

A-S 3900  
Global Perspectives on  
Terrorism  
Spring 2018

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Course site: [jimbutterfield.org/3900.html](http://jimbutterfield.org/3900.html)



### Possible Causes of Terrorism

- Poverty (correlated somewhat with education).
- Religious identity.
- Psychological maladies or propensities.
- Other forms of identity (e.g., nationalism, religion, ethnicity).



### Critical Thinking

- Complex problems have complex and multiple causes.
- Caution re correlation vs causation.
- Evidence and inference, not ideology, preconceptions or emotion.

### Causes of Terrorism

- An oft-cited cause: poverty.
  - Ted Gurr: the *relative deprivation* thesis.



### Causes of Terrorism

- Two oft-cited causes: poverty and religion.
  - Ted Gurr: the *relative deprivation* thesis.
- Re: poverty, does the evidence support the thesis that poverty leads to terrorism?



### Religion and Terrorism

- Are any religions inherently violent?
- Examples of violence justified by religion:
  - Radical Islamist terrorism today.
  - Manifest destiny in North America; Apartheid in South Africa (Christianity).
  - *Irgun* (Israeli independence group); various post-independence Jewish radical groups dedicated to driving out Arabs or terrorizing secularists (Judaism).
  - Assassination of Gandhi (Hinduism)

### National Identity and Terrorism

- The second wave of terrorism (Rapoport) was the anti-Colonial wave.
  - Nationalism as national self-determination.
  - Ethnic identity and (sometimes) ethnic separatism are influential even today.
- Sen: nationalism as a double-edged sword.
  - It provides identity, belonging and bonding.
  - It defines the "other," often in negative or even hostile terms.