



The Credibility Paradox: Violence as a Double-Edged Sword in International Politics¹

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Implicit in the rationalist literature on bargaining over the last half-century is the political utility of violence. Given our anarchical international system populated with egoistic actors, violence is thought to promote concessions by lending credibility to their threats. From the vantage of bargaining theory, then, empirical research on terrorism poses a puzzle. For nonstate actors, terrorism signals a credible threat in comparison with less extreme tactical alternatives. In recent years, however, a spate of studies across disciplines and methodologies has nonetheless found that neither escalating to terrorism nor with terrorism encourages government concessions. In fact, perpetrating terrorist acts reportedly lowers the likelihood of government compliance, particularly as the civilian casualties rise. The apparent tendency for this extreme form of violence to impede concessions challenges the external validity of bargaining theory, as traditionally understood. In this study, I propose and test an important psychological refinement to the standard rationalist narrative. Via an experiment on a national sample of adults, I find evidence of a newfound cognitive heuristic undermining the coercive logic of escalation enshrined in bargaining theory. Due to this oversight, mainstream bargaining theory overestimates the political utility of violence, particularly as an instrument of coercion.

“The most severe challenge to bargaining theory arises from the cognitive and decision-making biases”

(Lake 2010a:45).

Implicit in the rationalist literature on bargaining over the last half-century is the political utility of violence (for example, Fearon 1994a; Lake 2010b). Given our anarchical international system populated with egoistic actors, violence is thought to promote concessions by lending credibility to their threats. In dyadic competitions between a defender and challenger, violence enhances the credibility of his threat via two broad mechanisms familiar to theorists of international relations. First, violence imposes costs on the challenger, credibly signaling resolve to fight for his given preferences. Second, violence imposes costs on the defender, credibly signaling pain to him for noncompliance (Schelling 1960, 1966). All else equal, this forceful demonstration of commitment and punishment capacity is believed to increase the odds of coercing the defender’s preferences to overlap with those of the challenger in the interest of peace, thereby opening up a proverbial bargaining space (for example, Powell 1999).² Such logic is applied in a wide range of contexts to explain the strategic calculus of states, and increasingly, nonstate actors.

From the vantage of bargaining theory, then, empirical research on terrorism poses a puzzle. For nonstate challengers, terrorism does in fact signal a credible threat in

comparison with less extreme tactical alternatives. In recent years, however, a spate of empirical studies across disciplines and methodologies has nonetheless found that neither escalating to terrorism nor with terrorism encourages government concessions. In fact, perpetrating terrorist acts lowers the likelihood of government compliance, particularly as the civilian casualties rise. The apparent tendency for this extreme form of violence to impede concessions challenges the external validity of bargaining theory, as traditionally understood. In Kuhnian terms, the negative coercive value from escalating represents a newly emergent anomaly to the reigning paradigm, inviting reassessment of it (Kuhn 2012).

That is the purpose of this study—a reassessment of the dominant bargaining paradigm given the anomaly that escalating to terrorism or with terrorism actually hinders coercive success, despite enhancing the credibility of the threat. Why might escalation fail to produce superior, even commensurate gains when it boosts the credibility of a threat? Almost in passing, Schelling provides a potential clue. He mentions that for coercion to work, the challenger must signal not only a credible threat to inflict pain when concessions are withheld, but also a credible promise to remove the pain in the event concessions are forthcoming. Otherwise, no incentive exists for complying with the demands (Schelling 1966:75–76).³

Schelling and his rationalist disciples analyze escalation, however, only in terms of its positive effect on the threat—not the potentially negative effect on the promise. Neglected is what I call the Credibility Paradox: In international politics, the very escalatory acts that add credibility to a challenger’s threat can subtract credibility from his promise. Mainstream bargaining theory appreciates how violence strengthens the credibility of his threat, but

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² Schelling includes both deterrence and compellence in his definition of coercion. In contemporary usage, however, coercion is normally restricted to acts of compellence. A bargaining space or range is typically understood as the set of potentially acceptable preferences shared by both the challenger and defender; in the absence of such a space, compromise is impossible.

³ The bargaining literature focuses on the credibility of the threat, not the promise. For a similar reading, see Lebow and Stein (1994); Schultz (2001).

not the attendant risk of weakening his promise and with it the logic of bargaining. The Credibility Paradox is due to the Correspondence of Means and Ends bias, a new-found cognitive heuristic in international affairs substantiated via an experiment. Contrary to the strategic choice literature underlying mainstream bargaining theory, the experiment indicates that defenders are apt to infer the extremeness of a challenger's preferences directly from the extremeness of his tactics notwithstanding the nature of his actual demands. Because of this human tendency to confound the extreme means of the challenger with his presumed ends, escalation can discredit his vow to remove the pain regardless of whether the defender were to accommodate his demands. Without appreciating how escalation threatens the credibility of the challenger's promise to desist in exchange for compliance, bargaining theorists systematically overestimate the political utility of violence, particularly as an instrument of coercion.

My argument proceeds in seven sections. In the first, I summarize the core premise of bargaining theory that violence helps challengers to coerce concessions by lending credibility to their threats under anarchy. In the second section, I apply this familiar framework to nonstate actors by explaining how terrorist violence in particular enhances the credibility of their threats in seeming accordance with the dominant paradigm. In the third section, I present the anomaly—mounting empirical evidence across disciplines and methodologies that escalating to terrorism or with terrorism actually decreases the odds of bargaining success, despite elevating the threat to the targets of the pressure. In the fourth and fifth sections, I describe my theory to account for the anomalous empirics and test it with an experiment embedded in a survey on a large national sample of American adults. Fielded by the survey research firm YouGov/Polimetrix, the experiment demonstrates how escalating to terrorism or with terrorism adds credibility to a challenger's threat and yet subtracts credibility from his promise to ever remove it, undermining support for concessions. In the sixth section, I demonstrate the generalizability of the Credibility Paradox beyond the tactic of terrorism. The seventh section concludes with a broad appeal for political scientists to follow the lead of economists by integrating rationalist and psychological insights when their combination yields superior predictions, and I offer detailed recommendations to advance this behavioral revolution in bargaining theory.

Violence as a Credible Signal of Threat

As a product of the Cold War, bargaining theory has traditionally focused on conflict between states, not challenges to them from below. All else equal, violence is thought to help challenger states achieve their given preferences (for example, Baldwin 2000:104; Byman and Waxman 2002:10; Kinsella and Russett 2002:1047; Slantchev 2005:533). The presumed relationship between escalation and compliance is positive, Lake remarks: "As a general rule, the greater the violence threatened or inflicted by A (the coercer), the more likely B (the target) is to comply with A's demand. This is the dominant way in which power is conceived in international relations" (2010b:6). Escalating to violence, but especially with violence is believed to help challenger states coerce compliance by enhancing the credibility of their threats, in two main ways. At their heart are Schelling's pioneering ideas on how escalation signals to the defender under

anarchy that the challenger is both willing and able to punish him for noncompliance.

First, bargaining theory underscores how escalation adds credibility to threats by signaling that the challenger is resolved. In the 1960s, Schelling (1960, 1966) theorized that states possess private information about their commitment to winning a dispute. Because fighting is not cost-free, escalation separates bluffers from the truly committed. Spearheaded by Fearon (1994b, 1995) in the mid-1990s, a rich research program unlocks the strategic basis of escalation, largely by developing stronger micro-foundations of the associated costs with waging or even threatening war. The most obvious costly signal is in blood and treasure; by depleting finite human and financial resources, fighting incurs "sunk costs" even for the triumphant. Compared to economic sanctions, for instance, military combat is invariably registered in the literature as a more credible signal of resolve due to the elevated costs to the challenger (for example, Morrow 1989). Fighting inflicts not only direct human and financial tolls on challenger states, but it also jeopardizes these endowments by what Schelling (1960) described as "leaving something to chance." Bargaining theorists have also seized on this point to show how escalation adds credibility to threats by requiring states to cede control over the process and outcome of the conflict, generating an autonomous risk of ever costlier developments (for example, Powell 1985). Finally, an influential strain of bargaining theory expands Schelling's ideas on "audience costs" by revealing how escalation can accrue costs to challenger states from third parties independent of the defender. With important variations, these works generally demonstrate how escalation is a particularly credible threat from democratic leaders due to the electoral costs of then failing to deliver. For this micro-mechanism, too, the relationship between escalation and costs is positive, Fearon explains: "The greater the escalation, the more humiliating the acquiescence, and the greater the audience's dissatisfaction" (1994b:580). In these ways, bargaining theory highlights that there are multiple costs to challenger states for escalating and that these costly signals enhance the credibility of their threats, adding pressure on defenders to relent.

Second, bargaining theorists highlight that escalation also lends credibility to threats by inflicting costs on the defender. Schelling established that physical pain is the most credible signal of the challenger's "power to hurt" him in a world of asymmetric information (1966:3). By employing a measure of force, the state displays its threat is not empty (Walter 2009). Crucially, bargaining theory predicts that challenger states will gain coercive leverage by raising the costs of resistance because, as rational actors, defenders are expected to become more pliant as their adversaries reveal heightened punishment capacity with larger amounts of pain. According to the standard rationalist narrative, coercion will ultimately succeed when the expected costs to the defender outstrip his interest in resisting the demand. As George explains, "The central task of a coercive strategy is to create in the opponent the expectation of costs of sufficient magnitude to erode his motivation to continue what he is doing" (1991:11). More recently, Byman and Waxman reiterate the prevailing view of how coercive bargaining works: "Coercion should work when the anticipated suffering associated with a threat exceeds the anticipated gains of defiance" (2002:10). In sum, a key legacy of Schelling is that escalation helps to promote concessions by lending credibility to threats

under anarchy, namely by signaling that the challenger is both willing and able to punish political intransigence. In the next section, I apply this framework to nonstate actors by describing how terrorist violence in particular enhances the credibility of their threats in seeming accordance with mainstream bargaining theory.

Terrorist Violence as a Credible Signal of Threat

Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, many political scientists have applied the aforementioned bargaining framework to nonstate actors, particularly those that escalate to or with terrorism (for example, Lake 2002; Kydd and Walter 2006; Berman and Laitin 2008; Siegel and Young 2009). Of course, states and nonstate actors approach the decision to escalate from opposite structural conditions. The former generally bargain from a position of strength, whereas the latter are by definition in a position of weakness. Otherwise, the strategic logic is identical (Pape 2003). Like states, nonstate actors operate in a competitive international arena of incomplete information, where they too have an incentive to overstate their threats to achieve their preferences. By escalating—in this case, against civilians—terrorists also inflict costs on themselves and the target that display their commitment and punishment capacity. In this way, terrorists reveal the threats that they actually pose, raising pressure on targets to comply.

For nonstate challengers, employing terrorism is unquestionably a credible signal of resolve based on the standard arguments in bargaining theory. Perpetrating terrorist acts is costly in blood and treasure compared to relying on less extreme tactical alternatives. In her historical investigation of protest, Chenoweth and Lawrence find “The likelihood of being killed while carrying out one’s duties as an armed insurgent is high, whereas many lower-risk tactics are available to participants in a nonviolent resistance campaign” (Chenoweth and Lawrence 2010:257). So accepted are the relative dangers of terrorism that scholars commonly analyze its usage as a collective action problem (for example, Wood 2003). Clearly, the high likelihood of expending terrorist members reveals their own commitment. Yet it also exhibits that of the larger organization from which they hail—one evidently prepared to sacrifice not only critical manpower, but the very cadres whose resolve would have made them valuable in other key roles (Berman and Laitin 2008). Such determined members are always in precious supply regardless of what leaders of these groups may say. Gould captures the essence of this point: “While activists might have little trouble persuading a casual acquaintance to sign a petition, they would have great difficulty convincing such a person to risk injury, death, or imprisonment” (1995:204). The moral repugnance of killing civilians drains the pool of potential terrorists, adding to the costs of losing even one (Chenoweth and Lawrence 2010). And naturally, the costs of utilizing terrorism include financial ones in terms of both conducting operations and bearing the response. In addition to these sunk costs from using terrorism, Mueller’s (2006) research details how adopting this tactic leaves something to chance by provoking capricious government overreactions. The historical record is replete with aggrieved parties escalating to or with terrorism, aware that the additional pain to the target would boost the odds of paying a prohibitively steep price. Afghan tribal leaders, for instance, warned Osama bin Laden against committing the September 11

attacks due to uncertainty over the costliness of the American reaction (9/11 Commission 2004:251). Finally, nonstate actors that employ terrorism are manifestly willing to countenance the costs from other parties as well, viz. audience costs. Perhaps more than any other tactic, terrorism offends constituencies beyond the target of the pressure (Hultman 2005; Laitin and Shapiro 2008). As Weinstein notes: “Undoubtedly, groups that deploy violence against noncombatants incur significant costs in consequence. Indiscriminate violence...damages the reputation of the group both within the country and outside of it” (2007:206). In fact, such post-attack losses of support are among the most common ways for terrorist groups to end (Cronin 2009). Because of all these costs to nonstate actors as identified in bargaining theory, scholars agree that using terrorism enhances the credibility of their threats by revealing resolve (for example, Pape 2005; Kydd and Walter 2006).

Terrorism also adds credibility to threats by showing that nonstate challengers possess the power to hurt. Terrorism specialists acknowledge the difficulties in determining the resources of adversarial groups, perhaps even more so than with adversarial states (Schmid and Jongman 1988:488). For this reason, their tactics are likewise revealing. In comparison with terrorism, moderate tactics such as labor strikes, consumer boycotts, lock-downs, and sit-ins require little physical capability in terms of agility, stamina, or strength (Chenoweth and Lawrence 2010:254). Nor do nonviolent methods require arms, ammunition, explosives, or training to master them. Reliance on nonviolence therefore does not settle a crucial question under anarchy of whether the challenger poses a legitimate physical threat, whereas terrorism leaves no doubt he is capable of making the target pay (DeNardo 1985:36).

Terrorism is a “weapon of the weak,” but only in the sense that its practitioners are nonstate actors and therefore less capable than their government foes. In a recent review, Fortna (2012) finds no empirical evidence that weaker groups are prone to terrorism. Consistent with bargaining theory, she shows that the strongest rebel groups in civil wars are the most likely to engage in terrorism by attacking the population. Similarly, Asal and Rethemeyer (2008) demonstrate that membership size and other organizational resources are significant predictors of terrorist lethality. A case study on al-Qaida illustrates this point by detailing how its production of terror peaked with organizational capacity (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Jones 2008). Conversely, Horowitz (2010) notes that some groups aspire to use terrorism, but are too weak to sustain attacks. For this reason, Bloom (2004) theorizes that multiple groups claim credit for the same incident in a competition to project “militant credibility.” Formal models therefore appear to rest on solid empirical ground in taking terrorism as a proxy for group capability, with greater lethality signaling additional punishment capacity (for example, Lapan and Sandler 1993).

When political scientists apply bargaining theory to terrorism, they naturally predict that the violence will help nonstate actors to coerce government compliance, especially as the level of pain rises. Kydd and Walter maintain, “The greater the costs a terrorist organization is able to inflict, the more credible its threat to inflict future costs, and the more likely the target is to grant concessions” (2006:59–60). Pape likewise contends that terrorists aiming to exact concessions will try to kill as many people as possible because the apparent risk of

future pain “maximizes the coercive leverage” (2003:28). Hoffman and McCormick also draw on bargaining theory, predicting that terrorists will gain “leverage at the bargaining table” in proportion to their lethality Hoffman and McCormick (2004:250). This bargaining process is modeled, with governments modifying their posterior positions of whether to compromise based on the presumed resources of the perpetrators as reflected in the number of civilians killed (for example, Overgaard 1994). Mirroring the standard rationalist narrative applied to challenger states, defenders are expected to comply when the anticipated cost of the terrorism exceeds their interest in resisting the demands. As Pape states, terrorism succeeds by creating “mounting civilian costs to overwhelm the target state’s interest in the issue in dispute and so to cause it to concede the terrorists’ political demands” (2005:30). In the next section, however, I present a growing body of empirical evidence contra the predictions of bargaining theorists.

Anomalous Empirics

Bargaining theory is notoriously difficult to evaluate empirically. A core premise since Schelling, however, is that because violence lends credibility to threats, it should help challengers to achieve their given preferences. Application of this framework to nonstate actors therefore generates two testable predictions about terrorism, all else equal: (i) Escalating to this tactic should increase the odds of government compliance, or at least not reduce it; and (ii) escalating with this tactic should yield even better, certainly no worse, bargaining outcomes. Disconfirming evidence would therefore show that (i) adopting terrorism does not promote concessions and actually lowers the likelihood of government accommodation, and (ii) intensifying the pain with more lethal terrorist attacks further inhibits bargaining success. Both sets of empirics are emerging, challenging the external validity of bargaining theory.

For decades, terrorism specialists have expressed skepticism that attacking civilians helps nonstate actors to achieve their strategic demands. In the 1970s, Laqueur (1976) published a paper entitled “The Futility of Terrorism,” in which he asserted that terrorist groups seldom attain their political platforms. In the 1980s, Crenshaw also observed that terrorists do not obtain their given political ends, and “Therefore one must conclude that terrorism is objectively a failure” (1988:15). Similarly, RAND remarked, “Terrorists have been unable to translate the consequences of terrorism into concrete political gains... It is a fundamental failure” (Cordes, Hoffman, Jenkins, Kellen, Moran and Sater 1984:49). Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, several large-*n* observational studies have offered a firmer empirical basis. These reveal that only a handful of terrorist groups have managed to accomplish their political platforms (Abrahms 2006; Jones and Libicki 2008; Cronin 2009). All of the authors conclude that terrorism does not encourage concessions. Abrahms (2006) shows that none of the politically successful groups in his sample relied on terrorism as the primary coercive tactic. Jones and Libicki note that in the few cases in which terrorist groups have triumphed, terrorism had “nothing to do with the outcome” (2008:33). And Cronin concludes that the victorious achieved their demands “despite the use of violence against innocent civilians [rather] than because of it,” and that “The tactic of terrorism might have even been counterproductive” (2009:203). Hard case

studies have inspected the limited historical examples of clear-cut terrorist victories, determining that these salient events were idiosyncratic, unrelated to the harming of civilians, or both (for example, Neumann and Smith 2007; Rose, Murphy and Abrahms 2007; Cronin 2009; Dannenbaum 2011).

But without systematically comparing terrorism to more moderate tactical alternatives, none of that research directly contradicts bargaining theory by demonstrating that the escalation itself impedes government compliance. Such empirics are also emerging, however, notwithstanding two methodological constraints. First, the field of international relations has historically ignored non-occurrences of bloodshed, restricting comparative data and analysis (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Second, terrorists are presumably strategic actors who do not employ tactics at random, inviting concern of a selection effect in which the escalation is itself endogenous to the negative bargaining outcome. Mindful of these methodological issues, scholars are nonetheless concluding that escalating to terrorism or with terrorism has an independent, negative impact on government compliance even after tactical covariates are held fixed.

Gaibulloev and Sandler analyze a data set of international hostage crises from 1968 to 2005. They exploit variation in whether the perpetrators escalate by killing the hostages. The study finds that hostage-takers significantly lower the likelihood of achieving their demands by inflicting physical harm in the course of the standoff. The authors conclude that terrorists gain bargaining leverage from restraint, as escalating to “bloodshed does not bolster a negotiated outcome” (2009:19). There is no research consensus on whether the definition of terrorism requires the violent act to inflict physical pain. Terrorism data sets often include all hostage incidents in which an aggrieved person or group issues a demand. Yet many scholars count an act as terrorism only in the event that a measure of physical harm is inflicted, usually in the form of a civilian death (for example, Horowitz 2010). Those logistic regression results may therefore be interpreted as showing that either escalating to terrorism or with terrorism hinders bargaining success. Chenoweth and Stephan (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011) provide additional empirical evidence that meting out pain hurts nonstate actors at the bargaining table. Their studies compare the coercive effectiveness of 323 violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns from 1900 to 2006. Like Gaibulloev and Sandler, the authors find that refraining from bloodshed significantly raises the chances of government accommodation even after correcting for selection issues. Chenoweth and Stephan employ an aggregate measure of violence that includes both indiscriminate attacks on civilians and discriminate attacks on military personnel or other government officials, which are frequently differentiated from terrorism as insurgent, guerrilla, or militant attacks (for example, Ganor 2002). Other statistical research suggests that when terrorist attacks are combined with such discriminate violence, the bargaining outcome is not additive; on the contrary, the pain to the population significantly decreases the odds of government concessions (Abrahms 2012; Fortna 2012), especially against democracies (Abrahms 2007). Getmansky and Sinmazdemir (2012) find that the Israeli government in particular is significantly less likely to cede land to the Palestinians when they have perpetrated terrorism. To mitigate selection bias, they exploit variation in the operational out-

come of terrorist attacks; evidently, only those that physically harm civilians inhibit Israeli concessions.

Each of those works is a coercion study in which the dependent variable is bargaining outcomes. But scholars are finding complementary results with public opinion data. Without exception, this research shows that terrorism does not intimidate citizens of target countries into supporting more dovish politicians. Quite the opposite, terrorism systematically raises popular support for right-wing leaders opposed to concessions. In a couple of statistical papers, Berrebi and Klor (2006, 2008) find that terrorist fatalities within Israel significantly boost local support for anti-accommodation right-bloc parties, such as the Likud. Other quantitative work demonstrates that the most lethal terrorist incidents in Israel are the most likely to induce this rightward electoral shift. The authors conclude that heightening the pain to civilians tends to “backfire on the goals of terrorist factions by hardening the stance of the targeted population” (Gould and Klor 2010:1507). These trends appear to be the international norm, not Israel-specific. Chowanietz (2010) analyzes variation in public opinion within France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States from 1990 to 2006. In each target country, terrorist attacks have shifted the electorate to the political right in proportion to their lethality. More anecdotally, similar observations have been registered after mass casualty terrorist attacks in Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, the Philippines, Russia, and Turkey (for example, Wilkinson 1986:52; Mueller 2006:184, 587). In a summary of the literature, RAND concludes: “Terrorist fatalities, with few exceptions, increase support for the bloc of parties associated with a more intransigent position. Scholars may interpret this as further evidence that terrorist attacks against civilians do not help terrorist organizations achieve their stated goals” (Berrebi 2009:189–190). Psychologists are replicating these results in laboratory experiments, further ruling out the possibility of a selection effect (for example, Pyszczynski, Rothschild and Abdollahi 2008). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most notorious rebel leaders in modern history, from Abdullah Yusuf Azzam to Regis Debray, Vo Nguyen Giap, Che Guevara, and Carlos Marighela admonished their foot-soldiers against targeting the population because the indiscriminate violence was proving counterproductive (Wilkinson 1986:53, 59; Rapoport 2004:54–55).

As an object of empirical inquiry, terrorism is notorious for defying generalizations. But this unusual convergence of empirics across disciplines and methodologies has become conspicuous from the vantage of bargaining theory. Contrary to its predictions, the evidence strongly indicates that escalating to terrorism or with terrorism inhibits government compliance, despite bolstering the credibility of nonstate threats. In the next section, I propose a theory to account for the anomalous results.

The Credibility Paradox

The evidence that terrorism increases the credibility of threats and yet decreases the odds of government concessions presents an anomaly for bargaining theory, inviting reevaluation of it. Indeed, the standard rationalist narrative attends to only half of the theoretical preconditions for coercive success: Logically, the challenger must signal not only a credible threat to inflict pain when concessions are withheld, but also a credible promise to remove the pain in the event concessions are granted. Otherwise, defenders lack incentive to accommodate the demands.

In principle, Schelling purports to appreciate that the credibility of the promise is no less important than the credibility of the threat (1966:75). In practice, however, both he and his rationalist disciples consider only how violence strengthens the credibility of a threat—not whether escalation might also weaken the credibility of the promise, viz., the Credibility Paradox.

The credibility of the promise is disregarded entirely in most rationalist formulations (Jervis, Lebow and Stein 1989:34; Kydd 2005:30). Within international relations, bargaining theory typically assumes that the demands and preferences of the challenger are identical. This assumption underlies what Drezner describes as “the basic narrative of bargaining theory” in which the defender weighs the costs of acceding to the challenger’s demands against continuing to oppose him given the credibility of his threat (2003:645). This narrative is routinely modeled, with games spontaneously ending whenever the defender grants the demands, as these concessions are presumed to satisfy the challenger and thereby terminate the conflict (see Schultz 2001:49). This assumption overlooks a crucial point, however: The credibility of the challenger’s promise hinges on precisely this open question inherent to anarchy, that is, whether his preferences are indeed as moderate as his demands. If not, granting them would not be expected to sate the challenger, undermining his promise along with the strategic logic of appeasing him.

Because mainstream rationalist theory takes the perceived preferences of the challenger as exogenous, it fails to investigate whether they might be endogenous to his painful acts. Such independence of means and ends is enshrined in the broader strategic choice literature, which cautions modelers against committing the “sin of confusion” by inferring preferences from actions as these are shaped by the strategic environment (Frieden 1999:40; see also Morrow 1999). Nonetheless, social scientists have previously unveiled numerous cognitive heuristics that systematically outperform assumptions of perfect rationality (for example, Kahneman and Tversky 1979). In fact, a longtime focus of attributional research is that the intentions of actors are never directly accessible to observers and must therefore be ascertained indirectly. Observers tend to discern the intentions of actors by applying inferential rules based on their behavior. Such heuristics are practical given our cognitive and informational constraints, but can lead to systematic misperceptions or biases (Heider 1958; Jones and Nisbett 1972).

Research on terrorism and violent crime is surprisingly distinct, but citizens of target countries may be subject to the same biases as victims of assault, battery, robbery, and other violent offenses. Baumeister finds that victims of violent crime characteristically suffer from “The Myth of Pure Evil,” a cluster of interrelated biases about the intentions of the perpetrator. In reality, the modal perpetrator is motivated by specific grievances; he victimizes the target as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Because his violence is instrumental, he will usually desist upon obtaining his demands or discovering alternative avenues to achieve them (Baumeister 1999:101–103, 127). From the standpoint of the victim, however, the means of the perpetrator are endogenous to his desired ends. The attacker is ostensibly motivated not to achieve his particular demands, but by the sadistic pleasure of harming the victim (Baumeister 1999:71, 90).⁴

⁴ Baumeister’s research on violence extends the work of other psychologists (for example, Darley 1992).

In the next section, I examine whether citizens of target countries likewise view the extreme means of terrorists as endogenous to their ends. Specifically, I test for evidence of the Correspondence of Means and Ends bias, a new cognitive heuristic in international affairs. The hypothesized bias undergirding the Credibility Paradox is that defenders do not perceive the preferences of challengers independently of their tactical choices. Rather, citizens of target countries draw a direct correspondence between the extremeness of the challenger's tactics and preferences notwithstanding the nature of his actual demands. If defenders inferred the extremeness of the challenger's preferences directly from his tactics, escalation would create a credible commitment problem by rendering his vow to remove the pain unbelievable, regardless of whether the defender were to comply.

For analytical purposes, the extremeness of both an actor's tactics and preferences can be ranked on stylized continua. Within international relations, the extremeness of an actor's tactics is ranked in terms of the pain or physical costs to the population. Killing civilians is widely regarded as an extreme method, certainly in comparison with leaving the population unharmed (see DeNardo 1985:190). The extremeness of an actor's preferences is ranked in terms of the costs of government accommodation. At one end of the spectrum are moderates, who seek money, prisoner releases, or other tangible resources that are relatively inexpensive to relinquish. On the opposite end are extremists, who are motivated to harm the citizens of the target country for whatever reason, be it their ethnicity, religion, or way of life (for example, Marinov 2005). If the Credibility Paradox is valid, we should therefore find that defenders are indeed apt to conclude that a challenger harbors extreme preferences by dint of his employing extreme tactics. Specifically, citizens of target countries should be more likely to believe that a group is bent on harming them when it escalates to or with terrorism—even in cases in which the perpetrators promise to demobilize in exchange for prisoners, money, or other moderate objectives.

Testing the Credibility Paradox

The survey research firm, YouGov/Polimetrix, fielded my experiment over the Internet in May 2010 on a large, national sample of voting-age American citizens. By using random digit dialing to recruit participants and providing free Internet access to households that lack it, Polimetrix can administer survey instruments online to nationally representative samples. This technique is now standard in survey experiments, as the samples generated tend to surpass in quality those from conventional telephone polling (Tomz 2008). The empirical strategy is propitious for both methodological and substantive reasons. First, it enables the investigator to vary the extremeness of the challenger's tactics in a controlled environment unencumbered by selection issues, facilitating precise assessments of how the tactical change alone affects perceptions of the actor's intentions. Second, the subjects were members of the most relevant constituency for assessing the coercive value of terrorism. Terrorists target democracies to convince electorates that accommodating their demands is cheaper than resisting them (Pape 2003). If, however, citizens of target countries tend to conclude that perpetrators of terrorism are perforce unappeasable extremists, then the violence would create a credible commitment problem, empower leaders

opposed to compromise, and thereby lower the odds of government compliance.

All subjects were presented with a simple vignette of an unidentifiable group issuing a traditionally moderate preference through the American media—the release of its imprisoned leaders from US custody in exchange for permanently demobilizing. Subjects were randomly assigned, however, to two conditions that differed along a tactical dimension. In the control condition, the group surrounds a bunch of American civilians, takes them hostage, but does not physically harm anyone in the course of the confrontation. The same information was presented in the treatment condition, except the group escalates tactically by killing the civilians in its custody. To minimize framing issues, I paid attention to the formal aspects of the instrument by avoiding any derivatives of the word “terror” or any other emotive labels to describe either the coercive acts or the actors themselves. The two conditions were thus duplicates, except that in the painful treatment, the moderate group adopts a more extreme method by killing the civilians instead of releasing them unharmed.

Subjects in both conditions were presented with a series of identical multiple choice and ordinal scale questions designed to assess both directly and indirectly the perceived extremeness of the group's preferences. Specifically, all subjects were asked the following set of questions: (i) to evaluate whether the group is motivated to achieve its demand of freeing the imprisoned leaders in US custody or to harm Americans out of hatred toward them; (ii) to rate the group's preferences from 1 to 7 along this continuum;⁵ (iii) to judge whether the group would in fact demobilize upon achieving its demand to free the imprisoned leaders; (iv) to appraise whether the group would derive satisfaction from Americans physically harmed in an unrelated incident that would not contribute to winning back the imprisoned leaders in US custody; and (v) to ascertain whether the group would continue to engage in the same actions against Americans even after discovering a less extreme method that promised to free the imprisoned leaders (Appendix 1).

Following convention in experimental research, I then applied a two-tailed difference of means test to determine whether the tactical manipulation alone yields significant variation in the perceived extremeness of the self-described moderate group's preferences. Answers to each of the five questions strongly confirm the Credibility Paradox and are statistically significant at the .01 level or better (Table 1 and Figure 1). Compared to subjects in the control condition in which no civilians were physically harmed, those exposed to the painful treatment were on average: (i) 27% more likely to believe the group is motivated not to free the imprisoned leaders in US custody, but to harm Americans out of hatred toward them; (ii) 20% more likely to rate the group's preferences as the most extreme on a standard 7-point ordinal scale;⁶ (iii) 23% more likely to believe the group would not

⁵ Respondents selected 1 if they believed the motive was based entirely on hatred toward Americans; 7 if they believed the motive was based entirely to achieve the moderate demand; and 4 if they believed both motives applied equally. The unlabeled values between these options allowed a more nuanced response. A response of “uncertain” was also an option for all subjects.

⁶ Subjects exposed to the painful treatment were also 13% less likely to rate the group's preferences as the least extreme ($p < .001$). The middling option was selected the fewest times, indicating that the rubric of preferences adequately captured respondent perceptions.

TABLE 1. Differences Between Painful Treatment and Painless Control (Vignette 1)

	Question 1	Question 2 (y Opinion)	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Painful Treatment	0.656	3.306	0.738	0.804	0.697
Painless Control	0.381	4.616	0.501	0.47	0.481
Difference	0.274 (0.207 to 0.342)	-1.31 (-1.596 to -1.024)	0.236 (0.171 to 0.302)	0.334 (0.271 to 0.397)	0.216 (0.149 to 0.283)

Note. Vignette 1 refers to the scenario in which the hostage-takers demand prisoners in exchange for permanently demobilizing. Each column reports the average of the painful treatment and painless control for each survey question. Question 2 reports the average given that respondents had an opinion on a 7-point ordinal scale. 95% confidence intervals are in parentheses for each two-tailed difference of means test.

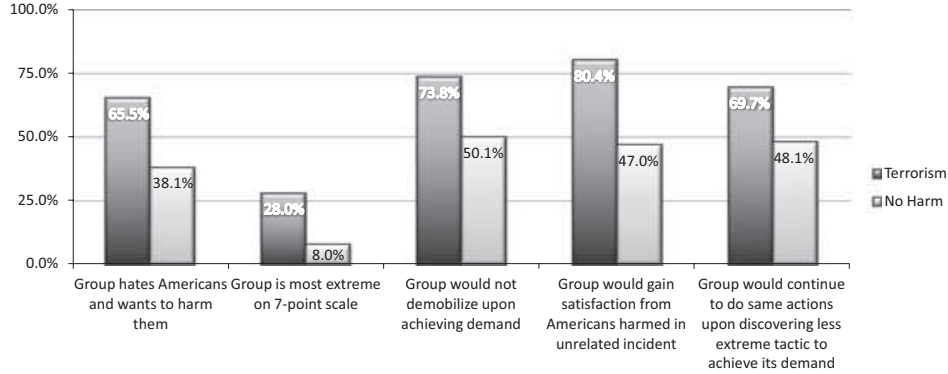


FIG 1. Average Survey Responses for Painful Treatment and Painless Control (Vignette 1)

TABLE 2. Differences Between Painful Treatment and Painless Control (Vignette 2)

	Question 1	Question 2 (y Opinion)	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Painful Treatment	0.693	3.296	0.744	0.798	0.687
Painless Control	0.294	5.031	0.39	0.418	0.425
Difference	0.3998 (0.336 to 0.464)	-1.7354 (-2.018 to -1.452)	0.354 (0.29 to 0.419)	0.38 (0.318 to 0.443)	0.262 (0.195 to 0.329)

Note. Vignette 2 refers to the scenario in which the hostage-takers demand money in exchange for permanently demobilizing. Each column reports the average of the painful treatment and painless control for each survey question. Question 2 reports the average given that respondents had an opinion on a 7-point ordinal scale. 95% confidence intervals are in parentheses for each two-tailed difference of means test.

demobilize upon achieving its demand to free the imprisoned leaders; (iv) 33% more likely to believe the group would derive satisfaction from Americans physically harmed in an unrelated incident that would not contribute to winning back the imprisoned leaders; and (v) 22% more likely to believe the group would continue to engage in the same actions against Americans even after discovering a less extreme method to free its leaders from US custody.

For experimentalists in psychology or behavioral science, the quality of a causal mechanism depends less on the scope of confirming cases than on the theoretical construct and its predictive power (McDermott 2002). As a robustness check, however, I also tested the mechanism with another vignette, again varying only whether the moderate group escalates tactically by killing the hostages instead of releasing them unscathed. Subjects in both conditions were presented with the same set of questions to further assess whether the extremeness of tactics employed by nonstate actors informs perceptions of their preferences independent of their actual demands (Appendix 1). Across questions, those exposed to the painful treatment were again significantly ($p < .01$) more

likely to conclude that the perpetrators are motivated to harm the population irrespective of whether the moderate demand were granted (Table 2). Schelling was the first to formally theorize that in international politics, the type of violence used is itself part of the negotiation process. He often said that hostage-taking represents the purest form of coercive bargaining because the perpetrators can pressure compliance by ratcheting up the credibility of their threats with pain (for example, Schelling 1966:192–194). This simple experiment elucidates how pain may strengthen the credibility of a threat but weaken the credibility of the promise, reducing support for compromise among the most relevant constituency.

This is the first controlled experiment on the mechanism of coercion. A concern inherent to this methodology is the sacrificing of external validity for precision. The results appear externally valid, however, in the following ways. First, the vignettes in the experiment are not based on hypothetical scenarios. Each tracks closely with the most common international events from a leading data set on nonstate coercion. International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events, 1968–2005 (ITERATE 5) contains detailed information from over a thousand

international hostage incidents between 1968 and 2005. By far the two most common demands issued are for governments to cede money or prisoners, which occurred in 16% and 11% of the cases, respectively. The perpetrators demand prisoners in vignette 1 and money in vignette 2 in accordance with both the relative frequency of these moderate demands and the definition of terrorism itself as an extremism of means though not necessarily ends (Oberschall 2004:26).⁷

Second, case studies confirm that the publics of target countries are in fact prone to inferring the extremeness of challengers' preferences directly from their tactics, empowering anti-accommodation hardliners in the face of terrorism. Within Israel, polls show that respondents who perceive the tactics of Palestinians as "mainly violent" are more likely to believe their intent is to "destroy Israel." Conversely, respondents who perceive the tactics of Palestinians as "mainly nonviolent" are more likely to believe their intent is merely to "liberate the occupied territories" (Kaufman 1991).⁸ Consistent with the Credibility Paradox, Palestinian terrorism thus erodes Israeli popular support for the peace process, strengthens hawkish leaders opposed to a two-state solution, and lowers the likelihood of government concessions (for example, Berrebi and Klor 2006). The Russian public also infers the extremeness of Chechen preferences directly from their tactics, fortifying hardliners against terrorist appeasement. Before the terrorism commenced, Russians favored granting an independent Chechen state. When terrorism erupted in the late 1990s, however, the Russian public concluded that the Chechens were apparently bent on harming it, shifting popular support away from concessions, while bolstering Vladimir Putin to instead bomb Grozny (Abrahms 2006). Al-Qaida's stated grievances about US-Middle East policies fell on deaf ears for the same reason. Bin Laden and his associates stressed that the purpose of the September 11, 2001, attack was to coerce the United States into withdrawing from the Middle East (for example, Clarke 2004). Polls show, however, that most Americans thought the point was "to harm them" as an end in itself (Harris Poll, 19–24 September), a perception that facilitated George W. Bush's counterterrorism response in the Arab-Muslim world (see Pronin, Kennedy and Butsch 2006).

Third, studies of media coverage of terrorism confirm that it struggles to amplify the political demands of the perpetrators. In their content analysis of terrorism articles in the *New York Times* and *Times of London*, Kelly and Mitchell find that "Less than 10% of the coverage in either newspaper dealt in even the most superficial way with the grievances of the terrorists" (1981:287). Terrorists struggle to broadcast their demands even when the perpetrators emphasize them, are highly educated, and speak the majority language of the target country. As Schmid and De Graaf (1982:111) illustrate via the Weather Underground, "The terrorists could bomb their names on to the front pages, but they could do next to nothing to make sure that the message intended by their bombings was also the message transmitted." Cordes et al. (1984:1) observe that "Although terrorism is often described as a form of communication, terrorists are rather poor communicators," as "The violence of terror-

ism is rarely understood by the public". Hewitt notes that instead of clarifying their preferences, perpetrators of terrorism are seen as engaging in "senseless bestiality" (1993:52), similar to how victims of violent crime view the motives of their attackers (Baumeister 1999). Although most content analyses have a Western bias, the Correspondence of Means and Ends bias does not appear to be culturally contingent.⁹

In sum, observational evidence accords with the experimental results that citizens of target countries do not perceive the means of terrorists as fully independent from their ends. When a nonstate actor escalates against civilians, citizens of the target country are apt to infer that the perpetrator harbors correspondingly extreme preferences, undermining the logic of concessions regardless of whether a bargaining space objectively exists. The Credibility Paradox can account for the empirical evidence that terrorist acts impede government compliance, particularly against democracies (Abrahms 2007), which are even more sensitive to popular pressures against bargaining with ostensibly unappeasable foes. The next section probes the generalizability of the Credibility Paradox to extreme tactics by challenger states.

Generalizability of the Credibility Paradox

The Credibility Paradox predicts that challenger states will also underperform at coercion with extreme tactics. Indeed, the civilian victimization literature generally finds that state challengers likewise fail to benefit politically by targeting the population (see Downes 2008). Carr charts the political successes of empires and great powers based on their brutality toward civilians, providing a wealth of historical examples that "The nation or faction that resorts to warfare against civilians most quickly, most often, and most viciously is the nation or faction most likely to see its interests frustrated and, in many cases, its existence terminated" (Carr 2003:12). More systematically, Pape (1996) analyzes a sample of strategic bombing campaigns from the First World War to the 1990 Persian Gulf War. His analysis reveals that governments reach an inferior bargain when their campaigns target the population, an assessment reaffirmed in independent statistical analysis (Horowitz and Reiter 2001). In the most relevant study, Cochran and Downes (2011) exploit variation in the use of civilian victimization campaigns on interstate war outcomes from 1816 to 2007. Though obviously successful in offing countless civilians, indiscriminate bombings, sieges, missile strikes, and other painful methods against the population do not yield a superior settlement notwithstanding the costs.

When attacked by states, the public tends to favor resistance over compliance regardless of their demands (see Pape 1996; Baumeister 1999:116). As with nonstate challengers, observational evidence abounds that governments risk signaling deep-seated hostility toward the population whenever they target it. In the eighteenth century, Kant (1795) admonished governments against any form of civilian victimization for precisely this reason—the belief they would be misperceived by the surviving citizenry as implacably hostile to them and thus unable to credibly partner a postwar settlement. Similarly, Lebow's case study on the Vietnam War reveals that the indiscriminate bombings

⁷ Pape (2005) shows that even the most lethal terrorists express surprisingly moderate political aims.

⁸ These correlations hold even after controlling for party affiliation, suggesting that the associations are not a function of preexisting beliefs.

⁹ The terms "political extremist" and "zealot" (Rapoport 2004:note 7) are misused internationally as synonyms for terrorists regardless of their particular demands.

and roundups failed to communicate the costs of resisting American demands; instead, the bloodshed inadvertently signaled to the Vietnamese people that the Johnson administration was bent on “hostility and convince[d] its target that it will be the victim of aggression, now and in the future, unless it stands firm” (1996:562).¹⁰ This undiagnosed inference is sometimes modeled for extreme tactics in addition to terrorism. In a prominent application, terrorists bait governments into attacking the local population in order to exhibit their hostility toward it and thus inability to credibly bargain (Lake 2002).

Finally, the Credibility Paradox is consistent with long-standing insights from political psychology that predate the post-9/11 focus on terrorism in political science. This research highlights that dyadic confrontations between defenders and challenger states also deviate from the predictions of mainstream bargaining theory. First, challenger states also struggle to convey their intentions. In *Conflict among Nations*, Snyder and Diesing find in their sample of 181 escalatory threats that only 40% were “correctly interpreted” by the target. The authors underscore how these empirics are problematic for bargaining theory, as “To treat all these characteristics of crisis bargaining merely as deviations from an ideal of perfect rationality would mean that the norm itself would be lost” (1977:237). Case studies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century warfare supply more detailed empirical evidence that the intent was not automatically received, leading Lebow (1989), Snyder (1989), Jervis et al. (1989), and others to conclude that such misperceptions are the central weakness of bargaining theory. Second, the political psychology literature suggests that in conflicts between states, defenders are also known to overrate the extremeness of their adversaries’ intentions, impeding cooperation (for example, Larson 1997). This belief dates to Hobbes, who recognized that even defensive actors may be seen as aggressive, laying the foundation for the security dilemma and associated international relations theories such as structural realism (Kydd 2005; :chapter 5). Third, Jervis has established that the behavior of statesmen may be seen as a reliable “index” of intent because actions are harder to manipulate than words (Jervis 1988:44). Fourth, the political psychology literature reveals that states likewise struggle to decouple themselves from negative perceptions and that the durability of these images in the face of discrepant evidence can lead to biased assessments, which do not seem to be culturally contingent (Jervis 1988:187). Together, such evidence across research programs in both political science, and psychology suggests that the Credibility Paradox is not an artifact of terrorism, but a universal feature of international conflict with implications for state and nonstate challengers alike.

Behavioralism in Bargaining Theory

Over 50 years ago, Verba (1961) instructed political scientists to integrate psychological insights when a synthesis outperforms assumptions of perfect rationality. Bargaining theory remains a product of the rationalist approach, however, with political psychology limited to identifying systematic deviations from it. Surprisingly few studies have attempted to integrate the two perspectives into a unified explanation of how coercive bargaining

actually works (Kahler 1998; Mercer 2005), ideally one that improves predictions without a complete loss of parsimony. In a recent clarion call to the discipline, Lake (2010a) recommends a behavioral revolution in bargaining theory as in economics that relaxes assumptions of perfect rationality in favor of psychologically plausible insights according with human decision making. This study bolsters the proposition that the two paradigms are complementary, with their combination yielding a fuller picture of both the benefits and drawbacks of pain. Schelling and his rationalist disciples illuminate how escalation strengthens the credibility of threats under anarchy, but not the attendant risk of discrediting the promise. In attending to both sides of the bargain, the Credibility Paradox preserves the elegant structure of his conceptually rich framework, but in a more empirically predictive manner.

As with any new concept, the Credibility Paradox invites empirical scrutiny, theoretical refinement, and possible extensions. First, coercion studies should continue isolating the discrete tactical effects from both state and nonstate challengers on bargaining outcomes. Recent studies offer new statistical evidence that escalating to terrorism or with terrorism reduces the odds of government concessions. Although Cochran and Downes (2011) offer strong empirical evidence that civilian victimization campaigns are also ineffective for state challengers, their specific instruments of pain are not tested independently. Future work should investigate whether all tactics underperform at coercion when they physically harm the population.

Though popular, coercion studies are difficult to operationalize. They must grapple with the thorny selection issue that because strategic actors do not employ tactics at random, these may co-vary with lurking variables driving the prospects of victory. In practice, controlling for tactical confounds is challenging in terms of both identifying appropriate proxies and measuring them. But adding relevant controls to future work would help to establish that extreme tactics are not epiphenomenal to bargaining failure. Of course, the utility of coercion research hinges on employing a conceptually meaningful definition. When violence is used to kill off a target, physically control it, or otherwise prevent it from responding, the actor lacks choice and the pressure ceases to be coercive. The provision of choice is fundamental to coercive bargaining and can be operationalized empirically (for example, Cochran and Downes 2011).

Second, these methodological and conceptual challenges can be bypassed using public opinion as the dependent variable instead of government concessions. Recent research shows that electorates gravitate toward right-wing candidates in the face of terrorism, especially after mass casualty attacks. Statistical testing of other extreme tactics should evaluate whether they, too, boost popular support for more intransigent camps, especially as populations suffer. This empirical strategy is no panacea since public opinion is only an indirect measure of policy outcomes. Yet the continued convergence of coercion and public opinion studies would further expose the limitations of civilian targeting as a coercive tool, particularly against democracies.

Third, the development of a more fine-grained taxonomy would add nuance to rating the extremeness of tactics in the international system. The present rubric is admittedly basic, enabling tactical comparisons only in terms of whether the actions visibly inflict physical costs

¹⁰ His case study on the Vietnam War illustrates that Schelling’s recommended strategy was wanting both in theory and practice.

on the population. This framework is a logical starting point given the fact that both the terrorist campaigns of nonstate challengers and the civilian victimization campaigns of state challengers are seen as escalatory and extreme (see DeNardo 1985:190). Still, tactical extremeness might also account for additional variables of pain such as its dispersion and duration.

Fourth, experiments offer a powerful tool for analyzing how variation in the means of international actors affects their presumed ends. Bypassing the selection issues inherent to observational studies, researchers can manipulate tactical variables holding all other factors constant. Presently, experimental evidence for the Credibility Paradox is confined to comparisons within hostage settings. The results are also restricted to American respondents due to the price of subjecting the survey instrument to multiple, nationally representative samples. Research from the attribution, civilian victimization, and political psychology literatures implies that any extreme tactic risks discrediting the challenger's promise. But future experiments, coupled with qualitative in-case comparisons on different national samples, can evaluate other tactical variations on diverse targets of pressure. These studies should be operationalized to minimize any contributory effects from the well-known availability bias of basing inferences on the ease with which certain patterns come to mind (Jervis 1989:22). Theory-informed case selection should therefore include scenarios in which the challenger tends to express only moderate aims, as in hostage settings.

Fifth, formal models on bargaining should incorporate the fact that the means of international actors inform perceptions of their ends. Already, several applications assume that both state and nonstate challengers signal hostility toward the population whenever they physically harm it (for example, De Figueiredo and Weingast 2001; Lake 2002; Bueno De Mesquita and Dickson 2007). This decision rule now has a stronger behavioral basis and can be made explicit. An area for future research, though, is the extent to which political leaders are also subject to the Correspondence of Means and Ends bias or whether they mainly exploit it to resist engaging with adversaries. The political psychology literature suggests that because elites are also human, they are subject to the same cognitive biases as the public, but that it is even more susceptible as these prevail when alternative information is lacking (Jervis 1976: chapter 4).

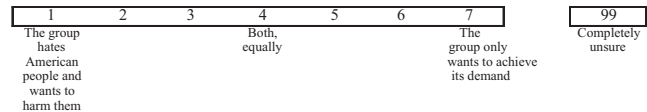
Finally, researchers might therefore probe the hypothesis that citizens of target countries are especially apt at the outset of conflicts to perceive terrorism and other extreme tactics as indices of their intent. The rationalist literature demonstrates that private information decreases over time as adversaries unveil themselves in the course of the confrontation (Fearon 2004). Yet research in political psychology finds that international actors struggle to decouple themselves from indices once negative motives are imputed to them. All challengers must therefore be exceedingly selective in escalating. On one hand, they have to impose costs on target countries and themselves to show that they pose a credible threat. But on the other hand, they must incentivize compliance with restraint or risk being mistaken—perhaps permanently—as an untrustworthy bargaining partner. Violence is thus a double-edged sword in international politics.

Appendix 1: Survey Questions (with pre-Polimetrix formatting)

Question 1: What do you think this group is hoping to achieve? Below are two different viewpoints. Please select the one closest to your own.

Viewpoint A	Viewpoint B:
The group hates Americans and wants to harm them	The group wants only to achieve its demand

Question 2: On the number line below, please indicate why you believe the group took the hostages.



Question 3: Let's imagine the U.S. government grants the demand. Do you believe the group would still engage in the same actions against Americans?

Viewpoint A	Viewpoint B
Yes, the group is a bunch of political extremists	No, the group is only motivated to achieve its demand

Question 4: Let's imagine the group never achieves its demand. Do you believe the group would gain some satisfaction from learning that thousands of American civilians had recently died in a natural disaster (e.g., hurricane, earthquake)?

Viewpoint A	Viewpoint B
Yes, the group wants the United States to suffer as much as possible and would therefore gain some satisfaction if American civilians were killed in a natural disaster	No, the group does not want the United States to needlessly suffer and would therefore not gain any satisfaction if American civilians were killed in a natural disaster

Question 5: Let's imagine the group learns of a less extreme way to achieve its demand. Do you believe the group would still engage in the same actions against Americans?

Viewpoint A	Viewpoint B
Yes, because the group is not motivated only to achieve its demand	No, because the group is motivated only to achieve its demand

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