

Motives of terrorist groups: A categorization of terrorist entities listed by the European Union

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Objectives

- Analysis of motives of terrorist groups listed by the European Union
- Categorization of groups

Relevance

- Up to now no categorization
- Assumption of pre-dominance of religious terrorist groups



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Definition “Terrorism”

- There is no standardized definition.
- We, as communication scientists, see terrorism as a form of communication:

“If a terrorist act goes unreported to the public, has it really happened? The answer is yes for those directly affected by the act, but no, in terms ‘terrorizing’ the larger public. No matter how bloody they may be, terrorist acts are largely symbolic, and for that symbolism to have effect, news of the acts must be communicated.”

(Seib & Janbek, 2011, p. 18)

The EU's Definition of Terrorism

“intentional acts, which, given its nature or its context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation, as defined as an offence under national law, where committed with the aim of:

(i) seriously intimidating a population, or

(ii) unduly compelling a Government or an international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or

(iii) seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation”

(The Council of the European Union, 2001, p. 93)

Categorization of Terrorist Groups According to Waldmann (2000)

- Social-revolutionary terrorism
- Ethnic-nationalistic terrorism
- Religiously motivated terrorism

Sample of Analysis

- 26 organizations identified by the European Union as terrorist entities following the articles 2, 3, and 4 of the EU's Common Position 2001/931/CFSP on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism
- 18 organizations identified by the European Union as terrorist entities to which only article 4 of the EU's Common Position 2001/931/CFSP applies

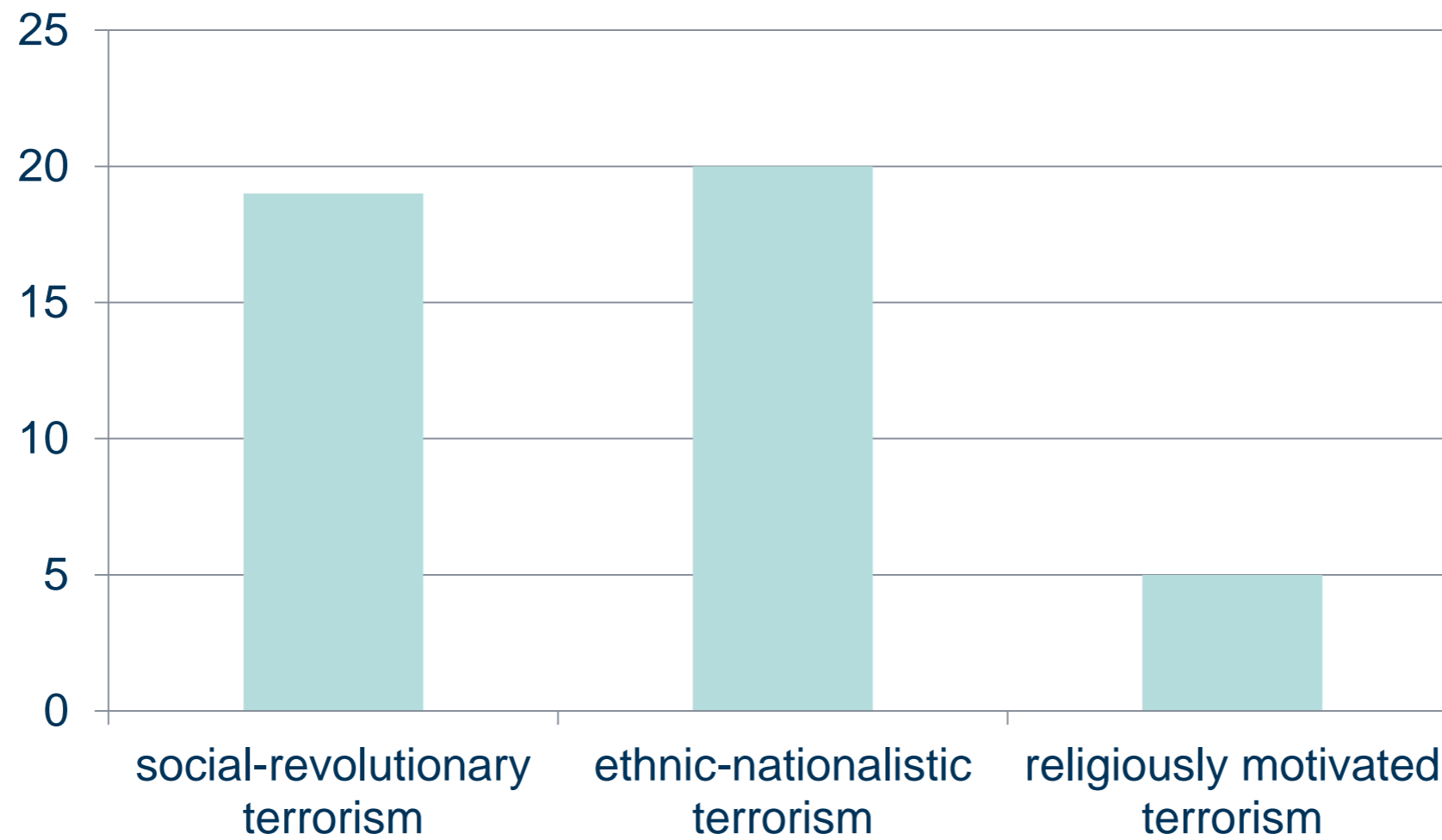
(July 2013)

Material used for categorization

- Terrorist groups' websites
- Documents (e.g. IRA green book; founding charters)
- Terrorist groups databases (RAND, START)

Results

Number of Terrorist Groups per Category



n = 44

Religiously Motivated Terrorist Groups

İslami Büyük Doğu Akıncılar Cephesi (IBDA-C)
Hizballah Military Wing
Al-Takfir and Al-Hijra
Gama'aa I-Islamiyya
Hofstadgroep

Social-revolutionary Terrorist Groups

Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army (NPA)

Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi (DHKP/C)

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)

Brigate Rosse per la Costruzione del Partito Comunista Combattente
Cooperativa Artigiana Fuoco ed Affini – Occasionalmente Spettacolare

PFLP – General Command

Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre (G.R.A.P.O.)

Federazione Anarchica Informale

Cellula Contro Capitale, Carcere i suoi Carcerieri e le sue Celle (CCCCC)

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

Sendero Luminoso

Solidarietà Internazionale

Epanastatikos Agonas

Nuclei Armati per il Comunismo

Brigata XX Luglio

Dekati Evdomi Noemvri

Fuerzas armadas revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)

Epanastatiki Pirines

Ejército de Liberación Nacional

Ethnic-nationalist Terrorist Groups

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna/ Tierra Vasca y Libertad (E.T.A.)

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF)

Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development

Al-Aqsa e.V.

Real IRA Red Hand Defenders

Stichting Al Aqsa Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

Orange Volunteers (OV)

Babbar Khalsa Hamas

Ulster Defence Association/ Ulster Freedom Fighters (UDA/UFF)

Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF)

Hizbul Mujahideen Abu Nidal Organisation (ANO)

Teyrbazen Azadiya Kurdistan (TAK)

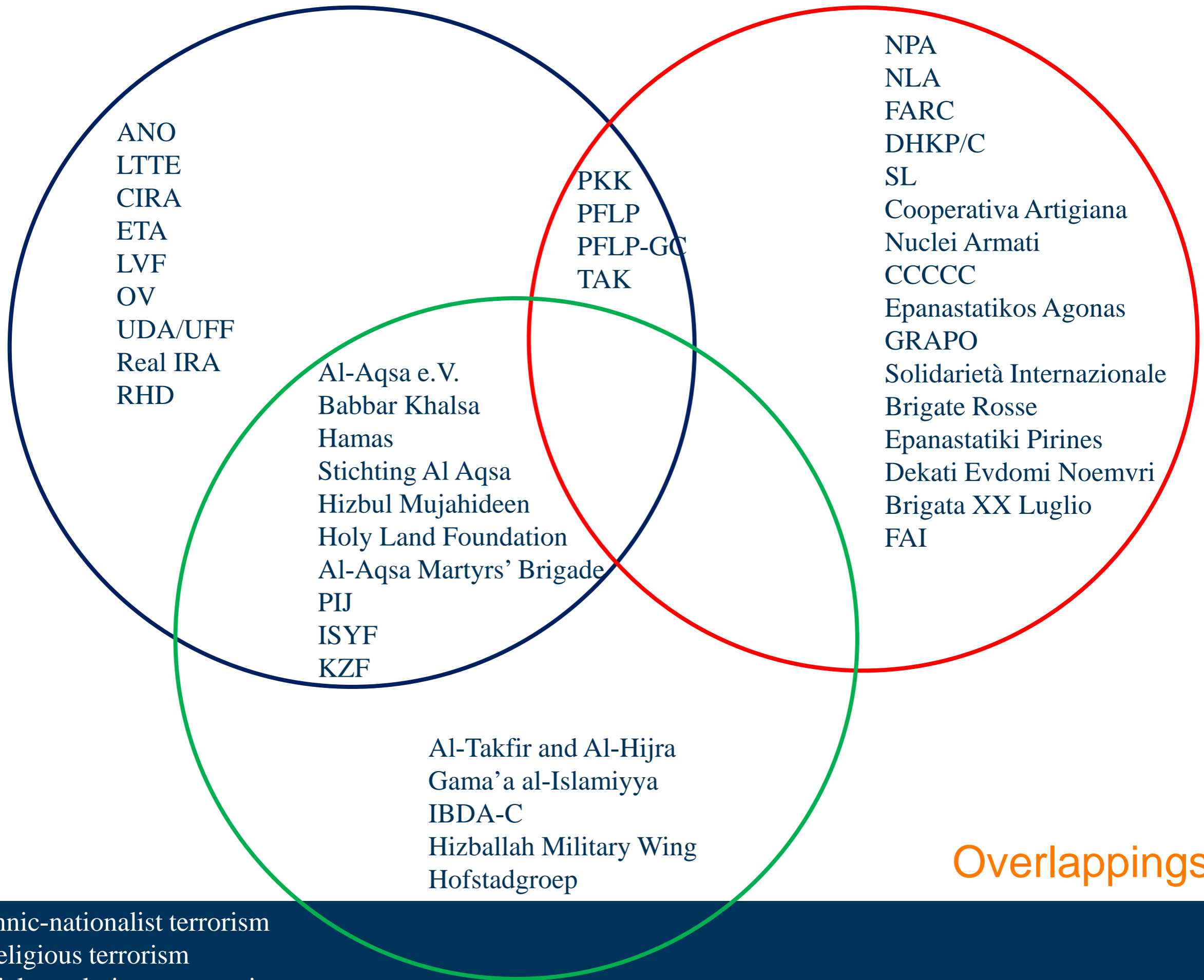
Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade

Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)

Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Background information via databases, secondary literature and website texts – sufficient? biased?
- Changes of motives over time
- Inconsistency between motives mentioned e.g. in founding charters and selection of symbolic targets
- High number of groups that combine different motives → new classification with circular schemes



Overlappings

blue = ethnic-nationalist terrorism
green = religious terrorism
red = social-revolutionary terrorism

Terrorism as a Form of Communication

- Acts of violence as mediator for terrorists' motives → symbolic character
- Dependence on media coverage → bypassed due to Web 2.0
- Communication through: assassinations, assemblies, audio and video files (e.g. patriotic songs, interviews with the group's leaders, documentaries), texts (e.g. (online-)newspapers, pamphlets), pictures (e.g. photographs of members or the country, flags) etc.

Methods and Media Strategies of Ethnic-nationalistic Terrorist Groups

Example: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

Motives:

- Members feel suppressed by Sri Lanka's ethnic majority, the Sinhalese
- Aim: establishment of an autonomous Tamil state

Strategies:

- Fighting against the government of Sri Lanka
- Discrediting of opponents
- Assigning the guilt to the government and the Sinhalese
- Officially distancing themselves from violence

Methods and Media Strategies of Ethnic-nationalistic Terrorist Groups

Example: Ulster Defence Association / Ulster Freedom Fighters

Motives:

- Prevent the unification of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- Preserve the British Culture in Northern Ireland

Strategies:

- Criticizing the Irish government for interfering in issues of Northern Ireland
- Analysing and criticizing the media's portrayal of Protestants
- Public threats

Conclusion

- Ethnic-nationalistic terrorism represents the largest part of the EU-sample
- Many overlappings

Outlook

- Debate on “real” motives
- Comparison with other terrorist lists
- Analyzing changes



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Thank you for your attention!

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