of terrorist groups with different motivations and finds that “compromise and conciliation are effective against groups with limited objectives, but less so against more radical groups” (2007, 334). This is a rational conclusion, as the objectives of religious, revolutionary and more absolutist groups are likely to be unattainable by the government in question as it may require their dissolution. Miller further finds that legal reform and restriction is effective against reactionary and revolutionary groups. Finally, he discovers that the biggest challenge lies with religious groups, as “they may seem undeterred by any policy, but may be limited in their ability to carry out attacks when states emphasize restriction” (Miller 2007, 344). The most important lesson from these findings is that it is imperative to understand group
motivations if a state ever hopes to deter terrorist violence. Simply enacting policies to combat terrorism in general is an inefficient solution.

Group dynamics such as organizational structure (hierarchy, leadership, terrorist cells, etc) are also important to consider. Martha Crenshaw (2001, 13) writes that “the act of terrorism is the outcome of internal group dynamics,” and such a view can severely affect counterterrorist policy. Crenshaw later writes that policies that aim at exploiting these group dynamics can be effective, but generally take longer to develop and are less visible to the public, making them less desirable to politicians. Nonetheless, such an approach is worth considering when creating policy to combat terrorism.

Second, group structure is important to consider. Whether or not the group is comprised of small, independent cells across the country (such as present day ETA), or if it has training camps located in remote areas (similar to Al Qaeda) will affect which policies are effective. For groups made of small cells, indiscriminate repressive policies may be unsuccessful as potential targets are limited and widely dispersed. Thus, it is quite easy to imagine how group dynamics can severely impact the success or failure of a given policy.

**Structural Factors**

Structural factors are similarly important to the success of counterterrorist policy. As Jeffrey Ian Ross notes, “structural factors interact with each other to cause terrorism” (Ross 1993, 326). Therefore, it is no surprise that successful counterterrorist operations will take these factors into account. Ross notes that there
are numerous structural causes of terrorism, several of which being geographic location, type of political system, level of modernization, presence of other forms of unrest, availability of weapons and explosions, and population grievances. One can imagine how these factors would affect which policies should be enacted, and furthermore, which policies should be effective. For example, Gregory Miller suggests that “the location of a group’s operations matters, since groups that act solely within a state’s borders are more likely to accept concessions than international groups that will not benefit from domestic reform” (Miller 2007, 344-345). Although I will not discuss each of these factors individually, they are undoubtedly a necessary consideration of policymakers.\(^5\)

**Institutional Restraints and Information Asymmetries**

Although I have just discussed the possible approaches that a government may take to combat terrorism, scholars often note the impact of institutional restraints and information asymmetries on a country’s counterterrorist policy. In this section, I will discuss the impact of regime type – primarily democratic versus authoritarian regimes – and informational asymmetry on the ability to fight terrorism.

Scholars have often discussed the limitations that democratic norms place on governments, and conversely, the possibilities associated with authoritarian regimes. For instance, Gurr (1990) argues that democracies are forced to consider the impact of repressive tactics on those sympathetic to the terrorists’ cause. Additionally, elections within democratic societies often pressure the government to enact

\(^5\) The research design of my thesis, especially as a within-case study, is intended to isolate these structural factors and test their impact on the level of terrorist incidents.
observable forms of counterterrorism. “Voters…force the government, through electoral incentives, to overspend on observable counterterror” (Bueno de Mesquita 2007, 11). Bueno de Mesquita notes that this forces democratic regimes to overspend on observable tactics in order to secure reelection. A common example of this phenomenon comes from the United States, which spends enormous amounts of money on TSA agents, metal detectors, and other forms of airport security – all of which placate travelers’ fears of midair terrorist attack.

Besides the potential dissatisfaction of its voters, democratic regimes are also forced to contend with the norms associated with democratic systems. For example, Shabad and Llera Ramo (1995) find that democracies are more inhibited by “legal and normative restraints” than are authoritarian regimes, which limits their potential counterterrorism strategies. According to this approach, the legitimacy of the government, and primarily democratic governments, prohibits the use of indiscriminate repression. Such theories suggest that repression will increase violence in long run while only possibly decreasing immediate violence (White 1989).

The second restraint on governments occurs due to the informational asymmetry between the terrorists and the policy makers. In his game theoretical approach, Sandler and Arce (2003) show that the informational asymmetry forces governments to expend more resources with little chance of improving their informational gap. Information asymmetries further hamper counterterrorist efforts at the strategic level: governments, unsure of how or where the next attack will occur,
must implement policies based on poor information, further favoring the terrorists vis-à-vis the state (Lyall and Wilson 2009).

In summary, a democracy such as Spain cannot simply implement counterterrorist policies at will. The government must bear in mind the preferences of the voters that keep them in power. Politicians and policy makers must further contend with the often miniscule amounts of information available to them. They must work with what little they have to guess where, how, and when the next attack will occur.

Problems with Previous Studies of Counterterrorism

As I briefly mentioned in the introduction, most studies of counterterrorism exhibit one of two flaws: they often examine only one dimension of counterterrorism – for example, only repression– or they over-aggregate the dependent and independent variables, which can negatively affect their findings. In this section, I will discuss several studies that exhibit these flaws, and how my research overcomes them.

The primary problem exhibited by many studies of counterterrorism is their often one-dimensional analysis. In other words, most studies only examine the effectiveness of one counterterrorist tactic, such as repression, conciliation, or restriction. There are numerous studies that one could look to for such an example; for instance, Peter Sederberg’s (1995) study entitled “Conciliation as a Counter-Terrorist Strategy,” or Jenna Jordan’s study, “When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation.” These studies, while useful to the
academic community, do not provide a comprehensive, unbiased analysis. If Policy A and Policy B are enacted at roughly the same time, and only one policy is examined, then it would be impossible to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of either policy. It is inaccurate to say that Policy A alone caused a decrease in terrorism, as the effects of Policy B were not taken into account. Effective studies of counterterrorism should remedy this problem by including all counterterrorist measures in effect during the time of analysis.

This study looks at the entire range of counterterrorist actions enacted by the Spanish government, and it is therefore much less likely to overlook an important event. By examining all tactics implemented by the government, the results from this study will be more accurate and representative of the true efficacy of these tactics. Furthermore, as a multi-level within-case study, this thesis examines the impact of both government policy as well as tactics on the frequency of ETA attacks. This innovative methodology renders the possibility of overlooking an important government action highly unlikely, thus strengthening the credibility of the results.

The second problem inherent to many studies of counterterrorism, and political science in general, is over-aggregation. In order to analyze the frequency of terrorist attacks or other political events, researchers often group the number of attacks into a given time period, such as months or quarters. With regard to the independent variables, researchers often examine government actions at the policy level, but do not account for day-to-day occurrences. For example, knowing that a repressive campaign took place between 1991 and 1993 is not as useful as knowing when each individual assassination within the campaign occurred.
It is important to consider over-aggregation because “As we aggregate data, we lose many of the statistical properties and dynamics of the raw series” (Shellman 2004, 6). When data is aggregated, especially at high levels such as years, statistical nuances and important interaction effects are lost (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 1997). Similarly, coefficients may be skewed and misrepresented when values are averaged or otherwise combined into time aggregates. This can potentially lead to further problems where different conclusions are generated from varying temporal aggregations. Shellman (2004) notes that temporal aggregation poses a severe risk to political science research, as it is nearly impossible to predict the unit of time that will accurately reflect the time needed for states and nonstate actors to respond to one another.

This type of problem is visible in many recent studies. For example, Enders and Sandler (1993) aggregate the number of terrorist attacks into quarter-year time periods. Jason Lyall (2009), when studying insurgent violence in Chechnya, groups the number of attacks into 90-day periods. While these levels of aggregation are unlikely to discredit their findings, lower levels of aggregations are always beneficial.

This study avoids aggregation as much as possible. With regard to the dependent variable – the frequency of terrorist attacks – I am using a form of analysis that does not require variable aggregation. Although it will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, the Cox Proportional Hazard Model analyzes the time between terrorist attacks, so I will not be grouping attacks by any predetermined timeframe. Concerning the independent variable, I also will avoid aggregation. By using TABARI, I will be able to examine the impact of every individual arrest,
killing, deportation, and any other action on the frequency of terrorist attacks. This will prove more effective than other research strategies.
Chapter Three: Spanish Counterterrorist Policy, 1970-2004

To test the hypotheses in the previous chapter, I used a methodology that combines multiple levels of analysis. In this section, I will discuss the findings from a longitudinal study that examines the effectiveness of Spanish counterterrorist policy between 1970 and 2004. For this analysis, I chose six high-profile Spanish counterterrorism policies that represent the spectrum of tactics available to governments: amnesty, conciliation, repression, judicial change, restriction, and political pacts condemning the use of violence. These policies were also chosen for their historical importance; previous studies have found that these actions were significant in Spain’s battle against ETA separatists. In this section, I will detail the study’s research design and the subsequent results.

Research Design

Data

I am interested in the effects of counterterrorist policy on terrorist attacks. To gather the data of terrorist activity, I used the Global Terrorist Database (GTD). As the largest and most comprehensive open-source database of terrorist attack statistics, the GTD was an obvious choice. However, the strengths and weaknesses of the GTD are noteworthy to my study.

The creators of the GTD decided to impose several criteria concerning the designation of an event as a terrorist attack. GTD1, which chronicles events between
1970 and 1997 (excluding 1993\(^6\)), includes events which satisfy the following definition: “The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation.” While this definition may pose certain problems for specific research objectives (state terrorism, etc), this definition will clearly suffice for my purposes.

GTD2 picks up where GTD1 left off, chronicling events from 1997-2005. However, the requirements for inclusion into the database were altered; instead of a set definition, the creators of the GTD opted for fulfillment of certain criteria. First, the act must qualify as an “intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor.” Second, it must meet two of the following three criteria:

4. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;

5. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims; and

6. The violent act was outside the precepts of International Humanitarian Law (START Data Collection Methodology).

Similar to GTD1, this definition will suffice to include all ETA attacks. Unlike some other organization where the line between state and non-state actors are blurred, or the conflict could be deemed a civil war, all ETA attacks are clearly acts of terrorism by any definition.

\(^6\) The GTD does not contain information from 1993 as the data was lost during transfer.
The biggest downfall of the GTD, and of all open-source terrorist databases for that matter, is their means of gathering information. The GTD only includes events that have been included in fairly reputable news sources. Thus, the possibility exists for incidents not to have been reported. As one can imagine, relying on news sources is problematic because failed or foiled incidents, while significant to researchers, are physically impossible to report. Although it may seem obvious that news sources cannot report incidents that failed to occur, it is nonetheless significant to researchers. Furthermore, LaFree and Dugan (2007, 188) note that news sources are “inherently biased toward the most newsworthy forms of terrorism.” Attacks that occur within regions where the media is scarce will fail to be reported and therefore fail to be included in open-source databases.

Despite these downfalls, the Global Terrorism Database is the best choice for my research. It would be possible to use several other data sources for this project such as the TWEED database, ITERATE, or WITS, but there are inherent limitations to each. For example, the coding of duplicate events in TWEED is not clear. This is particularly important when considered terrorists attacks that occurred on the same day. They could either be coded as separate, individual attacks, or merely as one attack as part of an ongoing campaign. The clarity with which GTD was coded is very useful, and it is another reason why it was chosen.

1,795 domestic ETA terrorist attacks were isolated from the Global Terrorism Database for this study. The first chronicled attack took place on December 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1970, and the last on December 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2004, representing nearly 34 years of attack history.
Dependent Variable: Time Between ETA Attacks

The Global Terrorism Database is structured to report individual terrorist attacks by the day they occurred. From the statistics provided by the GTD, I have formulated my dependent variable – the time between ETA terrorist attacks. This variable was created by subtracting the date of attack at time $t$ from the previous attack which occurred at time $t - 1$. However, it was not necessary to manually generate this information; once the data was successfully declared as time series data in Stata, the Cox analysis could be run and it would calculate the time between attacks on its own.

Independent Variable: Policy Interventions

What I am primarily attempting to learn from this study is how different policy interventions by the Spanish government have affected ETA terrorism. To this extent, I have chosen six high-profile interventions that represent the range of counterterrorist actions, from conciliation to repression. Dummy variables were used to code each variable, where “1” represents that the policy was in effect at the time of a given attack, and “0” meant it was not in effect. Several of the policies chosen had clear end dates, however, others did not. For example, Spanish judicial changes were easy to code, as they were enacted on day $t_0$ and repealed on day $t_0+n$. Conversely, the effects of amnesty policies like the one enacted in 1976 prove difficult to measure because it is unclear when and for how long effects will occur. In these cases, I used previous research and my own judgment to estimate an appropriate time period.
Table 3.1: Summary of Political and Social Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amnesty</td>
<td>Amnesty provided to all political prisoners prior to 1976. Effects measured for one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restriction</td>
<td>Top ETA leaders arrested in Bidart, France, March 1992. Effects measured for one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/Social Pact against Violence</td>
<td>Estella Accords, 12 September 1998. Effects measured for one and a half years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first intervention to be studied is the Amnesty Policy enacted by the Suárez Government. Beginning in July of 1976 and continuing for several months, the Spanish government passed a law to release prisoners detained under the Franco regime. Many of these prisoners were political dissidents and other activists. This policy will be considered in effect for one year after it occurred in order to measure how ETA leaders responded.

A similarly conciliatory policy was the Basque Statute of Autonomy that was passed on 25 October 1979. While not necessarily aimed at deterring terrorism, this policy is important because it represents a step toward Basque autonomy and decentralization of power – the main objective of ETA. This policy will be examined for 12 months following its approval in order to gauge ETA’s response.
The third intervention to be studied is the Dirty War that occurred between the paramilitary GAL (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación; Antiterrorist Liberation Groups) organization and ETA. The GAL’s efforts were supported by members of the Spanish Government and Police force; however, the extent to which these organizations aided GAL is still not completely known despite numerous trials and convictions in the early 1990s. This policy represents the most widespread repressive tactic of the Spanish government, and it will be measured from 1983-1987, which is the generally accepted length of the war (Reinares 2000).

The next intervention to occur was the Spanish judicial changes that initiated the policy of prisoner dispersion. This policy mandated that ETA prisoners could be transferred to prisons throughout the country, which would isolate them from other ETA members and even their own families. This policy was enacted in 1989 and later repealed in 1999, so it will be examined for the duration of its time in effect.

In 1993, another important event occurred: the arrest of 20 top ETA leaders in Bidart, France. This is an example of discriminate repression aimed solely at ETA, and its effects will be measured for one year to see how the group responds to the loss of its leadership.

The last intervention included is the Estella Accords against political violence that occurred on 12 September 1998. The Accords were initiated and signed by the leaders of Basque Nationalist political parties in support of the cessation of terrorism and to promote the sovereignty of the Basque Country. This policy will be examined for one and a half years as it was debated in Basque parliament for a period of time.
Controls

In addition to the policy interventions, relevant controls were also included in the study. The controls, which I chose for their potential to impact the number of terrorist incidents, were coded as either continuous or categorical variables. Continuous controls in the study include: the level of Spanish troops and military expenditure – which was considered a proxy measure of the government’s counterterrorist ability, the sum of failed ETA attacks in the previous month, the previous month’s sum of non-ETA terrorist attack casualties and injuries in Spain, and attack density. The attack density control refers to the amount of time between the current attack at time $t_n$ and the third previous attack at time $t_{n-3}$. Creating this variable will allow us to examine the significance of coordinated attack campaigns.

Two categorical variables were also included: the level of civil liberties and the level of political rights per year. All of these controls are relevant to the study as they have the potential to affect the number of terrorist attacks by ETA.

Unfortunately, the specific data for many of these controls was only available by year, so it is not necessarily specific to the day of a given attack. Although the primary goal of this study is to perform an analysis without the use of aggregate data, this was the only possible way to incorporate such necessary information.

\[^7\] The sum of failed attacks in the previous month was calculated as the sum of foiled ETA attacks in month $y-1$ of a given attack.
Table 3.2: Summary of Controls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Aggregation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel and Expenditure&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Political Rights&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Civil Liberties&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum on non-ETA terrorist attack fatalities, injuries&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of failed ETA attacks (previous month)&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack Density&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Event Specific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the effect of public opinion will be examined. Following a deadly ETA attack in a Hipercor shopping center that killed 21 people and injured 45 more (including entire families and several children), the public became infuriated with ETA. Sympathy for the Basque cause now turned into outrage directed against the group. Several organizations against political violence were formed in the wake of the attack, and nearly 750,000 people marched in the streets of Barcelona in protest. The public outrage will be measured for one year to analyze whether or not it impacted the number of ETA attacks. The effect of public opinion will be examined using a dummy variable, whereas an attack which occurs during the 12 months following the Hipercor bombing will be coded as 1, and at all other times, 0.

<sup>9</sup> Freedom in the World Comparative and Historical Data, Freedom House <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=439>
<sup>10</sup> Ibid.
<sup>11</sup> The Global Terrorism Database, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>
<sup>12</sup> Ibid.
<sup>13</sup> Ibid.
Methodology

Scholars have employed numerous methods to study conflict, but they have yet to determine the most effective strategy. With the data available from the Global Terrorism Database, which is event-specific, the most logical method of analysis is series hazard modeling. Although time series modeling could potentially be employed, series hazard modeling best utilizes the information available from the database. As I have previously discussed, time series modeling often requires data aggregation that can jeopardize the findings of the study. Therefore, I have decided to use series hazard modeling to avoid this problem.

An alternative to problematic methods that require data aggregation is series hazard modeling. Laura Dugan (unpublished manuscript) provides an excellent discussion of the benefits of series hazard modeling (more specifically, the Cox proportional hazard model) and how it can be applied to event data such as the Global Terrorism Database. The GTD is perfect for series hazard modeling as it provides accurate event-specific information such as the day, month, and year of each attack. Unlike time series modeling, series hazard modeling analyzes the time between attacks – whether it be days, weeks, or months. This form of analysis is an excellent approach to counterterrorist policy studies as successful policies will increase the time between attacks, and less effective policies will have the opposite effect and will either have no impact or decrease the time between attacks. Thus, series hazard modeling was the obvious choice.
Introduction to Series Hazard Modeling

Hazard modeling falls under the broad category of survival analysis, which is a method of analyzing the time it takes for an event to occur. Survival analysis has often been employed in the physical sciences and in medicine as it was originally developed to study death rates and the impact of different drugs and chemical compounds. As one can infer, studies were developed to test the effectiveness of certain compounds, and the final “incident” was patient mortality. More recently, survival analysis has been integrated into other fields such as political science.

Hazard modeling, as I have previously stated, is unique in that the dependent variable is the time between incidents – in this case, time between terrorist attacks. The “hazard” aspect of the model is defined as the probability of survival divided by the probability of failure. More generally, the hazard refers to the idea that variables which increase the time between attacks will decrease the likelihood of an attack. Conversely, policies that increase the time between attacks (which will be considered successful in this study) will decrease the hazard of an attack.

This study will employ the Cox Proportional Hazard Model, which is given by

$$h(t) = h_0(t) e^{(\beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \ldots + \beta_kX_k)}$$

where $h$ represent the hazard at time $t$ with $k$ covariates (Cox 1972). The Cox model is the most common form of hazard modeling; introduced by David Cox in 1972, it is a semi-parametric model which assumes no nature or shape of the hazard function. This separates the Cox model from other hazard models because it estimates the
hazard based on partial likelihood which allows a more transparent interpretation of the data (Dugan unpublished manuscript). Furthermore, this makes the Cox model well suited for this study, as it would be impossible to impose a parametric baseline hazard on the attack data.

The hazard model will have a slightly different specification for this study, but it will nonetheless retain the same characteristics of the aforementioned Cox model:

$$h ( Y ) = \lambda_0 ( Y ) e^{( \beta_1 \text{Government Intervention} + \beta_2 \text{Controls})}$$

This specification of the Cox model was originally designed by LaFree, Dugan and Korte in their study of counterterrorism policy in Northern Ireland (LaFree, Dugan and Korte 2009). This model will represent the coefficients for the hazard of a new attack after Y days since the previous attack in the presence of Government Interventions and Controls. These variables will be discussed in the following sections of the paper.

**Results**

The hazard model suggests that all but one of the government interventions significantly impacted the hazard of another ETA attack. Of these interventions, only one, the Statute of Autonomy in 1979, was positively correlated with more attacks. The others – the amnesty policy, prisoner dispersion, the Bidart arrests, and the Estella Accords – were all successful at decreasing attacks.
The majority of interventions proved to be significant in some way. The Dirty War, however, was the only action that had no noteworthy impact on the hazard of an attack.

**Table 3.3: Summary of Results (Government Interventions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Interventions</th>
<th>Coefficient Estimate</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amnesty</td>
<td>-.779**</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conciliation</td>
<td>.439***</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repression</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Change</td>
<td>-.312*</td>
<td>.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restriction</td>
<td>-.732***</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel and Expenditure</td>
<td>-.000**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict Political Rights</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict Civil Liberties</td>
<td>-.388***</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Outrage</td>
<td>-.233</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ETA casualties, injuries</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\(p \leq .1\)  **\(p \leq .05\)  ***\(p \leq .01\)

Several of the controls examined also proved to be significant. The restriction of civil liberties and the measure of attack density were both negatively correlated with attacks. This shows that when the government passed legislation to decrease the
civil liberties of its citizens, attacks were less common. Similarly, the more time that passed between attacks resulted in a lower chance of an attack. The measure of Spain’s military personnel and expenditure was likewise associated with a lower hazard of attack. Only one control was found to increase the likelihood of an ETA attack. The more failures that ETA incurred, the more likely they were to launch an attack.

**Conclusions**

Six government interventions were tested to see whether or not they reduced the hazard of an ETA terrorist attack in Spain. This study examined 1,795 ETA attacks between 1970 and 2004. During this time, and especially during the 1970s and 1980s, the Basque region was one of the most politically volatile regions in the world, surpassed only by Northern Ireland.

The results of this study showed that four of the government interventions tested were able to reduce the hazard of an ETA attack. These interventions were the amnesty policy, prisoner dispersion, the arrests of top ETA leaders in Bidart, France, and the Estella Accords.

The Bidart arrests were found to have a very significant (p = .003, coef. = - .732) negative impact on the likelihood of a terrorist attack. The arrests, which resulted in the imprisonment of ETA’s top leadership, represent the work of restrictive policies aimed at the group. This sort of action is concurrent with theories of counterterrorism that advocate the use of restrictive repression instead of widespread violence that can often result in increased violence (Nevin 2003). The
results of this policy were also concurrent with H₀ concerning the effectiveness of legal. restrictive policies aimed against ETA. As I have previously mentioned, there are many reasons why these sorts of actions would be successful – most notably for the disruption caused to the group, the information gained from former members, and the government’s display of legitimacy – and it appears that restriction is an effective policy to combat terrorism.

Similarly, the newly elected Spanish government’s decision to release political prisoners detained under the Franco regime proved to be very effective at appeasing political violence. Nearly 900 prisoners, many of which were ETA members, were reintroduced into society, and even exiled collaborators were granted amnesty (Art and Richardson 2007). However, it is difficult to say whether or not this confirms the effectiveness of conciliatory policies in general. At the time when this resolution was passed, the Franco regime had recently come to an end and the Spanish government was working with its citizens to form a democratic government. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether or not the reduction can be purely attributed to the policy, or whether the reduction was associated with Franco’s death. Regardless, the amnesty policy proved successful in this model, and it is concurrent with H₇.

The Basque Statute of Autonomy, unlike the pardoning of Franco prisoners, was correlated with a higher hazard of an ETA attack. Much of the extant literature on counterterrorism supports this finding. Numerous scholars argue that conciliation will lead to increased violence, as it merely emboldens terrorist desires and motivates them to demand further concessions (Dershowitz 2003). This finding confirms H₈, which theorized that conciliation would increase terrorist violence.
The Estella Accords were also successful at decreasing the terrorism. The accords, however, are quite unique; while similar pacts had been signed by the national Congreso de los Diputados in Madrid, this agreement was initiated and solely signed by members of the regional Basque congress. Unfortunately, the Pact is virtually unaddressed by the previous hypotheses. It most closely resembles a legal, indiscriminate intervention that attempts to stifle the population’s support for terrorism from the top down. Thus, it highlights the importance of legality and population support to the level of terrorist activity.

It is interesting that the Dirty War, contrary to $H_1$ and $H_4$, did not increase the likelihood of an ETA attack. Numerous studies, both quantitative and qualitative, have demonstrated the prevalence of backlash effects following widespread governmental violence (LaFree, Dugan and Korte 2009; Nevin 2003; Enders and Sandler 1993; Brophy-Baermann and Conybeare 1994). However, although the Dirty War did not increase the likelihood of an attack, there remains the possibility that the severity of attacks increased during this time. Further study would be needed to confirm this theory.

With regard to the controls, it is most interesting that the level of civil liberties experienced by Spanish citizens was negatively correlated with the likelihood of a terrorist attack. Similar to the Estella Accords, this was not formally addressed in the hypotheses. However, a review of current terrorism literature shows that scholars such as Li (2005) have found similar results. Li theorizes that higher levels of civil liberties make it easier for terrorists to plan and coordinate attacks. Therefore, when civil liberties are restricted, acts of terrorism should be more difficult to perpetrate.
Conversely, this finding negates another often-cited theory concerning civil liberties and terrorism, which says that the low levels of civil liberties will increase population grievances and force them into nonviolent channels in order to affect their political situation (Schmid and Jongman 2005).

Study Limitations and Further Research

Study Limitations

As with any study, there are several limitations to the work I have done. Although I examine a wide range of variables that prior research has shown to affect the level of terrorist incidents, it is possible that one or even several influential variables were omitted. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing which variables are necessary to include – and conversely, which to exclude. Furthermore, some variables that could be useful were simply unavailable. It would have been useful to include monthly measures of military personnel, military expenditure, civil and political rights, for example, but these values are simply unobtainable.

Lastly, both analyses represent a single case study. It is possible that the conclusions from this case are unique and cannot be applied to other situations around the world. Further studies of interaction between terrorist groups and governments are currently underway, and would be required to validate these findings (Chenoweth and Dugan, forthcoming).

Further Analysis based on Preliminary Research

The results of this preliminary research provide the background for the tactical-level analysis that I will be performing. After having carefully examined my
results and consulted various sources, I have decided to focus on Spanish counterterrorist efforts between 1988 and 1992. I will elaborate on these reasons and explain my research design in the following sections of this paper.
Chapter Four: 
Spanish Counterterrorist Tactics, 1988-1992

Rationale for Choosing 1988-1992

Unlike the previous decade, the late 1980s into the early 1990s represents a stable period of Spanish history. The transition to democracy following the death of Francisco Franco was a politically volatile period. Therefore, I opted to choose a point where the government was stable enough to reduce any unintended effects that a new, weak government could have on the probability of a terrorist attack. Furthermore, it was not until the mid 1980s that the Spanish government under the control of Felipe González institutionalized counterterrorist efforts nationwide. Prior to this, counterterrorism efforts were coordinated at the local and regional level, and intelligence sharing was practically nonexistent. It was during this period of weak cooperation that ETA stepped up its attacks (Reinares 2000). Between 1981 and 1983, a unified command for fighting terrorism was finally created. Control of the new command was initially given to a police commissioner, and it was staffed with members of other security and intelligence specialists (Art and Richardson 2007).

The average number of ETA terrorist attacks were also decreasing between the early 1990s, so a more in depth study of this time period will hopefully reveal some successful counterterrorist policies. It would be more difficult to study successful policies prior to the late 1980s because the number of terrorist attacks (both at the yearly, quarterly, and monthly levels) fluctuated a great deal. Thus, this study will hopefully be able to locate the reasons for the decrease in attacks.
It is also beneficial to study Spanish counterterrorism after the mid 1980s because it was not until this time did France agree to aid Spain in pursuit of Basque terrorists. Prior to the mid 1980s, France was considered a safe haven for ETA leadership. The focus of the GAL paramilitary group that was mentioned in the preceding section was most active in France as its mission was to assassinate ETA leaders hiding in France. Coincidentally, GAL’s indiscriminate violence witnessed in Southern France was one of the main reasons for French cooperation. The Irish Times noted that “The threat to French citizens was indeed much more persuasive to the French government, and especially to the French public opinion, than the killing of ETA refugees” (Encarnación 2007, 955). In this sense, GAL’s operations were tremendously successful to the multinational counterterrorist efforts against ETA.

As the level of civil liberties was shown to affect terrorism, I opted to choose a time period when these levels remained constant. Choosing an era when these levels were changing would add yet another factor to the equation. As these levels were constant between 1988 and 1992, they will support the credibility of my findings.

The last reason for choosing this time period is a more practical concern: the news sources used to generate event data are much more widely available in recent years. It would be nearly impossible to generate event data from the late 1970s because the necessary information would not be electronically available. Therefore, more recent time periods are optimal for this type of analysis.
Event Data and TABARI

One of the few ways to quantitatively study international relations is through the use of event data – “nominal or ordinal codes recording the interactions between international actors as reported in the open press” (Schrodt and Gerner 1994, 826). In simpler terms, event data is categorical data that details events in the newspaper. This data can then be analyzed statistically to study any number of topics.

Event data seems to be a relatively easy way to study international relations. However, generating event data was once a difficult task confined to large numbers of undergraduate students coding data from newspapers. More recently, computer programs have been developed to automatically code news stories from on-line sources such as Reuters and Agence France-Presse. To generate event data, I used TABARI (Textual Analysis By Augmented Replacement Instructions) – a program developed by Phil Schrodt and his team at the University of Kansas.

TABARI is the most recent evolution of years of event data work at Kansas University. TABARI codes events based on pattern recognition – for example, it identifies certain combinations of nouns and verbs – and it works by analyzing the lead sentence of news stories. In this sense, TABARI is considered to rely on sparse-parsing as it does not code the entire news story. Sparse parsing has been shown to be incredibly accurate and thousands of times faster than coding entire stories (Schrodt 2001). TABARI also only codes dyadic events – events that occur between two specific actors. However, it can accommodate many other events by breaking them down into multiple dyadic events. For example, the story “Spain and France
condemned the ETA terrorist attack that occurred in Madrid” would be coded as Spain condemns ETA, and France condemns ETA. Thus, many of its shortcomings – only coding dyadic events – can often be overcome.

Coding can also be done by humans instead of computers, and there are both advantages and disadvantages to this process. Most notably, because TABARI codes events based upon pattern recognition, it has difficulty coding complex sentences. Numerous verbs, passive voice, and complex structures render sentences unable to be coded. Another problem arises with unidentified actors. For example, TABARI cannot code ambiguous sentences such as “Guerillas attacked a NATO stronghold this afternoon,” or “Police today captured 4 ETA operatives.” Because neither “Guerillas” nor “Police” were identified as either Spanish Police or Afghani Guerillas, they cannot be coded even if they are later identified in the story.

The benefits of machine coding outweigh the disadvantages. Most important to my study is the speed of coding. There are approximately 1,200 Reuters news stories that discuss Spain and ETA between 1988 and 1994. As one can imagine, it would be impossible to hand-code this amount of stories and complete this project within one academic year. To further illustrate this point, it was calculated that TABARI codes 33 million times faster than the average human coder (Schrodt 2006). Therefore, it is the obvious choice for anyone dealing with large numbers of news stories.

Although it was just discussed how TABARI has difficulty coding certain sentences, it has nonetheless proved to be extremely accurate and reliable.
The stability of machine coding is 100% because the machine will always code the same text in the same manner...Because the patterns used in coding are explicitly specified in the coding dictionaries rather than dependent on coder training, the same rules used in 1992 can be used in 2002. In our experience, the reproducibility of machine coding seems comparable to the inter-coder reliability of humans, and a machine is obviously not influenced by the context of an event or by intrinsic political or cultural biases. The dictionaries used by a coding program may reflect biases, but these will be explicit and can be examined by another researcher; the dictionaries are also applied consistently to all actors and in all contexts. Automated coding is not subject to errors due to fatigue or boredom, and in contrast to human coders, a computer program does not require retraining after a coding vocabulary (Gerner, Schrodt, Francisco, and Weddle 1994, 12).

These advantages make TABARI and machine-coding in general the obvious choice for generating event data.

Why use TABARI and event data?

Analyzing event data is an enormously effective method of studying international relations, and in this case, the effectiveness of counterterrorist policies. The most obvious reason for its effectiveness is the fact that event data provides a means to study policies quantitatively with granular data.

Counterterrorism literature has specifically been plagued by a lack of systematic policy research mainly because there are inherent limitations to studying terrorism. In the past, difficulties have arisen concerning the availability of attack data. However, recent publicly available data sets such as the Global Terrorism Database have negated this problem.

More problems arise with counterterrorism, as the individual aspects of policies are often kept secret or are generalized in anecdotal accounts. At most, policies are often vaguely described without mentioning specifics – for instance, it is
known that between 1983 and 1987 the Spanish government used repressive tactics to combat ETA, but more precise actions and information are difficult to attain. This is where event data is useful; event data gives a ground-level account of governmental policies as reported by newspapers. Therefore, one could code news articles between 1983 and 1987 and generate a much more accurate and specific description of the repressive campaign enacted by the government. This detailed account of counterterrorism can then be studied with respect to attack statistics to determine what has been effective at reducing terrorist activity.

Lastly, TABARI significantly enhances the ability to study the efficacy of counterterrorism. As I have previously mentioned, one problem common to many studies is over-aggregation. By using TABARI and event-specific attack information from the GTD, this study completely eschews aggregation. The use of a hazard model analysis, which analyzes the time between specific attacks, also enhances this study vis-à-vis studies that aggregate in order to perform regressions and count analyses.

The results of this study will be helpful to determine which policies have been effective in the past, and more importantly, which should be employed in the future.

Incorporating TABARI into the Research Design

The first step in the process of generating event data was to download news archives from the Internet. Reuters was chosen over other wire services because previous studies have demonstrated consistent editorial control and, as it is a worldwide news source, it often uses less complex sentence structure and vocabulary than
the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, for example (Schrodt and Davis 1994). Approximately one thousand Reuters news articles originating between 1988 and 1992 were coded using TABARI. These news stories were first downloaded from Factiva, and the sole criterion was that each story reference Spain and ETA. However, further examination of these events showed that nearly half were irrelevant; although a story may have referenced ETA and Spain, it could, for example, actually be discussing diplomatic relations with another country. In order to solve this problem, events were only kept if the event actor was Spain and the target was ETA.

During this process, it was noticed that France was responsible for a significant portion of ETA arrests, and if one were to follow the previous rules then these events would be discarded. I decided it would be unwise to limit this study to arrests only made in Spain, though, as ETA has often operated in both countries precisely to circumvent Spanish counterterrorism efforts. As the goal of this study is to assess the effectiveness of counterterrorism against ETA, failing to include France’s efforts would impair the results. Therefore, events where France was the main actor and ETA the target were included.

Once the articles were downloaded, they required formatting in order to be coded by TABARI. Filters available from Schrodt’s team at the University of Kansas were able to properly format the stories and combine them into a single, TABARI-readable output file.

After the files were downloaded, it was necessary to run an actor filter. TABARI codes news stories by recognizing patterns within the lead sentence, and in
order for it to recognize patterns, it must first have certain files that tell it which words are verbs and which are actors. An actor filter, then, analyzes the news stories for common actors that should be added to the dictionary so that TABARI can successfully code them. If not for this step, TABARI would not recognize “ETA” as a Spanish terrorist organization, and it would be unable to properly code the event.

Whereas most of the actors were straightforward to code, some were not. The term “police” was often used in stories like “Police in Madrid apprehended four ETA suspects today.” In this sense, the word is ambiguous as it does not refer to a specific police force, whether it be French or Spanish or American. Therefore, I decided to code the word “police” as Spanish Police so that these events could be recorded. However, this leaves the door open for French police to be coded as Spanish police. I decided that this was worth the risk and it would be more important to partially miscode the story for the sake of including the event in my analysis. Although the country may be incorrect, it nonetheless shows the result of police action. Similarly, numerous political leaders such as Spanish and French Prime Ministers were identified in the news stories and were coded accordingly. Once these basic coding decisions were made, TABARI was allowed to automatically code the news stories.

From these stories TABARI ultimately coded 120 dyadic events. After reviewing the output and eliminating erroneous events, 55 dyadic events remained in the 5-year period of interest. The 55 generated events basically fall into 7 categories: arrests, killings, condemnations, deportation, security legislation, and banning and
allowing Basque political representation. These events represent the *Counterterrorist Actions* in the model.

**Research Design**

**Independent Variable: Counterterrorist Actions**

As Table 4.1 demonstrates, the 55 counterterrorist actions contained in the data set possess considerable variation across the dimensions of interest. The ability to aggregate and disaggregate the data according to the research questions is beneficial, and it allows me to manipulate the data in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

**Table 4.1: Counterterrorist Actions in Spain, 1988-1992**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condemnations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportations</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Killings</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowing Basque Political Representation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning Basque Political Representation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Disc.=discriminate; Indisc.=indiscriminate; Conc.=conciliatory; Repr.=repressive; NV=nonviolent; Viol.=violent.*
To test the impact of each specific action, I analyzed both granular and aggregate action categories. The first analysis was run on the raw data; the impact of every action such as arrests, killings, new security legislation, banning and political representation, and condemnations was tested for up to two months after its occurrence. The two-month duration is chosen because most researchers agree that the impacts of counterterrorism or counterinsurgency tactics are fairly immediate, though there is some variation across types of policies (Lyall 2010).

For the second and third analyses, I combined similar actions into categories in order to gauge the total impact of different policies. These categories consisted of security legislation, arrests, violent repression, and other nonviolent methods (condemnations, banning and allowing political representation).

**Dependent Variable: Hazard of Recurrence of ETA Terrorist Incidents**

Developing metrics of success can be difficult for any type of policy, and counterterrorism policies are especially complex. Morag, for instance identifies numerous dimensions with which to evaluate the effectiveness of different counterterrorism policies, including reduction in civilian casualties (on both sides of the conflict), effects on the economy, social cohesion, domestic and international support for the targeted government, and domestic and international condemnation of the terrorist group (Morag 2005). While these dimensions illuminate the political dynamics of terrorist activity, my immediate interest is in the reduction of terrorist attacks and fatalities due to terrorist attacks. One assumes that success in these two
domains will naturally lead to social cohesion, support for the government, and economic gains.

As previously mentioned, ETA attack data was obtained from the Global Terrorist Database (GTD). In total, this analysis examines 394 ETA terrorist incidents over the 5-year period between 1988 and 1992.

Because I am studying the effects of different counterterrorism interventions, I am primarily interested in the period of time that elapses between a counterterrorism tactic and the next ETA attack. Thus the dependent variable is the duration of days that go by without a terrorist attack. When the next ETA attack occurs, the counterterrorism policy has effectively “failed.” I chose to use the Cox Proportional Hazard Model, which is the same methodology applied to the previous longitudinal study of Spanish policy interventions. A more detailed description of the model can be found in Chapter 3.

Control Variables

Relevant controls were included in the analysis to account for factors beyond counterterrorism that could impact the likelihood of a terrorist attack. The number of failed ETA attacks in the previous month was calculated to control for more attacks as a result of increased failures and frustration. This number was obtained from the Global Terrorism Database and it is aggregated by month. In order to control for terrorist group outbidding within Spain, the number of casualties by non-ETA domestic terrorists was included. Scholars argue that outbidding could lead to increased attacks as groups vie for power, influence, and notoriety within their
country of operation, which could affect the trajectory of terrorist attacks independently of government counterterrorism interventions (Bloom 2004). I also included a variable to control for the Spanish government’s military expenditure and total military personnel, a proxy measure for the government’s anti-terrorism resources and capabilities. This indicator can be used to control for Spanish military presence that could possibly deter terrorism (Singer 1987). Lastly, I decided to control for attack density as terrorists may launch a series of pre-planned attacks as part of a campaign, and the success of these attacks may lead to continued action. Therefore, for each attack I calculated the amount of time that has elapsed since the third previous attack.

**Method of Estimation**

For this study, I use the aforementioned Cox Proportional Hazard Model. The Cox model will again undertake a slightly different specification:

\[ h(t) = \lambda_0(t)e^{(\beta_1 \text{Counterterrorist Actions} + \beta_2 \text{Controls})} \]

Using this model, I calculate the coefficient for each intervention and control. A negative coefficient indicates a reduced hazard of a terrorist attack, indicating an increased number of days elapsed between the counterterrorism policy and the terrorist event. Thus, a negative coefficient represents a desirable action, as it indicates a decreased chance of another attack. The counterterrorist actions and controls specified in the model are time specific, and refer to their measurements at the occurrence of an attack. A more detailed appraisal of the model can be found in the previous chapter.
Results

Table 4.2 shows the results of the hazard model analysis using the lowest aggregation possible. Events were grouped according to their specific action – condemnations, arrests, deportations, killings, allowing Basque political representation, enacting new security policies, and banning Basque political representation. The model found that both condemnations and killings were the only significant actions at one month, and both reduced the chance of a future terrorist attack. At two months, all actions proved to be significant; arrests and security legislation reduced the hazard of an attack, while condemnations, deportations, violence, and banning and allowing Basque political representation were all positively correlated with attacks. With regard to the controls, an increase in non-ETA terrorist casualties in Spain was found to increase the hazard of an ETA attack. Attack density was also negatively associated with attacks, meaning that more time in between attacks decreases the hazard of another attack. Lastly, Spain’s military personnel and expenditure was significant but failed to generate a statistically meaningful coefficient.

In Table 4.3 below, the results of the hazard model using aggregated actions are shown. In this model, the same controls were included but actions were grouped into four categories: arrests, security legislation, violence, and political action. As one can see, violence and political action both reduced the hazard of an attack at one month. At two months, arrests and security legislation were similarly associated with fewer attacks, while political action and violence increased the likelihood of another attack. The controls were found to have the same effect as in model one, wherein attack
density and military personnel and expenditure lowered the hazard of an attack, and increases in non-ETA terrorist casualties increased the hazard.

### Table 4.2: Hazard Model Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient Estimate</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counterterrorist Actions, One Month</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemnations</td>
<td>-1.690***</td>
<td>.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>-.208</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportations</td>
<td>-.786</td>
<td>.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>-.525*</td>
<td>.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing Basque Political Representation</td>
<td>-.496</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation</td>
<td>.327</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning Basque Political Representation</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counterterrorist Actions, Two Months</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemnations</td>
<td>2.051***</td>
<td>.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>-.349**</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deportations</td>
<td>1.250***</td>
<td>.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>.509**</td>
<td>.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing Basque Political Representation</td>
<td>2.493***</td>
<td>.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation</td>
<td>-1.406***</td>
<td>.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banning Basque Political Representation</td>
<td>2.274***</td>
<td>.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failures (lagged)</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack Density</td>
<td>-.034***</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Casualties, Non-ETA terrorism</td>
<td>.022*</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel and Expenditure</td>
<td>-.000***</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .1  ** p < .05  *** p < .01

In the third model, I attempt to identify which combination of policies is most effective at reducing terrorist incidents. To achieve this, I created a categorical variable that designates which policy or combination of policies was in effect at the time of each attack. As before, I measured their impact at one and two months following the implementation of each policy. For example, if an attack occurred
within one month of an arrest, but not any other policy, then it would receive a 1. However, if it occurred within one month of an arrest and the enactment of new security legislation, it received a 4. By using this method, I am able to better understand which policy, or combination of policies, was most effective.

Table 4.3: Hazard Model Results using Grouped Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient Estimate</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggregate Counterterrorist Actions, One Month</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>-.217</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>-.494*</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Action</td>
<td>-1.054***</td>
<td>.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggregate Counterterrorist Actions, Two Months</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests</td>
<td>-.356**</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation</td>
<td>-1.340***</td>
<td>.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>.457**</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Action</td>
<td>1.795***</td>
<td>.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failures (lagged)</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack Density</td>
<td>-.039***</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Casualties, Non-ETA terrorism</td>
<td>.033***</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel and Expenditure</td>
<td>-.000***</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.1   **p<.05   ***p<.01

The model found that only arrests were able to reduce the hazard of an attack at one month. At two months, however, arrests and security legislation were correlated with fewer attacks. Similarly, the combination of arrests and security legislation, and arrests and discriminate violence, were both able to reduce terrorism at two months.
Table 4.4: Hazard Model Results of Policy Combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Combinations</th>
<th>Coefficient Estimate</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Counterterrorist Actions, One Month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests Only</td>
<td>-.321**</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation Only</td>
<td>-.727</td>
<td>.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Only</td>
<td>-.203</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests + Security</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests + Violence</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security + Violence</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests + Security + Violence</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Counterterrorist Actions, Two Months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests Only</td>
<td>-.611***</td>
<td>.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Legislation Only</td>
<td>-2.802***</td>
<td>.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Only</td>
<td>-.526</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests + Security</td>
<td>-1.739***</td>
<td>.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests + Violence</td>
<td>-.657**</td>
<td>.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security + Violence</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrests + Security + Violence</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failures (lagged)</td>
<td>.042**</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack Density</td>
<td>-.026***</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Casualties, Non-ETA terrorism</td>
<td>.045***</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel and Expenditure</td>
<td>-.000***</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.1     ** p<.05     *** p<.01

How effective are these policies, relative to one another? Stated another way, which policies or combinations of policies make the most difference over time?

Figure 4.1 estimates the predicted values of the model in Table 4.3. I include only the policies that are statistically significant in the model.
Figure 4.1: Survival Function of Spanish Counterterrorism

Note: The x-axis depicts the probability that a terrorist attack will not occur. Y-axis observations begin on Jan. 1, 1988 (Day 1) and persist through Dec. 31, 1992 (Day 1826).

As one can see from Figure 4.1, when no counterterrorism policy exists, the chance of a terrorist attack increases from 0% on Jan. 1, 1988 to 20% at the end of 1988, all else being equal. Thus the probability of a terrorist attack occurring is 20% when the government does nothing, and increases dramatically after one year. When the government performed an arrest of a suspected terrorist, however, it was about nine more months before the attack probability reached 20% again. Interestingly, when Spain had a combined counterterrorism policy of security legislation and arrests, it took nearly three years for the probability of a terrorist attack to move from 0% to 20%. In fact, the likelihood of a terrorist attack remained well below 20% for
over two years when these combined policies were in place.

These values tell us that while discriminate actions, such as arrests, are highly effective on their own, a combination of discriminate arrests and nonviolent, indiscriminate policies such as the expansion of security laws seem to decrease the chances of recurrent terrorist attacks by several orders of magnitude.

**Conclusions**

A total of 55 Spanish counterterrorist actions were examined over a 5-year period during which 394 ETA terrorist attacks were perpetrated. Using the Cox proportional hazard model, I analyzed these actions at different levels of aggregation to determine their impact on the likelihood of a future attack.

In Model 1 and Model 2 I found evidence that discriminate violence decreases the chance of a terrorist attack at one month, but at two months it increased the likelihood of an attack by nearly the same substantive margin. However, when I ran Model 3 using a categorical variable to account for policy interaction, I found purely violent methods to have no effect on terrorist attacks at both one and two months. Consistent with earlier studies on violent repression, the implication of my findings is that repression succeeds in reducing terrorism only in the short term. Over the long term, however, violent repression is ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst, which is consistent with H₁ and H₃.

Arrests proved to be the most consistent policy, resulting in decreased hazards of attack at two months in every model. Only in Model 1 when tested at one month were arrests insignificant. This is consistent with H₀, in which I theorized that legal
restriction would reduce the hazard of a terrorist attack.

Taken alone, though, purely nonviolent counterterrorism actions proved to be the most ineffective strategy. Hypothesis 7 expects that conciliatory actions, such as allowing Basque political representation, would decrease terrorism over time, but conciliation consistently increases terrorism at two months. Only condemnations were significant at one month, where they decreased terrorism. However, condemnations, deportations, and allowing and banning Basque political representation all increased the hazard of a terrorist attack at two months in all three models. It is possible that in time this policy could have a deterrent effect with longer time horizons, but even at two months, the effects were insignificant.

Security legislation such as border agreements and increased police powers were negatively correlated with terrorist incidents at two months in every model. Interestingly, security legislation failed to be significant at one month in each of the three models, possibly signifying that there was a lag between the government’s approval of the legislation and the legislation actually taking effect. The benefits of security legislation are clear: while it is overt and clearly visible to the general population, it also functions as a discriminate legal apparatus to restrict terrorist movement and operations, and it further demonstrates the government’s legitimacy.

With regard to policy combinations, I found that combining arrests and security, or arrests and discriminate repression, were both effective at reducing the hazard of a terrorist attack at two months. Interestingly, no combination of policies was effective at one month. But when combined with ongoing efforts at arrests, the effectiveness of new security legislation considerably decreases the hazard of terrorist attacks over
time. This is consistent with the notion that legal and discriminate forms of counterterrorism will be most effective.

Overall, this portion of the study found strong evidence that demonstrates the importance of legitimacy and legality to fighting terrorism. For example, I found that counterterrorist measures that demonstrate the government’s legitimacy – such as legal, discriminate measures – were effective, while policies that demonstrate the governments resolve and credibility to combat terrorism – such as violent, indiscriminate policies – were ineffective at best. Strong evidence supports the hypothesis that discriminate counterterrorism is likely to be successful, especially when it involves restricting terrorists through arrests. In all three models, arrests generated a consistent deterrent effect on the hazard of an ETA attack. Legal, overt restrictive policies were also consistency successful, as security legislation produced a deterrent effect in every model tested. Conciliatory and other political counterterrorism strategies were the most ineffective strategies tested. Although two models found that political action deterred attacks at one month, they conversely were associated with increased attacks at two months. While it is possible that these policies are more successful if given more time, this study nonetheless shows that they are ineffective tactics of reducing terrorism in the short-term.

**Study Limitations**

As with any analysis, there are several limitations to the tactical-level study of Spain’s interaction with ETA. Most notably, the study is limited to a five-year period in a single country against a single terrorist group and by the fact that only 55 counterterrorist events are examined in this time period. The exercise of performing a
focused study on a singular domestic terrorist organization is useful, but it would be beneficial to expand the analysis to include more cases. Therefore, the first order of business is to expand the number of observations across time and space, a task that is currently underway (Chenoweth and Dugan, forthcoming).

Second, it is possible that the study failed to include a number of counterterrorist actions. I relied on TABARI to code events from news articles, but the limitations of TABARI – its inability to code complex sentences with multiple verbs and actors – mean that some actions may have been missed. However, studies performed by the developers of TABARI repeatedly demonstrate that it is nearly as accurate as human coders.

A final limitation has to do with the nature of the study as a microlevel test of counterterrorism. By employing TABARI to code individual, dyadic events between the Spanish government and ETA, I fail to include larger governmental policies—or overall counterterrorism doctrines—that may be relevant. Combining both micro and macrolevel studies of counterterrorism may be a fruitful area for continued research.
Chapter Five: Overall Findings and Conclusions

It is useful to consider the implications of these studies on their own, as they both deal with separate aspects of counterterrorism: one with strategy, and one with tactics. However, the most important findings of this study result from combining the lessons learned from both studies to generate broad implications for the security community. This is because counterterrorism is not a monolithic threat; instead, an effective approach to combating terrorism will incorporate strategy and tactics, creating a multilevel approach that accounts for the physical and ideological aspects of terrorism.

Using Politics to deter Political Violence

Political actions have long been a common tool to address the problem of terrorism and political violence. For example, political concessions, amnesty, and altering political and civil liberties have been used by governments around the world to address both domestic and international terrorist threats. This, too, has been the case in Spain; as this study has shown, the government has often attempted to use political means to deal with the threat of ETA violence, but the results have been quite varied. Nonetheless, it appears that several distinct conclusions can be drawn from Spain’s experience with political forms of counterterrorism.

In the first study of Spain’s counterterrorist policies since 1970, the most successful action was the Amnesty policy following the death of Francisco Franco. This is generally consistent with $H_7$, in which I hypothesized that conciliation will
decrease terrorism. This study did not measure the immediate impact of the policies – instead, it observed the effect of the policies over a one-year period. However, in the same study it was found that the Statute of Autonomy presented to the citizens of the Basque Country (which was eventually ratified and granted enormous regional autonomy) increased violence over a one-year period. This would be consistent with \( H_8 \), where I theorized that terrorist incidents would increase following conciliatory actions. Taken together, these findings would appear to be inconsistent. However, I would argue that they are actually complimentary as these specific policies – the Amnesty and the Statue of Autonomy – are actually quite different.

Terrorism has often been called a strategic action with underlying political motivations (Crenshaw 1998; Kydd and Walter 2006). Assuming this to be true, it is no surprise that these two policies resulted in inconsistent findings. If one assumes that the goal of terrorism is to influence politics, then a regional referendum should result in increased terrorist violence as the terrorist would desire to influence the results. Scholars such as Martha Crenshaw and Kydd and Walter have examined the potential strategies of terrorism, and have found that terrorism is often used as a form of social control or policy influence. For example, Kydd and Walter write:

Terrorist play to two key audiences whose behavior they hope to influence: governments whose policies they wish to influence and individuals on the terrorists own side whose support or obedience they seek to gain. The targeted governments are central because they can grant concessions over policy or territory that the terrorists are seeking. The terrorist’ domestic audience is also important, because they can provide the resources to the terrorist group and must obey its edicts on social or political issues (Walter and Kydd 2006, 58).
Therefore, taking terrorists’ strategic concerns into account, one would not expect to see a rise in terrorist incidents following a purely conciliatory policy such as Amnesty; instead, one would rightfully expect to see an increase prior to and following a high-profile political concession that could potentially be influenced by terrorist attacks. Although one may argue that there is no strategic logic for terrorism following a referendum, there are actual several possible explanations that are specific to the case. Following the referendum, the legislation must be approved by the Congreso de los Diputados in Madrid, so that is yet another reason for terrorists to act in order to influence their votes. Second, the referendum being examined occurred during a radical period of Spanish history in which numerous changes were occurring each year. Thus, this referendum signifies a time when numerous legislative acts were open to the influence of ETA violence, and is a potential explanation for the increased frequency of attacks.

This same mode of thinking – which considers the use of terrorism to be a strategic choice by rational actors – can explain the increased frequency of terrorist incidents following the banning and allowing of Basque political representation found in second study using TABARI. Before analyzing the events, it is important to know that the government initially banned certain Basque representatives from the parliament, but allowed them to rejoin several months later. Due to the timing of these events, it appears that the increased frequency of attacks occurred as a result of the political affront to the Basque political cause. Once again, this demonstrates that the timing and frequency of ETA attacks were strategically determined.
The Estella Accords that were examined in the first study of overall Spanish counterterrorist policy resulted in a decreased frequency of ETA attacks. Yet despite being a political action by nature, the Accords are quite unique when compared to the other events that similarly fall under the category of “political actions.” The Estella Accords originated within the Basque country and were an agreement between members of Parliament to forego and condemn the use of violence in the pursuit of Basque independence. Thus, this is more representative of a shift in the population’s support for ETA. Furthermore, the publicity of the Accords could have similarly weakened the already feeble support for political violence in the region, resulting in fewer ETA attacks. Scholars have repeatedly noted the importance of public support to terrorist groups, and it is no shock that a domestic initiative against the use of violence would weaken ETA’s ability to carry out attacks (Gergin 2010).

Overall, it appears that no simple relationship between terrorism and political action can be inferred from this study. However, an analysis of the types of political actions and the resulting frequency of terrorist incidents appears to confirm the strategic model of terrorist behavior. Political actions that were open to influence – such as the Referendum of Autonomy – were correlated with higher frequencies of attack. This is an expected outcome, as scholars have previously identified terrorist strategies to influence social cohesion and political outcomes (Walter and Kydd 2006; Crenshaw 1981).

On the other hand, political actions that did not require a vote or other form of public agreement yielded mixed results. This study shows that political actions without an alterable result could either yield higher or lower frequencies of attacks,
but it depends on the conciliatory or repressive nature of the action. For example, the amnesty policy was a conciliatory action with no alterable result, and it decreased the level of attacks. Conversely, repressive political actions – such as banning Basque political representation in the Spanish Parliament – yielded more attacks. Therefore, these centralized political decisions can affect the level of terrorist incidents, but whether or not they increase or decrease attacks is mostly dependent upon the nature of the decision.

Violence: A Viable Option to Fight Terrorism?

Policy makers and citizens alike often feel the need to retaliate against terrorists following deadly attacks. However, scholarly literature has yet to find a consistent outcome to such reprisals; Lyall, for example, found that indiscriminate state violence decreased terrorism in Chechnya, while numerous other scholars such as Nevin, Miller, and Lafree, Dugan and Korte found evidence of a backlash effect following violent counterterrorism. In this study, violence was generally found to have at best no effect on the frequency of terrorist attacks, and at worse, it increased terrorism.

In the first study, the effect of the Dirty War – a clandestine proxy war waged by the Spanish government against ETA rebels – was analyzed for the generally accepted duration of the conflict, from 1983 to 1987. Using the Cox Proportional Hazard model, the war did not generate any impact on the hazard of an ETA attack in Spain. This confirms that violence is an ineffective strategy at reducing terrorism.
However, the study of individual counterterrorist tactics from 1988 to 1992 found slightly different results. In two of the three models, violent counterterrorism resulted in a decrease of terrorist activity at one month, but it conversely increased terrorism by the same amount at two months. In other models, violence was found to be insignificant.

Overall, violent counterterrorism either was insignificant, or it ended up increasing terrorism by the same amount that it initially decreased terrorist incidents. Overall, repression neither had a net increase nor decrease on the frequency of terrorist events, so it does not confirm any of the hypotheses concerning repression. Some evidence confirmed the ability of violent counterterrorism to reduce terrorist incidents at one month, but because it also increased terrorism at two months, it really cannot be considered effective in the short term. Therefore, this study suggests that violent tactics to deter terrorism should be avoided.

**Restricting Terrorist to Deter Violence**

The restriction of terrorist groups through arrests and increased security is one of the more difficult tactics to enact. In order for such measures to be successful, diligent police work must be combined with rigorous intelligence gathering via informants and other means. It is also one of the more secretive operations (at least until the suspects are apprehended), making it of little utility to politicians looking for a quick support boost. However, it is often considered to be one of the most guaranteed methods of reducing terrorism. While some may argue that pursuing terrorists through these means is insufficient, others argue that operating within the
legal boundary and thereby displaying the government’s legitimacy is a necessary component of deterring political violence.

Both studies confirm that restriction is successful at reducing terrorist incidents at every time period tested. In the first study, the impact of the Bidart Arrests – the arrest of ETA’s top leadership in Bidart, France – greatly reduced the hazard of a terrorist attack for up to a year following its occurrence. Similarly, in the tactical study of Spanish counterterrorism, every model found that arrests significantly decreased terrorism at two months, and only in one model were arrests not significant at one month. This was the most consistent finding of the study, and it attests to the effectiveness of restriction at reducing the likelihood of terrorist attacks.

The Spanish policy of prisoner dispersion during the late 1980s and into the 1990s also falls under a similar category. The policy was implemented in order to disperse ETA prisoners to jails throughout the country, making it harder to both plan attacks and for family members to visit. Although this is different from most restrictive policies, it is similar in that it is a legal disincentive to commit acts of terrorism. And, similar to the restrictive actions that were tested, it was also correlated with a lower hazard of an attack.

Concurrent with H9, legal, restrictive counterterrorism tactics – in this case, arrests – were effective. This is one of the strongest findings of the study as it was confirmed by both studies and by nearly every model tested.
The Effectiveness of Policy Combinations

It was a secondary goal of this study to determine which, if any, combinations of counterterrorist tactics are successful. It is only possible to test combinations of tactics as none of the broader policies examined in the first study overlapped. However, a large number of tactics between 1988 and 1992 occurred around the same time, which means that it is possible to test their combined effect. In total, I found that two combinations of policies were significantly effective at the two-month time period: these were arrests and security legislation (coef. = -1.739), and arrests and violence (coef. = -.657).

It is no surprise that the two most effective counterterrorist tactics of this study – arrests and security legislation – proved to be effective when used together. However, this combination truly attests to the effectiveness of restriction; the security legislation examined in this study generally served to increase police powers and border security. In doing so, this legislation greatly enhanced the ability of police officers and border security agents alike to locate and capture terrorist suspects. Therefore, it seems that despite being indiscriminate actions, legislation that serves to bolster police powers and border security is extremely effective when combined with ongoing legal restriction.

It is also surprising that the combination of violence and arrests was effective at two months. From the other models, one would assume that violence both on its own and in conjunction with other policies would be ineffective. Therefore, I assume that it is not the violence that actually makes the combination effective; instead, the
decreased hazard resulting from the arrests overcomes the insignificant effect of violence which causes a net hazard decrease. Despite resulting in a positive effect, this approach would not be recommended because of the potential risks associated with violence, and because of the unwanted effects that violence has generated in other models.

**Discriminate vs. Indiscriminate Action**

A secondary goal of this study was to gauge the relative effectiveness of discriminate and indiscriminate actions. The extant literature on counterterrorism fails to provide a clear answer regarding which actions are best – those aimed specifically at the terrorists, or those that involve the greater population. For instance, Lyall’s study of Russian violence in Chechnya (2010) found that the use of indiscriminate violence decreased the number of terrorist attacks. The theory behind such findings is that indiscriminate government action will force the population to side with government out of fear of reprisal, thus depleting support – both monetary and otherwise – for the terrorists.

Others, however, argue that the opposite is true. For example, Kalyvas and Kocher (2007) found that populations are likely to side with the terrorists when states enact repressive policies. In such cases, siding with the terrorists can increase security, or it simply motivates civilians to join the terrorists in opposition of the government.

In both studies, a variety of discriminate and indiscriminate policies were tested. On the indiscriminate side, there is (study 1) the amnesty policy, the Statute of
Autonomy, the Dirty War, the Estella Accords, (study 2) condemnations, security legislation, and banning/allowing Basque political representation. For discriminate policies, there is (study 1) the Dispersion policy, the Bidart Arrests, (study 2) arrests, deportations, and violence.

Upon examining the findings of both studies, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the general effectiveness of discriminate or indiscriminate policies. In both categories, some policies were effective while others were either counterproductive or merely insignificant. However, it does appear that discriminate restrictive policies are generally effective. In both models, such policies were found to reduce the hazard of a terrorist attack – whether it be the Bidart Arrests or the Dispersion policy in study 1, or the arrests and security legislation in study 2. Deporting captured terrorists falls under this category but it went against the trend and increased the hazard of an attack at two months (in model 1). There are several potential reasons why this could be true. Most notably, deportations do not take terrorist suspects completely out of operation; deported members can still provide logistic and material support to their fellow terrorists even across country lines. Additionally, the members being deported could very well be the more moderate members of the group, and their departure would leave the group more radicalized than before. This is similar to Ethan Bueno de Mesquita’s theory (2005) in which moderates are drawn away from the group through conciliatory or other state policies, subsequently leaving more radical members in charge and creating an overall more dangerous organization.
The effectiveness of restrictive policies is concurrent with H9, where I stated that restriction would decrease terrorist incidents. Scholars have frequently lauded the effectiveness of these measures to combat terrorism. On the most basic level, such policies remove terrorists from operation, thereby weakening the group and making future attacks more difficult. Once terrorists are captured, however, the state can potentially gain invaluable information regarding upcoming attacks and the whereabouts of other members. The state can gain this information by providing lenient sentences and other rewards to the captured terrorist in return for useful information. By doing this, states can rectify the information asymmetry that generally keeps them at a strategic disadvantage vis-à-vis the terrorists (Lyall and Wilson 2009). Thus, not only do states benefit immediately from discriminate, restrictive policies, but they also gain information useful to the ongoing battle against the remaining terrorist organization.

**Theoretical Contributions and Policy Implications**

**Theoretical Contributions**

This study sheds light on much of the theoretical basis underlying terrorism and political violence. The most obvious conclusion is that terrorism appears to be a rational, strategic choice by politically motivated actors. This argument has already been made by numerous scholars such as Crenshaw (1998) and Walter and Kydd (2006). However, this study specifically shows how ETA responded to particular actions by the Spanish government. This is evident from ETA’s increased attacks during the politically volatile time period following the Basque Statute of Autonomy,
and when the Spanish Parliament decided to ban Basque political representation. ETA responded to these events by increasing the frequency of their attacks. In doing so, the group may have been attempting to influence the Spanish government and citizens.

There also appears to be a strong connection between terrorists groups and the populations that support them. It is interesting that following the Estella Accords, the hazard of an ETA attack decreased significantly, signaling that population support is essential to a terrorist campaign. Studying the interaction between terrorist groups and their domestic populations in Spain is a fruitful area of future research and is currently underway (Birnir, Baranov, Perkoski and Chenoweth, unpublished manuscript).

In the first study, one of the most interesting results was the inverse relation between civil rights and the hazard of a terrorist attack. The analysis found that limiting civil rights was significantly correlated with fewer attacks. The connection between civil rights and terrorism has been a common topic within the academic and policy circles, but no conclusion has been reached. For example, some scholars argue that restricting civil rights will limit the ability of terrorists to plan and carry out attacks (Li 2005). These arguments are often associated with regime type: democracies, which grant greater civil liberties, often experience more terrorism compared to authoritarian regimes that restrict the rights of their citizens (Gurr 1990; Shabad and Llera Ramo 1995). However, the inverse is also argued: regimes that limit the rights of its citizens will create grievances within the population, leading to more terrorism (Crenshaw 1981). Nonetheless, this study finds evidence to support
the first argument, that restricting civil rights will result in lower levels of terrorist attacks. Regardless of its effectiveness, however, states should exercise caution with this tactic as prolonged humanitarian abuses and impeding upon civil liberties could easily spawn new threats against government.

Finally, this study demonstrates that terrorists are strategic on the individual level in addition to the group level. The findings of this study suggest that terrorists are deterred by arrests, and the threat of imprisonment is a significant motivating factor. This finding results from the fact that arrests and the Dispersion policy (which relocated ETA prisoners to prisons throughout Spain) were both correlated with lower attack hazards. One could argue, however, that arrests produce a lower hazard because the arrested members were unable to help plan and carry out attacks. While there is no way to know if this was the case short of interviewing ETA terrorists, the Dispersion policy had no implications for the group as a whole and it can be viewed as a personal deterrent to individual terrorists. Therefore, one can accurately assume that the threat of imprisonment – and possibly being transferred to a distant prison – was a significant motivating factor to terrorists.

**Policy Implications**

From these two studies, it appears that governments would be wise to stay within the legal bounds when enacting counterterrorist policy. Illegal violence such as the Dirty War and simply killing terrorist members resulted in no effect or it increased terrorism in the short run. Such policies often force populations to sympathize with the terrorists and turn them against the government. On the other
hand, legal actions have not only proved to be effective, but they also demonstrate the legitimacy of the government in spite of ruthless terrorist tactics.

Legal restrictive measures were found to be effective in both studies. Arrests consistently decreased the hazard of an ETA attack both at one and two months, and also at one year. Arrests serve to both marginalize the group and provide the government with valuable intelligence useful to preventing future attacks. Although this is generally a more difficult and slower course of action, and it may not produce immediate political gains following an attack, this appears to be the most effective course of action.

Political initiatives to combat terrorism appear to be controversial. Decisions that are apolitical by nature – in other words, those policies that do not require a public vote or referendum like amnesty – and those emanating directly from the terrorist group’s native population – such as the Estella Accords – seem to be effective at reducing terrorism. Approaching this from the strategic point of view, it appears to make sense; terrorists have no reason to escalate attacks in response to these types of events. However, when the opportunity exists to influence a political action – such as the Statue of Autonomy and banning Basque political representation – it seems that terrorists will methodically increase attacks as a signal to voters and politicians alike. Especially when regarding a topic that is connected to the terrorist group’s manifesto, this study finds that governments should avoid referendums and other political initiatives that would give terrorist groups an incentive to escalate their attacks.
Lastly, it appears that governments are likely to be successful when they combine restriction with other legal deterrents. For instance, enacting new security legislation (which can further empower police officers) was found to be effective when combined with restriction. This study also found evidence that supports increasing the punishment for terrorist acts; this sort of policy acts as a personal deterrent to terrorists, and it would make engaging in political violence a much more costly action.

Conclusion

_The war we are fighting today against terrorism is a multifaceted fight. We have to use every tool in our toolkit to wage this war - diplomacy, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and of course, military power - and we are developing new tools as we go along._ –Richard Armitage

The international struggle against terrorism is far from over. While some terrorist groups have been successfully eradicated, others are still flourishing especially in the more underdeveloped regions of the world. These groups, while certainly dangerous to their domestic governments, are just as much a threat to the international community.

As my review of the extant literature on counterterrorism has shown, there is little consensus concerning the best strategies to fight terrorism. Strategies that were effective in one country have failed in another. It appears that the silver bullet to defeating terrorism is unlikely to ever be found.

However, I believe Richard Armitage is correct: combating terrorism requires a multidimensional effort that encompasses all aspects of terrorism, ranging from the
sources of terrorism to group strategies. And these actions cannot be static and unchanging – as he says, they need to be developed along the way in accordance with a threat that changes just as often.

This study is certainly not a definitive guide to combating terrorism; instead, the lessons learned from analyzing Spain’s interaction with ETA should be used as a general framework for creating effective counterterrorist policy in the future. Lessons such as the effectiveness of restriction and the importance of the legality of government actions should be taken into consideration when crafting new policies to deter terrorism. It would be unwise for states to ignore these types of findings from the academic community and to blindly enact counterterrorist policy. As the saying goes, those who forget history are doomed to repeat it.
References


