Author

When Xenia Tashlitsky chose to study separatism with mentor Professor Petracca, she hypothesized that modern separatist movements would match traditional models of legitimization, which posit that secessionists will seek to prove their monopoly on force and recognition by key international actors. But when confronted with real-world separatists' online statements, Xenia concluded that instead of power, Sri Lanka's secessionists attempt to establish their powerlessness. Through rejecting this hypothesis, Xenia learned that sometimes being wrong is more instructive than being right—if you succeed in answering the question of *why*? Xenia is an inaugural class member of the UCI School of Law, opening August 2009.

Key Terms
- Legitimization
- Secession
- Separatism
- Sri Lanka
- Tamil Tigers

The Politics of Powerlessness: How and Why the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Employ the Internet to Establish the Legitimacy of their Cause and to Ensure the Success of their Movement

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Abstract

The Internet's sprawling sphere of influence and small cost of use allows modern movements for state secession to access relatively large audiences at reasonably little expense. As Sri Lanka's strongest active militant movement, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is employing the Internet to sketch the political map of the island around the Tamil minority in the northeastern area of the state. To understand how the LTTE caters the claims on its website to the legitimization of its cause and the success of its movement, I analyzed approximately 1,800 news stories from the group's online archive, as well as several other LTTE, state and scholarly sources. Some scholars speculate that the message-making strategies of secession-seeking movements should appeal to arguments for political power. However, my study suggests that the LTTE instead appeals to assertions for political powerlessness tailored to an increasingly international audience. Because separatist sites are both unprecedentedly current and uniquely first-person, my research offers a new approach to analyzing the legitimization of modern social movements in an increasingly Web-based world.

Faculty Mentor

At all levels of governance, in virtually all parts of the world, the World-Wide Web is being utilized to inform, challenge, and potentially alter political life. Xenia's thesis seeks to document, analyze, and understand the use of the Internet by the Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to enhance the international legitimacy of this secessionist movement. Contrary to scholarly expectations, Xenia's research finds that appeals from the LTTE to the international community for independent recognition are characterized by claims of powerlessness which have yet to produce the desired result among key international actors.

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Introduction

Over the last century, the persistent survival of multinational states has come into conflict with the precipitous rise of separatist movements. Many multinational states contain explosive combinations of deep differences in race, religion and language, as well as enormous inequalities in political power, social position, and economic potential. Both social and separatist groups may argue that they are underrepresented, under-resourced, and otherwise underserved by their state governments because they are regionally, linguistically, racially, ethnically, religiously, and/or socio-culturally "different." However, while social movements seek recognition, restitution and redress within the system, separatist movements demand authority and autonomy outside of it. Separatists' cynicism for obtaining their objectives within the framework of the state makes their success a threat to the state's survival. In the Colonial Era, state size was synonymous with political power; in the Post-World War II Era, the status quo was tantamount to global stability. The state's refusal to relinquish its land and the international community's reluctance to recognize an emergent sovereign entity weighs heavily against the legitimization and secession of separatist movements. Clearly, separatist groups have a practical stake in legitimacy creation and social movement success.

Sri Lanka's strongest active militant movement, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is employing the Internet to sketch the political map of the island around the state's Tamil minority. I juxtaposed separatists' claims to legitimacy with scholars' theories on the creation of legitimacy and the success of social movements. Because the separatist sites are both current and uniquely first-person, I sought to offer a new approach to analyzing modern social movements.

Background

As one of approximately 400 modern movements for state secession (Hewitt and Cheetham 300), Sri Lanka's ethnic separatists are struggling to sketch the political map of the island around the Tamil minority in the northeast of the state (Rajanayagam, 1994). Since the violence of the mid-1970s, the targets of the groups have transformed from increased autonomy to inclusive separation from the government of Sri Lanka, which is controlled by the ethnic Sinhalese (Shastri 208). The bi-ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese-speaking majority and the Ceylon Tamil-speaking minority (Wilson and Manogaran 236) has contributed to more than 30,000 deaths and over half a million displace-ments (Pfaffenberger 1), with the Indian Tamil-speakers and the Muslim Tamil-speakers sometimes caught in the crossfire (Wilson and Manogaran 236).

While some claim that the Sinhalese and the Tamils are "historic" adversaries, others contend that Sri Lankan history is neither immutable nor apolitical. Tilly (1985) connects the success of a separatist movement to the creation of a claim to cultural legitimacy, which includes "sobriety, propriety of dress, endorsement of moral authorities, and evidence of previous undeserved suffering" (p. 261). Accordingly, Rajanayagam (1994) suggests that the Sinhalese and the Tamils are struggling over the ownership of Sri Lankan cultural history because "who possesses the history possesses the country, possesses the right to rule, and possesses the elusive right to exist in that country." The Tamils use history to explain "not who or what or how they are or how they came…but to prove that they have 'a right to be'" in Sri Lanka. Similarly, the Sinhalese use history to establish the Sinhalese identity in the midst of the Tamil usurpation of the island (p. 54).

By the middle of the twentieth century, some Sinhalese chauvinists considered Ceylon Tamils a threat to their "singular identity" and campaigned for preferential policies to create a "hegemonistic polity" in Sri Lanka (Wilson and Manogaran 236). Historically, the forested "agricultural frontier" between the Sinhalese-peopled Wet Zone and the Tamil-populated Dry Zone has produced a "porous imaginary boundary that has long separated the predominantly Sinhalese and the predominantly Sri Lankan Tamil regions" (Kearney and Miller 94). Since the 1930s, the state has sponsored the settlement of peasants in the sparsely populated "agricultural frontier" in the Dry Zone, justifying the de facto internal colonization as raising food production and relieving population pressure in the Wet Zone (Manogaran 84). Additionally, the state endorsed Sinhala as the only official language on the island in 1956 (Wilson and Manogaran 236) and enacted constitutional provisions to promote Buddhism in 1972 and 1978 (Wilson 126).

In 1974, an across-the-board university admissions policy was implemented that preferred Sinhalese students over Tamil speakers (Wilson 126). The "gatekeeper decision" to oversaturate the student population with the once-under-represented Sinhalese marginalized the Ceylon Tamils (Horowitz 664–665), especially the young people and the middle classes (Ross and Savada 203): in 1969–1970, the Tamils comprised just over 50% of university admissions in medicine and engineering, while after the amendment, they fell to 16% of engineering admissions and 26% of medi-

cal ones (Horowitz 664–665). The young, militant Tigers became the nuclear members of the nationalist movements, criticizing the older, more moderate Tamils for "indecisiveness" and transforming the movements into a revolt not only against the status quo in the Sinhalese state, but also against the parental "sacrosanction" in traditional Tamil society (Ross and Savada 203).

Wilson (1994) maintains that the Ceylon Tamils mobilized as a single "entity" to moderate the Sinhala hegemony in Sri Lanka (p. 126). Precolonial Sri Lankan Tamil culture combined "traditional" stratified family and caste constructs with "ancestral" South Indian economic and cultural connections, while postcolonial culture contained additional Portuguese, Dutch, and British institutions (Arasaratnam 28) and Colombo, Jaffna, and Batticaloa Tamil regional identities (Wilson 126). This combination created cross-cutting cleavages in ethnic identification. Jalali and Lipset (1992) claim that "where ethnic identities are cross-cutting, they are less likely to threaten political stability" (p. 587), as "an eagerness to utilize one affinity by a political leadership that seeks an easy constituency of popular support may encourage other leaders to exploit other affinities of the same individual" (Das Gupta 321). However, by adopting Sinhala as Sri Lanka's only official language, the state contributed to "a heightened attention to language as a basis of group identity" (Horowitz 73).

Founded in 1972 (Ross and Savada 204), the LTTE is the only Ceylon Tamil separatist group still classified as an "active" (Institute for Conflict Management, 2001) and "terrorist" (Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, 2008) organization. The LTTE's estimated 8,000–10,000 militant members, 3,000–6,000 trained Tigers, and elite squad of suicide bombers ("Black Tigers") control most of the northeastern coast but conduct missions throughout Sri Lanka, creating a network of checkpoints and informants to track and contain the "outsiders" in their territory (U.S. Department of State, 2001). Additionally, the LTTE amasses influence by aggressively recruiting two untapped resources, women and children. Women comprise a third of all LTTE members (Schweitzer 84), a plurality of the LTTE navy ("Sea Tigers") (Alison 38–39), and 30%–40% of the 2000 LTTE suicide bombers (Schweitzer 84). Furthermore, children under 18 ("Leopard Brigades"/"Baby Brigades") comprise half of the 1995 recruitment, 60% of the 1998 roster, and almost 60% of the casualties of combat since 1995 (Van de Voorde, 2005 186). In May 1999, the LTTE even attempted to establish the Universal People's Militia, which mandated military training for all children over age 15 (Hudson 256).

In addition to having "a firm power base in Sri Lanka itself" (Rajanayagam 169), the LTTE has cultivated a strong center of power outside of the island, which it carefully encourages and exploits by strategically selecting its enemies and allies. Although the LTTE is not a member of parliament, it is able to influence parliamentary politics by targeting Tamil parties that oppose its policies; for example, when the new (1995) Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) ignored the LTTE imperative to boycott the 1998 elections, it was confronted with "continual threats and attacks" from the organization (Szajowski 561–564).

Additionally, although the LTTE targets political and military leaders in the cities and top personnel in the countryside, it does not tackle foreign diplomatic and commercial concerns. Finally, it has a strong support structure among the North American, European, and Asian Tamil communities, combining covert and overt tactics to collect subsidies, weapons, and publicity. For example, the LTTE's covert organizations smuggle narcotics into European nations, while its overt ones lobby for assistance from the United Nations and the international community (U.S. Department of State, 2001).

Theory

Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* is an annual assessment that scores the political rights and civil liberties of the world's nations, asking questions like whether the elections are free and fair, the judiciaries are impartial and independent, and the unions are open and effective. Next, the survey sums the scores to resolve the rankings, labeling the states with the lowest scores "free," the states with the middle scores "partly free," and the states with the highest scores "not free" (Freedom House, *Methodology*, 2007). According to Freedom House (2007), Sri Lanka is a partly free polity (*Freedom in the World*). Political opportunity theory categorizes the relationship between political openness and movement mobilization as a curve, in which closed, repressive regimes inhibit social movements and open, responsive regimes incorporate them (Kitschelt 62). Consequently, political opportunity scholars might predict that a moderately repressive regime like the Sri Lankan state would allow the demonstrations but resist the demands of social movements.

However, according to Trevizo (2006), the successful recognition of social movements does not depend only on the development of democracy, centralization of power, completion of political systems, clout of political parties, and capability of armed forces in the country (p. 199).

("Success" means achieving recognition and attaining concessions from the ruling regime; recognition occurs when the ruling regime is open to negotiating or integrating with the social movement (Gamson 31–32).) Trevizo (2006) argues that although social movements may have more opportunities to influence the politics of democratic states, even social movements in nondemocratic societies are not necessarily without political influence. Thus, even states that suppress political protests with state-sponsored violence must also offer concessions and obtain consent (p. 199). In other words, legitimacy is just as central in non-democratic societies as in democratic ones.

Consequently, legitimacy is "the critical element [in the success] of all revolutionary movements" (Schutz and Slater 3). However, questions like "What is legitimacy?" "How can movements 'manufacture' legitimacy?" and "How is the creation of legitimacy connected to the success of social movements?" have puzzled scholars for centuries. Since the Age of Enlightenment, certain authors have argued that legitimacy is established internally, through the people's belief in the government and the government's ability to anticipate their wants and needs. Locke (2003), whose ideas inspired the cornerstone of the Declaration of Independence, asserted that a legitimate government is anchored in the consent of the governed and supposed to be in the service of the governed (p. 60). The citizens' belief in the justice of the rulers' claim to power is the springing point of the belief theory of political legitimacy (Merquior 6).

Weber (1964), the founding father of belief theory, attested that legitimate political power resides in popular support, specifically in a "minimum of voluntary submission" for the charismatic, traditional, or rational/legal authority of the ruling regime (p. 324). Charismatic states are controlled by popular leaders with generally accepted "gifts of grace." Traditional states have the "ancient recognition" of a community that believes in the status quo regime because it represents the historical continuity of the country. And rational/legal states are based on "the belief in the validity of legal statute and functional 'competence' based on rationally created rules" (Weber 2). Presumably, a successful social movement must persuade its target audience that the ruling regime neglects a need and that the movement can meet that need more effectively.

According to Weber (1919; 1968), a continuous, compulsory political organization "will be called a 'state' insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds a claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the

enforcement of its order…within a given territory" (p.1; p. 54). Additionally, while the state may confer a claim to the legitimate use of physical force on other individuals, organizations or institutions, "the state is [still] considered the sole source of the 'right' to use violence" (Weber 1). Thus, polity members agree that police officers, army officials, and other agents of the state have a legitimate claim to violent coercion when they accept that the state has a legitimate claim to political power. Weber's theory assumes that if the administration of the state is efficient, the population will recognize the legitimacy of the regime and provide the resources for the regime to establish a monopoly on physical force in its proper territory.

According to the political scientists in the theory section, the public's acknowledgement of a party's monopoly on "the *legitimate* use of physical force" (Weber 54) is associated with the people's acceptance of the party's "in-principle" legitimacy, "in-practice" power, and institutionalized organizational operation of a legitimate ruling regime. Considering the military might, political importance, and economic influence of the Tamil Tigers, I expected the organization to state its strengths to suggest the popular support, "power-holder" recognition, and even de facto state status of the militant movement. Accordingly, I did not expect the LTTE to emphasize the state violence against the Ceylon Tamils, which suggests the failure of the Tigers' monopoly on force in their territory. Additionally, as popular support is an essential ingredient in legitimate statehood (Weber 324), I assumed that the LTTE would attest to the popular manifestations of the public's endorsement of the separatist movement, such as protests of the state and celebrations of the organization.

Since legitimacy also requires the recognition of particular organizations by other "power-holders" (Stinchcombe 150), I expected the LTTE to claim to be a member of the power-holding community by chronicling its meetings with transnational organizations and foreign, state, Tamil party, and civil society leaders. According to institutional scholars, no organization is legitimate without establishing an environmental "congruence" (Mathews 350; Dowling and Pfeffer 122) and defending a domain "consensus" against ousting by other organizations (Levine and White 597). Consequently, I also assumed that the LTTE would attest to its interorganizational conflicts, policy proposals, and service provisions, emphasizing the contrast between the economic conditions of the Ceylon Tamils and the Sinhalese Sri Lankans. In other words, I expected the organization to confront the question, "What can the LTTE do

for Tamils that the Sri Lankan state and other Tamil organizations cannot?"

Data

To test the theory that separatists cite strength to establish the legitimacy of their causes and ensure the success of their movements, I analyzed 1,831 news stories created by LTTE members and compiled on the "Official Website of the Peace Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" at http://www.ltteps.org. The 2003 archive comprised 141 articles, the 2004 archive contained 308, 2005 had 490, 2006 had 656, and 2007 had 236 (I excluded the first five months from the 2008 news archive). Since the site was started in 2003, the steady rise and sudden drop in the quantity of stories may reflect the evolution of the site and the conclusion of the situations that inspired the organization's appeal to the international community: the February 22, 2004 Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state, the December 26, 2004 tsunami, the June 24, 2005 Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS), and the October 31, 2005 Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA), which was proposed by the LTTE but rejected by the state. The size of the sample ensures the robustness of the results against random chance and human error, while the spread of the dates allows the analysis of articulational changes in tandem with external circumstances.

Next, I classified the coverage into categories. The subjects of the stories were: 1) state violation of human rights, 2) conflict between groups, 3) meeting with international organizations, 4) meeting with foreign leaders, 5) meeting with state leaders, 6) meeting with TNA leaders, 7) meeting with civic leaders, 8) policy, 9) service, 10) protest, 11) celebration, and 12) other (the maximum size of the "other" category was 2%, which suggested that the subjects of the stories in the sample were effectively exhaustive). Finally, I divided the subtotal of stories per subject by the total of stories per year to discover the percentage of coverage for each subject for every year in the archive. The percentage of the coverage is a quantification of the perception of the organization when it answers the question, "What is the relative importance of sharing a particular subject with a potential supporter?" In other words, which story contains the strongest claim to the legitimacy of the organization?

Since a strategy can attract one audience while overlooking or even antagonizing another (Bostdorf 342), studying the statements on the site may clarify the conceptions of the separatists about the legitimacy sources for their likeli-

est supporters. However, the statistics on the use of the Internet in Sri Lanka suggest that the audience of the site is probably not a local one. According to a government survey on computer literacy, only four out of 100 households have a computer (Satharasinghe, 2004). In Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces, which contain 51% and 21% of the Ceylon Tamil population (Department of Census and Statistics, 1981, n.p.),[1] that number is 2% and 1%, respectively. Seven out of 1,000 of all households, or less than 20% of the households that have a computer, also have access to the Internet. Additionally, there is a deep disparity in Internet access between the urban (25%) and rural (16%) sectors (Satharasinghe, 2004).

According to the same source, approximately 3% of the 5-to-69-year-old population can use the Internet alone, and 7% can use the Internet with assistance. However, 90% of the population "is even not aware [of] this facility." Additionally, when the surveyors asked the subjects who accessed the Internet at least once in the past three months to identify their top three onlining locations, only 20% cited private locations like homes, communication centers, and cyber cafes, and an additional 13% cited the homes of friends and relatives. However, 40% stated that they went on the Web at the workplace—arguably an improbable place for accessing a separatist site (Satharasinghe, 2004). Thus, the website's employment of victimhood for the establishment of legitimacy may illustrate the LTTE's interpretation of powerlessness as the most effective argument for an international audience.

While some scholars stress the connection between the success of social movements and the acceptance of their arguments for political power, my study suggests that the LTTE instead appeals to assertions for political powerlessness. Between 2003 and 2007, the percentage of pages like "Kfir Bombing Destroy[s] Padahuthurai Village in Mannar 14 Killed," "Injured Mother and her Child Die in Kilinochchi Hospital," and "December Civilian Toll in the Tamil Homeland" (the first three articles from the January 2007 archive) increased from 17% to 84% (see Figures 1 and 2). Additionally, the difference between the percentage of stories on state violations of human rights and the percentage of stories on the next most covered category grew from -13% to 81% (see Figure 3). While one might wonder whether the ineffectiveness of the state assistance in the wake of the 2004 tsunami may have contributed to the

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1. 1981 is the year of the last complete census of the Sri Lankan population. The 2001 census lacks population statistics for all but one of the districts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces (Department of Census and Statistics, 2001), as the information collection has been hindered by the ethnic conflict in the northeast of the state.
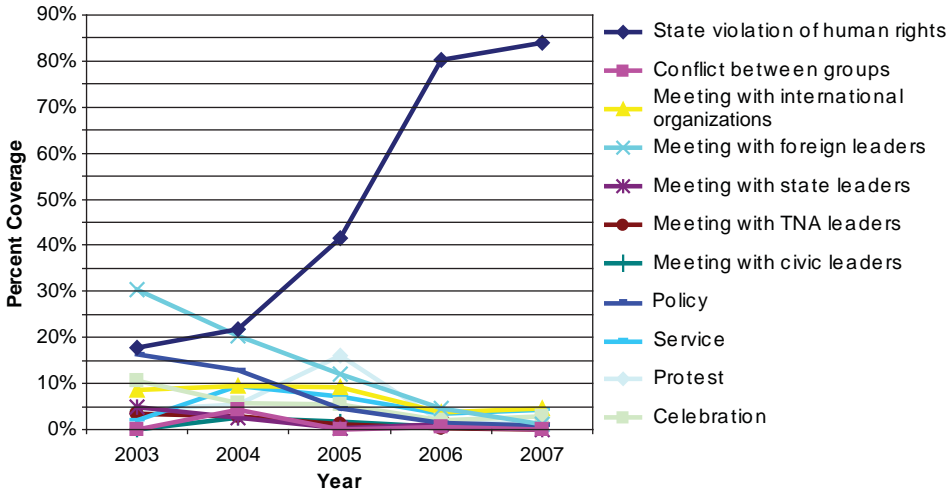
Figure 1

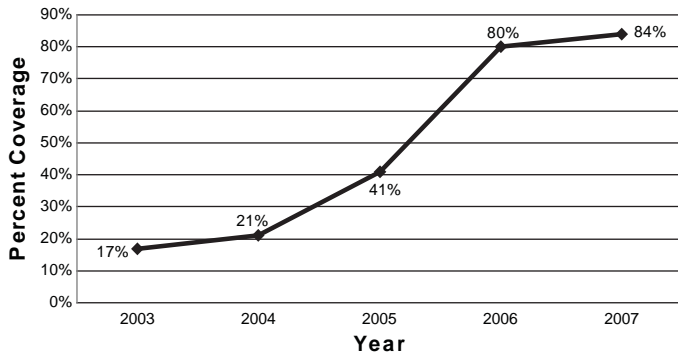Story Subjects on the News Website of the Tamil Tigers

Figure 2

State Violations of Human Rights on the News Website of the Tamil Tigers
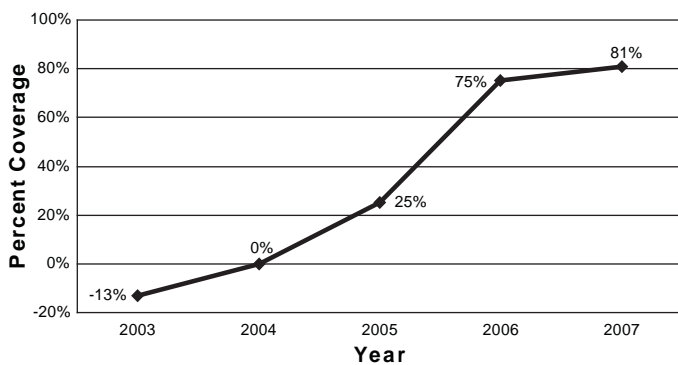

Figure 3

Difference Between State Violations of Human Rights and the Next Most Covered Category on the News Website of the Tamil Tigers

iar medium and adapts its arguments to an online audience.

While the percentage of stories on state violations of human rights increased from 17% to 84%, the percentage of pieces on every other subject plummeted from 83% to 16% (see Figures 1 and 2). The percentage of statements on protests of the state and celebrations of the organization decreased from 4% to 1% and 11% to 3%, respectively. (In 2005, the number of stories on protests spiked at 16%, arguably as a consequence of the aid crisis after the December 26, 2004 tsunami, which attracted the attention of the international community and augmented the audience for descriptions of demonstrations.) Like the percentage of stories on protests of the state and celebrations of the separatists, the percentage of statements on LTTE meetings with international organizations and foreign, state, Tamil party, and civil society leaders decreased dramatically: combined, the five categories of meeting coverage dropped from approximately 50% to about 5% of the articles in the archive. Similarly, the percentage of coverage on intergroup conflicts, organizational policies, and offered services fell from approximately 20% to about 5% combined. Strikingly, 0% of the stories on the site chronicled the violence being committed by the militants in the movement—despite the fact that according to the Western media, the LTTE is the world leader in suicide terror tactics. For example, *The New York Times* alleges that between 1980 and 2001, the Tamil Tigers carried out 75 suicide attacks, 40% of the world's total suicide terror incidents (Pape 17). Thus, in addition to clearly emphasizing the rhetoric of victimhood, the website conspicuously eschews the rhetoric of war.

Conclusion

While some scholars stress the connection between the success of social movements and the acceptance of their arguments for political power, my study suggests that the LTTE instead appeals to assertions for political powerlessness. Strategically speaking, why would an actor that aspires to statehood want to stake a claim to lacking a crucial characteristic of a legitimate state: a monopoly on force and an ability to secure the safety of its citizens? And why would it do so to the exclusion of other claims to the legitimacy of the organization? One theory is that "the main sense, if

increase in the number of complaints, the chart portrays the phenomenon as a part of a trend rather than an effect of a particular event. Thus, a likelier explanation is the "learning curve" of the LTTE as it acquires experience in an unfamil-

not the only one…a massacre has is that sense it gains from being reported and explained by the media" (Schmid and de Graaf 29). Although the possibility of publicity makes a compelling case for committing violence, my study suggests that the media exposure is arguably even more enticing when the group is portrayed not as the perpetrator but as the victim of violence, generating sympathetic support for the militant movement.

According to Ramanathapillai (2004), the Tamil Tigers tell the "trauma stories" of the Tamil citizens to target the pain and suffering of the group, transforming traumatized people into violent perpetrators. During 1983 Sri Lankan race riots, the simmering resentment of the Sinhalese "under-class" against the Tamil "usurpers" exploded into violence. The narrative of the systematic destruction of the Tamil minority by the Sinhalese majority "became both a powerful symbol and an effective tool to create new combatants by creating a new Tamil consciousness," as "this collective memory of fear, anger, hatred, and despair…led the Tamils to embrace any means [to] alleviate their distress," including violence (p. 1). Telling "trauma stories" is especially effective on the Internet, as it can cross political, economic, cultural, educational, and even demographic boundaries to create a sense of shared history and shared suffering between the Tamil locals in Sri Lanka, the Tamil diasporas in other countries, and even the non-Tamil sympathizers around the world.

Can we credit the politics of powerlessness with the success of the Sri Lankan separatists? The answer to the question depends on the definition of "success." From a theoretical perspective, the LTTE's assertions of political powerless-ness challenge the legitimacy of the "oppressor" govern-ment without confirming the legitimacy of the "oppressed" organization, as they suggest the shortcomings of the state's citizen security, popular support, service provisions, and pol-icy proposals without stating the advantages of the LTTE's alternatives. From a practical perspective, the combination of the rhetoric of victimhood and the reality of violence may preclude the possibility of a two-state solution, power-sharing arrangement, or peaceful intrastate assimilation, as it produces the potential for competing claims to victim status by the ethnic minorities and the ethnic majorities in the country. Like the LTTE, Palestinian militant movements such as Hamas, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and Fatah's al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades have crafted a cocktail of victimhood assertions and terrorist activities; however, they have also been unsuccessful at securing the statuses of separate states.
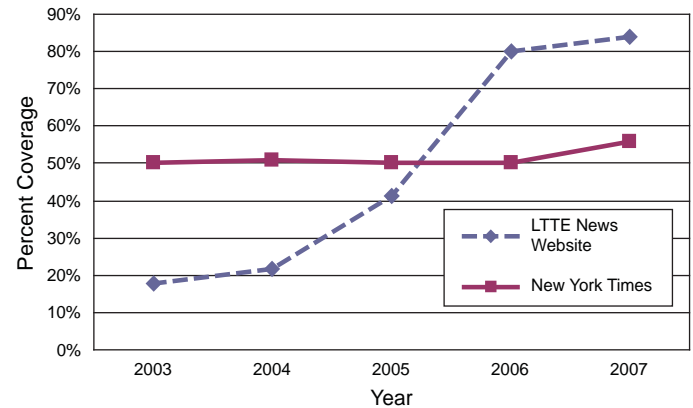

Figure 4

State Violations of Human Rights on the LTTE News Website and *The New York Times*
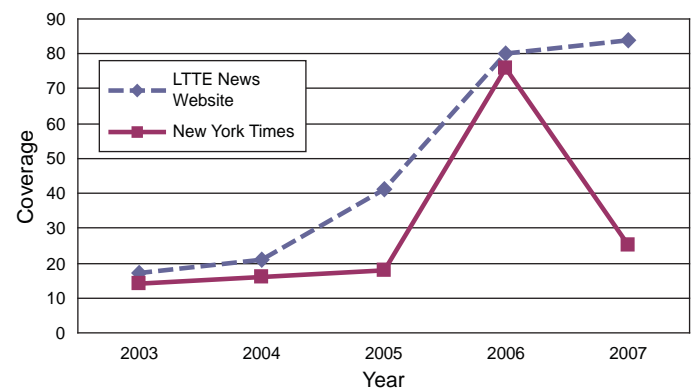

Figure 5

Percent Coverage of State Violations of Human Rights on the LTTE News Website and Total Coverage of the Tigers in *The New York Times*

Additionally, the Tamil Tigers have not succeeded at "sell-ing" their victim status to the Western world. Although the coverage of state-sponsored human rights violations surged from 17% in 2003 to 84% in 2007 on the organization's website (see Figures 1 and 2), the coverage of LTTE-led human rights violations stayed effectively stable from 50% in 2003 to 56% in 2007 in *The New York Times* (see Figure 4).[2] However, the separatists did succeed in attracting inter-national attention, collecting economic support, commit-ting terrorist strikes, and surviving in spite of opposition from the state and the 36 original Tamil organizations. Although the statistics suggest that one cannot connect the increase in the Tigers' claims of victimhood to the increase in their coverage in the *Times*, the Tigers' total coverage climbed from 14 stories in 2003 to 25 stories in 2005 (see

2. The *Times'* articles on the LTTE's acts of violence had titles like "Sri Lankan Young Still Forced to Join Endless Rebellion," "Masters of Suicide Bombing: Tamil Guerillas of Sri Lanka," and "UNICEF Says Rebels in Sri Lanka Keep their Child Soldiers"—the first three LTTE articles in the 2003 archive. The other 50% of the stories chronicled the state's sponsor-ship of anti-Tamil violence or the progress of peace on the island.

Figure 5)—a high number considering the total quantity of ethnic conflicts. Thus, the Tamil Tigers have been successful at securing the interest of the international media but not at establishing a separate state for the Tamil people.

In Second- and Third-World countries, the online audiences of militant movements are arguably younger, wealthier, and more international than the offline audiences of the same movements. Other scholars could study the changes in the organizations' claims in accordance with the changes in their audiences' age, affluence, and geopolitical location. They could also compare the claims of the movements by the quantity and strength of the competition, as well as by their places in the cycle of protest. Do the environments, ideologies, and issues of movements influence the politicization of legitimacy? For example, do groups seceding to create a national religion choose different claims to legitimacy than groups separating to reclaim their ethnic diasporas, elevate their economic conditions, rescue their national languages, or establish their national homelands? Because separatist sites are both unprecedentedly current and uniquely first-person, such research offers a new approach to analyzing the legitimization of modern social movements in an increasingly Web-based world.

Acknowledgements

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