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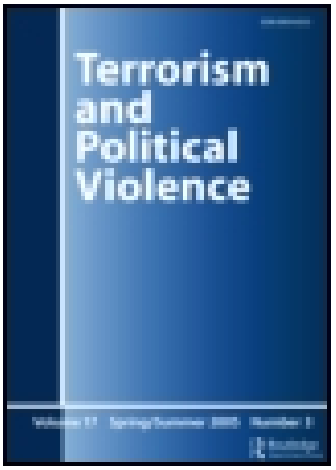

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Ideology Isn't Everything: Transnational Terrorism, Recruitment Incentives, and Attack Casualties

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Ideology Isn't Everything: Transnational Terrorism, Recruitment Incentives, and Attack Casualties

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In the current literature, the primary determinants of terrorist attack casualty rates have been attributed to religious fundamentalism. While zealotry, martyrdom, and the pursuit of salvation certainly empower religious fundamentalists with the liberty to decimate human targets, I argue that the sustaining necessity to recruit more terrorists from within the population, not religious fundamentalism alone, is an important predictor of the brutality of an attack. When targets are located within a potential recruitment population, there is an imminent need to restrict violence, as unnecessary collateral damage turns potential supporters away, rather than attracts them. Conversely, transnational attacks occurring outside the recruitment population abrogate these restrictions on violence. I test this argument on terrorist attacks from 1998–2005 and find empirical evidence that transnational attacks are a predictive cause of high casualty rates in a target population.

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Existing scholarship offers evidence that there is significant variation among terrorist network structures, goals, and tactics and these differences influence terrorist attack casualties.[1] Effective counterterrorism relies on understanding distinctions in terrorist groups' leadership structures, goal orientations, affiliations, target selections, and recruitment processes and motivations. As the threat presented by terrorist organizations increases, as measured by casualties per attack, it becomes increasingly crucial to empirically characterize variations within both terrorist organizations and attack target selection.

The current trend in terrorism, the Fourth Wave or "generation," is characterized by an increase in religious or millennium-oriented actors.[2] But there are important distinctions amongst these active terrorist groups and their attack targets. A determinant marker of high casualty rates is a terrorist group's ability to attack internationally; transnational terrorist attacks create greater carnage. Zealotry, martyrdom, and pursuit of salvation certainly empower religious fundamentalist terrorists with the liberty to decimate human targets, but religion is not the lone crucible of destruction. Transnational target selection is a seminal factor when considering the casualty rate of attacks. Domestic terrorism is defined by commonality between victims, perpetrators, audience(s), and geographic (country) location of an attack;

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whereas transnational terror attacks are less discriminant and entangle victims, institutions, audiences, policies, or perpetrators of different countries.[3]

The nature of the terrorist group's demands, goals, and network structures affect their ability to act outside the host state. Because domestic terrorists operate within their population, their desired level of attack-related casualties is constrained. Attacks, in part, are meant to attract new supporters from within the population; imposing attack-related deaths on this internal audience is counterproductive.[4] This is not a concern with transnational attacks, so the casualty rate is much greater and more indiscriminate. Transnational actors have the freedom, and more importantly, the incentive, to create hefty collateral damage, which will not threaten their recruitment capabilities. Defining the dichotomy between domestic and transnational terror groups is problematic since many of these organizations participate in both domestic and international activities and attacks.[5] Therefore, in order to improve our understanding of terrorism casualty rates, we must shift our focus from religious affiliation or group ideology to examine variation in attack targets.[6]

In the remainder of this article, I develop theoretical linkages between transnational target selection and attack casualties. After placing my argument in the context of the current literature, I articulate hypotheses and test the implications on Piazza's terrorism casualty data.[7] My results provide evidence that transnational terrorist attacks, as measured through target selection, are indeed more dangerous in terms of casualties than domestic attacks.

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The Fourth Wave of Terrorism

Encouraged by the Iranian Revolution and the mujahedeen's defeat of the USSR, Islamist organizations have assumed the face of terrorism.[8] Religion provided greater hope for success than the routinely defeated revolutionary ethos of the 1960s and 1970s.[9] While not determinative, there are three historical legacies and events that stimulated the increasing rate of Islamist terrorism—the increased sponsorship by Iran and Sudan, the legacy of the [Soviet-] Afghanistan war, and the fallout of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.[10] Islamist terrorists are "primarily motivated by interpretations of Islamic political principles or by a Muslim religious and communal identity."[11]

Prior to the Fourth Wave, terrorist attacks were chiefly attributed to nationalist, separatist, Marxist, racist, nihilist, and/or economic equality movements.[12] Religious groups then dominated transnational terrorist attacks as the world emerged from the Cold War. Essentially, after the collapse of this bi-polar world order, religious extremists filled the void of conflict partner in the international system. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the proportion of religious-oriented terror groups steadily increased. Before 1993, there were 45 active religious terror groups, and by 1998, there were at least 111 active terror groups motivated by a religious dogma.[13]

Transnational terrorist attacks decreased in frequency during the period of rising religious-based terrorist movements, but casualties per attack increased.[14] In the 1990s, the average casualty rate per attack increased to 10.38 and from 2000–2005, this high casualty rate remained similar at 10.89 victims per attack.[15] From 1998–2005, 31% of the attacks in the sample used in the following analysis are transnational; 58.1% of the attacks attributed to Islamists are transnational, constituting 65.5% of all transnational attacks. The most common justifications for this trend are

attributed to characteristics of fundamentalist organizations. In a rational choice framework, the increasing trend in the casualty rate may be an outcome of religious-based groups being less risk averse than traditional terrorist organizations.[16] Hoffman and Juergensmeyer attribute the increase in casualties to the diffusion of Islam and growth of fundamentalism since such groups are not concerned with winning over the targeted population.[17]

Additionally, religious-based terrorist groups may exploit "deep-set cultural identities": victims may be more easily identified as the "other" because they are not co-religionist and since some religions consider violence and sacrifice of life as "purifying acts" to be an end to themselves, rather than just a means of accomplishing an end.[18] Other scholars posit that Islamist terrorists are responding to a modernizing world or the growth of secular governments that challenge fundamentalist tenets.[19] Or, terrorists may be driven to engage in larger attacks because the public is increasingly desensitized with each additional attack.[20] The increase in casualties could simply be due to the increasingly "ad-hoc" nature of terrorism.[21] Asal and Rethemeyer attribute differences in casualties to otherness or dehumanization of the victims, but also consider the impact of the organization's audience and capabilities—both material and information resources.[22] Terrorist groups that are supported by a large membership or following, organized along religious or ethno-nationalist ideologies, and that control state territory tend to be more fatal.[23]

Yet, religious or ethno-nationalist ideology can have different foundations and motivations. Not all religious movements are focused on developing or exploiting an ethno-nationalist agenda, so grouping these two ideologies together is problematic. Piazza's work to further dichotomize modern terrorists organizations beyond "religious" and "not religious" is important; he suggests that one means of sub-dividing religious fundamentalists is to consider goal orientation similarly to more traditional categorizations that focus on nationalist, separatist, or Leftist goals.[24]

Goal Structure Isn't Everything

Piazza suggests that the proper sub-division of religious-based organizations, in his case, Islamist groups, is to classify their goal structure as universal/abstract or strategic.[25] Since all Islamist terrorist groups do not follow a monolithic extremist value system, differentiating groups by goal structure is an important distinction. Jihad is frequently misunderstood; it literally translates to effort or struggle and can include political violence and mobilization, but is not exclusive to violent tactics associated with Islamist terrorism.[26] Deciphering between types of Islamic terrorist organizations is important as engaging in external jihad is a frequently exaggerated cultural stereotype.[27] In fact, passages from the hadith collections place restrictions on acceptable forms of jihad and provide a framework within which jihad can be undertaken.[28] Some Islamic terrorist organizations, such as those affiliated with Al Qaeda, disregard the traditional interpretations of such hadith passages and pursue violent external jihad against international actors. Islamist terrorist groups that subscribe to contemporary distortions of the traditional hadith guidelines can be categorized as universal/abstract goal-oriented religious terrorists, while Islamic groups such as Hamas operate under a strategic goal orientation.[29]

Universal/abstract groups lend themselves to a more nebulous goal structure; such movements tend to focus on ambitious and/or complex objectives that have ideological foundations.[30] Movements in this classification are attention seeking,

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using attacks to enlighten the world to their cause and to signal determination.[31] Religious groups that fall under the universalist classification are likely motivated by a desire to change the world order through the use of highly visible attacks that are more about symbols and not necessarily about killing people.[32] Such groups are also not operating within traditional constituent politics, that is, universal groups direct their actions toward ideological communities and non-pragmatic goals that cannot be accommodated by the targeted government.[33]

Strategic groups ascribe to comparatively limited goals including territorial liberation, autonomy seeking, and government overthrow.[34] Such organizations still seek to communicate through attacks, but intend to speak to a specific audience to maintain support, demonstrate continued capabilities, and challenge the targeted government. Such groups better reflect constituent politics as their actions represent an articulation of specific political or policy demands voiced by a defined and limited group of individuals. It is more likely that a targeted government, if it wishes (i.e., without disrupting the composition of its winning coalition), can accommodate a strategic group's demands.[35]

Universal groups are found to carry out more lethal attacks.[36] Yet, focusing on goal orientation or organizational structure overlooks important characteristics of terrorist attacks that lead to increased rates of casualties. The level of casualties is linked to the audience the terrorist group is attempting to impress.[37] Focusing on group orientation or ideology misplaces the burden of explanatory power when considering attack casualties; rather, the location of an attack, in terms of within or outside potential recruitment populations, has a larger and more significant effect on terrorist violence. When terrorists attempt to dehumanize the target audience, carnage is likely to be greater; dehumanizing the target is in direct contrast to objectives to appeal to, to gain support from, or to attract recruits through attacks. Dehumanization of the target audience is counterproductive, if the group is trying to gain new recruits or politically mobilize. The potential victims of an attack are largely not the same individuals the terrorists are attempting to indoctrinate. All terror groups must recruit in order to maintain existence. Thus, the higher casualty rate attributed to universal groups is misspecified; the true driver of the casualty rate is motivated by recruitment goals underlying transnational versus domestic targeting. I shift the burden of evidence underlying attack casualty rates to heterogeneity and divergence in terrorists' target selection rather than focusing on group level characteristics.

Shifting the Focus: Recruitment Incentives

Transnational attacks frequently occur outside the group's home/host audience and aim to turn ideological differences with another state into tangible punishment against that state; gaining support is not the primary motivation. Domestic attacks are thus a better reflection of recruitment efforts and goals, and so are less violent.[38]

The inability of noncombatants to avoid victimization alters the cost-benefit analysis of supporting or joining the government or rebels.[39] When attempting to suppress a rebellion, an indiscriminately violent operation by the government is likely to backfire because non-elites can no longer secure their own safety.[40] A goal of government repression is to punish rebels and discourage support, but indiscriminate retaliation motivates physically insecure and/or vengeful individuals to become active supporters.[41] Additionally, indiscriminate repression influences active

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supporters to become more determined adherents when violence appears arbitrary and brutal.[42] When governments face armed rebellion, the justification of strong violent counterforce rests on the premise that it deters potential active supporters from committing to the rebels, but this premise is routinely wrong; state repression typically encourages "rational peasants" to mobilize in support of the rebel and intensifies resistance movements.[43]

Terrorists face a similar obstacle when executing attacks; widespread death, injuries, and destruction encourage apathetic civilians to turn against the perpetrators of violence. Terrorist groups that do not properly gauge the impact of collateral damage create unintended consequences that may weaken them. Just as excessive government violence increases the likelihood of civilians joining an opposition movement, excessive terrorist violence increases the probability of a surge in government support and anti-terrorist sentiment. Terrorism may work in the short term by commanding obedience, but it will likely alienate more and more people in the long term as observers and repressed individuals become increasingly outraged with the terrorists.[44]

Terrorist groups attack both national and transnational targets. These targets may differ, in part, based upon the group's goals at the time—strategic, universal, or recruitment.[45] While recruits sometimes come from the targeted population, the bulk of recruitment efforts focus on a terror group's home population or populations outside the targeted state.[46] If the group's intent is to win hearts and minds, high casualty domestic attacks are detrimental.

While goal structure is important when considering heterogeneity amongst terrorist groups, it is not the primary driving force of observed casualties. Refocusing attention toward the transnational versus domestic nature of the terrorist attack is of the upmost importance. As the literature demonstrates, religiously-oriented terrorist groups are more deadly since religion-based dehumanization may be easier to achieve than other foundations for dehumanization. It is also easier to see a transnational target as an "other." Instead of measuring the impact of transnational target selection through variation in a group's goal structure, I propose to test the effect of transnational targeting on attack casualties. More formally:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): When terrorist attacks are transnational, the attack will result in a higher number of casualties than domestic terror attacks.

H2: Transnational Islamist terror attacks will produce higher casualty rates than domestic Islamist attacks.

Transnational terrorist attacks are expected to produce a higher rate of casualties per attack than domestic attacks for three main reasons. First, transnational attacks do not target an audience of potential recruits; this audience will observe the terrorists' message without paying the physical or economic costs of the attack. Second, it is harder to dehumanize co-ethnics or co-religionists. If a terrorist group is operating within a country with a relatively homogeneous ethnic or religious population, it is increasingly difficult to motivate acceptance of the dehumanization of the target. When attacking transnationally, however, this is not an obstacle and the targeted population can be dehumanized along several potential dimensions that are credible in the eyes of the terrorist's audience. Transnational attacks are more likely to gain international media attention and spread more fear among those states that deem themselves credible potential targets.

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Empirical Analysis and Results

The argument extends from Piazza's work on terrorist organizations' goal structure, but shifts the burden of evidence of terrorist casualty rate to transnational versus domestic target selection.[47] I use the data and sample from Piazza's article, but change the key explanatory variables, some of the control variables, and the unit of analysis in some models.[48] Data on transnational and domestic terror attacks extend beyond this 8-year sample, but since Piazza has identified the group affiliation of each attack's perpetrators, and because the article is largely a response to his conclusions, I restrict my analysis to 1998–2005.[49] Summary statistics for the dependent, independent, and control variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary statistics

Country-event UoO	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max
Victims	4694	9.71	111.19	0	5291
Transnational attack	4694	.31	.46	0	1
Transnational Islamist	4694	.20	.40	0	1
Islamist	4694	.35	.48	0	1
Leftist	4694	.38	.49	0	1
Rightist	4694	.03	.16	0	1
National separatist group	4694	.55	.50	0	1
Al Qaeda associate	4694	.14	.35	0	1
Universal goal	4694	.14	.35	0	1
Strategic goal	4694	.93	.27	0	2
Number competing	4694	16.02	19.45	1	74
Free press	4694	31.19	19.30	.5	95.91
September 11th	4694	.001	.025	0	1
Kenya 1998	4694	.0004	.02	0	1
Population density	4694	212.63	204.95	2.87	1080.03
Country-month UoO					
Victims	1205	37.81	231.61	0	5319
International attack	1205	1.21	5.68	0	110
International Islamist	1205	.79	4.99	0	102
Islamist	1205	1.36	5.81	0	102
Leftist	1205	1.48	3.61	0	39
Rightist	1205	.11	.49	0	6
National separatist group	1205	2.14	5.80	0	107
Al Qaeda associate	1205	.56	2.94	0	62
Universal goal	1205	.55	2.57	0	60
Strategic goal	1205	3.63	7.20	0	110
Number competing	1205	62.40	231.27	1	4113
Free press	1205	26.84	18.95	.5	95.91
September 11th/Kenya and Tanzania 1998	1205	.002	.050	0	1
Number of attacks	1205	3.90	7.11	1	110
Population density	1205	166.26	172.66	2.87	1080.03

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Dependent Variable

My dependent variable, *Victims*, is a count of the number of casualties attributed to an attack. The dependent variable is treated as an event count. The conditional variance is greater than the conditional mean; I use negative binomial regression analysis to test my hypotheses. Figure 1 is a scatter plot of the dependent variable; victim count is extremely skewed toward a small number of casualties. The mean value for Victims is 9.71 and ranges from 0 to 5291; 48.72% of attacks in the sample result in 0 casualties, 15.72% in 1 casualty, 81% in 5 or fewer casualties, 90% in less than 15 casualties, and 99% of the attacks had 118 victims or less. The extreme outliers are the September 11th attacks and the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania; these attacks are the only terrorist acts in the sample that produce a casualty rate greater than 2,000 and when omitted from the sample, the mean casualty count drops to 7.43.

I present results using both an event unit of observation (UoO) and a country-month UoO. Due to the Poisson distribution, or over-dispersion of my dependent variable, I perform Vuong tests. One expects the test statistics to be insignificant as the number of zero observations is smaller than the number of non-zero observations. In the event and country-month models the Vuong test is not statistically significant, indicating that the zero-count is not inflated and therefore negative binomial regression is methodologically correct.[50] Negative binomial regression technique assumes all units of analysis are equivalent; variation and independence reside in the number of events within each unit of observation. The unit of observation is commonly defined by time and space, as the latent component in negative

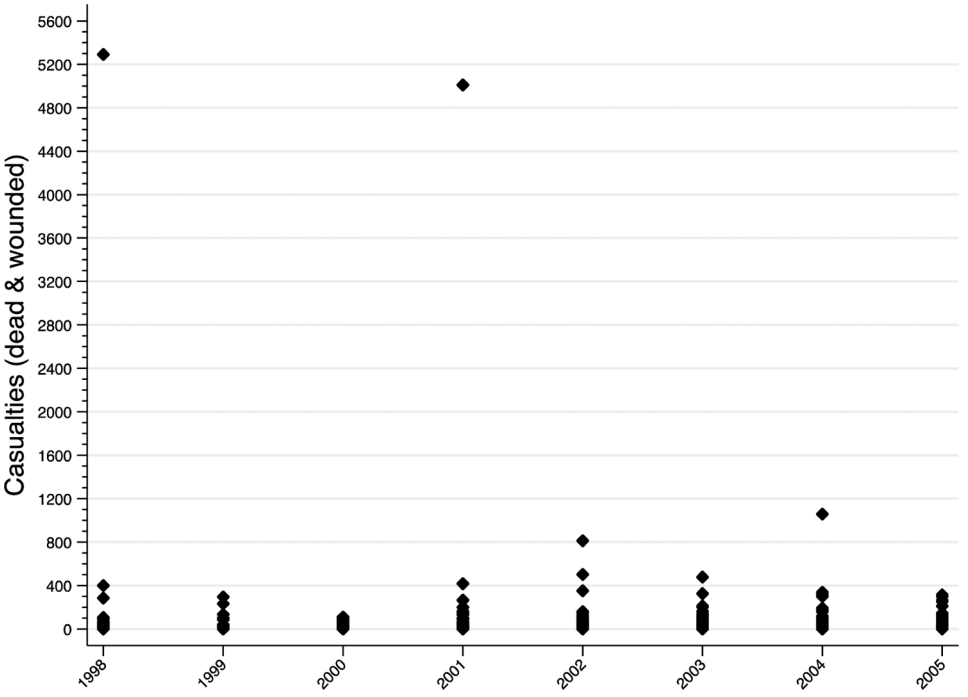

Figure 1. Casualties per terrorist attack, 1998–2005.

binomial regression is time. The event count measures the rate at which the event occurs; the outcome variable is units or events per time period, a standard unit of observation in the literature.[51] Therefore, to best assess the impact of transnational terrorism on attack casualty rate, I collapse the data from an event UoO to a country-month-event UoO (here forward referred to as country-month). By doing so, I assume all months in the sample are structurally equivalent; such an implication may overlook seasonal changes or other monthly differences that could potentially violate such an assumption, but in an imperfect empirical world, assuming all months are structurally similar is a suitable approach. This allows me to assess the effect transnational target selection has on the number of casualties per month which is equivalent to the commonly used units per time period. Once the data are collapsed, the sample includes all country-months in which at least one attack occurred from 1998–2005. This changes my dependent variable to a count of Victims per Month.

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Key Independent Variables

To test the effect of transnationality on attack casualties, I create a binary measure based on whether the terrorists acted transnationally or domestically. *Transnational Attack* takes on a value of 1 if the terrorists' nationality is different from the nation targeted, if the terrorists' nationality is different from the venue country, or if the nation targeted is different from the venue country.[52] Considering transnational terrorism in this manner provides a measure of the terrorist group's intentions—to act transnationally or nationally. In the event UoO sample, there are 4,694 terrorist events recorded; 1,459 (31.08%) are coded as transnational. When the data are collapsed to a country-month UoO, *International Attacks* counts the number of transnational terrorist attacks in the country-month of observation. International Attacks ranges from 0 to 110; 62.9% of the country-months experience no transnational attacks and 32.12% of the country-months experience between 1 and 4 International Attacks.

To test *H2*, I create a second binary measure, *Transnational Islamist*. I rely on my measure of transnationality and Piazza's indicator of Islamist groups; Islamist assumes a value of 1 if the perpetrators of the attack endorse Islamist ideological orientation.[53] Transnational Islamist takes on a value of 1 if Transnational Attack and Islamist are both coded as 1 and a value of 0 in all other cases. 20.36% of the terrorist attacks in the event UoO sample can be attributed to Transnational Islamists. To account for the change from an event UoO to a country-month UoO, *International Islamist* is restructured as a count of the number of transnational Islamist attacks in a month and ranges from 0 to 102; 80.25% of country-months have no recorded International Islamist attack and 9.46% of the country-months contain one observation of an International Islamist attack.

Control Variables

While the hypotheses point to distinct patterns in transnational and Islamist terrorism, I control for other potential ideological ethos. *Rightist, Leftist, and National Separatist Group* are dummy variables borrowed from Piazza's original dataset.[54] If an attack can be attributed to one of the ideology types, the measure for that specific type assumes a value of 1; otherwise, the specific ideology type assumes a value

of 0.[55] The research design omits anarchist, anti-global, criminal, and environmental terror group ideologies to serve as a reference category. I also control for goal structure in some models by including Piazza's (2009) measures of *Universal Political Goal* and *Strategic Goal*; again this is a dichotomous indicator. As goal structure and ideological motivations have been shown to alter a group's acceptance of death, accounting for distinctions within Islamist terrorism beyond transnationality is important.[56]

Several of the more recent and largest terrorist attacks are attributed to Al Qaeda and its network. Three such attacks are found in the sample—September 11th, the Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings, and an apartment bombing in Russia. Given the high level of activity of Al Qaeda affiliates from 1998–2005, 678 attacks or 14.44% of the country-event sample's observations, accounting for any potential disproportionate effect, is important given the literature's association between Islamist terrorist groups and higher lethality. Controlling for Al Qaeda activity allows a better assessment of a general pattern in Islamist and transnational terrorism that holds beyond Al Qaeda-affiliated attacks. *Al Qaeda Affiliate* is another binary variable that equals 1 if the perpetrator has any organizational or financial links to Al Qaeda and equals 0 when there are no discernible connections.[57]

Additionally, I include a dummy variable for the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania by Al Qaeda and one for the September 11th attacks in the United States; *Kenya & Tanzania 1998* and *September 11th* are assigned a value of 1 for the observations corresponding with these attacks and a 0 for all other attacks. Both of these attacks had a disproportionally high casualty rate when compared with all other observations. Controlling for both September 11th and the 1998 embassy bombings is important as both were conducted by the same transnational Islamist terrorist group. Not controlling for such uniquely high casualty counts could bias my results in favor of my expectations. In the country-month UoO regressions, I combine these into one dummy variable that assumes a value of 1 in the United States for September, 2001 and August, 1998.[58]

Two standard arguments in the terrorism literature are controlled for with *Press Freedom* and *Competition*. As terrorism is an act of signaling and communicating, orchestrating attacks in countries with a free press is a strong motivation beyond target selection and attack location.[59] Additionally, when attacks take place in a country with a free press, by default, the media is more likely to report the event.[60] This could have opposing effects on terrorist attacks—larger attacks provide bigger signals and thus attacks in free press countries may be bigger as word will spread further, or, attacks may need to be smaller in severity as the press is likely to report the attack regardless of the level of casualties. To operationalize Press Freedom, I use the Reporters Without Borders Index of Press Censorship in the targeted nation; it ranges from 0–100 and higher scores indicate worse scores, i.e., less Free Press and more press censorship.[61] When terrorist groups operate within the same domain, they are forced to outbid each other in terms of violence as larger attacks and more violence attract more recruits and support.[62] Competition counts the "number of active terrorist groups that are competing for the support or attention of an audience or constituent population."[63]

I also control for population density as a measure of the number of residents per square kilometer.[64] In measuring the number of victims, accounting for the potential of higher casualty rates being a factor of population density rather than group ideology, transnationality or goal orientation is certainly important. Lastly, in the

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county-month models, I include *Number of Attacks* as a count of the number of attacks in the month of observation as the more attacks per month, the higher the probability of larger casualties per month. The control variables are a combination of qualities of the perpetuating group and the location of the observed attack (Free Press and Population Density).

Results

In presenting a series of regression results, I demonstrate that the typical attribution of higher casualties to Islamist groups is underspecified. Both the country-event and country-month models provide strong evidence in support of *H1*. Transnational terrorist attacks create a significantly larger number of victims than domestic attacks. Higher casualties per attack are attributable to Islamist ideology, but the transnational nature of an attack continues to contribute to greater casualties per attack at a consistently statistically significant level ($\leq$.001) in Table 2.

After standardization of the unit of analysis, the country-month Models (6–10), Table 3, the results challenge the common notion that Islamist oriented terrorist groups are consistently more violent in their attack *modus operandi* than other groups. Transnational terrorist attacks, at a consistently statistically significant level ($\leq$.05 to $\leq$ .01), do increase the monthly casualty rate attributable to terrorism; that is, with each additional transnational terrorist attack, the number of casualties per month significantly increases.

Assessing support for *H2* is more complicated as it implies an interaction effect. The negative sign associated with the Transnational Islamist coefficients cannot deceive us. As the variable is an interactive term of Transnational Attack and Islamist, we must add those coefficients to the Transnational Islamist coefficient to interpret the results. Upon properly assessing the results, *H2* is not supported. Transnational attacks impose greater casualties than domestic attacks, but this distinction does not apply to transnational and domestic Islamist terrorism.

The coefficients produced by negative binomial regression must be transposed through the proper link function before substantive interpretation; as the coefficients are the log-odds of the variable's effect on Victims, the exponent of the coefficient is used for interpretation. In the country-event base model (Model 1), transnational attacks, all else constant, on average, compared to domestic attacks, produce 102% more casualties. Using the margins command in Stata, transnational terrorist attacks are predicted to result in 15.24 casualties whereas domestic terrorist attacks are predicted to result in 7.97 casualties. Clearly, transnational terrorism provides a significantly greater threat to both homeland and global security.

This effect is mitigated after accounting for group ideology (Models 2–5); in Model 2, Islamist terrorists, compared to all other groups, increase the casualty count by 71% and when an attack is transnational, regardless of ideology, the attack is expected to increase the casualty count by 57%. Interestingly, Al Qaeda affiliates, the primary focus of the ongoing War on Terror, are not statistically more dangerous to the world than other transnational actors (Models 2 and 3). Perhaps this relationship is different for the United States; further country-specific analysis could tell us so, but since this is not the focus of this article, future research should investigate this finding. In Model 5, we see that the nature of transnational attacks ($\beta = .921$, $p \leq .001$), attacking outside of one's recruitment audience, but not a universal goal structure ($\beta = .204$, $p = .24$), motivates increased casualties per attack.

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Table 2. Effect of transnational terror attacks on casualties (Event UoO)

Negative binomial regression	1 β (SE)	2 β (SE)	3 β (SE)	4 β (SE)	5 β (SE)
Transnational attack	.703*** (.160)	.450*** (.133)	.899*** (.178)	.899*** (.178)	.921*** (.179)
Transnational Islamist			–1.10*** (.254)	–1.10*** (.244)	–1.13*** (.247)
Islamist		.537*** (.153)	1.25*** (.231)	1.25*** (.210)	1.33*** (.213)
Leftist		–1.09*** (.164)	–.942*** (.175)	–.942*** (.169)	–.908*** (.180)
Rightist		.081 (.473)	.166 (.487)	.168 (.487)	.159 (.469)
National separatist group		–.240* (.143)	–.223 (.146)	–.223 (.141)	–.271* (.162)
Al Qaeda affiliate		.349 (.221)	–.001 (.218)		
Competition	–.004 (.003)	–.016*** (.003)	–.018*** (.003)	–.018*** (.003)	–.021*** (.004)
Universal goal					.204 (.286)
Strategic goal					.557* (.295)
Free press	.037*** (.005)	.031*** (.004)	.029*** (.003)	.029*** (.003)	.026*** (.004)
September 11th	5.88*** (.760)	4.78*** (.786)	5.14*** (.784)	5.14*** (.773)	5.31*** (.786)
Kenya and Tanzania 1998	5.67*** (.696)	4.68*** (.714)	5.09*** (.714)	5.09*** (.704)	5.32*** (.727)
Population density	–.0003 (.0003)	–.0003 (.0003)	–.001* (.0002)	–.001* (.0003)	–.001* (.0003)
Constant	.638*** (.197)	1.16*** (.221)	1.11*** (.225)	1.11*** (.222)	.694* (.351)
Wald $\chi 2$	210.77	505.44	537.11	536.96	592.42
Prob. $> \chi 2$	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.000
Alpha	5.39 (.177)	4.81 (.140)	4.76 (.139)	4.76 (.139)	4.76 (.139)
N	4694	4694	4694	4694	4694

Robust standard errors in parentheses. One-tailed significance.
$^{***}p \leq .001$, $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{*}p \leq .05$.

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Table 3. Effect of transnational terror attacks on casualties (Country-Month UoO)

Negative binomial regression	6 β (SE)	7 β (SE)	8 β (SE)	9 β (SE)	10 β (SE)
International attack	.111* (.063)	.131* (.063)	.221** (.079)	.199** (.073)	.216** (.077)
International islamist			–.209 (.133)	–.258* (.133)	–.234* (.138)
Islamist		.027 (.128)	.143 (.136)	.233* (.103)	.206* (.114)
Leftist		–.165** (.064)	–.143* (.066)	–.159** (.061)	–.149** (.064)
Rightist		.142 (.187)	.164 (.188)	.148 (.184)	.154 (.186)
National separatist group		–.063 (.043)	–.066 (.043)	–.081* (.043)	–.074* (.042)
Al Qaeda affiliate		.182 (.142)	.133 (.141)		
Competition	–.0003 (.0004)	–.006*** (.001)	–.006*** (.001)	–.006*** (.001)	–.007*** (.002)
Universal goal					.081 (.149)
Strategic goal					.045 (.131)
Free press	.050*** (.007)	.052*** (.006)	.051*** (.006)	.051*** (.006)	.051*** (.006)
September 11th/Kenya and Tanzania 1998	5.95*** (.470)	5.36*** (.506)	5.50*** (.505)	5.67*** (.478)	5.57*** (.566)
Population density	.002** (.001)	.002*** (.001)	.002*** (.001)	.002*** (.001)	.002*** (.001)
Number of attacks	.051*** (.016)	.237*** (.068)	.221*** (.071)	.237*** (.067)	.185 (.159)
Constant	1.01*** (.262)	.586** (.221)	.600** (.225)	.596** (.225)	.591** (.240)
Wald $\chi 2$	276.20	396.89	400.66	403.96	419.12
Prob. $> \chi 2$	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Alpha	3.93 (.204)	3.75 (.180)	3.74 (.178)	3.75 (.180)	3.75 (.179)
N	1205	1205	1205	1205	1205

Robust standard errors in parentheses.
$^{***}p \leq .001$, $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{*}p \leq .05$.

Table 4 summarizes the effect of transnational terrorism on casualty count across country-event model specifications (the statistically significant effects are italicized). The marginal effect is the change in predicted casualties when the observed attack is attributed to a specific ideology, or is transnational. To properly assess the effect of transnational Islamist attacks, we have to add the three marginal effects of Islamist, Transnational Attack, and Transnational Islamist together.

Based on the results of Model 3, both a transnational terrorist attack and an Islamist attack increase the expected casualty rate by 143% and 249%, resulting in a predicted 6.35 and 22.21 victims respectively. Transnational Islamists decrease the casualty count per attack by 66.7%, resulting in a predicted 18.98 victims. The

Table 4. Marginal effect of transnational attacks and group ideology on predicted casualty count

	Marginal effect	Std. error
Model 1		
Transnational attack	*7.19***	2.01
Model 2		
Transnational attack	*4.48***	1.47
Islamist	*5.33***	1.68
Leftist	*–10.82***	2.11
Rightist	.805	4.70
National separatist group	–2.39	1.43
Al Qaeda associate	3.47	2.28
Model 3		
Transnational attack	*8.89***	2.13
Transnational Islamist	*–10.85***	2.94
Islamist	*12.38***	2.88
Leftist	*–9.32***	2.07
Rightist	1.66	4.83
National separatist group	–2.20	1.46
Al Qaeda associate	–.010	2.16
Model 4		
Transnational attack	*8.89***	2.13
Transnational Islamist	*–10.85***	2.87
Islamist	*12.38***	2.73
Leftist	*–9.32***	2.03
Rightist	1.66	4.83
National separatist group	–2.20	1.41
Model 5		
Transnational attack	*9.22***	2.17
Transnational Islamist	*–11.28***	2.96
Islamist	*13.31***	2.87
Leftist	*–9.09***	2.12
Rightist	1.59	4.71
National separatist group	*–2.71**	1.65

***$p \leq .001$, **$p \leq .01$, *$p \leq .05$.

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difference between predicted casualties from Islamist and transnational Islamist attacks is not statistically significant. *H2* does not find support. Using Model 5, Figure 2 illustrates this relationship. In the marginal effects plot (Figure 2) we see the varying effects of Islamist, Transnational, and Transnational Islamist categorizations on terrorism casualties. It is clear that transnational Islamist attacks do not

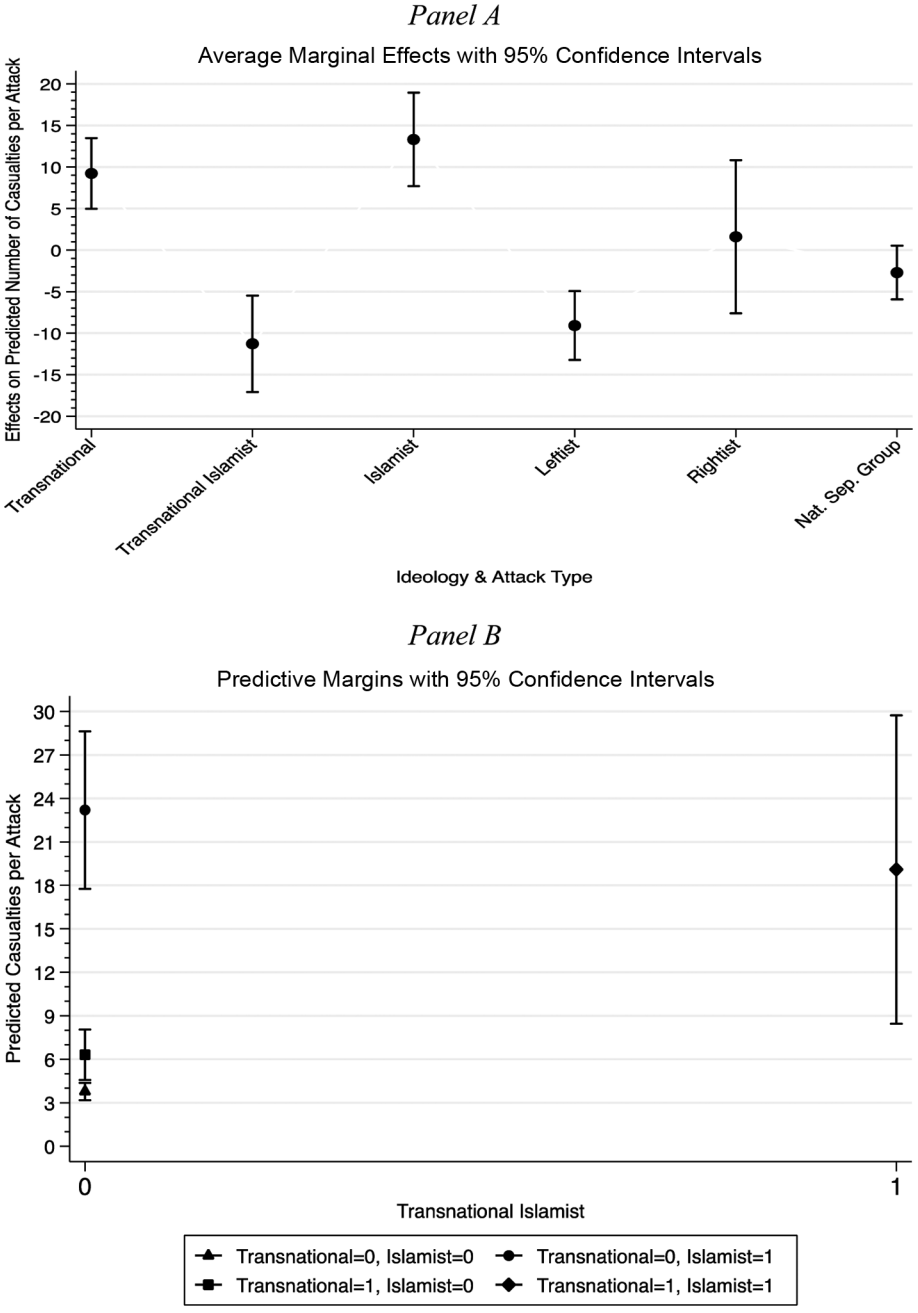

Figure 2. Marginal effects of group ideology and attack type on predicted casualties.

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create a higher casualty rate than domestic Islamist attacks. While transnational attacks remain a significant predictor of an increased number of casualties, once group ideology is included, attack type does not significantly affect the rate of Islamist casualties. As seen in Figure 2, Panel A plots the marginal effect of attack type and group ideology on predicted casualty count while Panel B plots the predicted casualty count of Islamist, transnational attacks, and transnational Islamist attacks.

The country-month models in Table 3 continue to strongly support *H1*. In the baseline model, Model 6, a one-unit increase in the number of International Attacks per month results in a 5.2% increase in the number of casualties per month. After introducing terrorist group's ideology into the models (Models 7–10), the number of Islamist attacks per month does increase the predicted number of casualties, but the relationship finds mixed statistically significant support while the number of International Attacks per month continues to have a statistically significant positive effect, a 14% to 24.7% increase, on the number of casualties per month.

From Models 7 and 8, the number of Al Qaeda-affiliated attacks per month has no statistically significant effect on the number of victims per month. When the Al Qaeda affiliate variable is included, Islamist ideology does not significantly influence the casualty count per month, but when the variable is omitted, Islamist attacks per month produce the effect expected in the literature. This points to a heterogeneity in Islamist groups that is not appropriately specified by the inclusion of Al Qaeda affiliation or goal orientation (Model 10); perhaps Al Qaeda-affiliated groups, likely through their heightened activity during the time period, are the underlying cause of the observation of increased lethality in terrorism in the Fourth Wave that is typically attributed to Islamist ideology. Clearly, in support of *H1*, the transnational nature of an attack has a significant impact on the average number of casualties attributable to the event.

I check for robustness by performing additional tests controlling for a terror group's capability and whether or not the attack takes place within foreign military occupation. Both could reasonably alter a group's ability to execute high casualty attacks against transnational targets and the availability of transnational targets. Groups that are capable of acting transnationally could have the capability to cause more damage, or to select larger targets causing higher casualties. If including a measure of capabilities in the empirical models challenges the robustness of my results, then I can conclude that group capability, rather than inhibition and recruitment incentives, is a driving determinant of attack casualties. My measure for capability takes two forms. First, I use the Big Allied and Dangerous Version 1.0 database to create an ordered variable measuring the size, *Organization Size*, of the terrorist organization.[65] Second, I rely on a binary indicator of *State Sponsorship*.[66] If higher casualties are not related to capability, it may be related to availability of transnational targets. Again, by including a proxy measurement for increased availability, I look to challenge the robustness of my results. To measure military occupation, i.e., the availability of transnational targets, I introduce a binary variable, *Occupied*, marking whether the attack location (country) is involved in an internationalized civil war or occupied by a military power; a value of 1 indicates occupation/foreign military intervention.[67] Data for the variable comes from the Uppsala/PRIO Armed Conflict Database.[68] Results for both robustness checks can be found in the online appendix (please see "Supplemental" section below for details). Both robustness checks confirm my results that variation in target selection—transnational vs. domestic—is a significant predictive measure of an attack's casualty level.

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Conclusion

The empirical tests and results support the theoretical argument that terrorists acting transnationally do not need to restrain the size and subsequent number of victims of their attacks since their target audience was never likely to support their ideological or political mission. On average, transnational terror attacks create higher casualty rates per attack. While the direct implications drawn from this study are limited to 1998–2005, the results point toward a need to consider the increased casualty rate of terrorism beyond the emergence of Islamist or millennialism groups.

A similar dynamic is likely to unfold with regard to domestic terror attacks. That is, when terror groups act domestically, they may be operating within a pool of eligible recruits. They take on more risk because they are targeting a co-ethnic or co-religionist. Anecdotally, we can think of this in terms of Sunni Islamists targeting Shi'a neighborhoods and not being constrained in terms of carnage if the Sunni terror group is not looking to recruit Shi'a supporters. Such a dynamic unfolded in Iraq: Zarqawi's letter in January 2004 to al-Qaeda's leaders urged attacking Shi'a religious, political, and military targets in an attempt to provoke a Shi'a backlash that would "awaken the inattentive Sunnis as they feel imminent danger and annihilating death at the hands of the Sabeans."[69] Although outside the relationship discussed in this paper, the argument can be applied to domestic terrorism. Within the sub-sample of domestic attacks from the sample used for this article's empirics, using Piazza's indicator of religious difference between the terrorist and target, that religious difference does increase the brutality of domestic terror attacks.[70] The results are included in the online appendix and suggest that the recruitment incentive discussed in this article is more intricate than a dichotomy between transnational and domestic attacks. This preliminary evidence strongly warrants further exploration into the "othering" of targets and recruitment and political mobilization mechanisms of domestic terrorism.

I propose that the increase in casualties resulting from terror attacks is not solely a result of increased Islamist terrorism, or even more specifically, an increase in Al Qaeda-perpetrated attacks, but a by-product of globalization. Transnational attacks are easier to perpetrate because targets have become increasingly available both in terrorists' host countries and abroad, and because improved communication and transportation technology allows for groups to have greater breadth in their targets and capabilities. I test this argument by measuring the effect of terrorists' transnational target selection on both the count of victims per event and per month. Transnational attacks produce statistically significant higher levels of casualties. Further investigation is required as the results indicate that the focus of explaining increasing casualty rates of terrorist attacks over the second half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century should not solely center on analyzing variation in attacker attributes such as ideological affiliation and goal structure. Variation in the characteristics of attacks and targets is an important avenue to explore, and has the potential to serve as a large step both scholarly and normatively.

Supplemental

Supplemental material is available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.961635.

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Notes

1. See Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Peter Chalk, "The Evolving Dynamic of Terrorism in the 1990s," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 53, no. 2 (1999): 151–167; Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening? A Time-Series Investigation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 3 (2000): 307–332; Victor Asal and R. Karl Rethemeyer, "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks," *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 2 (2008): 437–449; James Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?: An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization, and Goal Structure," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 1 (2009): 62–88.

2. Bruce Hoffman, "The Confluence of International and Domestic Trends in Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 (1997): 1–15; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (see note 1 above); Mark Juergensmeyer, "Terror Mandated by God," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 (1997): 16–23; Enders and Sandler, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening? A Time-Series Investigation" (see note 1 above).

3. Khusrav Gaibulloev, Todd Sandler, and Charlinda Santifort, "Assessing the Evolving Threat of Terrorism," *Global Policy* 3, no. 2 (2012): 135–144.

4. Recent research has identified that from 1968–2010, a greater proportion of domestic attacks, when compared to transnational attacks, result in casualties. Additionally, the proportion of domestic attacks ending in casualties has increased since 1990 (See Gaibulloev, Sandler, and Santifort, "Assessing the Evolving Threat of Terrorism" [note 3 above]; Todd Sandler, "The Analytical Study of Terrorism: Taking Stock," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 257–271). Their research and results focus on the proportion of domestic and transnational attacks per year that end in casualties, whereas my research is based on an event level of analysis. When shifting the level of analysis, transnational attacks, on average, generate more casualties per attack. This says nothing to contradict Gaibulloev et al.'s work, as more casualties per attack, and the proportion of attacks that end in casualties speaks to vastly different quantities of interest.

5. S. Brock Blomberg, Khusrav Gaibulloev, and Todd Sandler, "Terrorist Group Survival: Ideology, Tactics, and Base of Operations," *Public Choice* 149, nos. 3–4 (2011): 441–463.

6. Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49–80.

7. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?: An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization, and Goal Structure" (see note 1 above).

8. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (see note 1 above); David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in Audrey K. Cronin and James M. Ludes, eds., *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 46–73; Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism* (Edison, NJ: Transaction, 2001); Donald M. Snow, *Uncivil Wars: International Security and the New Internal Conflicts* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

9. David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism," *Current History* 100, no. 650 (2001): 419–424.

10. Chalk, "The Evolving Dynamic of Terrorism in the 1990s" (see note 1 above).

11. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?: An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization, and Goal Structure" (see note 1 above), 64.

12. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism" (see note 9 above).

13. Walter Enders, Gary A. Hoover, and Todd Sandler, "The Changing Nonlinear Relationship Between Income and Terrorism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Online First (May 26, 2014): 1–31.

14. Enders and Sandler, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening?" (see note 1 above).

15. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

16. Enders and Sandler, "Is Transnational Terrorism Becoming More Threatening?" (see note 1 above).

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17. Hoffman, "The Confluence of International and Domestic Trends in Terrorism" (see note 2 above); Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (see note 1 above); Juergensmeyer, "Terror Mandated by God" (see note 2 above).

18. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

19. Kristopher K. Robison, Edwards M. Crenshaw, and J. Craig Jenkins, "Ideologies of Violence: The Social Origins of Islamist and Leftist Transnational Terrorism," *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (2006): 2009–2026.

20. Chris Quillen, "A Historical Analysis of Mass Casualty Bombers," *Studies of Conflict & Terrorism* 25, no. 5 (2002): 279–292.

21. Chalk, "The Evolving Dynamic of Terrorism in the 1990s" (see note 1 above).

22. Asal and Rethemeyer, "The Nature of the Beast: Organizational Structures and the Lethality of Terrorist Attacks" (see note 1 above).

23. Ibid.

24. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

25. Ibid.

26. David Dakake, "The Myth of a Militant Islam," in Joseph E. B. Lumbard, ed., *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 3–38; Reza Shah-Kazemi, "Recollecting the Spirit of Jihad," in Joseph E. B. Lumbard, ed., *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 121–142; Waleed El-Ansary, "The Economics of Terrorism: How Bin Laden is Changing the Rules of the Game," in Joseph E. B. Lumbard, ed., *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 191–235; Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leaves Press DoubleDay, 2004).

27. Ibrahim Kalin, "Roots of Misconception: Euro-American Perceptions of Islam Before and After September 11," in Joseph E. B. Lumbard, ed., *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004), 143–187.

28. Dakake, "The Myth of a Militant Islam" (see note 26 above).

29. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

30. Ibid.

31. Bruce Hoffman and Gordon McCormick, "Terrorism, Signaling and Suicide Attack," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27 (2004): 243–281; James A. Piazza, "A Supply-Side View of Suicide Terrorism," *Journal of Politics* 70, no. 1 (2008): 28–39.

32. Peter Chalk, *West European Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: The Evolving Dynamic* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Chalk, "The Evolving Dynamic of Terrorism in the 1990s" (see note 1 above); Martha Crenshaw, "The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism," *Journal of Conflict Resoultion* 16, no. 3 (1978): 383–396; Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 343–361.

33. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

34. Ibid.

35. See Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?: An Empirical Study of Group Ideology, Organization, and Goal Structure" (note 1 above) for an in-depth discussion and comparison of universal/abstract and strategic groups.

36. Ibid.

37. Asal and Rethemeyer, "The Nature of the Beast" (see note 1 above).

38. Kydd and Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism" (see note 6 above).

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43. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (see note 41 above).

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45. Blomberg, Gaibulloev, and Sandler, "Terrorist Group Survival" (see note 5 above).

46. Kydd and Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism" (see note 6 above).

47. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. The zero-inflated negative binomial technique allows me to control for excess zeros, but I have no expectations about the latent split in the zero observations in the event count. Zero-inflated negative binomial regressions can be found in the online appendix (please see "Supplemental" section above for details). Again, the Vuong tests on the event and country-month models are not statistically significant and thus indicate that the negative binomial regression is appropriate methodologically. Therefore, the added value of controlling for the excess zeros is minimal.

51. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford S. Jones, *Event History Modeling: A Guide for Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); A. Colin Cameron and Pravin K. Trivedi, *Regression Analysis of Count Data* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); See Quan Li, "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (2005): 278–297; Robison, Crenshaw, and Jenkins, "Ideologies of Violence: The Social Origins of Islamist and Leftist Transnational Terrorism" (see note 19 above); Erica Chenoweth, "Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity," *Journal of Politics* 72, no. 1 (2010): 16–30; Alex Braithwaite and Quan Li, "Transnational Terrorism Hot Spots: Identification and Impact Evaluation," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24, no. 4 (2007): 281–296.

52. Transnational Terrorist is similar to the national difference variable included in Piazza's (2009) statistical models, but there are significant coding errors in the national difference variable that I corrected before creating the Transnational Terrorist variable.

53. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (see note 1 above).

57. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

58. When collapsing the data to a country-month UoO, the individual dummy variables each assume a value of 0 for 1204 country-months and a value of 1 for 1 country-month (as opposed to 3 and 2 for September 11th and Kenya and Tanzania 1998, respectively). This prevents the calculation of a Wald Chi-Square statistic. One observation of each event prevents the completion of a correlation matrix, as the single observation of the country-month cannot be correlated with any other observation. By combining the events into one dummy variable, correlation is achieved and the model fit statistic Wald Chi-Square is computed.

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61. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above); *Worldwide Press Freedom Index*, 2014, http://rsf.org/index2014/data/index2014_en.pdf.

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63. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above), 69.

64. The World Bank, *Population (Total),* 2012, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL; Office for National Statistics, *Mid-1981 to 2010 Population Estimates: Population Density in England and Wales; estimated resident population,* 2012, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/index.html.

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66. Piazza, "Is Islamist Terrorism More Dangerous?" (see note 1 above).

67. In my measure of military occupation I code Palestine, Kashmir, and Northern Ireland as occupied territories.

68. Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Havard Stran, "Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 5 (2002): 615–637; Lotta Themner and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflict, 1946–2013," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 4 (2014): 541–554.

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