

These are mere quibbles, however. Instead, the main limitation of Miller's book is found in his theory of "success" in state building. Returning to his core idea that foreign strategies must match the underlying causes of internal dysfunction, he fails to pursue to the full extent the underlying structural difficulties that such strategies can encounter when faced with local forces that resist change. In business school classrooms, students are constantly reminded that dreaming up a corporate strategy is far easier than executing it in the face of challenges from competitors, suppliers, consumers, and stakeholders, including civil society and governments (just think of how many firms have survived over the past 100–150 years of economic and technological change).

Similarly, even the "best" thought-out strategies for armed state building (Vietnam is, at least arguably, a case in point) can fall flat when confronted by determined elites who have no interest in democratization, the market economy, redistribution, civil rights, or the four freedoms. In short, they may confront hardened LAOs—as Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson encountered in such countries as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Vietnam—which resist even the coercive interventions of great military powers. How do foreign powers crack open these limited access orders? How do they eliminate rent-seeking behavior and its associated maladies? Answering these questions must be crucial to any true theory of state building, whether armed or not. It is not really my purpose to fault Miller here; answering these questions has proved a tall order for social science in general.

Mirroring the theoretical confusion in the scholarly ether is bureaucratic confusion among foreign governments when confronted with the problem of reforming fragile or failed states. This has produced a general flailing about as SWAT teams of aid workers import programs aimed at promoting such things as the rule of law, women's empowerment, microfinance, and democratic elections. While each of these projects undoubtedly has a great deal of merit, the causal relationship between such interventions and the outcomes that foreign powers are seeking (which are often poorly defined) is not well established. Indeed, the state builders have shown relatively little interest in gathering and making publicly available the kind of data and evidence that would help scholars to study what works and what does not in terms of effective interventions.

To summarize, the books under review provide an excellent introduction to the world of fragile and conflict states. They are both well written and clearly argued, and *Armed State Building* in particular is a real pleasure to read. Both make important contributions to tough scholarly and policy problems, and in so doing deserve wide followings in universities, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (including among the implementers of foreign aid programs). They may not have answered all of the big questions when it comes to institutional change and policy

reform, but who has? These issues continue to provide fertile ground to social scientists in search of some really big theoretical game.

The Terrorist's Dilemma: Managing Violent Covert

Organizations. By Jacob N. Shapiro. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. 352p. \$29.95.

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— Barak Mendelsohn, *Haverford College*

The abundance of books on terrorism attests to the demand for greater knowledge about the subject. Particularly in terrorism studies, numbers do not always translate to quality. Consequently, a book can make a major contribution not only by offering a new theory but sometimes by refusing to go along with trendy simplistic notions and by articulating fundamental insights that most serious observers of terrorism share. Jacob N. Shapiro's book *The Terrorist's Dilemma* does all these things and more. Shapiro negates the simplistic view of terrorist groups as unitary actors, and he articulates an understanding shared by many scholars concerning the dilemmas that terrorist leaders face when they run a secretive organization. But he goes further by linking the relationship between security, efficiency, and control to the structure of terrorist entities, cautiously testing hypotheses on three sets of case studies of terrorist organizations—from Tsarist Russia, Northern Ireland, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and making thoughtful recommendations about organizational trade-offs that terrorists make and how they should affect states' counterterrorism policies.

Shapiro's starting point is that terrorist groups are not unitary actors but organizations, and as such they feature many of the problems that organizations face. However, contrary to most organizations, terrorists use violent means in pursuit of their goals, which in turn puts them under pressure from state authorities. The result is that problems encountered by all organizations get amplified with terrorist groups and force them into making important trade-offs. Similar to other organizations, terrorist groups are bureaucratized entities with a number of layers. So long as all members of a terrorist organization have similar views of its objectives and the way to realize them, the organization faces "only" the extremely difficult challenge of coercing state enemies, which enjoy superior capabilities, to comply with the terrorists' demands. Because power asymmetries do not allow terrorists to mount a full-scale conventional assault on reigning powers, the achievement of their objectives depends instead on a calibrated utilization of force. Terrorists must strike a hard-to-find balance between the need to inflict pain and the danger of provoking a backlash from authorities and the public whom the terrorists claim to represent and whose support they seek and require. Shapiro elegantly shows how

typical organizational defects create particularly adverse consequences in secretive terrorist organizations, considerably intensifying the difficulty of attaining the terrorists' political objectives.

Similar to the workings of other organizations, in terrorist organizations a small number of managers determine goals and policies and then delegate the implementation of the plan to lower-level operatives. When these rank and file do not fully understand how violence is linked to particular political objectives, disagree with the methods and targets dictated by their leaders, or simply act on the basis of their own interests, they may use violence beyond the parameters determined by the organization's leadership and abuse the organization's scarce resources. Such excesses jeopardize the success of the whole enterprise. In legal nonviolent organizations, principals can significantly reduce the danger by using oversight tools. But in terrorist organizations, the need for oversight clashes with the imperatives of security. Regular reporting duties and leadership involvement in directing all operations may reduce undesirable actions by operatives but increase the risk from the state's counterterrorism efforts. Essentially, it is the conflict between highly important priorities that creates Shapiro's terrorist dilemma: Terrorists must strike a balance between control and security, even though the achievement of their delicate task often requires them to keep a high level of both.

The Terrorist's Dilemma makes another important contribution to the scholarship on terrorism by linking the structure of these organizations to the dilemmas of efficiency and control. Whereas many works about the "new terrorism" highlight the benefits of flat structures and strongly imply that hierarchical organizations are a thing of the past, Shapiro's book offers a nuanced theory in which structure is more flexible and conditioned by four variables: 1) the question of how discriminating the violence should be given the organization's political objectives; 2) the level of uncertainty faced by operatives about which attacks will serve the political goals; 3) preference divergence within the organization (particularly between leadership and operatives); and 4) the level of security pressure from the state. While this is the most innovative part of the book, it is not presented very effectively, perhaps because the author subordinates it to his effort to present the trade-offs that terrorist leaders face. How to promote two important claims in one book is a great problem for a scholar to have, but Shapiro misses an opportunity to put his level-headed analysis in direct conversation with trendy but rigor-deficient works, and to present a research agenda of immense importance to the field of terrorism studies.

For Shapiro, organizations whose objectives require the use of violence discriminatively are characterized by high uncertainty and preference divergence, and are subjected to only moderate state pressure would prefer hierarchical structure. On the other hand, principals in organizations that allow for indiscriminate violence and do not suffer

from the problems of uncertainty and preference divergence, but that are under strong state pressure, will reduce their security vulnerabilities by adopting decentralized structure. Although the reduction of organizational structure to various aspects of control will be vigorously debated among scholars, Shapiro's argument appears quite compelling overall. And it has significant implications for the study of terrorism because it allows for testing the linkage between these four variables and the structure that terrorist groups adopt. If we see discrimination, uncertainty, preference divergence, and state pressure as representing a typology, we may also be able to examine how these variables relate to one another and whether some are more important than others. Thus, taking Shapiro's work to its logical conclusions, *The Terrorist's Dilemma* could be seen as agenda setting.

The book could also enhance studies of religious terrorism. Underscoring organizational aspects, the author largely dismisses the importance of religious ideology. But a few points he makes suggest that religion may be more important than he gives it credence. According to Shapiro, religious organizations have greater opportunities to screen their operatives, and their involvement with charities alongside violence also improves their ability to control the operatives. These are important points that should be explored. The content of religious ideologies and the particular organizational impact of dissimilar religious ideologies also deserve more serious and explicit attention. That would require abandoning the binary distinction in which an organization is either religious or it is not. There are important distinctions among Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad that may interact with their organizational dilemmas.

Finally, while Shapiro's discussion of the link between the level of discrimination needed in terrorist operations and organizational structure is insightful, it cannot be detached from the question of whether indiscriminate violence is ever an effective tool. This omission can be linked to a broader issue, the author's narrow conceptualization of rationality. His view of rationality emphasizes organizational and operational aspects, such as the match between means and goals and the ability to select the one operational option that offers the greatest payoff. Granted, these are important elements of rationality and are highly relevant to the theory at the heart of the book. But as terrorist organizations rarely succeed, one should at least entertain the rationality of their actions in light of the attainability of their objectives. This is a particularly important discussion given that some religious terrorist organizations seek unreasonably high objectives. If the use of terrorism and the pursuit of certain objectives raise doubts about the sensibleness of terrorist leaders, a book about organizational dilemmas within terrorist groups could benefit from exploring how such issues affect the terrorist's dilemma.

In sum, *The Terrorist's Dilemma* is one of the most important contributions made to terrorism studies in the past decade. Its importance is not limited to its author's claims but extends further to the studies it is likely to inspire.

Insincere Commitments: Human Rights Treaties, Abusive States, and Citizen Activism. By Heather Smith-Cannoy. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012. 224p. \$29.95. doi:10.1017/S1537592714003053

— Wade M. Cole, *University of Utah*

Research on the causes and consequences of international human rights treaties focuses disproportionately on states while ignoring the beneficiaries of these agreements—individuals. In *Insincere Commitments*, Heather Smith-Cannoy brings individuals back in with an analysis of treaty provisions that empower them to petition oversight committees about alleged human rights violations. The book poses two questions. First, why do governments accept individual petition mechanisms (IPMs), whose sole purpose is to spotlight human rights abuses? Second, what effect do IPMs have on domestic human rights practices?

Smith-Cannoy addresses these questions using a mixed-methods research design. First, she conducts statistical analyses to determine why countries accept IPMs. Countries, she finds, are more likely to do so during periods of economic crisis, which render governments susceptible to the human rights overtures of external actors—international financial institutions, the United States, the European Union, and so forth—on whom they rely for aid. States under financial duress therefore make “hard” but insincere human rights commitments as part of a larger public relations bid to attract needed economic assistance. Countries, therefore, commit to IPMs as a form of window dressing, in lieu of substantive changes.

Countries that assent to oversight insincerely take a calculated risk. First, they assume that donor countries and institutions will accept their cheap signal at face value. Whether this is true remains an open question; we do not know, for example, whether aid flows increase after countries accept IPMs. Second, countries bet that their citizens will not avail themselves of the opportunity to complain about abuses. But individuals call the bluff and, with the help of nongovernmental organizations, file petitions that expose human rights abuses. NGOs play a twofold role in this process. They set the process into motion by socializing individuals to stand against abusive governments and helping complainants navigate the petition process. After petitions have been decided, NGOs then draw attention to treaty violations and enlist powerful third parties to pressure the offending governments.

The second part of the book offers detailed case studies of commitment to and compliance with IPMs

established under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Hungary; the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in Slovakia; and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. These studies do two things. First, they adduce evidence to show that economic crises indeed galvanized leaders to accept IPMs, over and above other standard accounts in the literature. Countries do not accept oversight to lock in democratic reforms or placate domestic opposition; neither does commitment stem from ex ante compliance or socialization from the world community. This information provides texture and nuance to the author's quantitative findings.

The cases are also where Smith-Cannoy tackles the much tougher job of assessing the effectiveness of IPMs. Because the selected countries relied on external assistance to weather difficult times during their transitions to market-based economies, she argues that they were compelled to change their policies and practices in response to unfavorable rulings, at least on the margins. She recounts, for example, how the Hungarian government strengthened domestic-violence legislation after an oversight committee ruled that Hungarian courts had failed to issue a restraining order against an abusive husband, in violation of CEDAW. Other petitions discussed in the book deal with forced sterilization in Hungary, discrimination against Roma citizens in Slovakia, the killing of antigovernment demonstrators by Kyrgyz militia, and the use of torture to extract confessions in Tajikistan. These examples give insight into the use of treaty-based complaints procedures.

There are, however, several weaknesses in the case studies. First, there is no accompanying quantitative analysis to gauge the average effect of IPMs around the world. Had one been conducted, the case studies suggest that petitions would correlate *negatively* with countries' practices. Smith-Cannoy concludes that the effects of IPMs were strongest in the European cases but weak in Central Asia, even though very few complaints emanated from the former while many more targeted the latter. Thus, the book does not bridge the much-lamented divide between quantitative and qualitative research in human rights (see Emilie Hafner-Burton and James Ron, “Seeing Double: Human Rights Impact through Qualitative and Quantitative Eyes,” *World Politics* 61 [April 2009]: 360–401). Its quantitative analysis of commitment to IPMs does not correspond to its qualitative analysis of compliance with IPMs, which is restricted to a handful of transitional postcommunist societies. The findings cannot be generalized beyond this specific context.

Second, the case studies are purely illustrative; they are not designed to trace causal processes. The analysis follows a “pre vs. post” design, with cases serving to “recreate the