



Crafty Bastards[®] Spotlight

March 27, 2015

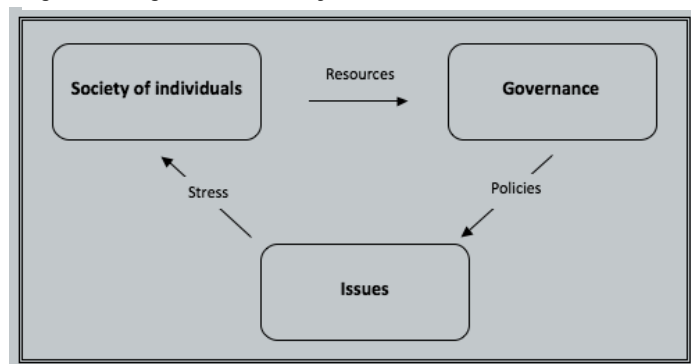
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Applying a “Polity” Model to Red

A model outlining the concept of “polity”, a three-way relationship among governance, public issues, and society, describes the inner workings of a number of human communities that have some kind of organizational structure encompassing people, issues, and authoritative entity responsible for addressing the group’s issues. Possibly the most evident polity is the nation-state, but many groups—such as corporations, unions, and social clubs—have internal relationships that can be understood through this model. In these cases, the *polity* is the group, *governance* is provided by the group’s leaders, *issues* focus on the wellbeing of the group’s members and charter, and the *society* represents the group’s members.

The main purpose of governance is to address public issues that affect the polity’s society by putting resources and policies toward these issues. Public issues that governance may seek to address include things that affect the majority of a society, like public health, climate issues, economic challenges, or anything that creates a stress on society.

Figure 1: Diagram of the Polity Model



In this model, a polity remains stable as long as the governing body has a sufficient amount of resources to address public issues and as long as the society does not feel the need to replace the source of governance. As long as the individuals responsible for leading the group are able to ensure the health of the charter (addressing existential, financial, or other threats) to the satisfaction of the group’s members, both the leadership and the group itself remain stable and functioning.



In this way, the world can be seen as a network of polities—nation-state level polities comprised of small government polities (state, local), empowered financially by corporate polities (with “governance” boards responsible to shareholders who represent the “society”), and so forth.

Most Red polities begin as groups—they have political goals, but are rarely *political entities* (e.g. states, nations, political parties). A Red polity does not always aspire to grow into a political entity, and in fact groups like ISIS appear to be the exception rather than the norm for Red polities. However, a Red polity growing to assume the role of governance in a state-level polity is far from inconceivable—in addition to ISIS, we have seen this type of aspirational evolution with HAMAS and Hizballah. The question for the intelligence community, therefore, is what this evolution looks like and what, if any, opportunities or lessons can be gleaned from the rise/expansion of a Red group polity to a Red state, nation, or international polity.

Imagining the Emergence and Growth of a State-Level Red Polity

At the outset of a Red polity, as it forms as a group or faction, responsibilities are limited—especially when compared to those of “state” polities. For this group, survival lies in the ability to feed off radical members who value this charter more than the luxuries and protections afforded by the existing regime. To accommodate these members, responsibilities might include (but are not limited to): enforcing the group’s charter, protecting the sanctity of the charter, making members value the charter over their own lives, and acquiring resources to sustain the group.

If the group grows beyond its initial size, and particularly if it assimilates the role of governance in a larger (political) polity, then the group also inherits the stragglers of that polity (the citizens who do not flee). These stragglers may accept the charter, but are unlikely to be as radical as the members of the initial Red group.

For an example, let us imagine a group that begins with 50 radical members, and assume that this group assumes governance over a town of 5,000. How does this affect the group? Primarily, their responsibilities grow exponentially. They are now responsible for providing public works, such as electricity and water; ensuring social services and social contracts, including providing safety, health, and education services; and safeguarding access to resources, such as food and other necessary goods.

Polity a Powerful Tool for Red

Red has many opportunities for empowerment under the polity model. Extremist groups, for example, can threaten governance of existing states by exacerbating public issues or rallying society against the failure of governance to adequately address public issues. Particularly aspirational groups can even aspire or attempt to overthrow governance and replace it by forces within the polity (e.g., HAMAS, Hizballah, ISIS). In that case, Red groups form alternative producers of public goods—they rival the authority of the existing form of governance and produce new policies to address public issues. Examples of this also occur outside of extremism, in drug cartels and traditional Mafia structures.



The Red polity can conceivably grow larger and larger—to the point of assuming the governance of a state, a nation, or even to theoretically form a multi-national polity. Much like the growth to a town-sized polity, however, the core polity retains all existing commitments and also assumes new responsibilities:

Figure 2. Responsibilities of a State-Level Polity

Responsibility	Goal
Political representation	Toward the acquisition of legitimacy, maintaining trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN recognition
Enforcement of independence	To ensure security, prevent civil war, protect sovereignty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army
Maintaining existing social programs or overhauling	Sustaining the support of the “casual” citizens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxation • Healthcare
National infrastructure management	Prevent environmental damage and ensure quality of life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precluding decay, which you see in the Niger Delta, for instance
Management of national resources	To keep people employed, to keep state funded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil, minerals
Maintaining or overhauling economy	To sustain buying power, finance programs/forces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Taliban dollar”
Maintaining cultural identity or overhauling	Consistent with charter? Is “renaissance” beneficial? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious, Legal, Artistic norms / customs

There do not appear to be any contemporary examples of a large, international Red polity. It is not necessarily fair to assume that Red cannot grow beyond this point. Red may well, in fact, be able to grow perfectly parallel to existing governments—so as to say, Red may be able to grow to any size that a state-level government would be capable¹. If existing governments can form multinational unions, then perhaps so can Red. It might be more likely to suggest that Red would assimilate multiple nations and then unite them under one charter (ISIS may be an example of this attempt), but the end result would be comparable.

¹ Let us assume that Red cannot defeat a government through traditional military force; Red thrives on insurgent warfare and agility as means of executing complex, coordinated, “flare-up” attacks. Should Red, even as a multinational polity, attempt to combat existing governments through traditional means, it would likely suffer a crushing defeat [unless Red were to obtain WMDs]. This in mind, let us for now table the possibility that Red could rise to the threat of *global domination*.



Governance Responsibilities Would Challenge Red

At every stage, as Red grows from the core polity to (conceivably) a state-level or multinational polity, three primary things grow in correlation with its size: 1) responsibilities; 2) threat to external polities; and 3) population.

These responsibilities present both constant struggles for Red and also several decision points: how well does the larger polity reflect the charter of the core polity? The foremost increases strain on the core polity—as responsibilities force Red to expand itself and redistribute its focus, the opportunity for Red to cave in on itself also increases.

- The second item, threat to external polities, is both perceptual and existential: as Red grows, and assuming it maintains the support of its people, so do its legitimacy and narrative. External polities may be threatened by this existential threat alone, but more importantly would be more threatened by the potential physical threat posed by such a large Red entity.
- The last concern, population, is critical as it increases the risk of revolt and is fundamental to the sustainability, expansion, or constraints of Red.

If there is dissonance, how can this be rectified, and how will the “casual,” or absorbed, citizens react? Red’s behavior, in this way, presents additional limitations. Force alienates “casuals,” so Red should enforce laws without using corporal punishment or executions (especially in societies where the behavior was not a common practice prior to Red’s assumption of governance).

Though the use of force may entice radical members, expanding Red’s legitimacy (and simultaneously the legitimacy of its charter) through results (addressing public issues) and sustained governance is preferable to exhibiting force.

Vulnerabilities Expand as Red Polity Grows

The information above illustrates how Red can grow, the capacity it has for growth, and the challenges to that growth. Red becomes more vulnerable as it assumes more responsibilities, but it remains vulnerable even as a “core polity.” Specifically, once a Red polity has grown to absorb a high number of responsibilities, it is vulnerable when its ideology is challenged or fades, when it fails to protect its members, and/or when it fails to obtain and provide the resources necessary to sustain itself. Even though the role of governance is less formal within a group-sized polity than it would be in a state-sized polity, the core polity is also vulnerable to competitors.

- This could be either alternative Red actors that provide competing charters that are more appealing to members or alternative actors who may better serve the needs of the polity and might then attempt to assume governance for that polity.
- The alternative could also be a state-level governance body—most likely one capable of providing enough satisfaction of member needs to diminish the appeal of the existing Red governance, ideology, or leader.



In addition, Red's assumption of even more responsibilities at the state level would lead to even more decision points, especially regarding controlling the population. Tribal strife, intra-nationalist conflicts, sustaining the food supply, and dealing with rapid urbanization place stress on capable governing bodies, and a novice and low-capacity governing group is unlikely to be able to absorb the challenges. Furthermore, Red would face challenges of rectifying cross-national conflicts, "streamlining" national values and cultural norms, and de-conflicting (a.k.a. quashing) dissimilar values.

Opportunities To Disrupt Red's Polity

Existing governments have many options within this understanding of Red as a sort of **viral polity**: a polity that expands outward, assimilating and consuming the polities around it. For Blue, defined here as the US Government, the polity model helps to identify stress points within states and other groups so as to glean insight into the potential drivers of Green, failure points of governance (even Blue), and opportunities for Red. In addition, the model is useful because the objects of a polity do not change from one to the next—governance, society, and public issues *contain* variables, but those exist in all polities, from states to social clubs. Understanding this model enables observers to make an objective evaluation of the variables within these entities—concepts that play into social structure, cultural norms, and other potential drivers or "Dark Matter" elements.

From the top-down, an understanding of Red's responsibilities provides several opportunities for intervention.

- Blue can constrain Red's ability to fulfill its commitments:
 - Can interfere with obtaining resources necessary to heat its towns
 - Can devalue its currency
 - Can institute an embargo.
- Blue can threaten the core charter of Red
 - Can force Red to stretch itself so thin (to address public issues) that it must sacrifice elements of its charter to sustain the larger polity
 - By countering their narrative.
- Blue can enable, fund, or otherwise empower rival polities to challenge Red as governance

The latter-most option would find many opportunities—remembering that "casual" citizens will embrace Red only if it is seen as a better alternative than the existing governance; the sustainability of Red therefore is only possible until a preferable alternative arises.

The only thing, at that point, that can sustain Red would be the passion and force exhibited by radical members, which could be dampened by the second option (threatening the charter), or which might exhibit so much strain upon the system that it contributes to the first option.

Expansion of Red Polity Untested

For Red to rise as spectacularly as this hypothetical construct illustrates, it must continue to earn "buy in" both from new radicals [born, radicalized, brainwashed] who can proselytize and sustain the core polity and charter, and from "casuals."



Red has shown that it can entice these members to join through propaganda, through opposing weak and inefficient governance (us over them), or by promising public goods (e.g. rule of law, like the Taliban provided in the 1990s).

No Red actor has shown whether this is sustainable.