Terrorism Is What We Make of It:

Construction of Terrorism Designation

By

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to refine our understanding of the social construction of terrorism designation. I examine formal terrorism designations made by the United States (U.S.) Department of State. Conceptualizing terrorism as marker of organizational illegitimacy and threat to national interests, I advance the premise that as the claims-maker, the State Department's designation of terrorism is socially constructed and strategically driven by a combination of both interests *and* legitimacy. I draw a constructivist framework and revisit the contextual analysis of social reality while putting the terrorism construction to its center. While a review of contextual constructionism contributes to the social problem literature, my framework invites the fields of Public Policy and International Relations (IR) into the analysis of how U.S. views the non-state actors as reflected in its patterns of terrorism designation. I intend to develop theoretical and analytic tools for understanding and furthering the social construction perspective that should be central in terrorism designation and definition. Drawing from institutionalist theories, I analyze the roles of collective legitimacy and national interest in the U.S designation of terrorism. I show that a constructivist analysis of terrorism designation is not sufficient based on the concept of legitimacy. State's national interests play a role in this process. Yet, national interests need not originate from materialist concerns. The social construction of national interest provides different insights on which non-state actors are more likely to be designated as terrorists. My findings indicate that the roles of legitimacy and interest should not be treated as opposition but as capturing two ends of a continuum of terrorism designation. My framework calls for a synthesis of literatures, theories and approaches, where social constructionism awaits. Given that terrorism is widely deemed to be one of the primary threats to U.S. security, how the United States designates non-state actors as terrorists also provides insights into our understanding of its overall foreign policy posture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Terrorism plagues our world today as warfare has become increasingly urbanized and asymmetrical in the 21ˢᵗ century. Lives lost from terrorism has risen nine-fold since the year 2000, although 78 percent of all deaths befell only five countries; Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). A spate of attacks in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey and France showed once again that terrorism continues to be a global threat to our world and the ways to counter it require a great deal of political, social and economic measures.

Terrorism is merely a new phenomenon and it is a social problem that does not exist independent of the threat perceptions of people around it. Indeed, social problems are the degree of felt concern over a given issue or condition irrespective of its objective seriousness. The social problem of terrorism is a good example of such contextual perspective. This degree of threat perception can manifest itself:

> "To the constructionist, the subjective reality of social problems can be measured or manifested in: the introduction of bills in legislatures to criminalize, outlaw, or otherwise address the behavior and the individuals supposedly causing the condition; the ranking of a condition or an issue in the public's hierarchy of the most serious problems facing the country" (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009, p. 153).

The formal designation of terrorism, as manifested in the Department of State's Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) list then, warrants a constructionist analysis. Consider for example, why Irish Republican Army (IRA) or Communist Party of India (Maoist), both of which carried out violent attacks and met the criteria of designation, were not designated; but the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a group that sought to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan and establish an Islamic caliphate, is designated although the group is operationally inactive since

the year 2001 and is considered as "a misnomer than a threat" (Stein, Foreign Military Studies Office, 2013).

I focus my analysis on the U.S. case of terrorism designation for theoretical and empirical reasons. The United States is a leading global actor in combatting terrorism and a policy or *norm* entrepreneur on blacklisting terrorist groups (Prakash, 2013). This is noticeable in similar lists adopted in the United Kingdom, United Nations and European Union following the United States wherein such lists has existed comparatively for a longer time.[i] The process of designation might vary across these actors, yet the constructivist framework presented in this thesis can be applied more generally to the question of designation as the variation in institutional design across these actors does not necessarily limit generalizability. Prior research offers a thorough case illustrating such variation across democracies while developing applicable models of designation as well (Beck and Minor, 2013).

Considering its elaborate bureaucratic structure, a global security establishment with geographic combatant commands, adaptation of U.S. military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies to the tasks of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency that fought two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to combat terrorism on global scale, an analysis of who terrorists are and how they are *made to be* is worth of investigation.

Chapter 2: Constructivist Framework

"All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out." (Schattschneider, 1960/1975, p.71)

Problem Definition, Social Constructions and Contextual Constructionism

Political issues are often so complex that they are open to alternative interpretations (Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2001; Chong & Druckman, 2007). How issues or conditions are defined

as policy problems affects governmental actions through which alternative policy solutions are sought (Crenshaw, 2001; Dery, 2000; Jeon & Haider-Markel, 2001; Waugh, 2002). Therefore, it is important to understand why some problems stimulate government action while others are ignored and why a problem is defined in one way or another. This also helps to locate where power lies in political system (Anderson, 2014). Stone (1989) argues that "problem definition is a process of image making, where the images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame, and responsibility" (p.282). The process is more than such attributions as well. Rochefort & Cobb (1994) assert that it also informs about "a condition's perceived social significance, meaning, implications" (p.3), and state that how a problem is emphasized or deemphasized helps push an issue to policy agenda. This process of describing problems in the political arena is problem definition.

What is the perceived social significance of terrorism and how is it defined? When put in context with other forms of violence, terrorism constitutes a lesser problem, per se, considering more than 435,000 people are murdered each year, over 13 times more than the number of lives lost from terrorism (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). According to U.S. State Department, from 2001 to 2014, more than 400,000 people died by firearms inside the U.S, while domestic acts of terrorism claimed 3,030 lives.[ii] The number of U.S. citizens killed overseas as a result of incidents of terrorism from 2001 to 2014 was 345, while the percentage of lives lost from terrorism that have occurred in the West since 2000 is merely 2.6. (START, 2015).[iii] Still, Americans today cite defending the U.S. against terrorism as a top policy priority (76%) while strengthening the nation's economy (75%) and reducing crime (57%) is behind on the list (Pew U.S. Politics & Policy Center, 2015).[iv] Although terrorist violence might be regarded as a relatively rare event and it is "one of the minor causes of human suffering in the world" (Roberts & Horgan, 2010; Williams, 2012, p.

172), terrorism disrupts our most deeply held norms and expectations. As Lizardo (2008) puts it, a war between nation-states or a civil conflict might alarm us, but they hardly "cause the shock and horror that comes from terrorist attacks" (p. 95). Terrorist violence seeks publicity, aims to affect audiences larger than its immediate victims and shakes the foundations of society (Hoffman, 2006; Walt, 2015; Wardlaw, 1989). Therefore, the perceived significance of terrorism is often higher than most other social problems and it stimulates immediate government actions. A few examples of government action stimulated terrorism were the creation of the Deparment of Homeland Security after 9/11 terrorist attacks or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Reveron, Gvosdev, & Owens, 2014).

The question, then, arises: How do we define terrorism? As a policy problem, terrorism has been defined as a crime and law enforcement issue, as warfare or a threat to national security issue, as a social and economic issue, and as a religious and cultural issue, even hinting a clash of civilizations to an extent (Crenshaw, 2001; Neumayer & Plümper, 2009; Spencer, 2012; Waugh, 2002). How terrorism is defined or redefined as a policy problem is important because it influences which particular political institution has jurisdiction and thus can *claim* charge for policymaking initiative. To name a few, these institutions range from the Department of State, the Department of Defense to the Health and Human Services (HHS) and its Center for Disease Control. However, in the case of terrorism, a more complicated concern, which allows for alternative problem definitions and framing (Pokalova, 2010), is actually the equivocal nature of the phenomenon *terrorism* itself.

It is no secret that there is not a consensus among not just academics but also between governments on what constitutes terrorism. Considerable amount of theoretical work on terrorism studied definitions (Cooper, 2001; Hoffman, 2006) including identifying common targets or

actions of terrorist violence (Bergesen, 2007; Goodwin, 2006; Tilly, 2004) and focusing on who the terrorist actor is (Gibbs, 1989; Lizardo, 2008). While Jongman & Schmid (1988) maps more than hundred definitions in terrorism literature, there are at least twenty different legal definitions of terrorism among U.S. governments (Perry, 2003). Beyond such variance, the phenomenon itself is loaded with political and moral debates besides its theoretical and methodological challenges.[v] As PLO Chairman Arafat famously stated in a speech before the United Nations, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (as cited in LaFree & Ackerman, 2009, p. 348). Therefore, the ambiguous, selective, and politicized nature of terrorism makes way for a fluid space where social constructions of terrorism help us make sense of what it is and shape how we respond to it (Chou, 2015).

The phrase "social construction" has been introduced by Berger & Luckmann (1966) in *The Social Construction of Reality*, although constructivist philosophy has deeper roots that goes back to Immanuel Kant and Max Weber. The notion is that the social world is not a *given* and it does not exist *out there* independent of the thoughts and ideas. Relatedly, terrorism is a social construction: not a given objective condition *per se*, but a socially constituted problem contested within a definitional process (Ben-Yehuda, 2012; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009, p. 151; Turk, 2004). While much about social constructions of social problems mostly has been written by sociologists (Best, 1989; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977),[vi] social constructionist framework has also fostered a vast research in political science both in Public Policy and International Relations.

In Public Policy research, analyses of target populations (e.g. deviants) applies a social constructionist framework. For example, Schneider, Ingram and deLeon (2014) illustrate the construction of deviants such as criminals, sex offenders, drug dealers and state that "Historically, the politics of punishment has dominated much of public policy toward deviants, as well as illegal

immigrants and more recently, *terrorists*" (p. 112, emphasis added). Thus, parallels can be drawn from the the social construction framework in public policy, which has been applied to target populations, to the designation of *others* as terrorists. Going back to works as early as Edelman's (1964), this framework has been used beginning with the works of Schneider and Ingram (1988) based on the idea that target populations in public policy design are chosen because of their positive or negative social constructions, enabling political leaders to gain more political capital as they work for the 'good' people and punish the 'bad' people. The social construction of the 'terrorist' speaks to this policy goal and designating groups becomes a policy instrument. In IR, constructivism is an empirical approach that takes on study of international system, which does not exist *out there* on its own, is constructed as the outcome of a set of ideas, a body of thought, a system of norms (Jackson & Sørensen, 2007; Wendt, 1992). For example, categorization of the *other* constructs the *self* and thus leads to the production of policies concerning others (Campbell, 1998; Hopf, 2002; Ruggie, 1998, p. 873; Wendt, 1994, p. 386). *Othering* in identity construction have instrumental roles in shaping the boundaries of policymaking in a subtle yet calculated way. Adler-Nissen (2014) argues, for example, how a separation of *us* from *them* in the stigmatization processes infers that "the labeled group is slightly less human, or, in extreme cases, not human at all" (p.147).[vii] The U.S. response to 9/11 terrorists is a good example of *otherness* in this regard.

Eventually, both Public Policy and IR literatures offer promising insights in order to study terrorism within a social constructionist framework. Moreover, placement of a group on the United States Department of State's Foreign Terrorist Organizations list, in my view, as a foreign policy instrument for counterterrorism is at the crossroads of both literatures. Therefore, I argue that not only terrorist violence, as a policy problem or a social problem, but also how *deviants* or *others*

are constructed, i.e. how non-state actors are designated as terrorists, warrants a social constructionist perspective and thus motivates my constructivist approach.[viii]

I should emphasize that even though one could expect this approach to advance a post-modernist methodology, I cannot see why a social constructionist framework cannot argue for the centrality of social factors such as interests and values (Benjamin & Duvall, 1991), while also posing a structural constructivist approach. As such, while terrorism is a social construct, designation of terrorism does not necessarily demand a post-structuralist methodology.[ix] There are few yet hopeful attempts to study constructivist concepts (e.g. narratives) with a positivist methodology (Jones & McBeth, 2010).[x] In addition, ontological orientations of a post-structuralist analysis of the subject matter in hand would lean towards what Goode & Ben-Yehuda (2009) calls a *strict constructionism* in which there is no way of empirically verifying or refuting the reality of a social problem. Yet, I advance an approach to designation of terrorism what they call a *contextual constructionist* point of view, in which a claim, the reality that is socially structured in need of examination, both objectively exists and is subjectively regarded as a problem. As Goode & Ben-Yehuda exemplifies, "drug abuse is both a problem objectively in that it kills a great many people and subjectively in that it is widely regarded as a problem" (p.152). As such, terrorism is a social problem: not a given objective condition *per se*, but a socially constituted problem. It both objectively and subjectively exists.

To the contextual constructionist, Spector and Kitsuse (1977) argues, *problem defining process* is essential to look at (as cited in Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009, p.154). Indeed, a look at the problem definition process, as I have highlighted, becomes important to locate where power lies in political system and who defines the social problems (Anderson, 2014). Spector and Kitsuse (1977), who contributed to the constructionist approach in social problem analysis, refers to actors

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involved in problem defining process as "claims-makers" sustained by *interests* or *values*, or a *combination* of them" (as cited in Rochefort & Cobb, 1994, p. 6, emphasis added). More specifically, Goode & Ben-Yehuda (2009) echo the same point, which recaps the core of my thesis; when discovering the social problem, "Constructionists emphasize the role of interests, resources and legitimacy" (p.154). Indeed. Incidentally, this is the exact departure point of my thesis because I propose the premise that as the claims-maker, the State Department's designation of terrorism is socially constructed and strategically driven by a combination of both interests *and* legitimacy.[xi] Before I explore my independent variables, legitimacy and interest, in next chapters; I turn to my dependent variable for a brief detailed description and then turn to my independent variables to conclude the framework of my thesis. Theory, model and hypothesis will be discussed in next chapters.

Designation of Terrorism

The ambiguous, selective, and politicized nature of the terrorism phenomenon opens a fluid space allowing the social construction of terrorism and designation of others as terrorists as discussed above. The potential uncertainty is quite astonishing considering the legal, political and fiscal consequences the formal designation of terrorism carries. Placement of a group on State Department's FTO list is regarded as one of the most critical counterterrorism policy instruments (Cronin, 2003; de Jonge Oudraat & Marret, 2010). Turk (2004) notes, "pronouncements by the U.S. State Department reflect assessments not only of objective threat but also of the political, economic, and military implications of naming particular entities as terrorist" (Turk, 2004, p.272). Therefore, studying the pattern of designation shall illustrate not only how it is socially constructed but also how these constructions shape counterterrorism measures in military, judicial or

immigration policies. It is also worth exploring because the US government's designations play a central role in guiding the policy in other countries (Beck & Miner, 2013, p. 848)

In 1997, the State Department to introduced the FTO list regarding information on international terrorist groups. FTOs are foreign organizations that are designated as Tier I category of terrorist organizations by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The Bureau of Counterterrorism in the State Department designates non-state actors as terrorists following several criteria: (a) the organization must be *foreign*; (b) the organization must engage in *terrorist activity* or *terrorism*, or retain the *capability and intent* to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism; (c) the organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must *threaten* the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the *economic interests,* in addition to the safety of individual Americans) of the United States. (Pillar, 2003). The State Department denotes FTO designations "play a critical role in the fight against terrorism and are an effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities, *stigmatizing* the designated groups internationally and pressuring groups to "get out of the terrorism business" (United States Department of State, 2015). As the organization who can command *resources* (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009), the State Department wields bureaucratic power as it bears the role of foreign policy maker (Lowi, Ginsberg, & Shepsle, 2011).

The designation of terrorism has practical advantages. As a frame of reference it facilitates cooperation internationally and it concentrates domestic inter-agency counterterrorism efforts including deportations, criminal prosecutions, freezing fund-raising activities and intelligence gathering depending on the problem definition procured. Considering such efforts could be sustained with other statutes in place in the U.S. (Pillar, 2003), or in other democracies as similar agencies tasked with responsibilities on criminal, legal, immigration and fiscal matters already

exist, it should be stressed that the major role of terrorism designation is certainly a symbolic one, which lends itself to constructivist inquiry, one that this thesis takes on.

Legitimacy

In practical terms, the concept of legitimacy holds a central place in terrorism designation. The goal of terrorism designation is to delegitimize the actors engaged in terrorism and curb the potential recruitment and sympathy from audiences (de Jonge Oudraat & Marret, 2010). Thus, designation stigmatizes and isolates terrorists and "heightens public awareness and knowledge of terrorist organizations" (Pillar, 2003). These goals are indeed located in the social constructionist framework. The constructions of the *other* position our understanding in relation to the *self* and hence legitimize, and even warrant certain foreign policy actions fulfilled by the self against the other (Weldes & Saco, 1996). This positional distance between the self and the other, or *deviants* in Schneider & Ingram's case for example, leads to viewing the claims of the "powerful advantaged groups as being more legitimate" than deviants who "have been stigmatized and labeled by the policy process itself" (1993, p. 342-344).

Theoretically, I advance the premise that terrorism designation is a social construction, albeit one that is driven by legitimacy. Beginning with Weber (1978), the concept has been an attribute of the state, in which the legitimate monopoly on the use of force is the defining feature of modern state. Therefore, accumulation of legitimacy as a symbol of state meant that other contenders for legitimacy, i.e. terrorists, had to lose out (Loveman, 2005). As Lizardo (2008) highlights, "terrorists are the international state system's outlaws, incapable of justifying their actions within this nation-centric '*Westphalian'* system of rules and conventions" (p.95, emphasis original). This conceptualization of terrorism, in fact, encourages the operationalization of the concept of legitimacy in my model. Lizardo aims to introduce "an operational characterization"

by drawing our attention to the institutional rules, which "allows for a more analytically advantageous focus on the structural and relational features that all episodes of non-state terrorism in the modern (Westphalian) system have in common" (p.98). Taking on this idea, Chou (2015) presents an admirable model, in which the the concept of legitimacy is fleshed out as the defining feature of state. Those who do not belong to category of modern Westphalian *stateness* as Lizardo outlined, will "pay the price of illegitimacy" (Chou, 2015,p.3; Zuckerman, 1999). More clearly, as Chou (2015) puts it:

"Illegitimate political actor, those who infringe on the state's monopoly on the use of force …is, in modern political discourse, occupied by the terrorist: a non-state actor who engages in political violence without the right that defines (and is today awarded exclusively to) the modern system of states, the right to be violent" (p.2-3).

In order to operationalize legitimacy, I draw from this conceptualization and his model of modern state as effective, representative, and secular (Chou, 2015). Thus, I hypothesize that legitimacy, conceptualized as stateness, drives terrorism designation. The more a group belongs to the category of state, the more it will appear legitimate, thus will be at a lower risk of being designated as terrorist. In other words, the U.S. State Department is more likely to designate non-state actors as terrorist when it regards them as illegitimate; that is, if they are far-off in stateness (i.e. the category of state).

Our attribution of legitimacy to the state, drives the terrorism designation, therefore its social construction. Indeed, "legitimacy is a socially constructed, cultural-cognitive condition that assigns characteristics of good, appropriate and desirable to actions of an organization or other social entity based on the subjective perceptions of interested observers" (Scott, 2001). Although

the scope of my work doesn't expand to explore how it is constructed, it is valuable to emphasize that legitimacy is a social construct.

National Interests

In practical terms, the role of interests clearly manifests itself in terrorism designation. The State Department is the chief bureaucratic power in foreign policy making and "protecting core U.S. interests" is at the center of its lexicon (U.S. State Department, 2014). Crenshaw (2001) argues, U.S. counterterrorism policy is not simply a response to the threats of terrorist violence, but "a reflection of the domestic political process" (p.329). This process is shaped by a policy debate in which government institutions, the media, interest groups, the elite and mass public *interpret* the threat of terrorism and determine and implement policy. Weldes (1996) in her renowned article narrates, in my view, the same process:

> "Drawing on constructivist assumptions, I argue that before state officials can act for the state, they need to engage in a process of *interpretation* in order to understand both what situation the state faces and how they should respond to it. This process of interpretation, in turn, presupposes a language shared, at least, by those state officials involved in determining state action and by the audience for whom state action must be legitimate. This shared language is that of *the national interest*" (p.275-276, emphasis original).[xii]

Although how national interests are constructed is out of the scope of my argument, it is important to underline that national interest, like legitimacy, is a social construction. It is created by representations such as "*our state* and *their state*, or *us* and *them",* as in Weldes' case (p.287, emphasis original); or us versus *non-state them*, as in my case.[xiii]

Building on the pioneering constructivist approach in Wendt's (1992) work, in which he argued "identities are the basis of interests" (Wendt, p.398), one can reckon then, that interests are

already embedded in the representations state officials, such as the State Department, create. In subject-positioning (i.e. us versus them), interests emerge not just out of inter-state interactions (1992, p.401), but also out of domestic political processes.[xiv] Indeed, Weldes (1996) contends, "more specifically, national interests emerge out of the representations, …out of situation descriptions and problem definitions, through which state officials and others make sense of the world around them" (p.280). Thus, in order to understand how threat of terrorism construes counterterrorism policies, taking national interests into account is imperative. After all, "it is through the concept of the national interest that policy-makers understand the goals to be pursued by a state's foreign policy" (Weldes, 1996, p.276).

Theoretically, I advance the premise that terrorism designation is a social construction, albeit one that is also driven by interest. As Weldes (1996) repeats, the concept of *the national interest* has been focal to theories of international politics for its part in explaining state action. The recent research on terrorism designation, however, disregarded the concept of interest (Beck & Miner, 2013; Chou, 2015). I revisit the concept of interest and synthesize its analysis in terrorism designation. While early research such as Chomsky (2002) and Jackson (2005) viewed the social construction of terrorism as "merely a sublimated expression of American foreign policy interests" (Chou, 2015), recent works on terrorism designation adopt an organizational perspective and renounce the analysis of interests. For example, Chou (2015) views insertion of interests into analysis as *a limit* and associate it to "strongly constructivist theories of terrorism, in which political interests alone dictate which groups are labeled as terrorists" (p.20).[xv]

In order to operationalize interest, I follow a similar categorical scheme I employed for legitimacy (Chou, 2015). Drawing from Art (2013); Bartholomees (2010); Reveron et al. (2014); and the Commission on America's National Interests (2000), I introduce a categorical scheme for

interest categorization and develop a model of national interest that categorizes vital, important and peripheral U.S. interests. The State Department's mission statements reflect these objectives such as "advancing *the security of the American people* by *assisting* countries around the world" in order to "prevent and counter threats to civilian security and effective governance, such as terrorism, violent extremism" so that these countries are able to build more "*democratic*, secure, stable, and just societies" (United States Department of State, 2015).[xvi]

Conceptualized as national interests, the protection of fellow Americans, spreading of democratic values and assisting other countries can be explained by many realist accounts; yet, the social construction of these interests go mostly unnoticed. The national identity, the democratic values and providing international assistance as the global leader are what makes the positioning between *us* versus *them*. The policy outcomes of such positioning are numerous, e.g. Iraq War. The image of *us*, Americans, as a democracy and as the global leader tasked with fiscal and military assistance to others, has been socially constructed especially after the victory in 1945 (Reveron et al., 2014; Weldes & Saco, 1996; Weldes, 1996). The social construction of foreign policies hint this positioning "since 'we' Americans are 'freedom-loving democrats' and 'civilized Westerners', it makes sense that 'our' US interventions abroad are designed to advance liberty and freedom", while on the contrary "aggressive totalitarians, duplicitous communists, puppets of the Kremlin, unstable underdeveloped states and *uncivilized terrorists*" hold the position of other (Weldes, 1996, p.281-.289, emphasis added). These representations are already defined in the national interest in a contextual constructionist's point of view.

Thus, I hypothesize that national interest drives terrorism designation. The degree to which groups threaten U.S. interests, determines which groups are designated as terrorists.

Chapter 3: Theory, Methods and Data

Following (Beck & Miner, 2013; Chou, 2015), I draw from new institutionalist organization theory that emphasizes the effects of social construction of identities and practices on organizational performance and forms. Neoinstitutionalist research on organizations use categorical schemas to illustrate how social construction drives the practices and forms organizations take (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Still, new institutionalist research is limited in the sense that the concept of interest disregarded. The application of this theory on terrorism designation confirms this neglect (Beck & Miner, 2013; Chou, 2015). Schemas of organizations reflect not only the legitimacy, but also the *interests* that organizations strive to maintain. (Scott, 2008, p. 22). After all, as Stinchcombe (1987), an institutionalist theorist, points out "the structure in which powerful people are committed to some *value* or *interest*", as I have maintained, is inherent and inseparable in organizations (p.107, emphasis added). In point of this, Beck and Miner (2013) inevitably succumb to this notion and point out that the State Department as the "*expert categorizer*", i.e. the claims-maker as I have argued, "could have a large degree of leeway in their decision-making" in terrorism designation (p.842). This calls for the consideration of two issues: how this fluid large leeway implicates the concept of national interest in designation of terrorism and what this indicates for state autonomy. The new institutionalist perspective is *restrictive* in embracing the concept of interest. As (Abbott, 1992) says, "The new institutionalists have to remember the power and interest that utilitarians never forget" (p.754). Thus, I argue that the roles of legitimacy and interest should not be treated as opposition but as capturing two ends of a continuum of terrorism designation.

I employ a logistic regression model where the dependent variable is the dichotomous coding of whether or not a non-state actor has been designated as terrorist by the US Department

of State to estimate the effects of the independent variables on listing status. Logistic regression measures the relationship between the binary dependent variable and various independent variables by using probability scores as the predicted values of the dependent variable. The probability of being designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department assumes a distribution for the random component of the latent dependent variable. The standard logistic distribution in this random component allows using the standard logistic regression model (Wooldridge, 2003).

I gathered my data for my dependent variable from the US Department of State Foreign Terrorist Organizations List. The main dataset I have utilized is the Uppsala Non-State Actor data built by Cunningham, Gleditsch, & Salehyan (2009),[xvii] which provides the estimated strength of a non-state rebel group relative to the country that it opposes, and whether the group is openly affiliated with an unarmed political group. Hence, I construct the variables for efficacy and representativeness from this data. From this dataset I construct a variable that takes a value of 1 if a non-state actor has the word "Islam" in its name and/or have a fundamentalist Islamic ideology, including Wahhabi jihadism. Examples include the Al-Shabaab (designated in 2008), The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (former Al-Qaida Iraq, 2004), and Eritrean Islamic Jihad (not designated). Building on this dataset, I constructed the other variables from various databases. For example, for the volume and severity of attacks on U.S. nationals, I used The Global Terrorism Database (START, 2013) is useful for my purposes, as it contains detailed information about location, year, and primary targets for more than 140,000 cases on domestic as well as international terrorist incidents that have occurred from 1970 to 2014. For an attack to be included in this database, it must meet at least two of the following criteria: (1) the act must be aimed at achieving a political, economic, religious, or social goal; (2) there must be evidence of an intent to coerce or

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intimidate an audience beyond the immediate victims; and (3) the act must be outside the context of legitimate warfare. Following the trend in the literature, I collect my democracy scores from Cheibub et al. (2010), and USAID data from the US Greenbook. The units of my dataset are conflict dyad periods since each single conflict in the Uppsala data distinguishes between side A (government) and side B (a non-state actor).

Chapter 4: Variables and Hypothesis

In light of the framework and discussion of theory illustrated so far, this thesis tests several hypotheses. Briefly, I argue that legitimacy, conceptualized as stateness and interest, conceptualized as the threat to vital, important and peripheral U.S. national interests, determine which actors are designated as terrorist. First, groups that appear more like a modern state – effective, representative and secular – are more likely to be seen as legitimate, therefore, will be at lower risk of being designated as terrorists. Second, the groups that threaten the vital, important and peripheral U.S. interests, are more likely to be designated as terrorists by the US Department of State. The main variables and how they operationalize the theoretical concepts are as follows:

Following Chou (2015), the stateness of non-state actor is measured in a continuum rather than a dichotomy; efficacy, representativeness, and secularism. This variation offers a satisfactory measurement of what modern state is like. Modern state's legitimacy comes from its efficacy, representativeness, and secularism (Chou, 2015; O. W. Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997). Modern state is effective as it delivers and secures public goods. Efficacy as a marker of legitimacy divides what is a *weak* state from a *strong* state (O. W. Meyer et al., 1997; Stinchcombe & Tilly, 1991). I measure efficacy using a dichotomous variable that takes a value of 1 if the non-state actor's the military strength relative its target country is much *weaker* (takes a value of 0 otherwise). If the group is relatively weak, as opposed to the ideal state, it is assumed to be less

legitimate. Modern state also derives legitimacy from democracy, representation of its citizens'

shared political will and responsible government. Representation as a marker of legitimacy is

among modern state's features (Dahl, 1991; Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012). I measure

representativeness using a dichotomous variable that takes a value of 1 if a non-state actor has

explicit, confirmed and alleged links ties to an unarmed political group (takes a value of 0

otherwise). The groups' ties to political entities is assumed to be the marker of their legitimacy.

Finally, modern state is secular. It has advanced its autonomy from religion (Casanova, 2011), and

institutional separation of religion from state is cherished in all liberal states (Joppke, 2004). On

the other side of the coin, Lizardo (2008) points to the handicap that religious non-state groups

face: "the current global context of the dominance of Western, secular models of political and

social organization" render such groups' legitimacy (p.100). I measure secularity of non-state actor

using a dichotomous variable that takes a value of 1 if the non-state embraces an Islamic

ideology.[xviii] If it has a fundamentally religious ideology, it is less like the ideal state. Stateness is

higher when representativeness takes a value of 1 and lower when efficacy and secularity variables

take a value of 1. Specifically, tested hypothesis are:

1. Non-state actors that are less like the ideal modern state are more likely to be designated as

terrorists:

    a) Groups that are weaker in military terms are more likely to be designated as terrorists.

    b) Groups with ties to unarmed political groups are less likely to be designated as terrorists.

    c) Islamist groups are more likely to be designated as terrorists.

    Similar to the markers used to classify non-state actors, I draw the markers to classify U.S.

national interests to reflect the categorical schema that U.S. State Department as the organization

responsible for foreign policy-making constructs. The literature provides a clear guideline for me

to create this schema. Art (2013), Bartholomees (2010), Reveron et al. (2014), and the Commission on America's National Interests (2000) more or less use the same conceptualization to categorize U.S. national interests: vital interests, important interests, and periphereal interests. Although, prioritization is not my objective, this variation offers a complete picture of how U.S. interests are constructed. The chief purpose of the U.S. foreign policy is protection of American security (Lowi et al., 2011). First, following Boutton & Carter (2014), I measure the vital U.S. interests as threats to *the security of the American people* by looking at a count of terrorist attacks within a country in which the United States is the primary target and construct the variables, Attacks and Casualty. I measure the count of attacks on U.S. nationals (including citizens, nongovernmental organizations, diplomatic facilities, businesses, etc.) for the former. The latter, Casualty variable accounts for the number of US citizens killed in terrorist attacks in a country. Contrary to previous literature (Beck & Miner, 2013; Boutton & Carter, 2014) however, I include the number of US citizens kidnapped and wounded into this variable from GTD as a stronger measure of severity that can affect the audience's construction of threat. In the important interests category, I measure the *threat to democracy* looking at whether non-state actor targeted a democracy or not. This dichotomous variable takes the value of 1 if the target country is a democracy (otherwise 0). Promoting and defending democratic regimes is one of the important foreign policy objectives of the U.S. foreign policy (Bartholomees, 2010, Pillar, 2003). Finally, in the category of peripheral interests, I measure the *assistance* the U.S. provides to countries targeted by non-state actors. I look at the military aid as the measure of commitment to curb the *threat* U.S. seeks to prevent terrorism through "secure and stable" societies (Boutton & Carter, 2014). Specifically, tested hypothesis are:

2. Non-state actors that threaten U.S. national interests are more likely to be designated as terrorist:

a1) The State Department is more likely to designate non-state actors in targeted countries as the number of attacks on U.S. nationals gets higher.

a2) The State Department is more likely to designate non-state actors in targeted countries as the number of causalities of U.S. citizens gets higher.

b) The State Department is more likely to designate non-state actors that target democracies.

c) The State Department is more likely to designate non-state actors that target countries in which U.S. foreign aid flows, indicating threats to its interests.

As well as the main variables outline above, two confounder variables are included in my analysis from these datasets. First, I included the variable 'Old' to control for the dyads before 1997, when FTO list was introduced. The dyads that are active after 1997 take the value of 1 (otherwise 0). Second, as argued by some literature (e.g., Chomsky 2002; Jackson 2005), in order to control for the materialist hegemonic interests that U.S. has in target countries, I included the variable 'Mena' that indicates whether a country is based in the Middle East or North Africa in the GTD database regions. The groups that operate in these regions that the value of 1 (otherwise 0).

Chapter 5: Results, Discussion and Future Research

In model 1, the findings confirm the previous work (Chou, 2015), that Islamist groups and relatively weak groups are more likely to be designated as terrorists by the State Department. That is, if the group's strength is much weaker compared to the state it targets, it is more likely to be seen as illegitimate, therefore more likely to be designated. The representativeness marker of the groups is not statistically significant, yet in the expected direction. In model 2, the effects of the volume of attacks on U.S. nationals, target state's regime and USAID are positively significant. However, severity of the attacks does not show significance. This confirms my initial expectations

that the State Department is more likely to designate groups that target U.S. nationals, democracies and countries which the U.S. sends foreign aid. Where U.S. interests are in jeopardy, the state takes action.

U.S. Terrorism Designation

	Model 1	Model 2	Model3
Islamic Ideology	2.469		3.235
	(6.84)**		(6.56)**
Relative Strength	0.830		-0.037
	(2.45)*		(0.09)
Political Ties	-0.608		-0.542
	(1.64)		(1.28)
Attacks		0.101	0.110
		(4.70)**	(4.71)**
Casualty		0.018	0.024
		(1.08)	(1.28)
Democracy		1.199	1.791
		(3.37)**	(3.84)**
USAID		0.002	0.000
		(2.03)*	(0.31)
M-East & N-Africa	1.046	1.537	1.367
	(2.79)**	(4.16)**	(3.12)**
Activity after 1997	1.000	1.535	0.955
	(2.90)**	(4.30)**	(2.36)*
_constant	-3.743	-4.299	-4.819
	(10.19)**	(11.32)**	(9.48)**
N	578	577	577

*p<0.05; ** p<0.01 **z values** *in parentheses.*

However, in model 3, when the models are synthesized, a different picture appears. The statistically significant indicators are limited to groups' Islamic ideology, the number of attacks on U.S. nationals, the democratic regime of targeted countries. USAID loses its significance along with the marker of group strength relative to the state. Relative strength also becomes negatively associated with designation, which would indicate if it is not relatively less weak, that is if the group has relative strength, it is more likely to be designated. We also see that designation is more

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likely especially if groups are active after 1997. Moreover, groups operating in Middle East and North Africa are more likely to be designated as terrorists. This may indicate the power driven hegemonic inclinations. Indeed, Lowi et al. (2011) argued the U.S. has "strategic oil interests in the Middle East" (See graph 1). Some results contradict with some of the findings in previous works (Chou, 2015), while some other conform with them (Beck and Miner, 2013).

What does these findings mean for social construction of terrorism designation? The Islamic fundamentalist groups are more likely to be designated as terrorists (See graph 2). That is, everything else equal, we would expect a fifteen percentage point increase in the probability of designation if we observe Islamic fundamentalist ideology in a group as opposed to not. Caution against the new wave of religious terrorism is confirmed with these findings. Moreover, the social constructions of us versus them could be inherent in U.S. designation since empirically, Islamic fundamentalism is rarely the driver of terror attacks in the West (Global Terrorism Index, 2015).

The volume of attacks on U.S. nationals is in positive direction and significant (see graphs 3 and 4); however, the severity of attacks is not. It is important to highlight that, contrary to earlier research, I also included the U.S. citizens wounded and taken as hostage, such as sixty-six hostages taken in Iran that did not result in deaths but marked a crisis, in order to capture all the effects that could influence the audience and construct the threat or positioning of *them*. Yet, not all attacks result in harming citizens. Thus, this confirms the empirical account I have provided in the beginning that, even though numbers of US citizens harmed from terrorism is low, it is not the number of US citizens, but the number of attacks that can give a better picture because it includes American educational and diplomatic institutions, military posts, international businesses, embassies, which are the symbols of "*us*". Likewise, Lizardo's (2008) proposition to include not just non-combatants but also military to the definition of terrorism therefore warrants attention. He

cautions, "Restricting terrorism to the targeting of civilians and non-combatants for the purposes of political violence …is not sufficient" and reminds the terrorist attacks which are closer to guerrilla warfare and is directed at the state and its *symbolic representativ*es, such as USS Cole incident, also constructs the phenomenon of terrorism.

When target country's regime is democracy, the attacking groups are more likely designated as terrorist. This may not substantively mean that democracy is the *sole* indicator; it is convenient and likely to target the democracies since it attracts more attacks due to having accountable governments and open society, in which it is easier to shock the audience (Goodwin, 2006). For example, groups like Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), both of which are Islamic fundamentalists and carry out deadly terrorist attacks on a democracy (i.e. India), are internationally designated. India institutionalizes its identity as a democracy leading the combat against terrorism in third world (Romaniuk, 2010), sharing similar norms that U.S. symbolizes globally. Therefore, designation of such groups who target a democracy, confirms my hypothesis. Indeed, empirically, the number of designated groups that target democracies is higher than those target non-democracies (See table 1 & chart 1).

Results also signal to other implications for social construction of terrorism designation. The concept of legitimacy itself is not a sufficient explanation for terrorism designation. Previous research argued for example, that when groups are relatively weak and not representative, they are more likely to be designated as terrorists. According to my findings, this might not be the case. Empirically, three examples contradict the previous notion. Hamas, a designated non-state actor, has won a decisive victory in elections and has the majority of seats in the Palestinian Parliament. Hezbollah, which is also designated, similarly holds seats in Lebanese parliament and deploys large-scale military campaign internationally. Considering the U.S. commitment to Israel, even

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though such unchallenged commitment might be rationally flawed in terms of foreign policy (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006), asks whether a social construction in which subject positioning of us versus them takes place in domestic processes where national interests are constructed. ISIL, a designated non-state actor, which calls itself the Islamic State, holds territory in both Iraq and Syria, maintains complex military operations, collect taxes, have command and control infrastructure. Its relative strength is not weak, it enjoys a formidable degree of popular support compared to a central government with a damaged legitimacy, yet it is, incontestably, a designated non-state actor. Even though these groups may *seem like* a state as they adopt quasi-governmental functions (such as delivering public goods, taxing, etc.) and are not weak but have strength relative to their target states, they are designated as terrorist organizations. The concept of legitimacy, therefore, is useful yet not sufficient to explain why some groups will belong to the category of others many years to come.

Future Research

In light of my constructivist framework and empirical analysis of terrorism designation, future search has many ways to go in explaining terrorism as a social problem and its manifestation in terrorism designation lists. To begin with, future analyses should include a distinction of whether the non-state actors operate domestically or transnationally. This has not been undertaken in this work, yet it can provide a more nuanced understanding of the construction of terrorism designation. Next, theoretically, one can safely reckon that the construction of terrorism designation is need of acknowledging the power of state. This impression need not specify precisely which state institutions and agencies are aboard in national interest construction but as Weldes (1993) points out "it is perhaps safe to say that the national interest is produced primarily, although not exclusively, by foreign policy decision-makers". In my analysis, the State Department

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safely fulfilled this position. Departing from previous literature (Chou, 2015), my approach invites the reexamination of the concept of interest, state autonomy and *bringing the state back* in (Skocpol, Evans, & Rueschemeyer, 1999).[xix] Indeed, writing on agenda setting, Kingdon (1994) underlines:

> "The state is more than the creature of the interest group structure or a reflection of class interests. People in government are not blank slates, but instead have their own interests and adopt their own goals and strategies. One need not reify the state to see that people in government are at least somewhat autonomous" (Kingdon, 1994, p.220).

He argues that both *state autonomy* and *the state as a reflection of society* can be reflected in cases of agenda setting. Thus, he cautions:

> "The trick for scholars is not to opt for one or the other picture, it seems to me, but to specify the conditions under which and the ways in which policymaking works from the top down or from the bottom up." (Kingdon, 1994, p.220).

Contrary to Chou (2015), my theoretical engagement in social construction of terrorism hints that the making of terrorism designation indicates the former.[xx] The process of national interest construction and the international character of FTOs, of which public has low informational expertise, bring the leeway, autonomy and exercise of power for collective interests into the picture and warrant an examination of concept of interests.

"The state is not only affected by society but also affects it" (March & Olsen, 1983)**.** Therefore, the social construction of terrorism does not end in the subjective reality that society creates. Terrorism designation by the state partakes in this construction; designation by the U.S. State Department places it in a contextual social reality, a Western one indeed that is both objective and subjective for the audiences.

A note on methods also demands attention for future research. Gary King says, "The most common and scientifically productive method of building on existing research is to replicate an existing finding-to follow the precise path taken by a previous researcher, and then improve on the data or methodology in one way or another." (as cited in Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). The Non-State Actor dataset, for example, renders this task challenging. The foreign names of non-state actors make it quite hard to merge datasets from different data sources. In order to extend the availability of replication in this research area, a proper language standardization is needed. In fact, changing names of the groups, which in terrorism research is almost most likely, could hurt a prospective replication of data. That way, it is probable that different scholars will offer unique cases each time that cannot be confirmed by others. A snippet of example: Ahlul Sunnah Jamaa is a Non-State Actor in the dataset operates in Nigeria. In fact, the official name of Boko Haram, the terrorist group based in Nigeria, is 'Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad' which is different from Ahlul Sunnah Jamaa, which is an Islamic organization operating in the United Kingdom. Although such problems are inherent in an age of world wide web of communication and international terrorism of an increasingly globalized character, the dataset needs improving. With this thesis, I also took on this task and learned a researcher's long and hard way to conduct an empirical analysis. Replicating data, following all previous research require a relentless attention. In many cases, it is not an easy task yet rewarding.

Finally, new venues of research can expand the framework of this thesis. Particularly, the framework and models employed here can be utilized also in analyses of delisting non-state actors from terrorism designation.[xxi] Specifically, in an ongoing research, I analyze a contemporary example of two regional parties and their delisting process. The formerly listed terrorist organizations Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have

been removed from the list in late 2014. These two leading Iraqi Kurdish parties were classified as Tier III terrorist organizations, which "qualify as terrorist organizations based on their activities alone without undergoing a formal designation process" (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). My theory of designation is applicable to this case especially considering how the Kurdish government in the north has come to challenge the designation from both legitimacy and interest perspectives as I have maintained in this thesis. Not only have these groups not presented a threat to *U.S. interests* (on the contrary, served them);[xxii] they also built a *legitimate* quasi-democratic government responsible for northern federal region of Iraq. Thus, my approach to construction of terrorism designation can be a good fit for analysis in this case.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis sought to continue the scientific work on the study of terrorism research and on the new empirical turn in terrorism designation analyses while realizing the rather torpid position constructionist school of thought holds both within the Public Policy and International Relations scholarships. It has explored that there is rather a limited application of concept of legitimacy and a vague application of social construction framework in previous research. The concept of interest, emerging out of state, plays a role in the construction of terrorism designation. Therefore, the roles of legitimacy and interest should not be treated as opposition but as capturing two ends of a continuum of terrorism designation. The State Department's designation of groups as others or deviants, is socially constructed based on the concepts of both legitimacy and interest.

The patterns of this designation, as examined in this thesis, display the posture of U.S. foreign policy. Groups that target U.S. nationals, groups that target democracies and groups whose organizational marker is Islamic fundamentalism are prone to be put in the categories of illegitimacy and threat to U.S. national interests. In this posture, designation reifies the identity of

us (U.S.), who oppose terrorism and terrorists while positioning the designated *others* as opprobrious *them* (Pillar, 2003).

Finally, the designation of terrorism is a symbolic instrument that keeps counterterrorism an issue of high saliency for audiences in both domestic and international settings, and thus, facilitate an interactive process where we learn who terrorists, the others or the deviants, are. State is at the center of this process and its designation partakes in the construction of terrorism. To the constructionist, terrorism is indeed what we make of it.
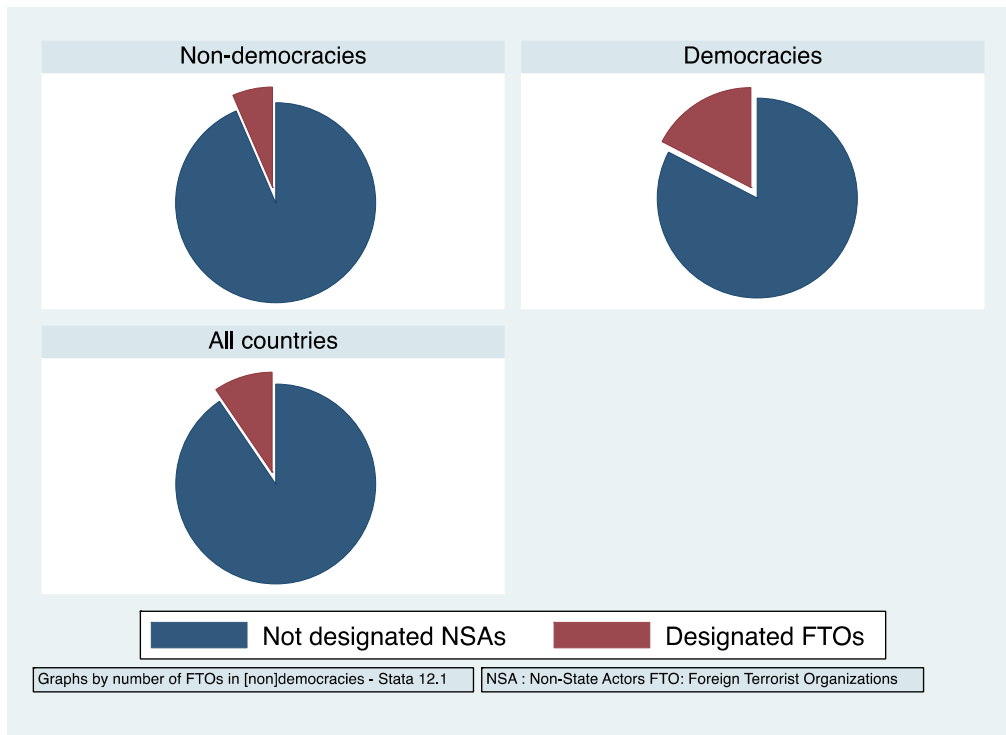
Chapter 7: Tables and Graphs

Table 1:

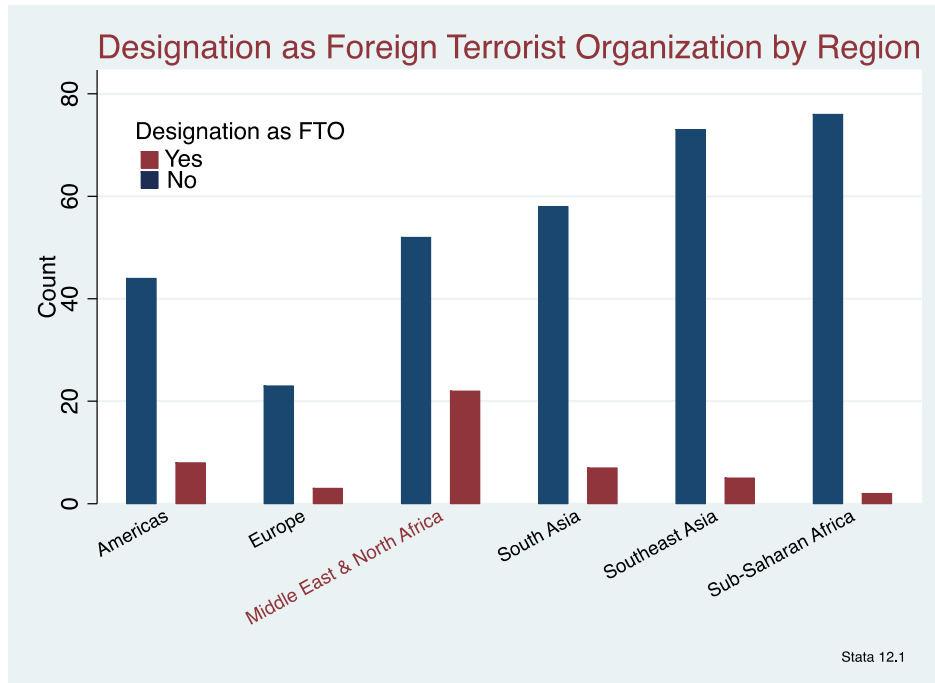| US Foreign Terror List	Non-democracies	Democracies	Total
No Designation	390	133	523
Designated	27	28	55
Total	**417**	**161**	**578**

* Number of designated NSAs in Democracies vs non-Democracies.

Chart 1:
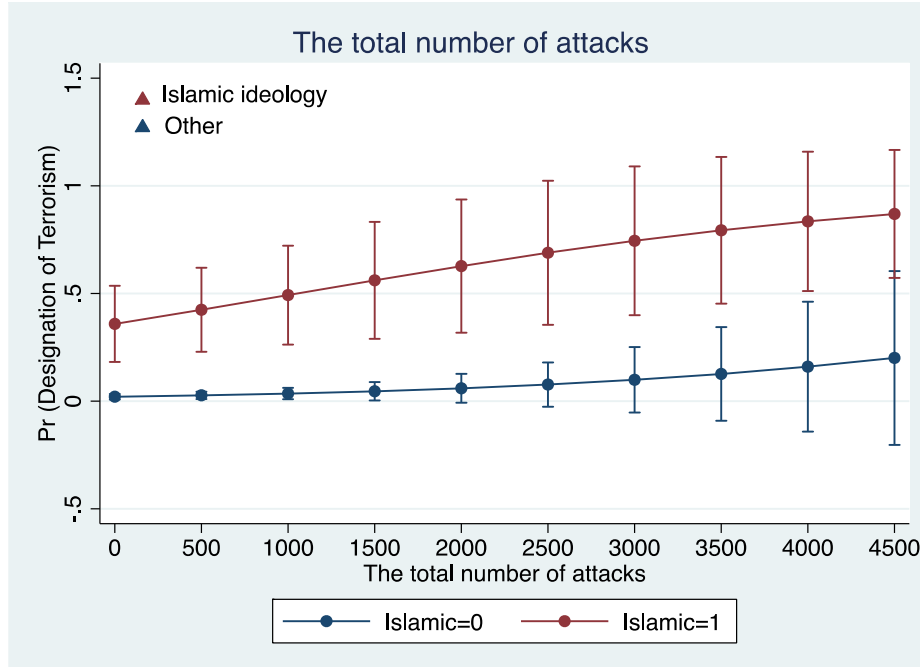

* Number of designated Non State Actors (NSA) in Democracies vs non-Democracies vs All countries total.
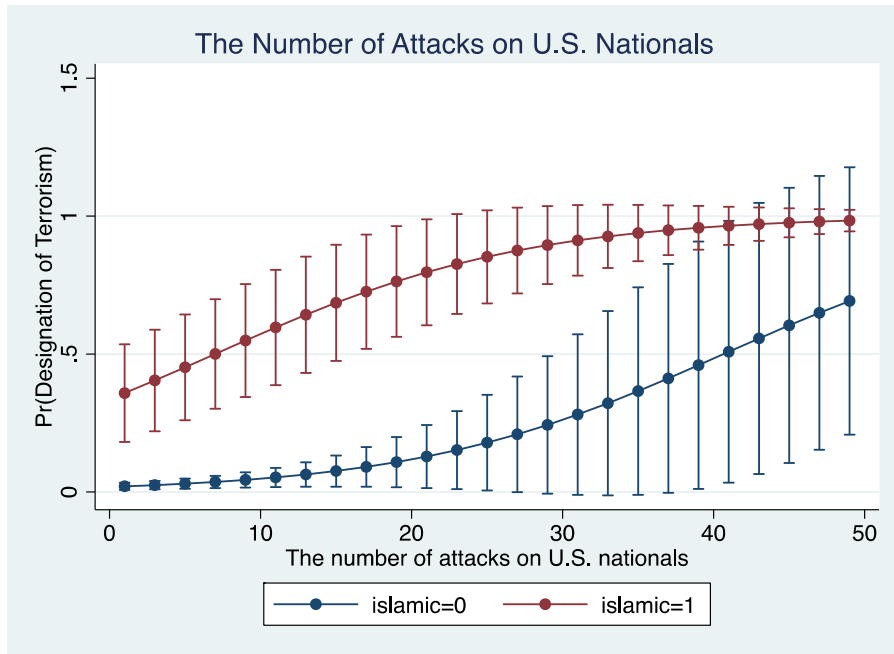
Graph 1:

Designation as Foreign Terrorist Organization by Region

* Most designated groups are in Middle East and North Africa.

Graph 2:

The total number of attacks

* The groups with Islamic fundamentalist ideology are statistically significantly more likely to be designated.

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Graph 3:

The Number of Attacks on U.S. Nationals

* The likelihood of designation is significant for Islamic groups, yet as the count of attacks on US. Nationals gets higher, then the Islamic ideology is not the substantive indicator of designation.

Graph 4:

Adjusted Predictions with 95% CIs
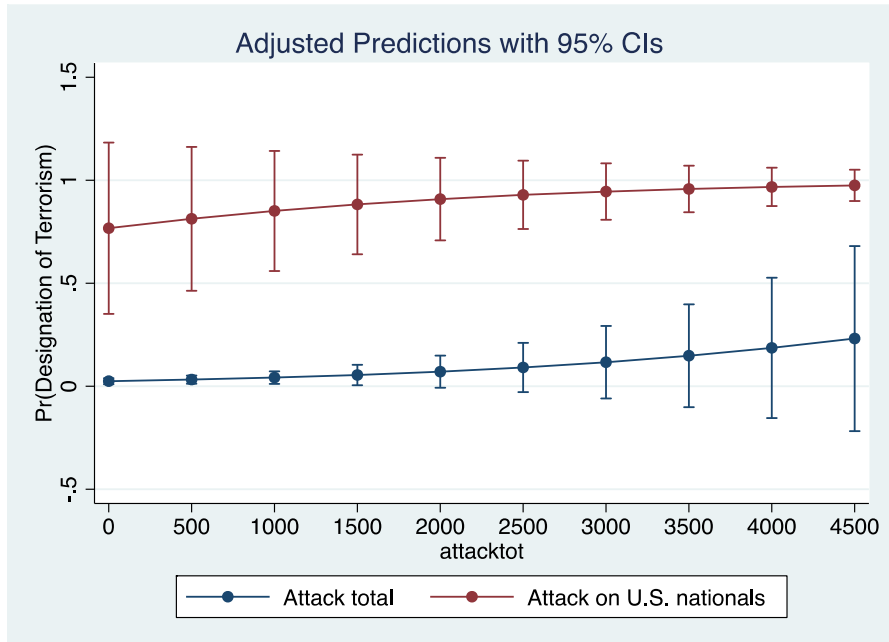
* When groups target U.S. nationals, the likelihood of designation is significantly and substantively meaningful. The count of attacks on U.S. is an important indicator for designation.

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Appendix

[i] See the websites of U.K. Department of Security, U.N. counter-terrorism, European Council. These entities adopted similar instruments following the U.S. There are also other lists maintained by the U.S. government such "State Sponsors of Terrorism" (SST) list, "Specially Designated Terrorists" (SDTs) list, "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" (SDN) list.

[ii] Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/injury.htm Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The year 2013 is the most recent year CDC data for deaths by firearms is available. This data covered all manners of death, including homicide, accident and suicide. http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/02/us/oregon-shooting-terrorism-gun-violence/

[iii] Stats exclude deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq, the majority of which are combat-related. http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_AmericanTerrorismDeaths_FactSheet_Oct2015.pdf

[iv] In fact, according to a 2015 Pew poll, defense against terrorism been among the public's leading policy goals since 2002. Excluding September 11, only 0.5 per cent of all deaths have occurred in Western countries in the last 15 years. Including September 11, the percentage reaches 2.6. http://www.people-press.org/2015/01/15/publics-policy-priorities-reflect-changing-conditions-at-home-and-abroad/?beta=true&utm_expid=53098246-2.Lly4CFSVQG2lphsg-KopIg.1&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

[v] See a discussion on mala prohibita, mala in se, jus in bello and jus ad bellum in Martin, G. (2015). *Understanding terrorism: Challenges, perspectives, and issues*. Sage Publications.

[vi] Spector and Kitsuse define social problems as "the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative conditions" (1977, p.75).

[vii] Her work refers exclusively to states.

[viii] I define non-state actors as a group other than a nation-state that exists and participates in the international system. Terrorist groups are an example of non-state actors. (Cunningham et al., 2009; Lowi et al., 2011).

[ix] I thank Nazli Avdan for highlighting this point.

[x] The poststructuralist orientation in NPA has frequently positioned itself as diametrically opposed to more empirically driven positivistic standards of social science scholarship to offer an NPF as a quantitative, structuralist, and positivistic approach to the study of policy narratives.

[xi] I define legitimacy as a social value. Claims-making denotes "a demand made by one party to another that something be done about some putative condition" (Spector and Kitsuse, 1977, p.78).

[xii] Weldes (1996) makes an important point: "Exactly which state institutions and offices are involved in national interest construction will of course vary across states, but it is perhaps safe to say that the national interest is produced primarily, although not exclusively, by foreign policy decision-makers" (p.281). This point aligns with my argument since my case entails the State Department, therefore it makes sense for the sake of argument.

[xiii] See Weldes (1996) for a detailed account of how national interests are constructed.

[xiv] Wendt (1992)'s treatment of states as unitary actors limits his analysis to provide an adequate account of national interests. See Weldes (1996). See also Bozdaglioglu, Y. (2007). Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach. *Review of International Law and Politics*, *3*(3), 121–144. Retrieved from http://www.usak.org.tr/dosyalar/dergi/3abv06hKYpVj1fK71jEi4AP2g6ctBc.pdf

[xv] My approach of contextual constructionism is different from such strong or "strict" constructivist accounts, which Chou (2015) criticizes.

[xvi] Retrieved from http://go.usa.gov/cBD43

[xvii] This comprehensive dataset covers dyads between 1950-2011.

[xviii] I constructed this variable from secondary sources that cite 'fundamentalist Islamism' as groups' adopted ideology and/or has *Islamic* in its name.

[xix] See Skocpol (1999) on states as organizational structures or as potentially autonomous actors.

[xx] Indeed, new institutionalism emphasizes the relative autonomy of political institutions (March & Olsen, 1983).

[xxi] I thank Jiso Yoon for her comment here.

[xxii] U.S. nationals hardly ever suffered casualties in Kurdish territory. See the panel data on insurgent violence in Berman, E., Shapiro, J. N., & Felter, J. H. (2011). Can hearts and minds be bought? The economics of counterinsurgency in Iraq. *Journal of Political Economy*, *119*(4), 766-819. Also see the piece by Filkins in *The New Yorker* in which he points out: "Since 2003, when the U.S. destroyed the Iraqi state and began spending billions of dollars trying to build a new one, the Kurds have been their most steadfast ally. When American forces departed, in 2011, not a single U.S. soldier had lost his life in Kurdish territory." Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/29/fight-lives on September 15th, 2015.