The Puzzle of Anonymous Political Violence*

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Abstract

Anonymity is a form of political violence that has received very little attention and no systematic analysis among scholars of political violence until now. This paper focuses on clandestine political violence identified by the paradigm of “propaganda by the deeds” according to which by signalling their identity, perpetrators advocate a cause and signal commitment to a number of audiences. Yet Between 1970 and 2006 only 27.694 out of 73.961 terrorist attacks worldwide were attributed to a perpetrator, leaving 62.5 per cent unclaimed. This paper presents a quantitative profiling of anonymous political violence between 1970 and 2010 based on the data recorded in the Global Terrorism Database between 1970 and 2012, the largest source on terrorist events to date. Most attributes of anonymity resulting from the analysis are not consistent with the hypothesis that it is the mark of a new phase of terrorism where the incentives of the perpetrators are substantially different from the past. Rather it seems that political violence has moved to a different habitat and adapts its means of communication through violence accordingly.

Keywords:
Political violence, mimicry, anonymity, claiming behaviour
Introduction

Political violence encompasses a large spectrum of conflicts where a political goal is at stake spanning from conventional war to genocide. This paper focuses on unconventional asymmetrical conflict (Kydd, Walters 2006) where political violence is identified by the paradigm of “propaganda by the deeds” of which terrorism is the relevant tactic rather than a definition (Gambetta 2005). According to this paradigm by making themselves identifiable, perpetrators advocate a cause and emit a costly signal of their commitment to their supporters, their competitors, and their political opponents. This paradigm has been adopted in particular to explain the behaviour of political groups that choose the path of clandestine violence (Crenshaw 2011, Della Porta 2013). Yet Between 1970 and 2006 only 27.694 out of 73.961 terrorist attacks worldwide have been attributed to a perpetrator, leaving 62.5 percent unclaimed (LaFree, Morris, Dugan, 2010: 635).

Not only the size of anonymous acts of political violence but their quality as well is puzzling. A surge of unclaimed acts of political violence between 1980 and 1982, for instance came in conjunction with an increase in the lethality of terrorist attacks (Cordes et alii, 1984: 5-6). Moreover fifty five percent of suicide attacks between 1981 and 2010 recorded in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) are attributed to “unknown perpetrator”. Suicide attacks are highly motivated and organized acts of political violence (Krueger, Laitin 2008) and are explained as sorting signals of the perpetrators qualities (Gambetta, 2005; Atran 2006; Kydd and Walter 2006; Wright, 2010). However what is the meaning of a signal when the signaller remains unknown?

These facts suggest that focusing on anonymous political violence is long overdue as it represents a relevant and crucial share of behavior among perpetrators of political violence at odds with conventional wisdom about terrorism. The paradigm of “propaganda by the deeds” emerged in the XIX century as perpetrators of political violence felt the need to signal the political quality of their actions marking the distinction with ordinary criminals’ behavior who opt for anonymity instead (Lacqueur 1977, Rapoport 1997). According to the paradigm of “propaganda by the deeds” the violent action is instrumental to promote a cause that by

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2 Anonymity is a form of mimicry in so far as a perpetrator (mimic), by not signalling his identity, shares the...
choice or contingencies - given an unbalance of power among contestants - cannot be pursued exclusively through peaceful means nor fought as conventional war "in the light of day [when] there is no mystery about the identity of the participants" (Lacqueur, 1977: 3). Perpetrators of political violence strike unannounced coming from anonymity and adopt the language of violence and intimidation to bargain for a cause and modify the behaviour of their enemies, by impacting an audience other than their direct physical target (Gambetta, 2005; Enders, Sandler, 2006, Bueno de Mesquita, Dickson 2007, LaFree, Dugan 2009; Wigle, 2010).

These goals are at odds with secrecy, underground groups’ defining condition. Benefits in terms of safety are counterbalanced by constraints that are likely to undermine the groups’ communicative goals thus hampering their political purpose. In particular asymmetrical information - when relevant knowledge is available to one part of the exchange but not to the other – is a constraint to which underground groups need to find adaptive solutions to have a political impact.

The success of clandestine political groups in promoting their cause depends to a considerable extent upon the publicity which their actions receive (Lacqueur, 1977: 110; Schelling 1991; Chalk, 1996) and they strategically develop an often “symbiotic” relationship with the media (Wilkinson, 1997; Enders, Sandler, 2006: 37; Rohner, Frey, 2007, Hoffman 2013). Political violence analyzed in this paper then is an essentially communicative act to intimidate and engage in a bargaining process with opponents, appeal to constituencies for resources, send messages to competing underground groups and to members either when internal channels of communication brake down or they are in prison.

In order to do so clandestine groups need to state credibly their authorship by developing a signature, an identity signal by which to mark their acts of political violence as their own exclusive work (Pizzini-Gambetta 2014: 5). The identity signal does not need to be verbal. Patterns of action, type of weapons can be signatures as well. Perpetrators of political violence who have a monopolistic hold on a cause may choose to be identified indirectly through their targets as it was the case of two tiers radical political organizations in the early 1970s in Italy. Their armed branches would strike anonymously against targets clearly belonging to the opposite camp. Direct identity signalling instead implies the potential cost of
incrimination besides costs of production to establish a signature as the true credential of the group identity. An identity signal takes the form of a name or acronym only when the trade-off between anonymity and the benefits of producing the name is positive for the latter. Anonymity in fact rests on a fragile equilibrium easily upset by manipulative exogenous attributions and by competing visions within the same camp (Pizzini-Gambetta 2014).

Making sense of anonymous political violence

Anonymous political violence is not a new discovery and a number of conjectures based on mostly anecdotal evidence have been provided. In the early 1980s – the pre-history period as to data collection on terrorism goes – RAND produced a report about transnational terrorist events perpetrated between 1980 and 1985. The authors of the report were puzzled by the fact that nearly half of the events were unclaimed in spite of their political nature (Cordes, Jenkins, Keller 1985: 15). Out of 2672 recorded events 1120 (42%) had not been claimed and among them 472 were attributed by a third party on the basis of educated guesses and intelligence (p.18). At the time, the report already mentioned a turn in claiming behaviour. Apparently 60% of events recorded in the larger RAND chronology of terrorist events were claimed between 1970 and 1979 whilst between 1980 and 1982 the claiming rate dropped to 39% (p.24). Most of these unclaimed acts were minor events but quite a few were ‘spectaculars’. The report went on noticing that different groups show different claiming behaviour ranging from high intensity claiming groups such as the Armenian separatists (ASALA), the Red Brigades and the Palestinians, to groups “more interested in actions than words” like Sendero Luminoso in Peru’, Dev Sol, Dev Lol in Turkey and others that “relied on attributions” (p.24).

Anonymity was explained on one hand as expediency to "protect terrorists against effective prosecution" and on the other as a crafty device to enhance uncertainty in the aftermath of an attack and ultimately amplify publicity by keeping the action longer in the press (Cordes, Jenkins and Keller 1985: 15-16). In this case however publicity shines on the event but how does it reverberate over the perpetrators? Lacking clear clues a claim would need to be issued to secure property rights over the publicity caused.
A few years later the question why terrorist do not claim their actions was raised again. Bruce Hoffman noted that in the mid 1990s anonymous spectacular acts were increasing. He claimed that this was the sign of a new type of faceless political violence emerging as a result of international contingencies and successful international pressure over states sponsor of terrorism. He concluded that the paradigm of propaganda by the deeds offers anachronistic explanations of terrorist behavior (p.5) and that the “real question is not why responsibility is concealed, but why claims are still made” (p.19, also Rapoport 1997). Furthermore he seemed to envisage a new basic goal of political violence in the production of indiscriminate fear: “even if their 'message' is not clearly communicated, the suspicion aroused by even an anonymous attack is sufficient reward by itself” (Hoffman, 1997: 4-5).

To what extent this would be a sufficient reward for an underground political group is not obvious. Among perpetrators of political violence fear is not an end in itself. It is an instrument of order to strengthen any kind of threat including criminal ones by the Mafia and states in international relations (Schelling 1961, Gambetta 1993, Kalyvas, Shapiro, Massoud, 2008). Underground groups however have a strong incentive in letting know as many people as possible that they are posing that threat (Enders, Sandler 2006: 3) and unless identity clues can lead to speculative attributions they must state their authorship publicly. The incentive decreases when the political violence is a form of state-sponsored ‘esoteric communication’ (Plucinsky 1997: 8) where a state covertly put pressure on to another sovereign state without engaging in open warfare – often to negotiate non-territorial disputes – or aims at thwarting the political will of democratic public opinion (Jenkins 1988, Ferraresi 1995).

The type of political violence has been summoned to explain variations in claiming behaviour. Ethno-separatist violence would induce more claims (Rapoport 1997) than religiously motivated violence (Hoffman 1998: 94, Post, 2005: 620, 630, Enders Sandler, 2006: 48). These two types of violence appeal to different constituencies. The worldly constituency of ethno-separatists needs to be won over to support the underground group (Bueno de Mesquita, Dickson 2007). When the violence, like praying, appeals to god instead it would be individually self-rewarding (Rapoport 1997: 15). This may be the case for the Thugs and the Japanese Aum Shinri Kyo (Rapoport 1997) exclusive groups of ‘chosen’ by their goddess Kaly. It seems to be hardly the case instead for the modern jihadists the creation of which is the result of intense activity of radicalization. Thus we should expect even among
modern religiously motivated political violence communicative mechanisms to be in place to address earthly constituencies of believers and non-believers alike.

A more recent explanation of anonymity relates claiming behaviour to the Principal-Agent problem and the level of control of the leadership on its cadres. For a number of reasons and in particular failure of communication through the clandestine structure of the group the behaviour of individual actors fails to be sanctioned by the leadership. Thus undesired actions are not claimed (Kearns, Conlon, Young 2014). This behaviour would fit both highly structured groups and highly decentralized one. It is not clear however how the latter can afford it. If the leadership control is weak how can it maintain control over the issuing of claims? Disclaimers are hardly effective as the burden of proving one’s innocence is on the disclaimant (Pizzini-Gambetta 2014).

Finally anonymity has been taken into consideration as the binary alternative to claiming in a quantitative test of Kydd and Walter’s (2006) five typologies of terrorist strategies (Min, 2013). According to the results of this study intimidation, spoiling and provocation are associated with low claim intensity whilst attrition and outbidding with high intensity.

How non-state actors handle their identity signaling emission has mostly been analyzed and explained as a basic dichotomy (Diagram 1) between the decision to claim or not (Rapoport 1997, Hoffman 2010, Wright 2010, Min 2013).

![Diagram 1 about here](image)

This dichotomy reaches to the core of the paradigm of political violence as “propaganda by the deeds” that predicates that given effort and investment of resources into an act of violence perpetrators will claim that action as "a private good that could not be shared among groups" (Enders, Sandler, 2006: 37, Kydd and Walters 2006). It predicts claiming as the default option in particular when perpetrators compete to represent a cause (Hoffman 2010), aim at radicalizing constituencies (Bueno de Mesquita, Dickson 2007), wish to signal their strength (Wright 2010), amplifies their motives (Sanchez-Cuenca 2007), maintain a strategy of intimidation (Enders, Sandler 2006, Min 2013). Anonymity instead would be preferred when the action enhances uncertainty or is likely to bring adverse publicity onto the group such as antagonizing its constituency or signaling weakness and incompetence.
Yet the range of strategic options available to perpetrators is more complex than that (Diagram 2).

[Diagram 2 about here]

Perpetrators face the choice between issuing an honest identity signal and mimicry (Pizzini-Gambetta, 2014). The latter refers to the deceptive behaviour of one agent (the mimic) passing off as a model in order to modify the behavior of a dupe (Gambetta 2005a). Anonymity², multiple claims free riding on actions perpetrated by others, false flags and blame shifting using an other’s signature, are strategic options resulting from the decision of lying about the true identity of the perpetrator (Kearns, Conlon, Young, 2014). The abundant historical evidence of the use of false flags (Jenkings 1988) also suggests that the design of the signature needs to be as mimic proof as possible to keep control on the emission of the identity signal (Pizzini-Gambetta 20014) and caution is at the essence when pinning down to a group the responsibility of an action of violence and assessing the credentials of a claim (Fox 2010).

As the outcome of a choice among more than two options anonymity then should not be reduced to the residual choice after claiming is ruled out. It should be considered as the result of a deliberate choice with payoffs higher than those of alternative forms of mimicry making it very hard for predictive models to identify the causal mechanisms leading to the choice of anonymity. Quite differently from claiming the choice from the mimicking menu and hence of remaining anonymous is context driven rather than posited by the nature of the act of violence. Accordingly the causal mechanisms leading to the choice are likely to be responses to specific conditions and constraints and may elude the rule of external validity. In depth analysis based on a detailed collection of data about claims and mimic behaviour would yield insights to solve the puzzle of anonymous political violence. This paper limits itself to the profiling of such an elusive form of political violence. By providing a preliminary descriptive

² Anonymity is a form of mimicry in so far as a perpetrator (mimic), by not signalling his identity, shares the signals of his host (the underground environment) to modify the behaviour of her dupe (the wider audience of the act). This type of mimicry is one of the possible forms of Crypsis (the ability to avoid detection by blending in) in biological terms. For an application of Signalling Theory to mimic behaviour among left and right wing violent militants in Italy in the 1970s see Pizzini-Gambetta, 2014.
quantitative overview of this phenomenon and its main attributes it will inform the selection of cases for in depth analysis.

The aim of this paper is to focus on anonymity – when no claim is issued and no clue about the identity of the perpetrator leads to an attribution of responsibility following an act of political violence - between 1970 and 2010. The paper will develop by illustrating and discussing the sources and data. It will then articulate a descriptive analysis of the size, geographic distribution and main attributes of anonymous political violence. The conclusion will summarize the main attribute of anonymous political violence and identify individual case studies to further explain this phenomenon.

Data
The analysis is based on data collected in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) of the START consortium (LaFree, 2010). It is the largest open source collection of terrorist events to date. It combines width including incidents of both domestic and transnational terrorism (98112 events), longitudinal depth (1970-2010) and wealth of coded and uncoded details. The records are standardized following a flexible definition of terrorism that accommodates the terms of the debate about this category (Hoffman 2006, Sanchez-Cuenca, De La Calle 2011, Sanchez-Cuenca 2014). Events included in GTD must a) entail violence or the threat of violence; b) be intentional; c) must be perpetrated by a sub-national actor. In addition at least two out of the following three criteria must be present: 1) The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal; 2) There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims; 3) The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities.

This source is not without limitations and they have been discussed in details (LaFree, Dugan, 2010; De La Calle, Sanchez-Cuenca 2011). However – as the extensive use of the database in the literature proves - they are offset by the advantages that such a comprehensive source provides in terms of width, depth and details described above. A main limitation is related to its legacy. It is the result of an open source longitudinal project merging the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Services (PGIS) data base and ongoing data collection. PGIS

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collected events from wire services such as Reuters and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), U.S. State Department reports, other U.S. and foreign government reporting, U.S. and foreign newspapers. It was chosen among other available databases because included both domestic and transnational events, it had a coherent team of data collectors over a long period (27 years) and because it had no pronounced bias in favour of events regarding or happening in the USA. PGIS included 67,179 domestic and transnational terrorist events between 1970 and 1997 including variables such as date, type of incident, city and country, the target, the weapon, the number of fatalities, and injuries. Most incidents included information on the group and the original media source plus a section of comment and further information. The ongoing data collection monitors news databases such as Lexis-Nexis (Professional) and Opensource.gov (previously FBIS). The GTD makes all efforts to compensate and reduce the effects deriving from the fact that the data collection is split in two clearly different periods marked by different collecting agents (LaFree, Dugan 2010: 186-89). Furthermore the original data about the year 1993 were accidentally lost. They have been collected anew but there is no certainty that all original data have been recovered therefore the year has been removed by the database. The analysis will take into account these issues and the partition into two periods.

A first step in the preparation of the database prior to the analysis is the elimination of sporadic political violence that is unlikely to be the work of clandestine groups. The chosen threshold is rather conservative: at least 20 actions over two consecutive years or at least 100 actions over the whole period. The total number of events at the end of the initial screening is reduced to 95,975 (initial 98,112) of which 39,398 (41%) attributed to unknown perpetrator. A further reduction is obtained by removing the records about which the coders express doubts as to the nature of the violence for the period 1997 onward (variable “DOUBTERR”). For the previous period events attributed to criminals, and tribal violence have been removed when it was possible to identify them matching the criteria of the variable DOUBTERR. By doing so the number of records is further reduced to 90,866.

For both periods it is then necessary to re-code the type of perpetrators. A large number of events are attributed to “unknown perpetrator” as the sources of the data were “often unable to identify perpetrators” (LaFree, Dugan 2010: 187). I assume that those are instances of complete anonymity when the perpetrators left no meaningful identifier. Alongside this there
are also generic attributions such as “terrorists”, “other”, “youths” that are equally instances of complete anonymity and will be coded accordingly. Then there are vague attributions such as “disgruntled activists”, “angry Palestinians”, “guerrillas”, “rebels” that suggest partial identifiers of the perpetrators that still cannot attribute the act to a specific political group. Anonymity in these cases is not complete as attribution to a camp in the fight is possible. A further issue of coding regards the fact that the PGIS database reports the name of the group “that carried out the attack” however it does neither specify whether this knowledge is the result of a claim or a third party attribution or if the claim is verified and truthful. For the period 1998-2010 a specific variable codes if an event was claimed but information about the trustworthiness of the claim is mostly lacking. Little can be done unfortunately to sort claims out of attributions for the period 1970-1997 and anonymity out of other forms of mimicry. Only in depth analysis on individual case studies can retrieve the missing distinction and identify acts of mimicry in details (Hoffman 2010, Pizzini-Gambetta 2014). The analysis takes this limitation into account and focuses on complete and partial anonymity in this period whilst attributions separate from claims will be taken into account only in the analysis of the subsequent period. Given the structure of the GTD we consider anonymity therefore as a function of not having sufficient clues leading to attribution besides lacking a positive claim.

To the purpose of profiling anonymous political violence the GTD presents a number of challenges. The first and most obvious relates to the fact that the sources are the media and the recorded events are those selected for reporting. Claimed events are more likely to be identified and reported by the media as acts of terrorism than unclaimed ones. Thus we should assume that anonymous political violence is underrepresented in this database in particular in its less spectacular forms, at the onset of conflicts when political violence is still embedded in social movements and when the act is not successful.

The second challenge regards the possibility of analyzing anonymous political violence over time. The collation of the PGIS database and the ongoing data collection is inconsistent on some crucial aspects. The flexible definition of terrorism accommodates a large variety of political violence in asymmetrical – irregular - conflicts. Yet communicative violence is a relevant part but by no means covers the whole spectrum of political violence. There is
violence perpetrated with a political intent that is not communicative in nature. Genocide for instance, or the confrontation of irregular armed groups in territorial civil wars quite simply aims to overcome the opponent. Equally conflicts where non-state actors hold a territorial base (De La Calle, Sanchez-Cuenca 2012, Duffy Toft 2014) are problematic as the recorded violence could have purely military goals alongside communicative ones. These aspects have been taken into account and addressed in the ongoing data collection but could still be an unresolved issue for the period 1970-1997.

It would solve many problems to concentrate exclusively on the second section of the database. However if we discard PGIS data we loose the longitudinal perspective that is one of the major benefits of the GTD. In order to keep it the GTD has been randomly probed. A first recognition of the GTD reveals that purely territorial civil wars and genocide are not a major component of the database. Rwanda, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Bosnia Herzegovina in spite of being theatre of genocide have relatively few entries. Similarly Congo, Chad and other African countries swept by all out civil war have few entries in the years relative to their conflicts. In order to avoid ‘noise’ however the records relative to countries theatre of genocide and territorial civil war for the years 1970-1997 have been removed from the database bringing the total number of events down to 87360. The loss of this data does not affect significantly the incidence of anonymity. Actions attributed to unknown perpetrator are 35.1 per cent before the removal of dubious entries and 34.9 afterward.

Furthermore two dummy variables have been introduced to control for the effect of civil war and groups holding territorial control. The two variables code whether in the country of the recorded event there were groups holding control over territories at the time of the event, and whether the country where the event happened and the year fit with those identified according to the definition of civil war in the PRIO database (Gleditsch et alii 2002). The sources for the dummy variables are the BAAD 1 database for the period 1998-2005 (Asal, Retheneyer, Anderson 2009) with the addition of web and literature searches to assess the chronologies

4 This dataset by the START consortium (http://www.start.umd.edu/data-tools/big-allied-and-dangerous-baad-database-1-lethality-data-1998-2005 download June 2014) records data about terrorist groups in order to inform knowledge about their lethality level. The location of the groups is identified at country level. The variable “TerrStrong” records if a group controls a territory or not regardless of the year of observation. I have created a variable matching the countries of location of groups that are recorded as holding territorial control. The variable I have created records positively if in the year of the group activity there are matching records in the GTD for the country of location of the group.

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of the groups beyond the timespan of the database, and the UCDP-PRIO dataset version 4-2009 (Harbom 2009)\(^5\) that covers the whole GTD chronology except the years 2009-2010. The latter have been coded as missing data.

A final *proviso* is necessary. For obvious reasons the profiling of anonymous political violence based on the GTD is at country and attack level rather than at group level as there is no information about the identity of the perpetrator of anonymous violence. It implies that we will treat all violence as domestic. Transnational political violence in fact is apparent through the identity of the perpetrators and the target. In short we can assess how anonymity fits into the dynamic of political violence in a country rather than directly as a decision of a specific group either national or transnational. The latter is beyond the scope of GTD.

**The attributes of anonymous political violence**

**Overview**

The trend of the events of political violence recorded in the GTD is split (Figure 1).

![Figure 1 about here]

It rises steadily between 1970 and the early 1990s (Figure 1a), drops sharply between 1994 and 1997 (Figure 1b), it is fairly stable for a few years (Figure 1c) and shoots up again after 2003 (Figure 1d).

![Figure 1a about here]

![Figure 1b about here]

\(^5\) The dataset ([http://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/](http://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/)) download May 2014) records armed conflicts between 1946 and 2008 involving a state and one or more regular or irregular belligerent over government or territory resulting in at least 25 battle related deaths per year. ‘The calendar year is the basic unit of every observation. Thus, if a conflict during the period June–September results in 30 casualties, that year will be recorded as a year of conflict. However, if the same number of casualties occurred in the period November–February and the conflict failed to reach the threshold of 25 battle-related deaths in either calendar year, neither year will be coded as in conflict.’ (Harbom 2009: 3). I have selected the countries where there was at least one observation beginning in 1970. Then I have selected the variable “TYPE” referring to the type of conflict, value 3 and 4 (Internal armed conflict between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) with and without intervention from other states). My variable matches GTD and UCDP-PRIO by country coding the years when at least one observation is recorded. The years 2009-2010 are missing values.
This trend suggests that there are three distinct periods in the history of political violence. They correspond to major changes in international relations. The peak reached in 1990 and the sudden subsequent drop is in line with the finding about transnational terrorism that the cold war and the Soviet Union were international facilitators between 1970 and the early 1990s (Robinson, Crenshaw, Jenkins 2006, LaFree, Morris, Dugan 2010). The onset of a new dramatic upward trend in 2003 suggests that the war on terror more than an answer to the problem is a strong factor in the increased political violence more recently. Iraq alone is the theatre of 21% of the violence between 1998 and 2010, 74% of the violence recorded there occurs after 2006 and 91.3% is attributed to unknown perpetrator.

The trend of anonymous political violence is equally upward, follows a very similar pattern (Figure 2) and correlates strongly with the series of all events (r=0.9114).

Anonymity is a relevant feature and represents about half of the recorded events distributed between complete (41.7%) and partial anonymity (8.4%). Claiming behaviour looks different in the two periods (Fig.3).

Between 1970 and 1997 more than half of the events are either claimed or attributed (54.6%) to a group, 35 per cent are attributed to unknown perpetrator and 10.6 per cent are generically attributed to a camp in the fight. Between 1998 and 2010 instead the number of generic attributions is drastically reduced to 3 per cent whilst attribution to unknown perpetrator is much higher, 58 per cent. Events attributed to groups are 38.8 per cent of which 13.2 per cent are certainly claimed. By removing Iraq from the counting however the difference between the two periods is reduced. The attribution to unknown perpetrator drops to 48%, generic attributions is slightly higher (4%) and attributions to groups are 47.2% of which 15.6% positively claimed. Violence in cities follows a similar pattern. Between 1970 and 1997 35% of the events that occurred in cities were attributed to unknown perpetrator. The share of anonymity is higher in the following period (59%). Once Iraq is removed from the counting
the percentage is still significantly higher than in the previous period however it drops to 50%.

The propensity to anonymity shows a steady upward trend and a more regular pattern (Figure 4).

The average propensity is 50% for the whole database with a small standard deviation (0.1239). The upward trend is more pronounced for the period 1998-2010 – with an average propensity equal to 61% and a standard deviation of 0.083 - than between 1970 and 1997 – 41% with a standard deviation of 0.083 (Figure 4a and 4b).

If we remove Iraq from the period 1998-2010 however the average propensity drops to 45 percent confirming that political violence in Iraq is an outlier in terms of size and attributes and that the differences between the two periods are much reduced by removing it. The propensity to anonymity strongly suggests that this phenomenon is a physiology of political violence rather than an oddity and that it is so throughout the period 1970-2010 weakening the claim that it is the mark of a new type of political violence. However there are odd years in the time series, such as 1997 (72%), that may have fostered such hypothesis.

**Anonymity at country level**

The geographic distribution and the main actors of political violence between the periods 1970-1997 and 1998-2010 are different. As Figure 5 shows with the exception of India that maintains high level of violence across periods, the ranking has much changed.

Peru followed by Colombia, El Salvador, Northern Ireland, Spain and Turkey were the theatre of most of the violence between 1970 and 1997. In the following period they are all drastically reduced when not altogether disappeared whilst the geography of the violence has moved towards the east of the globe, to Iraq, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand and the
former Soviet Union region. The distribution by region confirms the geopolitical shift between the two periods (Figure 6).

[Figure 6 about here]

Anonymous political violence by country shows at first remarkable variation between the two periods as well. Figure 7 represents the ranking of countries according to the absolute number of events attributed to unknown or generic perpetrator.

[Figure 7 about here]

It shows two very different patterns and how Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Thailand and Russia stand out in the period 1998-2010 suggesting that recent conflicts may be more prone to this form of political violence. The difference between periods is substantially less dramatic however if we consider the propensity by country to anonymous political violence (Figure 8).

[Figure 8 about here]

We notice two different patterns yet anonymity was and still is a widespread attribute of political violence at country level and its geographic distribution extends well beyond the theatres of new conflicts. Afghanistan for instance had a much higher propensity to anonymity in the former period than between 1998-2010 whilst some European countries (Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Spain) show a distinctly higher propensity to anonymity in the latter period. This finding puts into question the claim that different types of political violence have an intrinsically different attitude towards anonymity. It suggests instead that it is the dynamic of individual conflicts rather than the type of violence to drive the propensity to anonymous political violence.

**Anonymity at attack level**

Anonymity is not the mark of multiple attacks\(^6\) between 1998 and 2010. Only 33 per cent (31 excluding Iraq) are completely anonymous, 8% are partially anonymous, 52 per cent are attributed (54 excluding Iraq), and only 6% are claimed. This distribution suggests that the

\(^6\) “[…] when several attacks are connected, but where the various actions do not constitute a single incident” (GTD Codebook, 2011: 20)
perpetrators do use the multiple nature of the attack as a signature that makes the issue of a claim often redundant.

Anonymity marks conflicts where there are multiple actors between 1998 and 2010. More than one group in a conflict does not reduce the number of attributions to unknown perpetrators and increases uncertainty of attributions by third parties. Complete anonymity rises to 68% (52 excluding Iraq) whilst partial anonymity and attributions by third parties drop. The overall percentage of claims drops to 10% but rises up to 14% once Iraq is excluded from the counting. This suggests the obvious conclusion that the practice of attributing becomes more difficult in the context of multiple parties conflict. It is not so obvious however why outbidding is not pushing up the numbers of claims in a more significant fashion.

Other attributes of the attack coded in the GTD regard its success, if it is a suicide mission, the type, the target and the weapon of execution. The effect of the success of the action on anonymity is hard to evaluate on the basis of available data. Most recorded events in GTD are successful (92%)\(^7\). The intrinsic bias in favour of successful events is carried over to anonymous events among which 99% are successful. Among the unsuccessful one however the rate of attribution to unknown perpetrator is higher than among successful ones (Table 1) and claims are correspondingly lower.

![Table 1 about here]

These differences are heightened between 1970 and 1997: 8 per cent more attributions to unknown and 9 per cent less claims and attributions to groups. Between 1998 and 2010 instead the success of the action affects less claiming behaviour. Attributions to unknown perpetrators of unsuccessful attacks are only 2 per cent higher than successful ones. Attribution to a group is 4 per cent lower if the action is not successful however positive claims are higher (14%) suggesting that anonymity is higher among unsuccessful attacks but there are conditions in which the sheer effort of trying is considered worth signalling identity in the eyes of the perpetrators. Once again the effect of the outlier Iraq is palpable and by removing it from the counting anonymity drops 5 percentage points and claims increase one point.

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\(^7\) Success of a terrorist strike is defined according to the tangible effects of the attack. Foiled or failed for technical malfunctioning are coded as unsuccessful attacks (GTD Codebook, 2011)
A report by RAND (Cordes, Jenkins and Keller 1985 pp.25-26) highlighted that the type of attack affected the likelihood of the event being claimed or anonymous in the 1980s. The report identifies that the highest likelihood of claiming regards kidnappings. Hit and run attacks on installations and assassinations of exiles (assassinations by rough states) would have high likelihood of anonymity instead. The longitudinal perspective of the GTD allows us to check how anonymity is affected over time by the type of attack. Figure 9 compares the distribution of the attacks by type in GTD.

[Figure 9 about here]

The majority of the attacks in both periods are bombings and armed assaults. Their differ in terms of lethality however and 59% of bombings caused over 10 casualties between 1998 and 2010 against only 23% in the previous period. Armed assaults instead were more lethal in the earlier period (58% causing more than 10 casualties) then in the following one (32% causing more than 10 casualties). They are followed by assassinations between 1970 and 1997 and by attacks on infrastructures and facilities in the next period. The inclusion of Iraq does not change this ranking suggesting that no matter the conditions the arsenal of violence in asymmetrical conflict is a limited set. Assassinations however are an eminent feature of the 1970-1997 period and would be consistent with the hypothesis that there is a qualitative difference in the political violence in the two periods. The propensity to anonymity however is high for assassinations and much higher between 1970 and 1998 than between 1998 and 2010 (Fig.9a).

[Figure 9a about here]

We cannot directly compare assassinations reported in the GTD with the report by RAND as GTD does not identify the attributes of the victims systematically. Kidnappings, bombings and hijackings show higher propensity to anonymity between 1970 and 1997 than in the following period when armed assaults and hostage taking instead have higher propensity to anonymity.

Suicide missions are a type of attack that for its extreme nature is treated separately from other attacks in GTD. Out of 1570 recorded events only 95 occurred between 1970 and 1997, the first instance being in 1982. Lebanon and Sri Lanka hosted nearly one third each of all recorded events followed by Israel and the West Bank. In the second period suicide missions
hit a larger share of countries however they were mostly confined to three countries: Iraq (41%), Afghanistan (17%) and Pakistan (12%). Between 1982 and 1997 anonymity is not the mark of suicide missions and only 21 per cent are attributed to unknown perpetrator\(^8\). In the following period instead 56 per cent of suicide missions are attributed to unknown perpetrator. Yet expectations based on the paradigm of propaganda by the deeds are not failed entirely. The percentage of claims is much higher than for other types of attacks (24.5%). It is even more so if we remove Iraq from the counting where 81 per cent of suicide missions are not attributed to a perpetrator. This brings the percentage of anonymous events down to 38 per cent and that of claims up to 35 per cent. The high percentage of suicide missions left without an author in Iraq defies the expectation that given the resource content of this type of action they should be claimed and suggest that beside being a signal of strength and resolve they become tactical weapons of last resort in asymmetrical irregular war. This however is not the case of Afghanistan - quite similar as to type of conflict to Iraq – where 31 per cent of suicide missions are claimed. More similar to Iraq is Pakistan instead where claimed suicide missions are 19 per cent and 70 per cent are anonymous.

Figure 10 compares the distribution of targets by periods.

[Figure 10 about here]

It shows that private citizens and properties alongside government and police targets were most common both between 1970-1997 and 1998-2010. Military and business targets bore a much larger share of the violence between 1970-1997 than in the following period and the propensity to anonymity on attacks to these targets is low. The propensity to anonymity by type of targets (Fig.11) shows that the targets more likely to be anonymous in both periods are not among the most common.

[Figure 11 about here]

This suggests both that pattern of attacks could be clues to attributing responsibility to groups and that groups more actively claim actions that are core to their strategies. This is the case for instance of attacks to government targets the claiming rate of which is relatively high (15.8%). Educational institutions, military and government targets show a propensity to

\(^8\) Here unknown effectively means that no group claims authorship. In the case of suicide missions in fact the perpetrator, meaning the person who carried out the attack, is always known thanks to forensic.
anonymity between 1998 and 2010 markedly higher than in the previous period with and without Iraq.

Most common weapons used to commit the political violence recorded in GTD are explosives and firearms followed at a distance by incendiary devices (Figure 12).

[Figure 11 about here]

Firearms were more common between 1970 and 1997 (35%) than between 1998-2010 (29%). The lion share in the latter period belongs to explosives with 58 per cent against 43 per cent between 1970 and 1997. By removing Iraq from the counting explosives decrease to 53 per cent and firearms rise to 30 per cent. In short the common weapons used to commit political violence more recently bear the mark of more indiscriminate violence than in the past. It is also marked by a higher propensity to anonymity. Figure 12 illustrates the propensity to anonymous political violence by type of weapon.

[Figure 12 about here]

The propensity to leave without author actions perpetrated by firearms and explosive – even excluding Iraq from the counting – is considerably higher between 1998 and 2010 than in the previous period. Anonymity unsurprisingly marks peculiar kinds of weapons such as the ones used by hoaxers (fake weapons) or banned by the international community (biological, radiological and chemical) and available mostly to legal powers that subscribe to the convention.

How does the lethality of the action affect anonymity? The report on political violence by RAND found that events with no casualties were equally likely to be claimed or not, up to 4 casualties were most likely to be claimed, over this threshold the likelihood decreased (Cordes, Jenkins and Keller 1985 pp.25-26). This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that perpetrators of political violence concerned with the reaction of a worldly constituency restrain their violence and resort to mimic behaviour when excessive violence is the undesired outcome of their actions. GTD allows checking how the lethality of the attack affects the propensity to anonymity over time. The overview is that more than 50 per cent of the attacks recorded in the GTD in both periods do not cause deaths however between 1998 and 2010 the propensity to commit more lethal attacks is slightly higher than in the previous period even excluding Iraq from the counting (Figure 13).
The propensity to anonymity by level of lethality is constantly lower between 1970 and 1997 than in the following period (Figure 14).

Between 1970 and 1997 however the propensity to leave without author lethal actions is higher than the average of the period (41%) for actions up to 10 casualties and at the same level and considerably lower over 100 casualties. This suggests that anonymity is more the attribute of actions causing a limited number of casualties. Between 1998 and 2010 the picture is similar. The propensity to anonymity equals or exceeds the average of the period (61%) for actions causing up to 10 casualties while it is much below it when the casualties increase. Once Iraq is removed from the counting the picture changes dramatically and the propensity to leave lethal actions without author between 1998 and 2010 is considerably lower than that between 1970 and 1997 for all levels of lethality above 1. Among actions causing more than 10 casualties the propensity to anonymity drops to 35 % and the propensity to issue a claim increases to 21% once Iraq is excluded from the counting. This suggests that political violence is more lethal between 1998 and 2010 than in the past however perpetrators consider worth claiming high lethality actions relatively more than low lethality actions as it was the case in the previous period.

Conclusions

The profiling of anonymous political violence based on data recorded in the GTD provides a few relevant leads to frame this phenomenon and engage with the current debate about the nature of political violence. Anonymity is a relevant feature of political violence both between 1970 and 1997 and more recently. It is more pronounced in the period between 1998 and 2010 although it is to a great extent as the result of violence in Iraq after 2003. Moreover increased propensity to anonymity between 1998 and 2010 is shown in countries hosting ethno-nationalist conflicts alongside countries hosting religiously motivated conflicts. This result strongly suggests that the logic of anonymity lies within the dynamic of a conflict rather than in its ideological or cultural premises.
Unsuccessful attacks are more marked by anonymity in both periods in the database. However there are conditions in which the sheer effort of trying is considered worth signalling the perpetrator’s identity between 1998 and 2010 as it was among ideological clandestine groups in the 1970s (Pizzini-Gambetta 2014). This result suggest that success is in the eyes of the beholder and that in terms of signalling in asymmetrical conflicts success may be irrelevant as long as it shows potential and lack of success could be a signal in itself. A clear example of this is the double mortar attack on Heathrow airport in March 1994, deliberately failed and claimed by IRA to send a clear signal of restrain and openness to a political solution and yet retain intimidation power to spend on the bargaining table (O’Mallie, McKittrick 1996: 288-89).

The types of attack show a common repertoire in the two periods and explosions and armed attacks top the rankings. Their relative lethality however is much different and between 1970-1998 armed assaults rather than bombings fetched the highest number of casualties. The reverse is true in the following period. Propensity to anonymity consistently reflects this difference and bombings show higher propensity to anonymity between 1998-2010 whilst armed assault are more likely to be anonymous between 1970 and 1997. This suggests that concerns about the impact of excessive violence on an audience are shared in both periods. In the first period assassinations are the qualifier of more discriminate violence and at the same time shows a high propensity to anonymity between 1970 and 1997. However according to the paradigm of propaganda by the deeds political assassinations by clandestine groups should have a high claiming rate when they are a political statement and a low claiming rate when they are a form of punishment. Thus this finding suggests that between 1970 and 1997 a large number of assassinations were not executed in the name of propaganda rather as forms of punishment or foul play in international relations. Mimicry in the form of anonymity – and false flags - is the obvious signature of perpetrators whose audience is not the public. The high propensity to leave without an author highly sophisticated actions such as assassinations strongly suggests that foul playing in international relations is responsible for those actions between 1970 and 1997 (Conrad 2011).

Suicide attacks are of particular interest. Anonymous suicide attacks between 1982 and 1997 were much fewer than in the following period. A crucial difference is that between 1982 and 1997 suicide missions were staged in conflicts were nationalist and social grievances were at stake (Israel and West Bank, Turkey, Sri Lanka) whilst between 1998 and 2010 they are
mostly hosted within conflicts with strong religious connotations besides other grievances (Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan). Yet it would be simplistic to draw the conclusion that religiously motivated conflicts modify the incentive of the perpetrators to claim in favour of anonymity. Expectations based on the paradigm of propaganda by the deeds are not failed even in the context of these conflicts: they register the highest claiming rate among types of attack in the database before and in particular after Iraq is excluded from the counting. The high rate of suicide missions without an author in Iraq defies the expectation based on the resource content of the action according to which they should not be anonymous and suggests that suicide missions become both a signal of strength and resolve but also a tactical weapon of last resort in asymmetrical irregular war. This feature however can be extended to Afghanistan only to a point albeit it is the theatre of a conflict much similar to the one in Iraq.

The ranking of the targets is very similar between the two periods and private citizens and properties top it. In the analysis of transnational terrorism based on the ITERATE database instead the targeting of private citizens and property is marked as a difference between ideological and religious types of terrorism (Robinson, Crenshaw, Jenkins 2006). GTD however records both domestic and transnational events and it has been noted that the latter albeit more advertised are a minor portion of political violence which is essentially a domestic affair (LaFree 2010). As such results based on GTD have a larger scope and reflects a picture of political violence closer to reality. What seems to qualify the difference between the two periods instead are attacks on business targets and military installations that were much more prominent – and have much lower propensity to anonymity - between 1970 and 1997 than in the more recent period. This result is consistent with political violence inspired by Marxism and nationalist/separatist grievances. The propensity to anonymity by type of targets shows among differences of volume and distributions a common thread: the targets more likely to be anonymous in both periods are not among the most common. This suggests both that patterns of attacks could be clues to attributing responsibility to groups and that groups more actively claim actions that are core to their strategies.

The analysis of the lethality of the attacks as well does not support fully the claim according to which increasing lethality is a function of increased anonymity marking a new phase of terrorism. Once Iraq is removed from the counting the propensity to leave high fatality rate incidents without an author is not higher between 1998 and 2010 than in the previous period.
This finding suggests that the claim according to which more lethal attacks foster anonymity and mark a new phase of terrorism (Hoffman 1997) rests on shaky grounds.

There is at least one attribute of anonymous political violence that is not consistent with the paradigm of propaganda by the deeds. In spite of individual case studies showing the contrary (Hoffman 2010) the presence of more than one group in a conflict increases the likelihood of anonymity in the GTD between 1998 and 2010. There is a simple explanation intrinsic to the way the GTD is constructed. By having more than one group in a conflict anonymity is increased as attributions to a group become more difficult. In line with outbidding theory however we should register an increased rate of claims to privatize the political effect of the action. We should also expect a multiplication of instances of strategic mimic behaviour as a consequence of intra groups rivalries and the consequent further increase of claims (Pizzini-Gambetta 2014, Hamill forthcoming). Unfortunately we cannot compare the two periods as the variable conflates both attributions and claims for the period between 1970 and 1997. This result however is in line with criticism to the logic of outbidding as a generalized theory of terrorism tested on the period 1970-2004 (Findley, Young 2012).

Most attributes of anonymity do not fully support the hypothesis that it is the mark of a new phase of terrorism where the incentives of the perpetrators are substantially different from the past. Rather it seems that political violence has moved to a different habitat and adapts its means of communication through violence accordingly. The fact that most of the new political violence happens in occupied countries and in the midst of insurgencies is in itself a major change from the political violence of the past. Anonymous violence in Iraq for instance can be explained by sheer volume. When conflicts escalate the goal of violent actions is simply the direct damage they inflict. Once conflicts escalate into real wars, claiming authorship may become redundant or impractical or devoid of meaning given the intensity of the conflict. We should expect that as the number of acts of violence increases the number of unclaimed attacks should also increase and should do so more than proportionally.

Yet within these conflicts claiming behaviour shows variation that deserves further investigation. Why for instance the volume of violence induces anonymity in Iraq while it is not so in Afghanistan begs an explanation. Equally the fact that the propensity to anonymity increases among European ethno-nationalist conflicts after 1998 but not in Sri Lanka or Colombia raises another relevant question. All this conflicts were approaching peace talks in
the period and yet why is anonymity the voice of spoilers (Kydd and Walters 2006, Findley, Young 2013, Min 2013) in Europe and not elsewhere? The different dynamics of individual conflicts may hold the keys to answer these puzzles.

Understanding the mechanisms leading to the choice of anonymity by perpetrators of political violence is relevant to the academic debate about the nature of terrorism and bears policy implications as well. The aim of the RAND report in the early 1980s was to gain insight on patterns of terrorist behaviour so that attributions could be easier. The policy implication of this is double edged. While on one side attributions may lead to incriminations on the other hand they relieve the perpetrators of a heavy burden. The production of a credible claim adds a cost to the execution of the action in terms of preparation, delivery, and risk both in execution and in terms of incrimination (Pizzini-Gambetta 2014). As the report itself shows many groups rely on attributions instead. The practice of third party attribution grants the publicity that the groups are eagerly after for free. The explanations of anonymity that the report provided lead towards that policy implication. “Some of these attacks achieve more publicity than if there had been a claim” (15), only however as there was quick resort to speculations and attributions, I would add. Without attributions these actions would remain mute and perpetrators would need to claim if they wished to yield the benefits of their effort. Is the reduction of uncertainty in the eyes of the public worth such a free gift for the perpetrators of political violence? A thorough understanding of the causes of anonymity may lead to more refined ways to tackle this form of political violence.
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Sources


Diagram 1: **Claiming behaviour basic dichotomy**

```
perpetrator

not claim

claim
```
Diagram 2: Identity signalling range of options

Figure 1:

Trend of events 1970-2010
Figure 1a:

Events of political violence

Figure 1b:

Events of political violence
Figure 1c:

Events of political violence

Figure 1d:

Events
Figure 2:

**Political violence (1970-2010)**

- Anonymous events
- All events
- Linear (Anonymous events)

Figure 3:

**Events claimed, attributed to a group and to unknown perpetrator by period**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Generic attribution</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Claimed group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- 1970-1998
- 1998-2010
Figure 4b:

propensity to anonymity (1998-2010)
Figure 5:

Comparative ranking by country

Peru
Colombia
El Salvador
Northern Ireland
India
Philippines
South Africa
United States
Lebanon
Pakistan
Italy
Corsica
Algeria
France
Israel
West Bank and Gaza Strip

1998-2010
1970-1997
Figure 6:

**Distribution by region**

- Western Europe
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Southeast Asia
- South Asia
- South America
- Russia & the Newly Independent States (NIS)
- North America
- Middle East & North Africa
- Eastern Europe
- East Asia
- Central Asia
- Central America & Caribbean
- Australasia & Oceania

Colors indicate:
- Red: 1998-2010
- Blue: 1970-1997

Regions:
- Australasia & Oceania
- Central America & Caribbean
- Central Asia
- Eastern Europe
- East Asia
- Middle East & North Africa
- North America
- North Africa & the Newly Independent States (NIS)
- South Asia
- South America
- Southeast Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Western Europe
- Western Europe

Legend:
- 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100% 120%
Figure 7:

Events attributed to unknown perpetrators and generic attributions by country (absolute numbers)

- Colombia
- India
- El Salvador
- Pakistan
- Guatemala
- South Africa
- Lebanon
- Turkey
- Chile
- Peru
- United States
- Algeria
- Israel
- West Bank and Gaza Strip
- Sri Lanka
- Italy
- Philippines
- Northern Ireland
- Corsica
- Argentina
- Spain
- France
- Iran
- Germany
- Greece
- Bangladesh
- Russia
- Bolivia
- Mexico
- Japan
- Brazil
- Egypt
- Haiti
- Thailand
- Honduras
- Ecuador
- Tajikistan
- Great Britain
- Venezuela
- China
- Indonesia
- Nicaragua
- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Yugoslavia
- Georgia
- Panama
- Myanmar
- Cyprus
- Soviet Union
- Portugal
- Yemen
- Puerto Rico
- Albania
- Zimbabwe
- Belgium
- Austria
- Nigeria
- Netherlands
- Namibia
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Rhodesia
- Papua New Guinea
- Kuwait
- Kenya
- Sweden
- Jordan
- Bahrain
- Sudan
- Uruguay
- Senegal
- Guadeloupe
- Nepal
- Ireland
- Suriname
- Somalia
- Saudi Arabia
- Macedonia

- 1998-2010
- 1970-1997
Figure 8: Propensity to anonymous political violence by country

- Macedonia
- China
- Albania
- Russia
- Yemen
- Tajikistan
- Bahrain
- Haiti
- Georgia
- Soviet Union
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Brazil
- West Bank and Gaza Strip
- Sweden
- India
- Afghanistan
- Bolivia
- Zimbabwe
- Israel
- Algeria
- Ecuador
- Thailand
- Guatemala
- Iran
- Kuwait
- Indonesia
- Cyprus
- Panama
- Iraq
- Kenya
- Argentina
- Saudi Arabia
- Lebanon
- South Africa
- Japan
- Austria
- Papua New Guinea
- Rhodesia
- Mexico
- Jordan
- Nepal
- Honduras
- Switzerland
- Guadeloupe
- Venezuela
- Netherlands
- Corsica
- Bangladesh
- Sudan
- Portugal
- Greece
- Italy
- United States
- Somalia
- Namibia
- Belgium
- Turkey
- Chile
- Nicaragua
- Myanmar
- Colombia
- Egypt
- France
- Suriname
- Senegal
- El Salvador
- Puerto Rico
- Great Britain
- Northern Ireland

1998-2010
1970-1997
Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>Attacks</th>
<th>Attributed to unknown perpetrator</th>
<th>Generic attribution</th>
<th>Claimed and attributed to group</th>
<th>Claimed</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-2010</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1997</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-2010</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9:

Events by type of attacks

- Unknown
- Unarmed Assault
- Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
- Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)
- Hijacking
- Facility/Infrastructure Attack
- Bombing/Explosion
- Assassination
- Armed Assault

Legend:
- □ Iraq excluded
- ■ 1998-2010
- ● 1970-97

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XIII ECPR General Conference, Glasgow 3-6 September 2014
Figure 9a:

**Propensity to anonymity by type of attack**

- Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)
- Hijacking
- Armed Assault
- Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
- Assassination
- Bombing/Explosion
- Facility/Infrastructure Attack

Legend:
- Iraq excluded
- 1998-2010
- 1970-1997
Figure 10:

Attacks by target

Figure 11

Propensity to anonymity by target

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Figure 12:

![Events by type of weapon diagram](image)

Figure 12a:

![Propensity to anonymity by type of weapon diagram](image)
Figure 13:

**Distribution of actions by lethality**

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>11-100</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14:

**Propensity to anonymity**

<table>
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