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Ripeness in Negotiating with Proscribed Terrorist Groups

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Abstract

Since the original formulation of ripeness theory, a growing number of conflicts have involved armed groups designated as terrorist organizations. Can conflicts involving terrorist groups also become ripe for negotiations? This article addresses this question by examining how proscription affects the two key mechanisms that can make a conflict ripe for the onset of negotiations: mutually hurting stalemates and the willingness to look for a way out. The article proposes that proscription expands the power asymmetry between states and non-state actors and empowers hardliners, reducing the likelihood that both sides perceive a mutually hurting stalemate. Proscription can also hinder the ability to look for a way out by placing legal constraints on engagement, reducing trust, polarizing inter-group relations, and interfering with the ability of third parties to create incentives for negotiations. The article briefly considers these dynamics within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, showing how a terrorism focus has increased the power asymmetry between Hamas and the Israeli state, has reinforced military responses over diplomatic solutions, and has undermined both the perception of a mutually hurting stalemate and the belief of the two sides that a way out is possible through negotiations.

William Zartman argued that the success of negotiations depends in large part on their timing, and whether they are pursued when the conflict is “ripe” for negotiations (Zartman, 2001). Ripeness theory has inspired a rich research program and influenced many practitioners. Since its initial formulation, however, conflicts have featured an increasing number of groups that are designated as terrorist organizations (Haspeslagh, 2013). Can conflicts involving terrorist groups also become ripe for negotiations?

Scholars disagree on whether one can negotiate with terrorist groups, given their ideological rigidity, social isolation, lack of credibility and commitment to violence. Aside from these characteristics, however, some have suggested that proscription itself can pose significant obstacles to negotiations (Dudouet, 2011; Haspeslagh, 2013; Höglund, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2019; Toros, 2008, 2015). To date, there is little explicit discussion of whether the terrorist designation influences ripeness.

This article addresses this question. I argue that the proscription expands the power asymmetry between states and rebels, reducing the likelihood that either party can perceive a mutually hurting stalemate. Proscription also hinders the possibility of looking for a way out, by placing legal constraints on engagement, reducing trust, polarizing inter-group relations, and interfering with the ability of third parties to create incentives for negotiations. In order to explore these dynamics, I briefly consider the 2008 negotiations between Israel and Hamas, showing how proscription undermined the mechanisms of ripeness. The article concludes with a reflection on policy implications.

The Conditions and Actors Affecting Ripeness

At first sight, ripeness theory proposes a straightforward and intuitive argument: states and rebel groups are optimally positioned to start negotiations when they perceive themselves in a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS), where the deadlock is too costly, and both sides are ready to look for a way out (WO) and seek an alternative policy. Since its initial formulation, scholars have refined this argument in response to three main lines of inquiry. First, does ripeness explain the outcome of negotiations? Second, can ripeness occur under any structural conditions? And third, how do different actors affect ripeness?

One of the main criticisms of ripeness theory has been that it cannot explain the outcome of negotiations, tending to resort to tautological reasoning, and blame failures or inactions on the absence of ripeness (O’kane, 2006; Walch, 2016). In response, Zartman has distinguished between the conditions necessary for starting, continuing, and ending negotiations. Whereas the MHS and WO are necessary but insufficient conditions for the successful onset of negotiations, in order to continue negotiations, “the parties need to turn the promise of a Way Out into the pull factor of a mutually enticing opportunity (MEO)” (Zartman, 2015, p. 481). Mediators can provide incentives and design solutions that can create MEOs that promote inter- and intra-party trust, confidence in the peace process, and enthusiasm about the post-conflict reality (Vuković, 2019, p. 187). The end of negotiations, similarly to their onset, also depends on finding a ripe moment, when parties that find themselves in a mutually hurting stalemate within the negotiation process can see a possible way out, and an outcome that can be seized (Zartman, 2019, p. 18). While these distinctions are useful, it remains unclear how we can differentiate between effective and ineffective onset of negotiations independently of whether talks continue.

A second question regarding ripeness is whether it is highly conditional on certain structural characteristics. For example, the emphasis on a clear stalemate where neither party can escalate or impose its will implies that negotiations function best if there is a condition of power symmetry (Zartman, 1995, p.8; Zartman, 2007, p. 100). Zartman has argued that internal conflicts rarely produce the stalemate required for negotiations precisely because they are typically defined by asymmetry, where one party (usually the government) is much stronger than the other party both in terms of military capabilities and legitimacy (Zartman, 1995, pp. 7-8). What is key, however, is the perception of this asymmetry and of the stalemate, more so than any objective conditions. Nonetheless, asymmetry can also lead to effective negotiations when the

strong party is constrained, and the weaker party finds ways to “challenge, circumvent, upstage and outmaneuver” the stronger partner (Zartman, 2007, p. 121). This underlines the connection between the onset and the continuation of negotiations, as well as the importance of agency for negotiations.

In terms of agency, ripeness theory centers on the state-rebel group dyad, but since its early formulation, scholars have expanded our understanding of how different actors affect negotiations. For one, it is rare that states and rebel groups are unitary actors. Both sides can have doves and hawks, with hawks typically opposing negotiations and acting as spoilers (Pruitt, 2007, p. 1532). Fragmented rebel organizations make the identification of MHS and WO more difficult, because leaders may perceive the context differently (Walch, 2016). Within states, political leaders also have to agree about the MHS and the WO.

Mediators can also affect the perception of the conflict. They can manipulate the situation and increase the stakes or limit the actions of the parties in conflict (Zartman, 2001, p.15). Third parties can also resort to “heavy-handed mediation” and employ direct leverage to help the weaker side and alter the military balance, in order to bring about a stalemate (Beardsley, 2011, p. 34). Third parties can pressure actors and motivate them to end the conflict, and they can encourage optimism about the outcome of conciliation. The motivation to end conflict and the growing sense of optimism can encourage readiness for negotiations (Pruitt, 2007).

The perception of the public is also critical for conflict dynamics and for negotiation processes more broadly (Faure, 2003). Research on armed groups has also shown that loss of public support can severely weaken an organization, and pull it away from violence (Cronin, 2011; Malthaner, 2011; Matesan, 2018). Public opposition to negotiations with an armed group

can undermine the government's willing to look for a way out, and sabotage otherwise ripe moments for negotiation (Matesan, 2020).

Transnational audiences can also affect both the WO and the perception of a stalemate. Diasporas, for instance, can support insurgencies and contribute to conflict by raising funds and weapons, sending fighters to join the conflict, and lobbying external actors to intervene in a conflict (Hockenos, 2003; Wayland, 2004; Zach, 2020). Remittances can give both sides in a conflict more resources to wage war, as seen with the Tamil, Lebanese, Kurdish and Armenian diasporas (Bercovitch, 2007, p. 31). Diasporas can also play the role of peacemakers, encouraging dialogue and supporting negotiations (Zach, 2020), rewarding actors that seek peace, and withdrawing support from spoilers (Bercovitch, 2007, p. 33).

Building on these developments in our understanding of the conditions and actors that affect ripeness, the next section discusses how proscription affects these dynamics and the onset of negotiations.

Proscription, Mutually Hurting Stalemates and the Willingness to Engage

Since 9/11, proscription has become a prevalent tool of counter-terrorism, adopted by individual states and embraced by multilateral institutions like the U.N. or the E.U. (Haspeslagh, 2013, p. 192). The justification for designating groups as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) is to eliminate outside sources of funding and support, isolate organizations in the hope of weakening them, and disincentivize the use of violence against civilians. Proscription is presented as an instrument to strengthen states and inter-state collaboration on counter-terrorism, and to weaken terrorist groups.

The terrorist designation, however, also serves a political function, defining who the enemy is, and categorizing certain actors as illegitimate. This explains why states vary in their

application of the terrorist label, and why there have been inconsistencies across the different proscription regimes. Under the Reagan administration, for instance, the main criteria for distinguishing between freedom fighters with legitimate goals, and terrorists that could not be negotiated with, was the stance on the Cold War (Haspeslagh, 2020, p. 514). After 9/11, U.N. Resolution 1373 encouraged member states to set up their own proscription regimes, without clearly defining what terrorism is. This has enabled states to blacklist at their own discretion, and let national interests define who the terrorist suspects are (Haspeslagh, 2020, p. 518).

Proscription has both direct and indirect effects on ripeness. The terrorist designation has direct consequences on the ability to initiate contacts and engage with FTOs, as well as on a state's willingness to look for a way out through negotiations. Perhaps more significantly, proscription also has indirect effects on ripeness, increasing the power asymmetry between states and rebels, and privileging military over diplomatic solutions. This becomes evident when we unpack how proscription affects different actors: hawks and doves among state leaders and rebels, domestic publics, third parties and diasporas. The remainder of this section elaborates on both the direct and indirect effects of proscription on ripeness as it relates to the onset of negotiations, by considering how the designation influences the calculations of different actors and impacts the MHS and WO. Table 1 summarizes the argument.

Table 1. Impact of Proscription on the Conditions of Ripeness

	Mutually Hurting Stalemate	Way Out
State	- Boost to state legitimacy - Stronger state tools for repression - Political leaders less likely to agree on the perception of MHS	- Constraints on negotiations - Hawks empowered - Villainization of certain constituencies
Rebel groups	+ Reduced resources - Radicalization and fragmentation	- Reduced trust in state actors - Weakening of moderates - Barriers to demobilization - Marginalization and opposition to negotiations
Public	+ Public condemnation of both state violence and terrorism - Increased domestic sympathies for rebel group	- Public not acceptant of negotiations with terrorist groups - Polarized intergroup relations
Third parties	- More difficult to influence rebel group perception - More difficult to emphasize MHS	- Hindered ability to engage actors - Incoherent policies towards proscribed groups
Diasporas	+ Fewer opportunities to support insurgencies	+ Stronger support for negotiations

Note: + connotes positive impact, - connotes negative impact

Proscription as a counter-terrorism tool enables states to boost their legitimacy, gain international allies in their fight against armed actors, and weaken the international links and resources of their opponents. Proscription may also increase a state's confidence in its ability to defeat an armed group (Griffiths & Whitfield, 2010, p. 15), and empower hawks within the political leadership. By reinforcing the view of states as inherently legitimate, proscription can have the unintended consequence of enabling increasing levels of state repression. These dynamics widen the power asymmetry between state and rebels, and reduce the likelihood that the state would perceive a MHS.

Proscription also places direct constraints on engagement and negotiations, reducing the likelihood of a WO. Designating armed groups as FTOs can lead to what Toros calls a villainization of certain constituencies, which limits the possibility of negotiations, and increases divisions within the political elites around the question of engaging armed actors (Griffiths & Whitfield, 2010, p. 14; Toros, 2015, p. 13). For the rebels, the political isolation and marginalization that come with proscription can make groups less inclined or able to participate in negotiations (Höglund, 2011, p. 224). State violence can also radicalize constituencies, reduce trust in state actors, lead to rebel fragmentation over tactics, weaken moderates, and undermine demobilization, all of which further undermine the perception of an MHS or the willingness to engage (Höglund, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2019).

The impact these dynamics have on the public is mixed. In some instances, such as in the Sri Lankan case, proscription has increased domestic sympathies for a terrorist group, even though it simultaneously reduced its sources of funding (Höglund, 2011, p. 239). In other cases, the demonization of a terrorist group can turn the public so drastically against it, that it completely rejects engaging such actors in negotiations, let alone making any concessions to

them (Matesan 2020). Proscription can polarize intergroup relations by legitimizing some actors, and delegitimizing others (Kirkpatrick, 2018). This undermines the WO.

Proscription makes it much more difficult for third parties and mediators to engage with terrorist groups. For instance, U.S. legislation prohibits individuals in the United States or subject to U.S. jurisdiction from providing material support, expert advice or training to FTOs. This means that third parties cannot lend their support to designated rebels in order to alter the military balance, and they are constrained in their ability to influence rebel group perceptions of the conflict and of a MHS. Proscription has also made it more challenging to push groups to look for a way out (Dudouet, 2011; Griffiths & Whitfield, 2010; Haspeslagh, 2013).

When it comes to diasporas, the implications for ripeness are more optimistic. The case of Tamil Tigers (Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam, LTTE) is a telling example. Proscription reduced the support for the insurgency and cut off the main funding source of the LTTE, at the same time that it made the diaspora push more strongly for negotiations (Fair, 2007). Some suggest that the LTTE only used negotiations to boost its legitimacy, establish itself as the sole representative of the Tamil people and win greater support from the Tamil diaspora (Beardsley, 2011, p. 20). From the perspective of ripeness theory, however, diaspora pressure had a positive effect on both the likelihood of an MHS and a WO.

The LTTE example also shows that the effects of proscription are mixed. On one hand, the post 9/11 climate moderated the diaspora, and helped bring the LTTE to the negotiation table. On the other hand, proscription complicated the involvement of the major international actors involved in the negotiations, underscoring their differences and undermining the prospects of successful settlement (Whitfield, 2010, p. 28). LTTE's terrorist designation by the U.S. and consequent exclusion from the Washington donor meeting also increased the group's sense of

marginalization, pushing it to withdraw from the talks (Höglund, 2011, p. 239). Ultimately, in the Sri Lankan conflict, the state opted for military force, and destroyed the insurgency.

The next section briefly considers the effects of proscription on ripeness in the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Proscription and Ripeness in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Zartman argues that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has seen several moments that were ripe for negotiations. The most important one was 1993. According to Zartman, there were several factors that contributed to the emergence of a ripe moment: the rise of Hamas as a common enemy for both the PLO and Israel, the commitment to negotiations expressed by both Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chair Yasser Arafat, and the stalemate in the Madrid-Washington talks because of Washington's opposition to PLO participation. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry seized this ripe moment, and brokered the Oslo Accords (Zartman, 2015, p. 484).

In this interpretation of events, both the refusal to engage with the PLO and the rise of Hamas as an armed actor contributed to the MHS. But in 1993, perhaps more important than the MHS, was the willingness of both sides to engage and look for a way out, and in particular Rabin's approach towards negotiations. Rabin was willing to separate the issue of terrorism from the pursuit of negotiations, famously stating "We negotiate peace like there is no terror. We will cope with terror like there are no peace negotiations" (Rabin, 1993).

Until January 1993, Israeli law banned contacts with PLO officials (Makovsky, 2018, p. 13). Unofficially, Israeli security members and former members of the PLO had been meeting outside of Israel under the guise of academic conferences. The absence of a strict global proscription regime allowed the PLO to have greater international legitimacy than terrorist

groups today – the UN General Assembly gave the PLO observer status in 1974, and subsequently more than fifty states recognized the PLO (Höglund, 2011, p. 236). This context facilitated back-channel contacts, which the PLO used to signal its willingness to engage in negotiations and play an active role in the peace process. Inside Israel, by 1992, under pressure from a dovish faction within the Labor party, and from the leftist Meretz party, Labor pushed for repealing the Israeli ban on meeting with PLO, despite Rabin's opposition. By December 1992 Knesset approved the repeal, and in January 1993 it became law (Makovsky, 2018, pp. 19–20). This move was an essential precondition for engagement, for signaling willingness to engage, and for seizing the ripe moment.

The comparison of Oslo to the post 9/11 environment is telling in regards to the effects of proscription. Hamas was banned by Israel in 1989, and listed as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. in 1997, the U.K. in 2001, Canada in 2002, and the E.U. in 2003. This has not precluded Israel from negotiating a ceasefire with the organization on several occasions. Nonetheless, proscription has made ripeness ever more elusive. To illustrate the effects of proscription on ripeness, I briefly examine the June 2008 ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas.

Zartman argues that these negotiations were pursued during a ripe moment, because both sides recognized that the escalating exchange of rocket fires from Gaza and Israeli air strikes were becoming too costly, and reached a MHS (Zartman, 2015, p. 483). The mediation by Egyptian President Mubarak, and the visit by former President Jimmy Carter pulled the two parties to agree on a six month ceasefire, in exchange for easing the border restrictions on Gaza. The ceasefire ultimately fell apart, and was followed by Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. Zartman argues that the ceasefire “failed to turn into a more lasting MEO for the two parties because the

truce was ineffective in stopping violence” (Zartman, 2015, p. 484). While this may be the case, I argue that the conditions of ripeness were not actually met, and that proscription posed significant obstacles to both the MHS and the WO.

By 2008 Hamas was under a lot of pressure, much of which was linked to its designation as a terrorist group. Proscription interrupted the private donations from the diaspora in the U.S. and U.K., which had constituted over a third of Hamas’s budget (Koinova, 2018). Both the EU and the UN restricted their contacts with Hamas, and attempted to isolate the group politically (Whitfield, 2010, p. 20). While some argue that Hamas used elections to reinforce its legitimacy domestically (Kear, 2016), outside of the Palestinian Territories, proscription overshadowed any potentially legitimizing aspects of elections. After Hamas’s electoral victory in 2006, all sources of the Palestinian Authority (PA) funding were cut off, OECD donors suspended their direct transfers, U.S. Treasury prohibited transactions with the PA, and NGOs providing humanitarian relief work were faced with significant obstacles because of American anti-terror legislation (Turner, 2006, p. 750). After Hamas assumed unilateral control of Gaza in June 2007, Israel declared the Gaza Strip a hostile territory and imposed a blockade.

Such measures weakened and constrained Hamas significantly, and increased the power asymmetry between the Israeli and Palestinian side, undermining a *mutually* hurting stalemate. If Hamas’s strategy by 2008 was to fire rockets in the hope of forcing Israel into accepting a ceasefire (DeVore et al., 2019, p. 387), then the larger the power asymmetry, the stronger the incentive for Hamas to escalate its violence. In addition to undermining the MHS, the Israeli blockade, by associating the entire Gaza Strip as terrorist territory, involved measures that collectively punished many Palestinians. This included closing borders for people, goods and

services and for the provision of fuel and electricity; limits on fishing activities; and the closure of Gazan airspace (United Nations General Assembly, 2009, pp. 82–84).

These policies shattered any trust in the Israeli counterpart and in being able to reach a compromise agreement, which are important ingredients for a WO and for perceiving negotiations as a positive-sum game. A look at Palestinian public opinion underlines this point. While ripeness theory focuses on the perception of leaders, public opinion is nonetheless significant, because we can assume that it reflects the preferences of leaders as well. If it does not, then the greater the distance between leaders and the public, the more challenges leaders will face. In March 2007, 45% of Gazans believed that a compromise permanent status agreement was still possible. In June 2008 only 27% continued to do so, even though 64.2% of Gazans believed that Hamas should negotiate with Israel (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2007, 2008).

Israeli policies also empowered more radical spoilers such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and reinforced support for violence against Israel, placing barriers towards demobilization. Thus, even though in June 2008, 64.9% of Gazans supported a ceasefire negotiation as long as it stipulated the immediate opening of the border crossings, over 60% of respondents also continued to believe that firing rockets into Israel and having armed attacks on Israeli civilians inside Israel were justified (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2008). Such attitudes suggest that both Hamas and the population in Gaza perceived an immediate need to ease the suffocating blockade, but they did not believe an exit out of the conflict itself was truly possible.

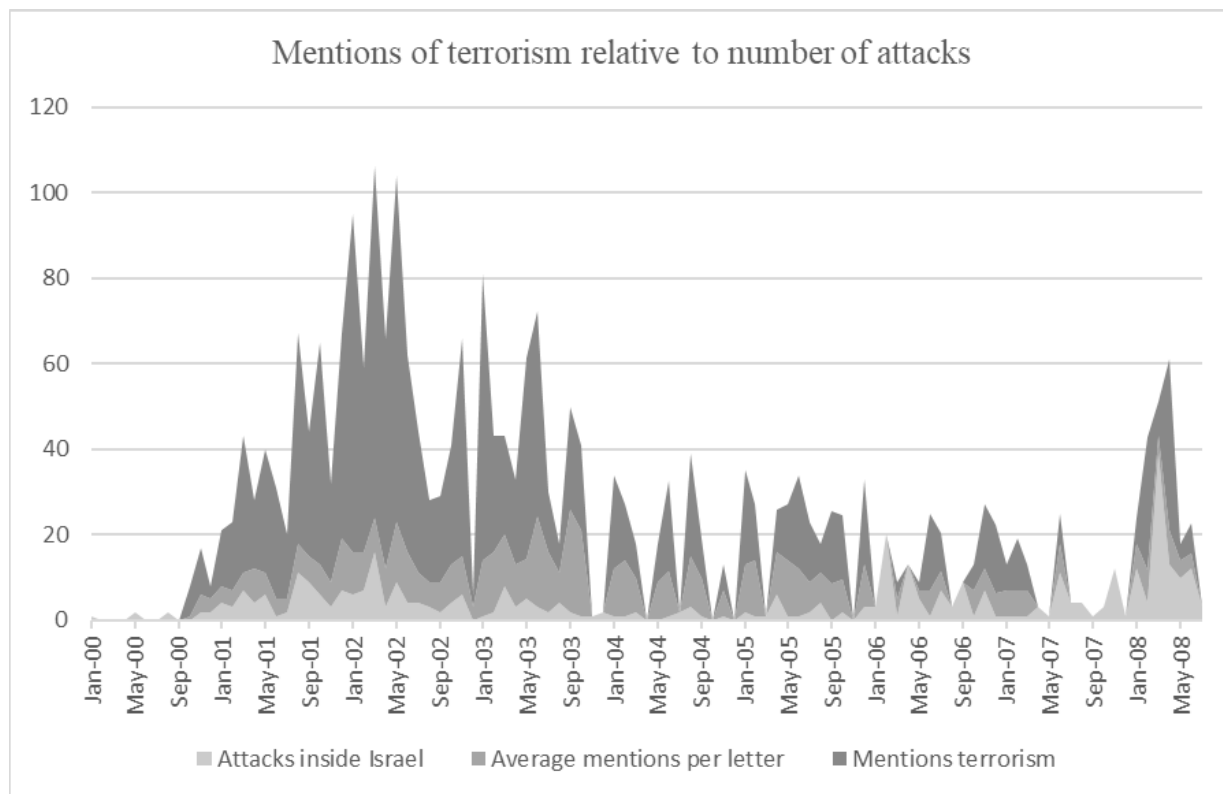
On the Israeli side, one can argue that the sharp rise in rockets from Gaza motivated the government to look for a way out. Yet, only 11% of the public perceived the escalating

Palestinians struggle against Israel to pose an existential threat, and 81% considered the military realm to be either very or somewhat successful (*Peace Index Poll*, 2008a). This is relevant, because ripeness is about the perception that it is impossible to escalate out of the conflict. Negotiations conducted only under the push of a MHS and without a genuine desire to look for an alternative policy are likely to be unstable (Zartman, 2001).

When we look at the numerous letters Israel sent to the U.N. Security Council and U.N. Secretary General between January 2000 and June 2008, we see that the framework of terrorism became much more prevalent after 9/11, and after Hamas was designated as a FTO by the UK in March 2001. An analysis of 221 letters obtained from the U.N. website shows that the average number of mentions of “terror” or “terrorist” more than doubled after the U.K. proscribed Hamas.

One may argue that the rhetorical emphasis on terrorism is in response to the escalation in terrorist tactics. If we compare the change in rhetoric to the number of attacks against non-military targets inside Israel, we see that there are disproportionate spikes in the use of terrorism language after the U.K. proscription and after 9/11. This becomes even more evident if we look at the steep rise in the number of total mentions of terrorism every month, which suggests that Israel not only used the terrorist frame more frequently, but also sent significantly more letters to the U.N. once Hamas was proscribed.

Figure 1. Total mentions of terrorism vs. average mentions of terrorism per letter, compared to the number of attacks



Sources: Number of attacks obtained from the Global Terrorism Database, "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2014). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>". This number includes attacks inside Israel, and excludes attacks on settlements, military and police, or attacks undertaken by Jewish extremists. Number of mentions based on original analysis of letters obtained from U.N. website.

The framing of Hamas as a terrorist organization had concrete policy implications. During 2007 and 2008, while there was growing concern in Israel over rockets, the government also used the language of terrorism to justify repressive measures of collective punishment, and villainize all of Gaza as enemy territory. In September 2007, for instance, the Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs decided to limit the supply of fuel and electricity to Gaza on the grounds that "The Hamas organization is a terrorist organization that has taken

control of the Gaza Strip and turned it into a hostile territory” (Israeli Supreme Court, 2008). When a court case was filed against this decision in January 2008, the Israeli Supreme Court denied this petition, reiterating that “the Gaza Strip is controlled by a murderous terrorist organization” (Israeli Supreme Court, 2008).

The terrorism lens also influenced how Israel perceived Hamas’s commitment to a ceasefire. Whereas Hamas had no intention of permanently abandoning armed resistance, Milton-Edwards argues that Hamas leaders repeatedly signaled their commitment to a truce and sought the active intervention of international mediators and monitors. Nonetheless, Israel believed that the group was using the ceasefire to rearm and “prepare itself for more rocket and terrorist attacks against the Jewish State” (U.N. Security Council, 2008, p. 3). Ultimately, this became a self-fulfilling prophesy. At the same time, the Israeli press revealed that Israeli leaders only agreed to the June ceasefire in order to prepare militarily for a strike on Gaza (Milton-Edwards, 2017, p. 227).

The perception that Hamas could not be a reliable partner for negotiations also prevailed among the Israeli public. Public opinion polls reveal that only 19% of respondents thought that a truce with Hamas was very good for the security of Israel, whereas 47% thought that it was very good for the interests of Hamas, and 58% did not think that Hamas would respect the truce even if Israel does (*Peace Index Poll*, 2008b). Such attitudes undermined the perception that negotiations could be a mutually beneficial option leading to a positive-sum outcome.

In the previous section I suggested that proscription may have a positive impact on ripeness through its effects on diasporas. In the case of Hamas, the terrorist designation has reduced the external financial support for the group, but it has not made diasporas any more supportive of negotiations. Whether and how diaspora mobilization will affect conflict dynamics

remains to be seen. It is possible that pro-Palestinian diaspora mobilization may one day change the perception of a hurting stalemate for Israel, therefore increasing the chance of a MHS.

However, if such diaspora mobilization does not seek engagement with the other side, and instead contributes to inter-group polarization, such activism can simultaneously damage the possibility of a WO, making ripeness for negotiations ever more unachievable.

Conclusion

Can there be a ripe moment for negotiating with a terrorist group? We know that it is possible to engage extremist groups, and that such engagement should involve a combination of carrots and sticks (Zartman & Faure, 2011). This article has shown that proscription tends to over-emphasize sticks, and make carrots more difficult to offer. The Israeli-Palestinian case reveals how proscription can increase the power asymmetry between the state and the rebel group and undermine the possibility of a MHS. The terrorism framework can also encourage measures of collective punishment, reinforce mistrust, weaken moderates and undermine the willingness of both side to look for a way out.

Proscription has turned the maxim that “we do not negotiate with terrorists” into a self-fulfilling prophecy, by making the possibility of ripeness ever more elusive. The terrorist designation directly and indirectly benefits the military option over negotiations, reinforcing the kinetic approach over the diplomacy paradigm. Nonetheless, actors still have agency. States can incentivize exit options from violence, and avoid measures that villainize and punish entire communities. If good intentions are not enough, it is not only mediators who can encourage parties to recognize that attempts to escalate into victory can bear a high cost and be unsuccessful (Vuković, 2019, p. 186). Domestic and international audiences also affect the calculations of both states and rebels, and can send clear signals about what policies and tactics are acceptable,

and what costs are unbearable. After all, ripeness is primarily a perceptual event that requires both sides to recognize the necessity to look for a way out of the conflict.

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