Transnational Terrorist Attacks

Seung-Whan Choi, University of Illinois Chicago

https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.859
Published online: 17 April 2024

Summary

Since the September 11 attacks, a great number of studies have explored the causes and effects of transnational terrorist attacks which are carried out by at least two different nationals. However, discussions of whether transnational terrorist attacks are more deadly than domestic terrorist attacks are scant in the current empirical literature. This paucity of research is unfortunate given that many people believe that transnational terrorists, due to their possession of greater organizational, financial, and logistical resources than domestic terrorists, tend to incur higher death tolls. The literature indeed reveals three deficiencies: (a) a discrepancy between popular belief and scholarly work exists regarding the superior lethality of transnational terrorism, (b) very few researchers have taken a serious step toward debunking the myths of international terrorist attacks, and (c) the findings of the published studies are inconsistent. These deficiencies call for an empirical investigation of whether popular belief aligns with empirical data. A series of regression analyses after compiling a sample of 209,706 terrorist incidents spanning from 1970 to 2020 shows robust evidence supporting the popular sentiment of the superior lethality of transnational terrorist attacks over domestic ones. This finding implies that the counterterrorism community should remain committed to the Global War on Terrorism to protect innocent lives. Since terrorist threats persist and even diversify with new tactics, the counterterrorism community must strive to finish the initiative that President George W. Bush set out about 20 years ago: “our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”

Keywords: transnational terrorist attacks, domestic terrorist attacks, lethality, public perception, Global Terrorism Database

Subjects: Conflict Studies, Security Studies

On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda perpetrated one of the most horrendous acts of transnational terrorism[1] in history. It hijacked four civilian airplanes to destroy iconic symbols of the United States, including the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon, resulting in the loss of more than 3,000 lives. These attacks prompted President George W. Bush to announce a comprehensive plan to combat terrorists worldwide, marking the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism. The September 11 attacks also engendered a strong interest among the public, journalists, policy analysts, and scholars (Chermak & Freilich, 2016; see also Smith & Zeigler, 2017). Amidst the political and scholarly efforts to determine how to deter transnational terrorism, another shocking incident occurred in Mumbai, India in 2008. Ten members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a militant Islamist organization from Pakistan, carried out 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks across Mumbai between November 26 and 29. The 2008 Mumbai attacks claimed a total of 175 lives (Acharya & Marwah, 2010). Before the gruesome memories of the September 11 attacks and the 2008 Mumbai attacks could fade, the world was devastated to learn that hundreds of

members of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) employed brutal mass-casualty suicide bombings against the Iraqi army and seized control of Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq, on June 10, 2014. ISIS executed at least 500–800 people by the time Iraqi prime minister Haider al Abadi declared victory over ISIS on December 9, 2017 (Shamieh & Szenes, 2015).

The success of these terrorist incidents and their extremely high fatality rates have instilled fear and anxiety in the general population across countries (Avdan, 2022). Many people have been haunted by the idea that transnational terrorists, armed with larger funding and greater logistical networks worldwide than their domestic counterparts, pose a direct threat to their safety. The direct menace to human lives explains why the transnational terrorist threat has remained a top policy priority in the minds of Americans since the September 11 attacks. In 2020, 74% of Americans expressed the view that the president and Congress must defend the country from future terrorist attacks; it was 83% in January 2002, just months after September 11 (Pew Research Center, 2021). Even during the COVID-19 pandemic's dominance in global news headlines, a majority of citizens in 14 economically advanced countries surveyed in 2020 still perceived terrorism as the third-largest threat to their countries (Pew Research Center, 2020).

People's fears and anxieties have grown into a myth that transnational terrorist attacks are more deadly than domestic terrorist attacks, despite the former occurring much less frequently than the latter (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2011; Sanchez-Cuenca & De la Calle, 2009). People view myths as stories that are based on tradition, culture, and history. While some myths may have factual origins, others are entirely fictional. The myths of a golden age give people the hope that great leaders will improve their lives. Yet, true to the nature of life, myths often serve as warnings as much as promises. Moreover, many myths *<https://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes/myths_what.html>* have an ominous tone. A notable example is the myths surrounding transnational terrorism, which leave people feeling terrified of living in a world of continuous terrorist violence.

Since "data doesn't lie" (Baker, 2017, p. 1), this study conducts a series of regression analyses to evaluate whether the myth of the superior lethality of transnational terrorism is borne out by data. This empirical investigation leads to the conclusion that the myth is not unfounded but, in fact, accurate. Over the past 5 decades, worldwide data show that transnational terrorist attacks have been more fatal than domestic terrorist attacks. This scientific discovery implies that the counterterrorism community should strengthen its commitment to the Global War on Terrorism with the aim of better protecting innocent lives. Since terrorist threats persist and even diversify with new tactics, the counterterrorism community must strive to finish the initiative that President George W. Bush set out about 20 years ago: "our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated."[2]

What Is Known About Domestic and Transnational Terrorism

Ever since the September 11 attacks, scholars have displayed a great research interest in exploring the causes and effects of terrorism in general and transnational terrorism in particular.[3]

The Origins of Terrorism

Scholars have identified several key causal factors of terrorist violence, including democratic institutions, nationalism, economic growth, poverty, organized crime, humanitarian aid, and aggressive foreign policy. For example, Choi (2010) and Li (2005) emphasize the role of democratic institutions in either facilitating or reducing domestic and/or transnational terrorism. Choi (2022) uncovers that when state leaders play the nationalist card, their countries become more exposed to terrorist attacks initiated by unfavored ethnic groups (see also Asal et al., 2016; Choi & Piazza, 2016). Furthermore, Choi (2015) demonstrates that developed countries are less prone to experiencing domestic and transnational terrorist events than developing countries, but they are more likely to endure suicide attacks. Gassebner and Luechinger (2011), Krueger and Maleckova (2003), and Piazza (2011) show that poverty is not the root cause of terrorism (for a dissenting view, see Choi & Luo, 2013). Bibes (2001) contends that when states rely on repressive measures in fighting against organized crime, they tend to fuel more terrorism. Choi and Salehyan (2013) observe that humanitarian aid to refugee camps tends to increase the risk of domestic and/or transnational terrorism. Additionally, research by Collard-Wexler et al. (2014), Piazza and Choi (2018), and Savun and Phillips (2009) reveals that countries with interventionalist foreign policies are more likely to generate resentment abroad, thus making them targets for transnational terrorism, as opposed to countries with isolationist foreign policies (see also Abrahms & Mroszczyk, 2021; Choi & Piazza, 2017; Lai, 2017).

The Effects of Terrorism

Scholars have also examined the economic, political, and security consequences of terrorist violence. For example, Blomberg et al. (2004) and Gaibulloev and Sandler (2011) discovered that transnational terrorism has a small but significant impact on economic growth. Dimitrova et al. (2022) and Powers and Choi (2012) find that terrorist activities detrimental to multinational businesses lead to a decline in foreign direct investment. Choi (2021b) observes that a series of terrorist campaigns can inspire non-Muslims to convert to Islam, thereby contributing to the growth of the worldwide Muslim population. Robinson (2009) and Williams et al. (2013) suggest that terrorism is likely to encroach on some aspects of democratic institutions. Contrary to popular belief, Choi (2018a) argues that terrorist threats are unlikely to stimulate restrictive immigration policies, whether they originate from domestic or transnational terrorist organizations (for a dissenting view, see Bove et al., 2021; Helbling et al., 2023). Furthermore, Choi and James (2016) contend that human rights concerns, rather than democracy promotion or transnational terrorists, are likely to encourage U.S. military interventions abroad.

What Is Left

These scholars have demonstrated their ingenuity by elucidating the driving forces and consequences of terrorist violence. They have developed active research programs premised on the assumption that terrorism poses a grave security threat to individual countries and the world. In pursuit of these scholarly endeavors, they have also launched ambitious data collection projects, especially focusing on transnational terrorism, which is considered highly destructive

(e.g., the ITERATE project). However, these scholarly activities have been pursued without addressing the most fundamental question of how much deadlier transnational terrorist attacks are compared to domestic terrorist attacks. The next section details why the literature is too thin on this issue. Scientific probes into the origins of terrorism may lead to limited insights if they begin without a clear understanding of how dangerous terrorist attacks are. After all, what is the point of studying terrorism if it is not threatening at all? In particular, why should scholars devote their time and energy to investigating the intricacies of transnational terrorist attacks if they are not as significant as domestic terrorist attacks, which occur far more frequently than the former? It seems that scholars should go back to square one and evaluate the relative lethality of domestic versus transnational terrorism before moving forward with their ongoing journey in causal inference.

Domestic Versus Transnational Terrorist Attacks

The absence of authoritative empirical research that establishes the superior lethality of transnational over domestic terrorist attacks is concerning, as most people likely associate terrorist attacks with some form of carnage (Asal & Rethemeyer, 2008a). Even more critical is the common perception that terrorist attacks coordinated by transnational terrorist organizations result in higher death tolls due to the scale of their activities or plots. Is the lethality comparison between domestic and transnational terrorism a pressing issue? The answer is yes. In fact, there has been insufficient attention paid to the deadliness of transnational terrorist attacks, which are executed by subnational actors equipped with greater organizational strengths and material reserves across countries.

In contrast to domestic terrorist organizations, transnational terrorist organizations possess a larger membership base, providing them with the necessary human, financial, and logistical resources to carry out attacks in multiple countries simultaneously, while domestic terrorist organizations confine their activities to only one country (Avdan & Webb, 2018). Transnational terrorist organizations also "can strike wherever targets are vulnerable" (Pillar, 2001). As a result, transnational terrorist organizations with the "necessary resources . . . are unlikely to practice moderation" and are rather likely to be more deadly (Crenshaw, 1988, pp. 15–16). It is not surprising that citizens, journalists, policy analysts, and scholars all have "considered [transnational terrorism] to be a more serious threat than domestic terrorism and one that is growing in importance over time" (LaFree et al., 2015, p. 146; see also Choi, 2016, 2018b). Similarly, Crenshaw (2020, p. 3) underscores the security significance of transnational terrorism, characterizing it as "insurgency on a global scale, a violent campaign aimed at influencing a worldwide audience and encouraging followers through the use of modern communications technology."

Due to the lack of clarity regarding the deadliness of domestic versus transnational terrorist attacks, political leaders and policymakers face significant challenges in drafting effective policy responses to future transnational terrorism, with the goal of protecting their citizens. Without concrete evidence to guide them, they may mistakenly conclude that transnational terrorist attacks do not require special attention or improved counterterrorism measures, on the grounds

that they are not as destructive as domestic terrorist attacks. This misconception could potentially jeopardize many innocent lives. For political leaders and policymakers to make an informed policy decision, scholars should have evaluated and compared the deadliness of transnational versus domestic terrorism a long time ago.

Put differently, scholarly efforts to systematically demystify the presumably superior lethality of transnational terrorist attacks have been less than optimal thus far. This limitation is mainly due to a paucity of appropriate empirical data. Most existing data sets either fail to distinguish domestic from transnational terrorism, such as the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents *<https://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents/about.html>*, or are limited to only one type of terrorism, such as the ITERATE project on the characteristics of transnational terrorism (Flemming et al., 2008). These data have hindered researchers from conducting comprehensive comparative analyses between domestic and transnational terrorist attacks. While a few scholars have diligently worked to disaggregate domestic and transnational terrorist attacks (e.g., Enders et al., 2011; Kis-Katos et al., 2011), one of the most valuable freely accessible data collections is LaFree et al.'s (2015) Global Terrorism Database (GTD) *<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>*. This database not only distinguishes between transnational and domestic terrorism but also categorizes transnational terrorism into three more nuanced subcategories: logistical, ideological, and miscellaneous (see also LaFree & Dugan, 2007).

From a historical perspective, the origin of the myths of transnational terrorism may be traced back to the September 11 attacks and sensational media coverage (Mitnik et al., 2020; Powell, 2011; Weimann & Winn, 1994). Notably, President Donald Trump's tweet stating "that nearly 3 in 4 individuals convicted of terrorism-related charges are foreign-born" further fueled the fear and anxiety of the American public regarding the graveness of transnational terrorism (quoted in Davis & Nixon, 2018). In response to this concern, Silva et al. (2020) launched a systematic investigation to determine whether terrorism perpetrated by foreign actors poses a far greater threat than one committed by American citizens. They collected completed/failed/foiled terrorist incidents occurring between January 1, 1995, and December 31, 2017. Their findings, represented in a pie chart, indicate that contrary to popular sentiment, "domestic perpetrators pose a greater threat than international perpetrators" (p. 311). However, Gaibulloev and Sandler (2023), based on a sample for 1970–2019, assert that "on a per-incident basis, there is not a large difference between transnational and domestic incidents in terms of carnage per attack" (p. 276), thus assessing how deadly transnational terrorism is on a global level. Moreover, LaFree et al. (2015, p. 168), based on the GTD covering the period from 1970 to 2012, present a histogram showing that "ideological international attacks have the highest average lethality." Their argument is partly supported by Levy's (2023) study that focuses on terrorist organizations rather than terrorist attacks. He finds that terrorist organizations employing transnational attacks, which was a control variable in his regression analysis, may or may not be more lethal.

After reviewing the status of the terrorism literature, this study comes to three conclusions: (a) A discrepancy between popular belief and scholarly work exists regarding the superior lethality of transnational terrorism; (b) very few researchers have taken a serious step toward debunking the myths of international terrorist attacks; and (c) the findings of the published studies are inconsistent.

The literature also hardly discusses how transnational terrorism affects American lives. In the past, transnational terrorists targeted Americans only when they were outside the United States. However, there has been a notable shift in their strategy. Indeed, as of 2023, transnational terrorists have expanded the sphere of their operations by attacking Americans on U.S. territories.[4] This strategy holds significant implications for the exposition of transnational terrorist activities. This strategy may be a fierce reaction to America's efforts to underline transnational terrorism as a high-level national security problem since the start of the Global War on Terrorism, leading to U.S. military invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq and a broader use of special forces worldwide (Barton & Wight, 2019). Not surprisingly, there is evidence that interventionist states such as the United States are likely to create resentment abroad and hence more likely to be the target of transnational terrorist attacks than isolationist states (Choi & Piazza, 2017; Collard-Wexler et al., 2014; Piazza & Choi, 2018; Savun & Phillips, 2009). Thus, interventionist states may provide the grievances necessary to motivate deadly international terrorism.

Furthermore, it is necessary to look at the role of global media in shaping public perceptions and responses to such incidents. Indeed, a small number of immensely powerful transnational media corporations, many of which are based in the United States, have been influential in the global media market (Dimitrova, 2021). These media channels often sensationalize incidents involving the killing of U.S. citizens, thus amplifying the fear and anxiety of people about future transnational terrorist attacks (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2006).

Another interesting observation is that studies since 2000 have made notable progress by collecting systematic data and producing evidence-based research, marking a significant improvement over traditional studies that often relied on anecdotal evidence (Silke, 2001). However, it is essential to note that these studies analyze terrorism data using descriptive statistics such as a histogram and pie chart. Consequently, they fall short of engaging in inferential statistical analysis, which can further advance the cumulation of scientific knowledge on transnational terrorist activities (Silke, 2008). As widely recognized, while descriptive statistics allows a sample's characteristics to be summarized, inferential statistics enables statistical inferences to be made and the behavioral pattern among subnational actors to be generalized. Inferential statistical analysis is particularly useful for hypothesis testing to discover the general pattern regarding populations. Given that this study is interested in testing a hypothesis—whether transnational terrorist attacks are more deadly than domestic terrorist attacks—inferential statistical analysis becomes a valuable tool.[5]

Building a Statistical Model of Terrorist Lethality

To conduct inferential statistical analysis, this study utilizes the latest version of the GTD <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>. After cleaning up the GTD, which included removing missing observations, this study has compiled a dataset consisting of 209,706 terrorist incidents spanning from 1970 to 2020. This study focuses on terrorist incidents because public fears and anxieties are often shaped by significant events, such as the September 11 attacks and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Moreover, this study notes that almost all existing studies assess terrorist lethality by examining individual attacks.

Dependent Variables

This study collects two dependent variables for the analysis. The first dependent variable is the total number of confirmed fatalities, which aims to measure the lethality of a given terrorist attack, consistent with the approach of previous studies (e.g., Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2023; LaFree et al., 2015). The number includes all victims and attackers who died as a direct result of the incident. To capture this transnational terrorism and America nexus, this study measures the second dependent variable as the number of U.S. victims and U.S. perpetrators who died as a result of the attack. U.S. victims include not only U.S. citizens killed on American soil but also U.S. citizens who died in incidents occurring outside of the United States.

Main Independent Variables

This study gathers four main independent variables to examine the effect of transnational terrorist attacks.

The first independent variable identifies a terrorist attack as either domestic or transnational: “1” for transnational terrorist attacks and “0” for domestic terrorist attacks. This dichotomous measure allows me to conduct a straightforward comparison between the two types of terrorism. From the total number of 209,706 terrorist incidents, this study identifies 72,103 cases of domestic terrorism (34%) and 43,090 cases of transnational terrorism (21%). The remaining 94,513 cases fall into the category of “unknown terrorism” (45%), which is not relevant to the focus of this study and is therefore dropped from the sample data. To visually analyze the annual trends in each of the two terrorism types, this study has created a line chart represented in Figure 1.[6]

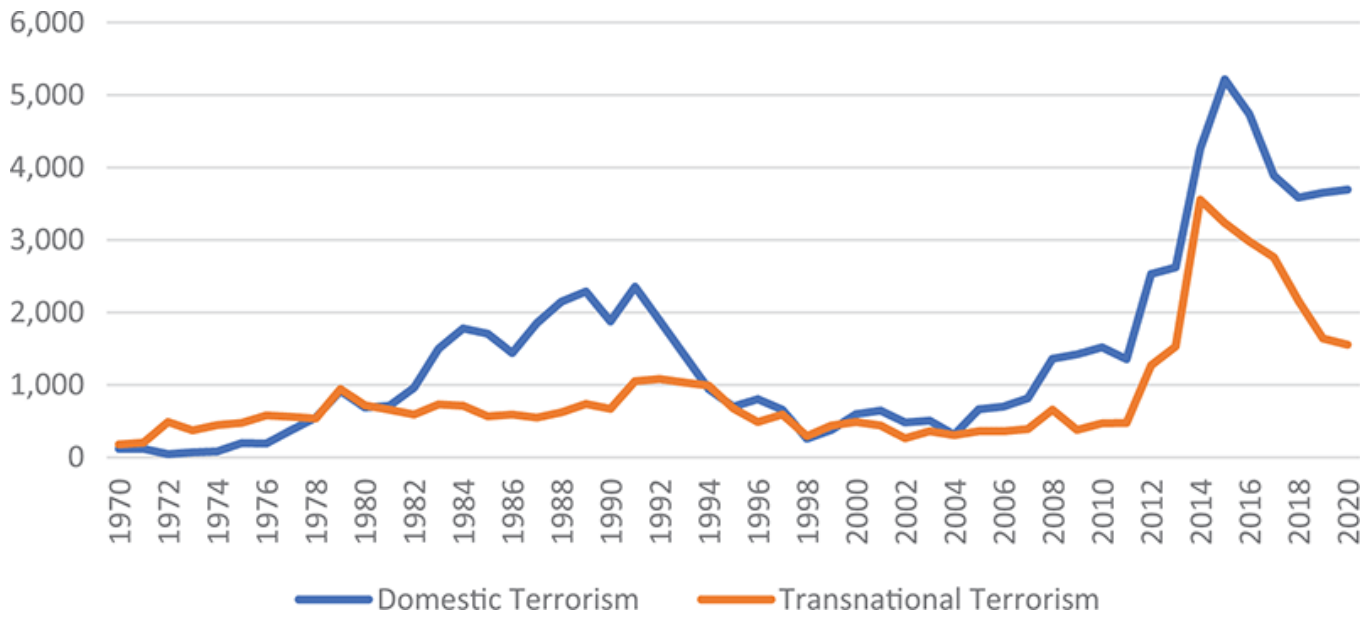

Figure 1. Domestic versus transnational terrorism.

The chart clearly illustrates that domestic terrorism has occurred far more frequently than transnational terrorism since the 1970s. This yearly trend aligns with the findings of previous studies, affirming the reliability and validity of my data collection (see Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2011; Sanchez-Cuenca & De la Calle, 2009). It should be noted that 2014 and 2015 were watershed years in terrorism history. During these years, both transnational and domestic terrorist attacks reached their peaks. This surge was a result of a drastic increase in terrorist activities in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Nigeria, which collectively accounted for over 60% of all attacks worldwide. Major events include the spring "fighting season" in Afghanistan; the ISIS attack on Badush prison in Mosul, Iraq; numerous kidnappings in Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, and Syria; and an exceptionally high number of hostage-taking events at the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan.[7] Essentially due to U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts on a global scale, transnational terrorist attacks started to decline after 2014. In fact, 2015 marked a critical turning point for ISIS as it faced significant setbacks, resulting in "losing momentum and in retreat" (New York Times Editorial Board, 2015).

By regrouping transnational terrorism into three subtypes (logistical, ideological, miscellaneous) according to the GTD scheme, this study compiles three more independent variables. The GTD identifies logistical transnational attacks by comparing the nationality of the perpetrator group and the location of the attack, revealing instances where a perpetrator group crossed an international border to carry out an attack. For instance, attacks by Palestinian groups in Israel or Northern Irish groups in Great Britain fall under this category. Ideological transnational attacks are created by comparing the nationality of the perpetrator group with the nationality of the target(s)/victim(s) and determining that a perpetrator group targeted individuals or entities of a different nationality. This category includes incidents like those involving the Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA), which carried out attacks against Spanish targets in Spain while seeking independence for the Basque people of France. A specific example is the Hipercor bombing in which the ETA detonated a car bomb on June 19, 1987, at the Hipercor shopping center in

Barcelona, Spain, killing 21 people and injuring 45 (Barros & Gil-Alana, 2006). Miscellaneous transnational attacks are recorded by comparing the location of the attack with the nationality of the target(s) and determining that a perpetrator group attacked a target of a different nationality but the information on the perpetrator was lacking (LaFree et al., 2015; Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2021).

In Figure 2, this study presents a visual inspection of these three subtypes of transnational terrorism. This study observes that the frequency of these three subtype attacks varies by year and that ideological terrorist attacks consistently outnumber logistical terrorist attacks throughout the sample period. It is also worth noting that the former increased much more rapidly than the latter toward 2014, which captured a series of terrorist attacks that occurred in those five countries as noted earlier (Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria).

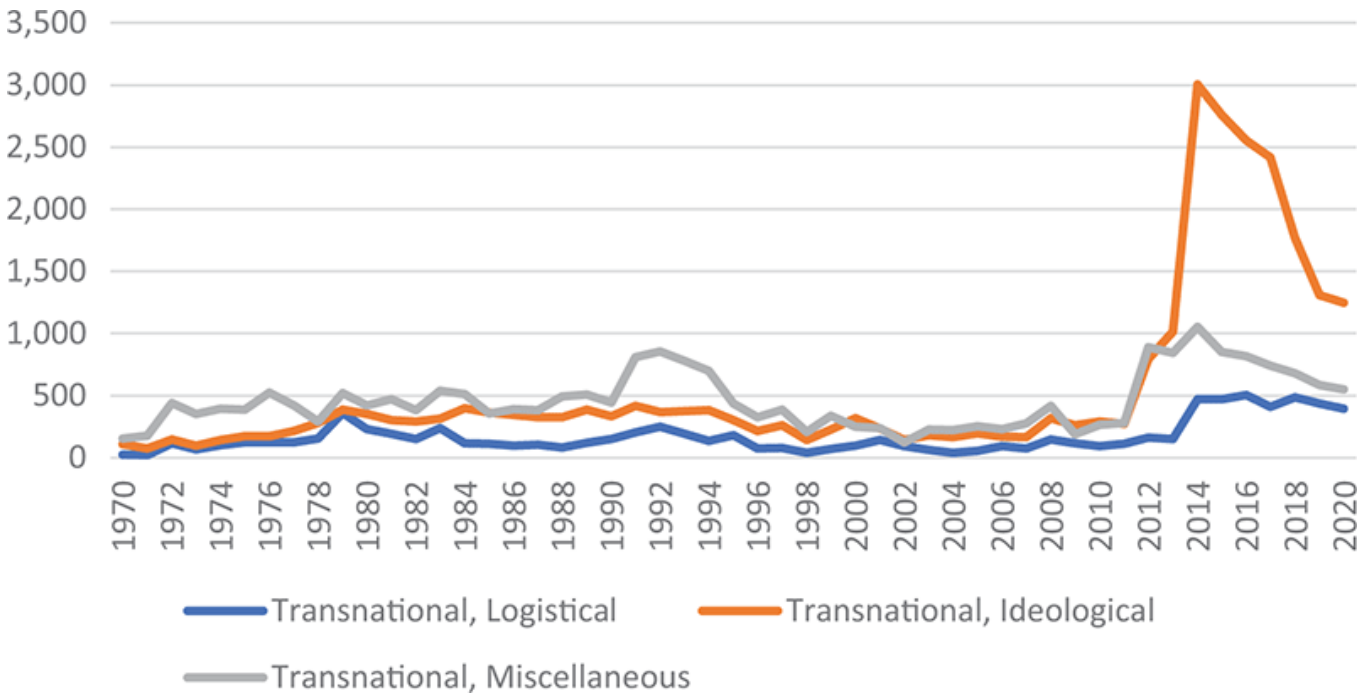

Figure 2. Three types of transnational terrorism.

Control Variables

To construct an empirical model that can test the effect of transnational versus domestic terrorism on lethality, this study has opted for a parsimonious approach, given the limited existing research in this specific area. This study has selected four control variables based on my literature review: democracy, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, region, and time. In an attempt to avoid spurious results, various previous studies include these control variables.

While existing studies highlight the importance of democratic governance in terrorism-prone countries, they present contradictory explanations of the impact of democracy on terrorism. On one hand, democracy is thought to provide disgruntled people with a peaceful avenue to address their grievances, thereby reducing the likelihood of turning their dissatisfactions into terrorist

violence (Choi, 2010). Therefore, this study anticipates that democratic governance reduces bitterness among people, leading to less severe terrorist events and therefore fewer casualties. On the other hand, terrorist groups can thrive in democratic societies by exploiting loopholes in democratic institutions. For example, they can use the freedom of association to easily organize their activities and the freedom of expression to quickly disseminate their messages (Li, 2005). Consequently, this study expects that as the level of democracy increases, terrorist attacks become more deadly. Democracy is operationalized using the Polity IV data set and ranges from -10 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic; Marshall et al., 2017).

As the national economy improves, it ameliorates poor economic conditions and economic grievances. Consequently, economic prosperity minimizes terrorist activity and economically wealthy countries are likely to experience fewer fatalities (Boylan, 2016; for a dissenting view, see Freytag et al., 2011; Piazza, 2006). This study measures economic conditions using the logarithm of real GDP per capita in constant 2010 U.S. dollars; data are gathered from the Maddison Project Database (2020) *<https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-project-database-2020?lang=en>*.

This study specifies region fixed-effects since waves of terrorism tend to occur in regions rather than individual countries (Rapoport, 2004; for a dissenting view, see Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2023). This study uses six regional dummy variables to account for the geographic location of the base country: Eastern Europe and Central Asia (including Mongolia and the German Democratic Republic), Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa (including Israel and Turkey, excluding Cyprus), sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe and North America (including Cyprus, Australia and New Zealand but excluding the German Democratic Republic), and Asia and Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand). These regions reflect geographical proximity as well as characteristics that contribute to regional understanding, drawing from previous research on democratization (e.g., post-communist).[8] The Middle East and North Africa region is the reference in the model estimation.

This study also controls for temporal effects, recognizing that some years are more prone to terrorism than others.[9] This aligns with Rapoport's (2004) observation that terrorism occurs in historical waves all over the world.

Since the dependent variable, the number of fatalities, is a count measure and its variance (128.62) is greater than the mean (2.43), this study opts for a negative binomial maximum-likelihood regression. This estimation method adds a dispersion parameter, accounting for the unobserved heterogeneity among observations and therefore correcting the over-dispersion found in the sample data. Given that the data set is clustered—terrorist attacks are clustered in specific countries, this study employs standard errors that allow for intragroup correlation. This modification relaxes the usual requirement that the observations should be independent. This clustering accounts for the data pattern that terrorist attacks are independent across countries but not necessarily within countries. This study also introduces zero-inflated negative binomial regression as an attempt to alleviate media bias in terrorism data collection.

Empirical Results

Table 1 displays simple regression models addressing the question of whether transnational terrorist attacks are more deadly than domestic terrorist attacks. Model 1 is a bivariate regression model evaluating the effect of total transnational terrorism on the total number of fatalities; Models 2–4 delve into three subtypes of transnational terrorism: logistical, ideological, and miscellaneous. Models 5–8 follow the same model specification as Models 1–4, but their focus is on U.S. victims and U.S. perpetrators who died as a result of the attack. The overall results lend support to the popular belief—transnational terrorist attacks are a more serious security threat than domestic terrorist attacks, especially when they are motivated by ideological reasons.

Table 1. Is Transnational Terrorism More Deadly Than Domestic Terrorism?

	Total Fatalities				Total U.S. Fatalities			
Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Transnational Terrorism								
Total	−0.063				3.425***			
	(0.211)				(0.619)			
Logistical		−0.286				−0.738		
		(0.207)				(0.847)		
Ideological			0.353*				3.389***	
			(0.158)				(0.707)	
Miscellaneous				−0.385				4.093***
				(0.209)				(0.291)
Constant	1.202***	1.266***	1.141***	0.934***	−5.169***	−2.742***	−5.052***	−4.946***
	(0.123)	(0.118)	(0.130)	(0.102)	(0.637)	(0.779)	(0.576)	(0.799)

	Total Fatalities				Total U.S. Fatalities			
Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Transnational Terrorism								
Dispersion = 1	3.84	3.66	3.63	3.66	151.04	547.99	310.30	147.18
Observations	104,311	95,415	95,296	193,809	72,366	67,091	67,070	143,454

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; Year dummies are omitted to save space.

* $p < .05$,

**$p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$, two-tailed tests.

When perusing the effect of total transnational terrorism on the overall lethality, this study notices that total transnational terrorist attacks do not incur more fatal blows than total domestic terrorist attacks (Model 1). However, it seems that among the three subtypes, ideological transnational attacks are more deadly than ideologically domestic attacks (Model 3). When evaluating the harm inflicted on U.S. citizens, transnational terrorists appear to claim more American lives, as indicated by total terrorist attacks in Model 5, ideologically motivated attacks in Model 8, and miscellaneous attacks in Model 9.

If appropriate control variables are not included in the statistical model, they may distort the estimated results of my empirical models. When used properly, control variables holding political and economic factors fixed ensure an accurate assessment of how much transnational terrorism predicts the variation in the outcome variable. Table 2 shows the estimated results of multivariate regression models. The main findings of Table 2 are fairly consistent with those of Table 1:[10] transnational terrorism is more destructive than domestic terrorism.

Table 2. Is Transnational Terrorism More Deadly Than Domestic Terrorism? Control Variables Included

	Total Fatalities				Total U.S. Fatalities			
Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Transnational Terrorism								
Total	0.075				3.509***			
	(0.152)				(0.522)			
Logistical		−0.244				1.107*		
		(0.189)				(0.548)		
Ideological			0.294*				3.995***	
			(0.148)				(0.577)	
Miscellaneous				−0.036				3.742***
				(0.179)				(0.578)
Democracy	−0.009	−0.013	−0.015	−0.016	−0.194***	−0.180***	−0.190**	−0.146***
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.053)	(0.045)	(0.062)	(0.033)
GDP per capita	−0.316*	−0.321*	−0.304	−0.435**	0.373	−0.144	0.328	0.613*

	Total Fatalities				Total U.S. Fatalities			
Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Transnational Terrorism								
	(0.156)	(0.162)	(0.162)	(0.137)	(0.298)	(0.255)	(0.371)	(0.268)
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	−0.352	−0.309	−0.261	−0.591**	−1.391**	−2.815	−1.496*	−1.055*
	(0.358)	(0.373)	(0.408)	(0.209)	(0.522)	(1.623)	(0.705)	(0.427)
Latin America and the Caribbean	−0.797**	−0.893**	−0.730**	−0.753**	0.829	−0.599	0.054	0.550
	(0.289)	(0.301)	(0.268)	(0.239)	(0.661)	(0.650)	(0.733)	(0.806)
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.155	0.137	0.231	0.135	−0.749	−1.797**	−1.163	−0.283
	(0.371)	(0.391)	(0.386)	(0.369)	(0.644)	(0.618)	(0.724)	(0.667)
Western Europe and North America	−1.751***	−1.737***	−1.735***	−1.365***	2.397*	2.448*	2.186*	3.858***
	(0.392)	(0.388)	(0.374)	(0.336)	(0.967)	(0.970)	(1.025)	(0.996)
Asia and Pacific	−0.523	−0.606	−0.448	−0.755**	1.506*	0.277	1.341	0.771
	(0.340)	(0.368)	(0.337)	(0.265)	(0.591)	(0.495)	(0.736)	(0.476)
Constant	4.330**	4.466**	4.091**	5.096***	−11.155***	−4.802*	−11.920***	−12.916***

	Total Fatalities				Total U.S. Fatalities			
Variable	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**	**Model 7**	**Model 8**
Transnational Terrorism								
	(1.478)	(1.537)	(1.526)	(1.285)	(2.625)	(2.305)	(3.230)	(2.473)
Dispersion = 1	3.72	3.56	3.55	3.40	38.38	61.33	36.39	44.32
Observations	75,518	69,284	69,174	142,644	41,627	38,720	38,706	90,151

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; Year dummies are omitted to save space,

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$, two-tailed tests.

In the multivariate regression analysis, Models 1, 2, and 4 exhibit no significant influence of transnational terrorism. However, Model 3 shows supporting evidence that when transnational terrorist attacks have ideological purposes, they are likely to engender more fatalities than domestic terrorist attacks. It is also important to note that transnational terrorist attacks are more deadly than domestic terrorist attacks when American people are their targets (Models 5–8). This study draws the conclusion after taking other potential factors such as democracy and GDP per capita into consideration. Among the control variables, the Western Europe and North America region achieves significance in a consistent manner. However, depending on whether the terrorist target is American or not, the region effect points in the opposite direction.

To further check the robustness of my findings, this study introduces two more analyses: marginal effects and zero-inflated negative binomial regression.

Since statistical significance does not necessarily ensure a meaningful finding in a practical sense, the marginal effects of variables should be reported for empirical verification (Greene, 2003). In Figure 3, this study visualizes the average marginal effects of all transnational terrorism-related predictors using the logs of predicted counts of the outcome variable from Models 5–8 of Table 2. These average marginal effects show the average change in predicted counts when each of the predictors increases by one unit—from domestic terrorism to transnational terrorism. The figure illustrates that, on average, transnational terrorist attacks are predicted to kill at least two more people than domestic terrorist attacks, holding all other things equal. This graphic analysis confirms the positive relationship between transnational terrorism and lethality. Put differently, the analysis of marginal effects confirms the results of the conventional significance-level tests.

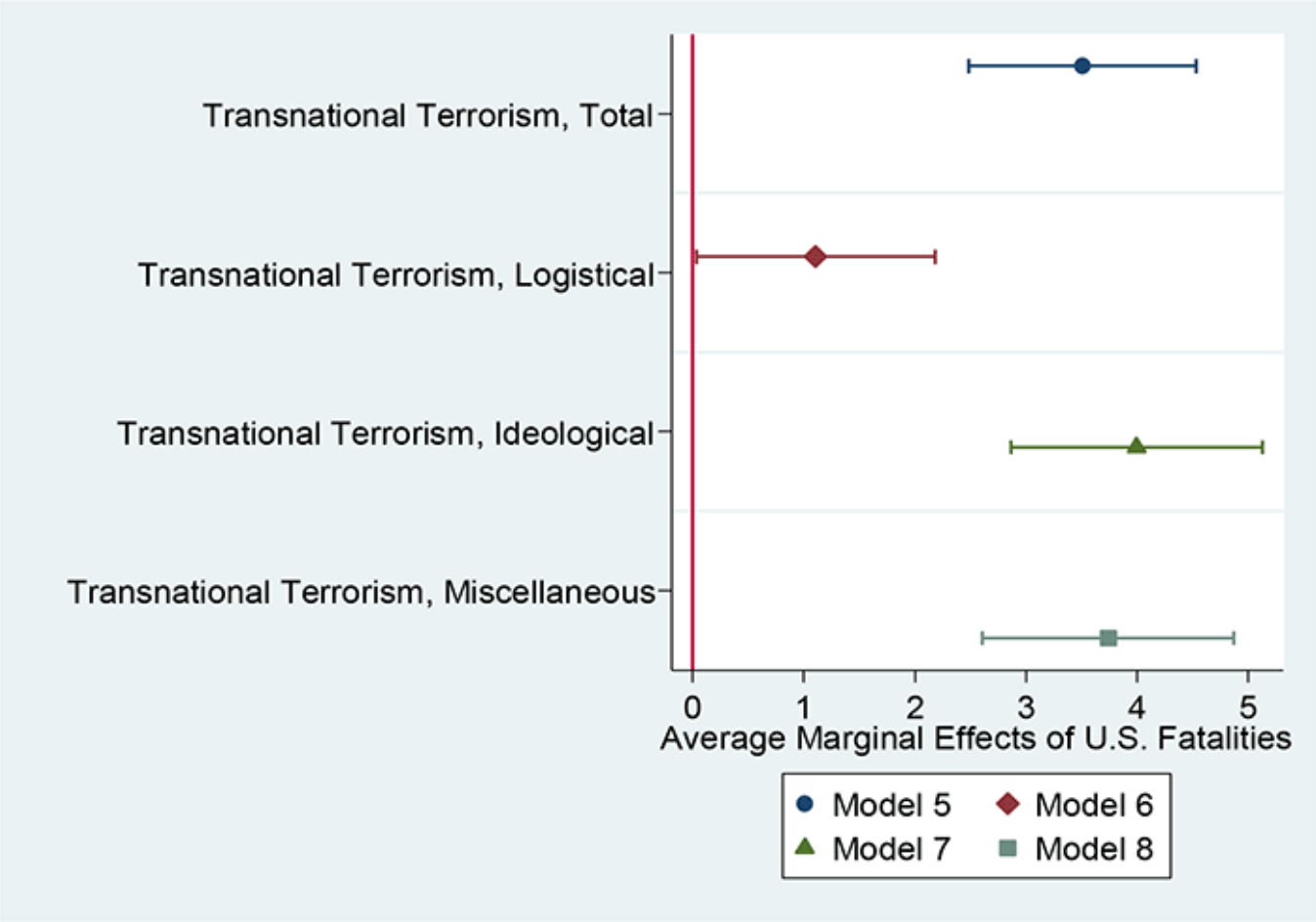

Figure 3. Average marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals.

To conduct inferential statistical analysis, this study relies on negative binomial regression, a standard estimation method in the literature on terrorism. However, like all other estimation methods, negative binomial regression is not a one-size-fits-all solution. In the case of a rare observed variable, such as terrorism, negative binomial regression is not as efficient as it should be. Additionally, media bias provides another reason to consider an alternative estimator to negative binomial regression. The data compilers were unable to have full access to all terrorist events that occurred in every corner of the world due to politico-security reasons, censorship, and especially media coverage bias. It is likely that global media report transnational terrorism more often than domestic terrorism since the interests of multiple countries are at stake. In particular, global media that follow U.S. interests more closely than any other country's interests are likely to publish more news stories when U.S. citizens, diplomats, military personnel, and their family members are terrorized and killed by transnational terrorists (e.g., the September 11 attacks and the 2012 Benghazi attack). This reporting bias is likely to lead the public to downplay the importance of domestic terrorism even though it breaks out more frequently than transnational terrorism (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2023; Mitnik et al., 2020; Powell, 2011; Weimann & Winn, 1994). To address this issue, this study turns to the approach recommended by Drakos and

Gofas (2006), who highlighted the presence of reporting bias in terrorism data collections and suggested using zero-inflated negative binomial regression (for technical details, see Hilbe, 2007; for an application, see Choi, 2016; Santifort-Jordan & Sandler, 2014).

Table 3 displays the estimated coefficients and standard errors of the zero-inflated negative binomial regression. The estimated results do not deviate from those of negative binomial regression in Models 5–8 in Table 2.[11] Even after taking potential media bias into consideration, this study still finds strong evidence for the popular belief—the superior lethality of transnational over domestic terrorism.

Table 3. Is Transnational Terrorism More Deadly Than Domestic Terrorism? Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial (NB) Regression

	Total U.S. Fatalities							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	**NB**	**Logit**	**NB**	**Logit**	**NB**	**Logit**	**NB**	**Logit**
Transnational Terrorism								
Total	3.673***							
	(0.249)							
Logistical			1.171**					
			(0.361)					
Ideological					4.068***			
					(0.320)			
Miscellaneous							4.130***	
							(0.195)	
Democracy	−0.196***		−0.171***		−0.222***		−0.148***	
	(0.018)		(0.023)		(0.022)		(0.027)	

	Total U.S. Fatalities							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	NB	Logit	NB	Logit	NB	Logit	NB	Logit
Transnational Terrorism								
GDP per capita	0.720***	2.264***	−0.490	−0.556***	0.633**	5.693***	0.893***	1.026***
	(0.173)	(0.610)	(0.308)	(0.159)	(0.196)	(1.336)	(0.126)	(0.118)
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	−1.467**		−3.320		−1.412		−1.271*	
	(0.529)		(2.315)		(0.800)		(0.575)	
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.827*		−0.639		0.458		0.217	
	(0.326)		(0.441)		(0.389)		(0.356)	
Sub-Saharan Africa	−0.628		−1.834***		−0.835		−0.477	
	(0.376)		(0.445)		(0.455)		(0.315)	
Western Europe and North America	3.768***		2.060***		2.603***		4.585***	
	(0.565)		(0.602)		(0.502)		(0.434)	
Asia and Pacific	1.624***		0.181		1.701***		0.722*	

	Total U.S. Fatalities							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Variable	NB	Logit	NB	Logit	NB	Logit	NB	Logit
Transnational Terrorism								
	(0.281)		(0.295)		(0.328)		(0.324)	
Constant	−14.518***	−22.275***	−0.936	4.912*	−14.702***	−60.219***	−14.943***	−9.440***
	(1.497)	(6.456)	(3.202)	(2.149)	(1.793)	(14.103)	(1.244)	(1.099)
Dispersion = 1	18.97		31.31		31.47		13.66	
Observations	41,627		38,720		38,720		90,151	

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; Year dummies are omitted to save space. GDP = gross domestic product.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$, two-tailed tests.

Conclusion

Given its important security implications, existing studies have explored the causes and effects of transnational terrorism (e.g., Choi, 2010; Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2011; Kis-Katos et al., 2011; LaFree et al., 2015; Li, 2005; Piazza & Choi, 2018; Powers & Choi, 2012). However, they rarely address the most essential question: Are transnational terrorist attacks more deadly than domestic terrorist attacks, although they have pestered the public, journalists, policy analysts, and scholars for many years? This study fills the gap by conducting inferential statistical analysis to provide the first-cut analysis of comparing the deadliness of transnational terrorism versus domestic terrorism. The overall results suggest that public fears and anxieties should be taken seriously in the policymaking process of counterterrorism because, as opposed to domestic terrorism, transnational terrorism is more likely to jeopardize the safety of many innocent citizens. The superior lethality of transnational terrorist attacks should not be a surprise, given that they were primarily carried out by transnational terrorist organizations whose membership, financial resources, training facilities, and logistics excel those of domestic terrorist organizations.

Due to the absence of data on the significant roles that the Global War on Terrorism has played across time and across years, this study provides no empirical test of its impact on transnational terrorism. Nevertheless, the overall analysis leads to an important policy recommendation: Former President George W. Bush's initiative on the Global War on Terrorism should continue to remain a top policy priority for the counterterrorism community, because it can effectively save many innocent lives in every corner of the world. The United States should continue working with its coalition partners to ensure that transnational terrorist organizations do not prosper in terrorism-prone countries such as Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Nigeria and that their activities do not spill over into neighboring countries. The U.S. global strategy that has, since 2018, shifted focus from the Global War on Terrorism to great power competition with China and Russia may backfire, as it could provide new openings for jihadist groups all over the world. Without continued U.S. leadership, terrorist organizations on the run, such as ISIS and Al Qaeda, could successfully rebuild their networks in the Middle East and beyond, seeking to expand their influence and territorial control and kill more innocent people.

References

Abrahms, M., & Mroszczyk, J. (2021). Terrorist targeting in theory and practice. In N. Sandal (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Acharya, A., & Marwah, S. (2010). Nizam, la Tanzim [System, not organization]. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *34*(1), 1–16.

Asal, V., Ackerman, G., & Karl Rethemeyer, R. (2012). Connections can be toxic. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, *35*(2), 229–254.

Asal, V., Findley, M., Piazza, J., & Walsh, J. (2016). Political exclusion, oil and ethnic armed conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *60*(8), 1343–1367.

Asal, V., & Karl Rethemeyer, R. (2008a). Dilettantes, ideologues, and the weak. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *25*(3), 244–263.

Asal, V., & Karl Rethemeyer, R. (2008b). The nature of the beast. *Journal of Politics*, *70*(2), 437–449.

Avdan, N. (2022). Public perceptions of international terrorism. In N. Sandal (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Avdan, N., & Webb, C. (2018). The big, the bad, and the dangerous. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, *11*(1), 3–25.

Baker, L. (2017). *Truth, lies & statistics*. CPI.

Barros, C., & Gil-Alana, L. (2006). ETA. *Defence and Peace Economics*, *17*(2), 95–116.

Barton, M., & Wight, D. (2019). International terrorism and the United States. In J. Dailey (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. Oxford University Press.

Bibes, P. (2001). Transnational organized crime and terrorism. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *17*(3), 243–258.

Blomberg, B., Hess, G., & Orphanides, A. (2004). The macroeconomic consequences of terrorism. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, *51*(5), 1007–1032.

Bove, V., Böhmelt, T., & Nussio, E. (2021). Terrorism abroad and migration policies at home. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *28*(2), 190–207.

Boylan, B. (2016). What drives ethnic terrorist campaigns? *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *33*(3), 250–272.

Chermak, S., & Freilich, J. (2016). *Transnational terrorism*. Routledge.

Chermak, S., & Gruenewald, J. (2006). The media's coverage of domestic terrorism. *Justice Quarterly*, *23*(4), 428–461.

Choi, S.-W. (2010). Fighting terrorism through the rule of law? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *54*(6), 940–966.

Choi, S.-W. (2015). Economic growth and terrorism. *Oxford Economic Papers*, *67*(1), 157–181.

Choi, S.-W. (2016). *New explorations into international relations*. University of Georgia Press.

Choi, S.-W. (2018a). Does restrictive immigration policy reduce terrorism in Western democracies? *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *12*(4), 14–25.

Choi, S.-W. (2018b). *Emerging security challenges*. Praeger.

Choi, S.-W. (2021a). Immigration policy and terrorism. *Defence and Peace Economics*, *32*(3), 271–295.

Choi, S.-W. (2021b). Terrorist campaigns and the growth of the Muslim population. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, *22*(1), 40–56.

Choi, S.-W. (2022). Leader nationalism, ethnic identity, and terrorist violence. *British Journal of Political Science*, *52*(3), 1151–1167.

Choi, S.-W., & James, P. (2016). Why does the U.S. intervene abroad? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *60*(5), 899–926.

Choi, S.-W., & Luo, S. (2013). Economic sanctions, poverty, and international terrorism. *International Interactions*, *39*(2), 217–245.

Choi, S.-W., & Piazza, J. (2016). Ethnic groups, political exclusion and domestic terrorism. *Defence and Peace Economics*, *27*(1), 37–63.

Choi, S.-W., & Piazza, J. (2017). Foreign military interventions and suicide attacks. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *61*(2), 271–297.

Choi, S.-W., & Salehyan, I. (2013). No good deed goes unpunished. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, *30*(1), 53–75.

Collard-Wexler, S., Pischedda, C., & Smith, M. (2014). Do foreign occupations cause suicide attacks? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *58*(4), 625–657.

Crenshaw, M. (1988). The subjective reality of the terrorist. In R. Slater & M. Stohl (Eds.), *Current perspectives in international terrorism* (pp. 12–46). Macmillan.

Crenshaw, M. (2020). *Rethinking transnational terrorism*. United States Institute of Peace.

Davis, J., & Nixon, R. (2018, January 16). White house fuels immigration debate with terrorism statistics. *New York Times*.

Dimitrova, A., Triki, D., & Valentino, A. (2022). The effects of business- and non-business-targeting terrorism on FDI to the MENA region. *International Business Review*, *31*(6), 101976.

Dimitrova, D. (Ed.). (2021). *Global journalism*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Drakos, K., & Gofas, A. (2006). In search of the average transnational terrorist attack venue. *Defence and Peace Economics*, *17*(2), 73–93.

Enders, W., & Sandler, T. (2000). Is transnational terrorism becoming more threatening? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *44*(3), 307–332.

Enders, W., Sandler, T., & Gaibulloev, K. (2011). Domestic versus transnational terrorism. *Journal of Peace Research*, *48*(3), 319–337.

Flemming, P., Mickolus, E., & Sandler, T. (2008). Research note: Using the ITERATE and DOTS databases. *Journal of Strategic Security*, *1*(1), 57–76.

Freytag, A., Krüger, J., Meierrieks, D., & Schneider, F. (2011). The origins of terrorism. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *27*(S1), S5–S16.

Gaibulloev, K., & Sandler, T. (2011). The adverse effect of transnational and domestic terrorism on growth in Africa. *Journal of Peace Research*, *48*(3), 355–371.

Gaibulloev, K., & Sandler, T. (2023). Common myths of terrorism. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, *37*(2), 271–301.

Gassebner, M., & Luechinger, S. (2011). Lock, stock, and barrel. *Public Choice*, *149*(3/4), 235–261.

Greene, W. (2003). *Econometric analysis*. Prentice Hall.

Helbling, M., Meierrieks, D., & Pardos-Prado, S. (2023). Terrorism and immigration policy preferences. *Defence and Peace Economics*, *34*(5), 646–659.

Hilbe, J. (2007). *Negative binomial regression*. Cambridge University Press.

Kis-Katos, K., Liebert, H., & Schulze, G. (2011). On the origin of domestic and international terrorism. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *27*(S1), S17–S36.

Krueger, A., & Malecková, J. (2003). Seeking the roots of terrorism. *Chronicle Review*, *49*(39), B10.

LaFree, G., & Dugan, L. (2007). Introducing the Global Terrorism Database. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *19*(2), 181–204.

LaFree, G., Dugan, L., & Miller, E. (2015). *Putting terrorism in context*. Routledge.

Lai, B. (2017). Terrorism and foreign policy. In W. Thomson (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press.

Levy, I. (2023). Lethal beliefs. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *35*(4), 811–827.

Li, Q. (2005). Does democracy promote or reduce transnational terrorist incidents? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *49*(2), 278–297.

Marshall, M., Gurr, T., & Jaggers, K. (2017). *POLITY IV Project: Dataset users' manual*.

Mitnik, Z., Freilich, J., & Chermak, S. (2020). Post-9/11 coverage of terrorism in the New York Times. *Justice Quarterly*, *37*(1), 161–185.

New York Times Editorial Board. (2015). *The importance of retaking Ramadi*.

Pew Research Center. (2020). *Despite pandemic, many Europeans still see climate change as greatest threat to their countries <https://pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/PG_2020.09.09_global-threats_FINAL.pdf>*.

Pew Research Center. (2021). *Two decades later, the enduring legacy of 9/11 <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/09/02/two-decades-later-the-enduring-legacy-of-9-11/>*.

Piazza, J. (2006). Rooted in poverty? *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *18*(1), 159–177.

Piazza, J. (2008). Incubators of terror. *International Studies Quarterly*, *52*(3), 468–488.

Piazza, J. (2011). Poverty, minority economic discrimination, and domestic terrorism. *Journal of Peace Research*, *48*(3), 339–353.

Piazza, J., & Choi, S.-W. (2018). International military interventions and transnational terrorist backlash. *International Studies Quarterly*, *62*(3), 686–695.

Pillar, P. (2001). *Terrorism goes global* <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/terrorism-goes-global-extremist-groups-extend-their-reach-worldwide/>. Brookings Institution.

Powell, K. (2011). Framing Islam. *Communication Studies*, *62*(1), 90–112.

Powers, M., & Choi, S.-W. (2012). Does transnational terrorism reduce foreign direct investment? *Journal of Peace Research*, *49*(3), 407–422.

Rapoport, D. (2022). *Waves of global terrorism*. Columbia University Press.

Robinson, K. (2009). Terror's true nightmare? *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *22*(1), 62–86.

Saeidi, S. (2022). Hizbollah in the global arena. In N. Sandal (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Sanchez-Cuenca, I., & De la Calle, L. (2009). Domestic terrorism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *12*, 31–49.

Santifort-Jordan, C., & Sandler, T. (2014). An empirical study of suicide terrorism. *Southern Economic Journal*, *80*(4), 981–1001.

Savun, B., & Phillips, B. (2009). Democracy, foreign policy, and terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *53*(6), 878–904.

Shamieh, L., & Szenes, Z. (2015). The rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). *Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science*, *14*(4), 363–378.

Silke, A. (2001). The devil you know. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *13*(4), 1–14.

Silke, A. (2008). Research on terrorism. In H. Chen, E. Reid, J. Sinai, A. Silke, & B. Ganor (Eds.), *Terrorism informatics* (pp. 27–50). Springer-Verlag.

Silva, J., Duran, C., Freilich, J., & Chermak, S. (2020). Addressing the myths of terrorism in America. *International Criminal Justice Review*, *30*(3), 302–324.

Smith, M., & Zeigler, S. (2017). Terrorism before and after 9/11—A more dangerous world? *Research & Politics*, *4*(4), 1–8.

Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. (2021). *Global Terrorism Database codebook: Methodology, inclusion criteria, and variables* <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>.

Thiel, M., & Maslanik, J. (2017). Transnational actors. In N. Sandal (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Weimann, G., & Winn, C. (1994). *Theater of terror*. Longman.

Williams, L., Koch, M., & Smith, J. (2013). The political consequences of terrorism. *International Studies Perspectives*, *14*(3), 343–361.

Notes

1. In this study, terrorism is defined as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation" (START, 2021, p. 11). Following LaFree et al.'s (2015, p. 147) work, this study refers to transnational terrorism as "attacks where one or more of nationalities differs from the others." These nationalities can be associated with at least one of three factors: (a) the country in which the attack took place, (b) the perpetrator(s), and (c) the target(s). The September 11 attacks are a typical example of transnational terrorism. When an attack involves all those three features, it is categorized as domestic terrorism. An example of domestic terrorism is the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995, which occurred on American soil and was carried out by an American against a U.S. federal building.

2. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html *<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>*.

3. See Thiel and Maslanik (2017) on how to define the term, transnational. Saeidi (2022) offers valuable insights into the transnational movement of Hezbollah (Party of God).

4. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-COUNTERINGTERRORISM/pdf/GPO-COUNTERINGTERRORISM-1-3.pdf *<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-COUNTERINGTERRORISM/pdf/GPO-COUNTERINGTERRORISM-1-3.pdf>*.

5. Since Silke's (2001, 2008) suggestions, inferential statistical analysis has become more popularized in the study of terrorism. Examples include Asal and Rethemeyer (2008a, 2008b), Asal et al. (2012), Choi (2010, 2021a), Enders and Sandler (2000), Li (2005), Piazza (2006, 2008), and Powers and Choi (2012).

6. Since the data for 1993 is missing due to an office move (LaFree & Dugan, 2007), this study interpolates them by averaging between the previous and following years.

7. https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/239628.pdf *<https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/239628.pdf>*.

8. For more details, see Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C., Lindberg, S., Teorell, J., Altman, D., Bernhard, M., Cornell, A., Fish, M., Gastaldi, L., Gjerløw, H., Glynn, A., Grahn, S., Hicken, A., Kinzelbach, K., Marquardt, K., McMann, K., Mechkova, V., Neundorf, A., & Ziblatt, D. (2023). V-Dem codebook v13 *<https://v-dem.net/documents/24/codebook_v13.pdf>*. *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project* (p. 325).

9. Other ways of accounting for temporal effects are the use of discrete time periods such as decades, the separation of sample data into two time periods such as pre- versus post-9/11, and the inclusion of cubic polynomials of the time that account for potentially nonlinear trends in the birth of terrorist groups. These alternatives do not meaningfully alter the main findings of this study, so this study does not report the estimates to economize space.

10. The total number of observations is smaller in Table 2 than in Table 1 due to a shorter study period of 1970 through 2018. The existing data sets for democracy and GDP per capita are available only up to 2018 at the time of writing.

11. The reanalysis of Models 1–4 in Table 2 also yields similar results, which are not reported to save space.

Related Articles

Intelligence and Terrorism

International Organization and Terrorism

Terrorism and Counterterrorism

The Strategic Model of Terrorism

Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism