

Islamist Terrorism, Diaspora Links and Casualty Rates

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Abstract

We explore the widespread belief that Islamist groups are especially violent and also consider the possibility that links with transnational diasporas may reduce casualties by Islamist terrorist organizations. Analyzing between 77,000 and 82,000 terrorist incidents from 1970 to 2016, we find that attacks by Islamist groups produce fewer casualties than attacks by non-Islamist religious groups. We also find that Islamist groups with links to diaspora kin abroad commit lower casualty terrorist attacks. We explain these findings by arguing that Islamic diaspora communities impose tactical restraints on terrorist organizations with which they are linked. Diasporas constitute a major political audience and source of support for terrorist organizations and provide an audience outside the homeland that may be negatively affected by extremely violent attacks.

Keywords: Islamist Terrorism, Diasporas, Lethality, Casualties, Quantitative Analysis

Introduction

One of the most consistent conclusions about terrorist attacks over the past half century is that they have grown deadlier.[1] In 1975, terrorism expert Brian Jenkins famously argued that “terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening, and not a lot of people dead.”[2] A little more than 25 years later, Jenkins amended his earlier statement to note that “Many of today’s terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people dead.”[3] Jenkins’ shift is largely supported by data on terrorist attacks. For example, using the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) data from 1968 to 2003, Enders and Sandler show that from the late 1970s through the early 1990s, fatal terrorist attacks were about 18% of all attacks. The proportion of fatal attacks in ITERATE jumped to 28% in the mid-1990s.[4] Similarly, based on the RAND Corporation’s Terrorism Knowledge Database from 1968 through 2005, Piazza shows that the average number of victims per international terrorist attack increased from 2.1 for the period 1968 to 1979, to 3.8 in the 1980s, 10.3 in the 1990s and 10.9 from 2000 to 2005.[5] Finally, LaFree, Dugan and Miller, using the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), show that on average terrorist attacks during the 1970s claimed one fatality per incident, but more than five fatalities per incident by the late 1990s.[6]

This increase in the deadliness of terrorism is frequently linked to the rise of Islamist-fueled terrorism.[7] In an influential book, Rapoport contends that the world has experienced four waves of terrorism over the past 150 years: anarchist, anti-colonial, new left, and religious. He goes on to argue that the religious wave began in the 1980s, that Islam is the most important religion in this wave, and that attacks by al Qaeda exemplify it.[8] In an analysis of worldwide terrorist attacks between 1970 and 2014, LaFree and Dugan find that six of the ten deadliest attacks involved Islamist perpetrators.[9]

In this article we explore the extent to which Islamist-inspired terrorist organizations have in fact produced a greater number of casualties than terrorist organizations with other ideological motivations, including non-Islamic religious motivations, over the past half century. Despite the common assumption that terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists are deadlier than attacks by groups with other ideological motivations, there are surprisingly few quantitative studies of the relationship. Moreover, among the few studies that exist most exclude data on the huge increase in the number of Islamist-inspired terrorist attacks that have taken place during the past 15 years.[10]

Regardless of whether Islamist terror attacks produce more casualties than attacks by other groups, there is a great deal of variation in the casualty rates of different Islamist organizations. This difference was dramatically displayed in a high-profile contrast between the leadership of al Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. [11] In a letter written in 2005 from Ayman al-Zawahiri—the man who became the head of al Qaeda—to Abu

Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of the group that became ISIS, Zawahiri strongly condemned the practice of beheading captives, filming it and placing it on social media. Vignettes like this raise the possibility that Islamist-inspired terrorist groups may sometimes be concerned about the effects of their use of violence on the perceptions of a larger audience.

Past research has suggested that one of the most important types of audience for politically organized groups operating in specific countries is their diaspora communities in other countries.[12] Following Post and Scheffer, we define diasporas as: “groups of persons of the same ethno-national origin who themselves or whose ancestors migrated from one place to one or more other places, settled in these places, and maintain various kinds of contacts with their places of origin.”[13] Rapoport considers diaspora populations to be among the four major international audiences of terrorist groups (the other three are foreign terrorist groups, liberal sympathizers, and foreign governments).[14] Prior research on the impact of diasporas on political violence in the home country have produced mixed results with some research suggesting that diasporas reduce violence in the home country[15], while others have argued instead that diasporas increase violence.[16] Thus far there have been few large-scale quantitative analyses of this issue. Moreover, we were unable to identify a single prior study that has specifically looked at the impact of diasporas on the frequency and lethality of terrorist attacks by Islamist extremist groups. In this article we examine directly the effect of diaspora communities on the frequency and lethality of worldwide Islamist terrorist attacks from 1970 to 2016.

Our article has several core findings. First, Islamist terrorist groups are not the most deadly type of groups. Terrorist attacks by non-Islamist religious groups tend to be higher casualty. Second, in general, terrorists connected to transnational diasporas do tend to commit higher casualty attacks. We suspect that this is due to the capacity-building effects of diasporas on terrorist movements. However, our third finding is that diasporas actually restrain the Islamist groups they are associated with. Diaspora-linked Islamist groups commit lower casualty attacks than Islamist groups without diaspora community associations.

The remainder of the article proceeds in four sections. First, we review prior literature on casualties produced by Islamist and other groups and connections between Islamist terrorism and Muslim diasporas. In particular, we contrast the casualty rates of Islamist groups with and without substantial diaspora communities. Second, we detail the data and methods used to examine the connections between Islamist inspired terrorist attacks, casualties and Islamist diasporas, including a discussion of how each of our independent, dependent, and control variables are measured. Third, we present the results focusing first on the deadliness of Islamist attacks and then examining whether Islamist groups with substantial diaspora communities are less deadly. Finally, we discuss the results of our analysis and the implications of the article for advancing both theory and public policy on countering religiously motivated violent extremism.

Casualty Rates Among Islamist and Non-Islamist Groups

A wide array of recent research has highlighted the importance of radical Islamist ideology for increasing lethality of politically motivated violence.[17] Rapoport[18] argues that the “religious wave” of terrorism began in the 1980s, and while we can find examples of religious terrorism from a number of denominations, in recent years Islamist terrorism has far and away received the most research and policy attention.[19] In a study of suicide attacks, Henne[20] finds that the religious ideology of a group greatly increases the number of deaths per attack, controlling for a wide variety of other factors. Moreover, Henne notes that all of the groups with a religious ideology that he studied were Islamic. Rapoport points out that religious identity was also important in earlier terrorism waves but in the past, it generally overlapped with ethnic identity, as illustrated in the Armenian, Macedonian, Irish, Cypriot, Israeli, and Palestinian conflicts. Moreover, during earlier periods religion was generally put to the service of creating a secular sovereign state, whereas during the current religious wave the goal of many Islamist terrorist organizations has been to establish a new religious state; a state that once existed, and one that would be governed by *Sharia*, Islamic law. Islamist terrorism has been notable for massive attacks against military and government installations and also for the promotion of martyrdom through suicide attacks.

Hoffman details the rise of religious terrorism in the 1990s and like Rapoport points out that while religious motives for terrorist attacks have been common, a unique feature of the most recent form of religious terrorism is that the religious aspect of the movement has become the dominant one. Hoffman argues that compared to terrorism by secular groups, terrorism driven by religious imperatives often leads to more intense violence and higher casualty rates.[21] Hoffman claims that the combination of religion and terrorism is one of the main reasons for the increasing lethality of terrorism in recent years.[22]

Juergensmeyer studied a wide range of religiously inspired terrorist attacks including Christians involved in abortion-clinic bombings, Catholics and Protestants involved in terrorism in Northern Ireland, jihadi-style attacks by Muslim groups, and extremist-religious Jewish Israelis who supported the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. He identified several common elements among these perpetrators of religiously justified terrorism, including conceptualizing terrorism as symbolic rather than strategic, striking out against the humiliating forces of modernity, and seeing themselves as heroic agents of change.[23] Juergensmeyer claims that religion is not the underlying cause of political violence, but when groups are able to co-opt religion's networks and imagery to recruit others for a political cause it weakens norms against violence: "What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless is that its perpetrators have placed such religious images of divine struggle—cosmic war—in the service of worldly political battles." [24]

Although claims for the greater lethality of religiously motivated terrorism are common, there have been few empirical tests of the argument. Piazza provides the most extensive quantitative evidence to date. Based on the RAND Terrorism Knowledge Base from 1998 to 2005, Piazza shows that Islamist terrorist organizations had significantly higher casualty rates than other types of terrorist organizations, controlling for a wide variety of rival explanations. Piazza distinguishes between universal/abstract groups and strategic groups and argues that the former are characterized as "highly ambitious, abstract, complex, and...driven primarily by ideology." [25] He argues that al Qaeda and its network of affiliates are the most prominent Islamist example of a universal/abstract group. Piazza finds that when affiliation with the al Qaeda network is included in quantitative models, Islamist groups were no longer more likely than non-Islamist groups to commit high casualty terrorist attacks. While these results provide solid evidence for the argument that Islamist groups—or at least those affiliated with the al Qaeda network—are associated with higher casualty rates than other groups, the data are limited to seven years, they exclude domestic attacks and the study misses the meteoric rise of several major Islamist groups since 2005, including ISIS, Boko Haram and al Shabaab.

Effect of Diasporas on Islamist Terrorism

The explosion of communications and transportation technology in the past century has greatly eroded the boundaries between countries. It is natural that individuals living in a new country will still take an active interest in the struggles and conflicts in the nation from which they trace their cultural heritage. In many cases there are even family members in regular contact across the homeland and the host country. In situations where the homeland is involved in political conflict, members of the diaspora community may react by voicing their political support, sending funds or even going to fight on the side of one group or another. In the 1940s, terrorist organizations such as Lehi and Irgun recruited extensively from the Jewish diaspora communities in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to stage terrorist attacks against British authorities in Palestine. More recently, al Qaeda and the Islamic State have recruited broadly from Muslim diaspora communities living in North America and Western Europe.

The field of diaspora studies has increased in importance in the past half century along with the tremendous growth in the number and size of diasporic communities themselves.[26] However, with few exceptions[27] most of these studies have not linked diasporas to terrorist attacks.[28] We argue in this article that diasporas constitute a major political audience, and source of support, for terrorist organizations and that on balance, diaspora communities will reduce the casualty rate for Islamist terrorism by providing an audience outside the homeland that may be negatively affected by extremely violent attacks. However, not all the recent research supports this expectation. In the next two sections, we review evidence of diasporas either reducing or

increasing violence by groups in the homeland.

Evidence for the Declining Lethality of Diasporas

Many researchers have pointed out that a major strategy of terrorists is to demonstrate that they have greater legitimacy than the governments they oppose.[29] This strategy may take the form of encouraging government responses to terrorist attacks that energize a base of potential supporters. Perhaps most famously, Benjamin and Simon argue that Osama bin Laden's decision to authorize the September 11 attacks was motivated in part by the belief that American retaliation would inevitably kill innocents and thereby demonstrate the extent of American hatred toward Muslims.[30]

Much prior research confirms that maintaining the support of diaspora communities can be critical to terrorist organizations. Byman[31] and others[32] have pointed out that successful ethnic terrorist groups often receive money and organizational support from their diaspora communities. Although host countries are often motivated to monitor the behavior of diaspora communities, such regulation is likely to be complex and resource intensive. Furthermore, Lyons[33] and others[34] have recognized the role that diasporas play as peacebuilders, who from a safe distance can mediate disputes, pressure parties to engage in non-violent conflict resolution and help fund the reconstruction of war-torn societies. For example, Byman[35] cites the moderating influence of the Basque diaspora on ETA actions in Spain and the Assamese diaspora on attacks in India. Moderate members of the Basque diaspora were generally satisfied with the high level of autonomy the Basques gained from the central administration in Madrid and provided strategic support to the government in its dealing with ETA. Accordingly, terrorist attacks by ETA continued to decline and eventually stopped altogether. Similarly, Byman notes that the Indian government had success in reducing terrorist attacks by Assamese groups by winning over support from the worldwide Assamese diaspora.[36]

While we could identify no large-scale multivariate studies that directly test these arguments, there is empirical support from case studies. By the twenty-first century, the United States hosted the largest overseas Irish community in the world—an estimated seven times greater than the population of the Republic of Ireland. [37] The Irish diaspora's interest in the Northern Ireland conflict fluctuated and depended on the level of tension between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland over time. However, several researchers have argued that the Irish Republican Army could not have sustained its long-term campaigns of violence without financial and political support from U.S. citizens, particularly from the Irish Diaspora.[38]

Dugan and colleagues[39] examined the attack trajectories of two Armenian terrorist groups, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG). The researchers were especially interested in the fact that both groups had been extremely violent in the early 1980s but had largely ceased any attacks by the late 1980s. Why the sudden desistance in terrorist activity? The researchers examined a variety of explanations for the rapid decline but after a quantitative analysis concluded that the most convincing argument was that the groups lost support of their diasporas in the mid-1980s. Both groups depended strongly on the financial and political support of the Armenian diaspora.[40] But as the groups increasingly staged deadlier attacks, especially those that took the lives of non-Turks, the support of the diaspora community rapidly declined. The Armenian case suggests that concerns of the diaspora may not be limited to the country where the diaspora lives.

Feyissa argues that diasporas may also reduce conflict and violence in the homeland by promoting civil engagement.[41] To the extent that members of the diaspora are removed from the frontlines of the conflict, they may be able to provide a more objective perspective on the conflict, guided less by anger and emotion. Moreover, members of the diaspora may have access to more objective, factual news sources than those in the homeland. For example, Rigby points out that members of the Acholi Diaspora were successful in bringing together representatives from the Ugandan government, the Lord's Resistance Army and other stakeholders through a series of conferences with the aim of seeking a negotiated settlement to the ongoing conflict.[42] Similarly, Zunzer reports that members of the Afghan Diaspora played a constructive role in setting up 2001 peace talks that eventually resulted in a transitional government for Afghanistan.[43]

Evidence for the Increasing Lethality of Diasporas

However, support for the argument that terrorist organizations with diasporas will produce fewer casualties is not universal. Byman and colleagues conclude that diasporas have been a key factor in sustaining conflict and violence among insurgencies around the world.[44] Antwi-Boateng argues that the U.S.-based Liberian Diaspora has increased violent insurgency in that country.[45] Similarly, Blitz claims that funding by the Serbian Diaspora lengthened the Balkan wars, Chalk asserts that the active involvement of the Tamil Diaspora prolonged civil war in Sri Lanka, and Lyons argues that the Ethiopian Diaspora contributed to 2005 post-election violence in Ethiopia.[46]

More recently, Piazza found empirical evidence that connection to a diaspora group decreases the likelihood that a terrorist organization will end by engaging in a political process or transitioning into a nonviolent political movement.[47] However, he did not examine the impact of diaspora connections on the violent activity of terrorist groups. More generally, a number of empirical studies of the impact of diasporas on civil wars, rather than terrorism, indicates that diasporas are frequently “peace-wreckers.” For example, Collier argues that diaspora members are frequently hardliners and uncompromising and are, therefore, more likely than others to use their influence over rebel movements to eschew peace negotiations to end civil wars with states.[48] Saideman and Ayers discuss the central importance of “identity preservation”—the safeguarding of connection to a homeland and identity while living abroad—to diaspora communities.[49] They argue that diaspora groups frequently engage in efforts to mobilize support for contentious struggles by their kin in the homeland specifically in order to facilitate identity preservation. The reasoning goes that because members of the diaspora do not have to live in the conflict, they can express strong opinions from the sidelines—without directly experiencing the negative consequences. Asal and Ayers argue that for this reason compared to residents of the homeland, members of diaspora communities have fewer incentives to take conciliatory positions on contentious political issues facing the homeland.[50]

Data and Methods

To examine the connections between Islamist-inspired terrorist groups, casualties generated by terrorist attacks and the impact of diaspora communities on the lethality of attacks originating in the homeland, we conduct a series of regression estimations using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), along with data from other sources and original data we collected. The dependent variable for the study is a count of persons wounded or killed per terrorist incident for the period 1970 to 2016.[51] Our two main independent variables, explained in more detail below, are the ideology of the perpetrator of the attack—specifically whether the group is an Islamist terrorist organization—and whether the perpetrator is linked to a transnational ethnic or sectarian diaspora group. To focus our analysis on established perpetrator groups about whom there is more reliable information, we limit our data to incidents committed by perpetrators who orchestrated at least five attacks from 1970 to 2016. Our unit of analysis is the individual attack and with data availability this yields a total number of observations between 77,552 and 82,238 depending on the specific estimation.[52] Over the time period examined, 6.162 individuals were injured or killed per attack. Because our dependent variable is a count measure that is characterized by over-dispersion, we use a negative binomial estimation technique.[53] Moreover to control for secular trends—the casualty rate of terrorist attacks has increased over time[54]—and for unobserved idiosyncrasies across terrorist groups that may affect casualty rates of attacks—some terrorist organizations are more lethal than others due to their capacities or other factors—we apply terrorist group and attack year fixed effects in our estimations. As a further validity check we also conducted standard negative binomial estimations, and these reproduced the core results of the analysis,[55] suggesting that model selection does not drive the results.

Worldwide Terrorism Data

We provide descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis in Table 1. For the main dependent variable, total casualties, we rely on the GTD. Terrorism in the GTD 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.”[56] Because the characteristics of the GTD are described in detail elsewhere[57], we offer only a brief explanation here. Limitations of open source data include media reporting biases, incomplete information and the challenge of distinguishing terrorism from other forms of violence, including genocide, insurrection, insurgency and civil war.[58] Early versions of the GTD were based mostly on individual news outlets such as the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, and the BBC. Over time data collection has relied increasingly on existing media aggregators such as Lexis/Nexis, Factiva, and the Open Source Center. At present, the data collection process begins with a universe of two million articles published daily worldwide in order to identify the subset of articles that describe terrorist attacks. The GTD staff use customized search strings to isolate an initial pool of potentially relevant articles and the final database is compiled by a staff of 15-20 analysts and student interns.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Obs.	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Casualties	88,023	6.162458	52.99099	0	8749
Islamist	88,023	.3434216	.4748534	0	1
Diaspora	83,273	.4359396	.4958823	0	1
Religious, Non-Islamist	88,023	.0373198	.1895453	0	1
Left	88,023	.3575997	.4792961	0	1
Right	88,023	.0483396	.2144841	0	1
Nationalist-Separatist	88,023	.2549334	.4358262	0	1
Criminal (reference category)	88,023	.0087477	.0931198	0	1
Civil Conflict Intensity	87,144	3.455292	2.265873	0	10
Ethnic Fractionalization	87,076	.5166323	.2326597	.0039959	1
Nat. Capacity Score	88,023	.0154907	.0291618	3.33e-06	.2181166
Suicide Attack	88,023	.0401486	.1963088	0	1
Government Target	88,023	.1155721	.3197129	0	1
(ln) Population	87,636	17.49331	1.421455	10.296	21.03808
(ln) GDP	87,636	7.646822	1.18445	5.195404	11.51948
Regime Type (Polity)	82,998	4.775633	4.938498	-10	10
Cent Am., Caribbean	88,023	.0733104	.2606468	0	1
South America	88,023	.1501653	.3572354	0	1
East Asia	88,023	.0029765	.0544763	0	1
Southeast Asia	88,023	.0631312	.2432002	0	1
South Asia	88,023	.2317576	.4219574	0	1
Central Asia	88,023	.000693	.0263159	0	1
Western Europe	88,023	.1194574	.3243278	0	1
Eastern Europe	88,023	.0174613	.1309834	0	1
Middle East, N. Africa	88,023	.2073663	.4054224	0	1
Sub-Saharan Africa	88,023	.108324	.3107909	0	1
Australasia, Oceania	88,023	.0007612	.0275789	0	1

Independent Variables

We developed measures for our two major independent variables—perpetrator ideology and perpetrator links to diasporas—using the following steps. First, we extracted from the GTD all incidents with an identified perpetrator (54.1% of all incidents). There are 899 different perpetrators in our data and a majority of them are identified with a specific terrorist group name, such as the Taliban, the Shining Path or the Kurdistan Worker's Party. However, 17.1% of perpetrators who are responsible for 13.3% of incidents where the attacker is identified, are labeled using generic terms such as “animal rights extremists” or “Tamils.” For a subset of these, the generic identification was sufficiently clear to assign an ideology as well as an association with a specific ethnic or sectarian group. Some examples include “Dissident Republicans” or “Loyalists” in Northern Ireland, “Basque Separatists,” or “Baloch Nationalists.” Other generic labels were too vague to permit either ideological or ethnic diaspora classification and they were dropped from the analysis.

Second, for all cases where we could identify an attack perpetrator we also assigned a core ideology: leftist, rightist, nationalist or separatist, Islamist, and religious but not Islamist. For a small number of cases we were unable to assign an ideology and instead designated the cases “criminal.” Because the GTD is an event rather than an individual database, cases get included because they are classified as terrorist attacks rather than terrorist perpetrators. Some of the events which meet the technical demands for inclusion in the GTD are perpetrated by groups or individuals that many would regard as ordinary criminals. For example, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) was a Puerto Rican clandestine paramilitary organization that carried out dozens of bomb attacks in the United States with the goal of independence for Puerto Rico. However, these attacks closely resembled more ordinary crimes and most of the individuals responsible for these attacks were convicted of activities such as robbery and possession of illegal firearms.

We developed dichotomous nominal indicators for each ideology and for the criminal category. To make a determination of a perpetrator's ideology, we consulted an array of sources that describe terrorist and nonstate armed movement attributes: the Jones and Libicki database[59], which contains data on 652 terrorist organization attributes; the Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPs) database of over 800 terrorist movements created by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism[60]; the Big, Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) database collected by Asal and Rethemeyer[61]; the Stanford Mapping Militant Organizations database[62]; and encyclopedic sources authored by Crenshaw and Pimlott[63] and Chalk[64]. We do not treat perpetrator ideology as a mutually exclusive designation. Nine and one-half percent of the incidents in the data were perpetrated by organizations that fit more than one ideological category. Some examples include attacks perpetrated by Hamas, which is designated as both “Islamist” and “nationalist-separatist;” or the Kurdish Worker's Party, which is designated as both “leftist” and “nationalist-separatist.”

As shown in Table 1, based on these procedures the most common ideological category was leftist (mean = .358 or about 35.8 percent of our sample), followed closely by Islamist (mean = .343) and nationalist-separatist (mean = .255). Right-wing ideological groups and non-Islamist religious groups were far less common (means = .048 and .037 respectively). Groups characterized by criminal motivations are the least common in our sample (mean = .008 or .8 percent). In all of our analyses, we use criminal groups as our reference or excluded category.

Finally, we used the same sources to develop our measure for diaspora links to the terrorist organization that perpetrated the attack and employed a multistep process. First, for each terrorist group in our sample, we examined the descriptive and narrative information provided by Jones and Libicki, TOPs, Asal and Rethemeyer, Mapping Militants, Crenshaw and Pimlott and Chalk to determine if the organization was associated with a particular ethnic or ethno-sectarian[65] community or communities. We considered a terrorist organization to be linked to an ethnic or ethno-sectarian community if it met one or more of the following criteria: 1) it makes or made a claim to fight on behalf of a specific community, in terms of advancing that community's political interests, rights, physical integrity, privileges, territorial claims or other political aspirations; 2) it makes or made use of a specific community's collective identity in its ideological appeals or recruitment efforts; and/or 3) it includes a specific community in its name. Second, we investigated the ethnic or ethno-sectarian community

that the terrorist group was associated with had a significant transnational diaspora—meaning co-ethnic kin living in sizeable, permanent communities outside of the homeland while retaining ties with the homeland. To determine this, we consulted Levinson[66] and the Minorities at Risk Databases.[67] We used this information to create a variable coded “1” for all groups that are associated with ethnic or ethno-sectarian groups that have links to a diaspora community abroad and “0” otherwise.[68]

It is important to note that in order to code a terrorist movement as connected to a diaspora we required the association to be between a terrorist group and a specific and discretely defined ethnic or ethno-sectarian community. This excludes terrorists that have made ideological appeals to a more universal, abstractly-defined or multi-ethnic community. So, for example, we coded a terrorist group like Hamas as associated with an ethnic and religious-sectarian community: Palestinian Muslims. However, we coded a terrorist group like al Qaeda as not associated with a specifically-defined ethnic or religious-sectarian community. Both groups are Islamist. However, al Qaeda makes ideological appeals not to a specific ethno-sectarian community but rather to a universal and abstract multi-ethnic Muslim *umma* or global community of believers. We do this because we theoretically expect terrorist groups linked with specific and narrowly defined diasporas like Hamas to be dependent upon, and tactically affected by, their global community of supporters. Such communities are close-knit and have a strong sense of identity and unity. This makes them able to more effectively engage in collective political action and to therefore be able to shape the tactical behaviors of their terrorist allies. In contrast, abstract communities, like the global *umma* claimed by Al Qaeda, lack the necessary cohesive identity needed to exert this level of control over terrorist allies.

A total of 39.7% of perpetrators in the data were associated with local ethnic or sectarian groups that have diaspora kin in other countries while 43.5% of incidents in the data were perpetrated by armed movements without prominent diaspora links. A total of 70 Islamist terrorist organizations in our dataset are associated with ethnic or sectarian communities that have diaspora kin in other countries. We list these groups, along with the diaspora they are associated with, in Appendix Table 1.

Control Variables

We include two sets of control variables in the analyses. The first is a basic set of covariates that are included in all estimates. To hold constant country qualities, we include the natural log-transformed measures of population[69], gross domestic product[70] and the political regime of the country in which the incident occurred.[71] Our assumption is that more populous and poorer countries may have greater difficulty policing terrorism and are therefore more likely to experience high casualty attacks. We assume that compared to democratic regimes, nondemocratic regimes are more likely characterized by governments that are less responsive to their citizens and impose greater media censorship. Perpetrators of terrorist attacks in nondemocratic countries may use high casualty attacks to force governmental responses and to break through media censorship. Finally, recognizing the potential impact of regional effects on terrorist attack casualties, we include dichotomous indicators for the major world region in which the event took place.[72]

Our list of extended controls includes qualities of both the venue of the attack and the attack itself that might affect casualties. We assume that terrorist attacks occurring in the context of a civil conflict are likely to produce higher casualties, particularly where there are deep ethnic divisions and where the state has a lower capacity to project physical force and defend against armed movements. Thus, we control for the presence and intensity of civil conflict[73] and the degree of ethnic fractionalization[74] within the venue country and the national capacity score of the venue country’s government.[75] We also control for whether the incident was a suicide attack—an attack mode that generally nets high casualties—and whether the attack was against a government target, which we assume is likely to result in fewer casualties as it is more likely to be a hardened target. Finally, in all estimations we control for time dependency by adding a year cubic polynomial to the model.[76]

Results

The results are presented in Table 2. Models 1 and 2 examine the impact of perpetrating terrorist organization ideology on incident casualties including the sets of basic and extended covariates. Models 3 and 4 run the same estimations while also including the diaspora links variable. Model 5 estimates the interaction between the diaspora linked variable and the Islamist terrorist perpetrator measure. Model 6 is our full estimation where the interaction between diaspora links and Islamist perpetrators are regressed to casualties with the extended covariates included.

Table 2. Effects of Islamist Attacks and Diaspora Links on Casualties

Y:	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties
Islamist ¹	0.080*** (0.022)	0.036 (0.023)	0.056* (0.024)	0.027 (0.025)	0.386*** (0.035)	0.274*** (0.040)
Diaspora ¹			0.134*** (0.021)	0.126*** (0.021)	0.333*** (0.039)	0.352*** (0.036)
Islamist * Diaspora ¹					-0.398*** (0.045)	-0.357*** (0.046)
Religious, Non Islamist ¹	0.398*** (0.035)	0.401*** (0.035)	0.345*** (0.036)	0.361*** (0.036)	0.316*** (0.036)	0.330*** (0.036)
Left ¹	-0.133*** (0.023)	-0.085*** (0.023)	-0.090*** (0.025)	-0.053* (0.025)	0.025 (0.028)	0.049* (0.028)
Right ¹	-0.081* (0.037)	-0.030 (0.038)	-0.018 (0.040)	0.026 (0.040)	0.114** (0.042)	0.140*** (0.043)
Nationalist-Separatist ¹	-0.053** (0.020)	-0.043* (0.020)	-0.152*** (0.023)	-0.132*** (0.023)	-0.217*** (0.024)	-0.192*** (0.025)
Civil Conflict Intensity ²		-0.001 (0.003)		-0.007* (0.004)		-0.006* (0.004)
Ethnic Fractionalization ²		0.114** (0.040)		0.001 (0.043)		0.027 (0.043)
Nat. Capacity Score ²		-5.024*** (0.565)		-3.955*** (0.620)		-3.663*** (0.622)
Suicide Attack ³		0.969*** (0.018)		0.974*** (0.018)		0.972*** (0.018)
Government Target ³		-0.215*** (0.015)		-0.198*** (0.016)		-0.196*** (0.016)
(ln) Population ²	0.051*** (0.006)	0.110*** (0.009)	0.068*** (0.006)	0.115*** (0.009)	0.071*** (0.006)	0.114*** (0.009)
(ln) GDP ²	-0.047*** (0.009)	-0.065*** (0.009)	-0.069*** (0.010)	-0.086*** (0.010)	-0.046*** (0.010)	-0.066*** (0.010)
Regime Type (Polity) ²	-0.004** (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.004** (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.003* (0.001)
t	0.209 (0.167)	0.496** (0.168)	0.196 (0.173)	0.491** (0.174)	0.215 (0.173)	0.514** (0.174)

t ²	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
t ³	omit	omit	omit	omit	omit	omit
Constant	-204.835 (166.843)	-490.645** (168.115)	-193.167 (172.974)	-486.270** (174.165)	-211.344 (172.774)	-508.635** (173.978)
Obs.	82,238	82,168	77,613	77,552	77,613	77,552
No. of Terrorist Groups	799	797	746	744	746	744
Wald χ -square	2371.92***	5674.86***	2427.81***	5645.76***	2507.24***	5706.48***

Notes:

All estimations calculated with terrorist group and attack year fixed effects

Unit = terrorist attack, 1970 to 2016

*** p ≤ .000 ** p ≤ .01 * p ≤ .1

Y = count of casualties (deaths + injuries) in the attack

Region dummies included in all models (Central America and Caribbean, South America, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Western Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australasia/Oceania)

Standard errors, in parentheses

¹ Feature of perpetrator, criminal perpetrator is reference category

² Feature of venue country of attack

³ Feature of event

While both researchers and policy makers have frequently assumed that, *ceteris paribus*, Islamist terrorist organizations are prone to commit higher casualty attacks than non-Islamist groups[77], our results suggest a more complex pattern. Table 2 shows that Islamist attacks produce significantly more casualties in models 1, 3, 5 and 6, compared to the reference category (criminally motivated terrorist groups). Substantively, terrorist attacks by Islamist perpetrators yield between 5.6 percent (in model 3) and 38.6 percent (in model 5) higher logged casualty counts. Using marginal effects calculations, this translates to between .05 and .09 more persons wounded or killed in Islamist attacks, on average, when compared with criminal groups. However, we find that attacks by non-Islamist religious terrorist groups more consistently produce higher casualties. The religious, non-Islamist variable is significant and positive across all models and such groups yield between 31.6 (model 5) and 40.1 (model 2) percent more logged casualties, or between .273 and .400 persons wounded or killed per attack. In contrast, attacks by left-wing and nationalist-separatist terrorist groups generally yield fewer casualties than the reference category. Attacks by leftists produce between 5.3 (model 4) and 13.3 (model 1) percent fewer logged casualties than attacks by criminal groups while attacks by nationalist-separatist perpetrators result in between 4.3 (model 2) and 21.7 (model 5) percent fewer logged casualties. The impact of right-wing terrorist perpetrators on casualty rates is mixed in our findings. While we do find right-wing groups to commit higher casualty attacks in models 5 and 6—11.4 and 14.0 percent more logged casualties per attack respectively—the right-wing ideology variable is negative and significant in model 1 and is not significant in models 2 through 4.

We find that affiliation with a diaspora community generally is associated with higher casualty attacks. In models 3 through 6, the diaspora variable is significant and positive. Substantively, attacks by generic terrorists with diaspora links produce between 12.6 (model 4) and 35.2 (model 6) percent higher numbers of logged casualties than do attacks by terrorists without diaspora community affiliations. This translates into between .125 and .260 more persons wounded or killed per attack, on average. This finding supports our theoretical contention that in general diaspora community links increase the capacity of terrorist groups to commit higher casualty attacks.

However, in models 5 and 6 we find that the interaction between Islamist group ideology and diaspora community links reduces the number of casualties that a terrorist group produces per attack, on average. The

coefficient for the interaction term is significant and negative in both of these estimations. Islamist groups with diaspora community links conduct attacks that produce 39.8 percent (model 5) and 35.7 percent (model 6) fewer logged casualties than attacks by the reference category, criminal groups. Again using marginal effects, this translates to .096 and .041 fewer persons wounded or killed per attack, on average. To vivify the substance of our findings, we also compared the substantive difference in casualty rates, per attack, between Islamists with and without diaspora community links. Marginal effects calculations show that in the full model (model 6) that attacks by Islamist groups with diasporas result in .124 fewer casualties per attack compared with attacks by Islamists without diasporas. This is a reduction of about 10.6 percent. Raw, unmodeled descriptive statistics help to further illustrate the effect diaspora affiliation has on Islamist attacks. The average attack by an Islamist group without diaspora connections produces about 11.9 casualties. The average attack by diaspora-affiliated Islamist groups produces about 8.7 casualties.

Several of the other control variables are also significant in our estimations. Countries that are more populous experience higher casualty terrorist attacks. Suicide attacks yield higher numbers of casualties. Attacks in wealthier countries, measured by gross domestic product, experience lower casualty attacks as do countries with higher national capacity scores. Attacks launched by terrorists against better-defended, hardened government targets yield fewer casualties. All of these variables are signed in the expected direction. Other controls are inconsistently significant: civil conflict is not significant in model 2 but is significant and negative in models 4 and 6; ethnic fractionalization is significant and positive in model 2, and regime type is significant and negative only in models 1, 3, 5 and 6. This suggests that under some conditions more ethnically divided countries might experience higher casualty rates while civil conflict prone countries and democracies might experience lower casualty attacks.

We conducted several further tests to check the robustness of our findings.[78] First, we reran the analysis without terrorist movement and year fixed effects. These estimations slightly changed the size of the sample, but produced the same substantive results, giving us confidence that our modeling choices do not drive our findings.

Second, we reran the models without the year fixed effects but including dichotomous variables indicating the different eras under which the Global Terrorism Database, the main data source for our study, was collected. From its inception, the GTD has been curated by a research team at the START Center at the University of Maryland, however, primary data collection has been done by different institutions over time.[79] Each different institution was characterized by different personnel and resources. These differences could potentially affect patterns of collection and reporting of terrorist incidents in the data, given that GTD is based upon open source reporting. For example, particularly deadly attacks might be more widely reported by media and therefore more likely to be included in the GTD during data collection periods characterized by fewer coders or resources. Inclusion of the GTD coding era dummy variables, however, does not change the main substantive results. This gives us further assurance that our findings are not overly affected by potential reporting biases in the data over time.

Third, to help clarify causality among the type of terrorist organizations we are interested in, we also reran the analysis on a subsample of the data that included only Islamist terrorist groups. These results, also, conformed to the main findings of the study. Islamist groups with diaspora links launched fewer deadly attacks than Islamist groups without diasporas.

Fourth, to check whether the impact of diasporas is different for different types of terrorism, we separated domestic from transnational attacks in the data[80] and ran the estimations on each separately. We found that Islamist groups with diaspora links committed lower casualty domestic and transnational attacks. The relationship does not seem to depend on the type of terrorism considered.

Fifth, we considered two possibilities that might distort and complicate interpretation of our findings. It is possible that our results are affected by outliers such as extreme casualty events. Also, we considered the possibility that while terrorist organizations may consciously adapt their tactics and targeting to increase or decrease the number of casualties yielded in an attack, they may not be able to precisely control the number

of people killed or wounded. Terrorist perpetrators may opt to launch attacks designed to maximize casualties but likely do not have absolute control over casualty rates of their attacks. To address both of these possibilities, we transformed the dependent variable into a dichotomous measure coded “1” for attacks with 1 or more casualties and “0” for attacks with no casualties and re-estimated the models as a logistical regression analyses. We found that 59.11 percent of attacks in the data yielded one or more casualties. As with all of the other robustness specifications, these models reproduce the main findings in the study.

Finally, we reran our analysis using terrorist-group-year as the unit of analysis. To do this we collapsed our main database into yearly totals of casualties caused by each individual terrorist group in our sample. We then estimated whether Islamist groups with diaspora links were characterized with fewer casualties per year. The results of these estimations, summarized in Appendix Table 2, reproduce our main findings. We find, again, that Islamist terrorist groups connected to diasporas produce fewer casualties on an annual basis than do Islamist groups without diaspora connections. In the most basic model (Appendix Table 2, model 1) we determine that Islamist groups without diasporas commit attacks yielding on average 301.18 casualties per year, Islamists linked to diasporas commit attacks producing on average only 211.37 casualties per year. This suggests that diaspora links reduce casualty rates for Islamist groups by around 89.81 persons hurt or killed per year. In model 2 of Appendix Table 2, we include some other covariates: annual totals of suicide attacks and attacks against government or hard targets by the terrorist group.[81] Addition of these covariates, both of which are significant, does not change the main result. Diaspora affiliation still reduces casualties by Islamist groups.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although many claim that the rise of Islamist terrorism over the past two decades has been especially deadly, there have been few empirical tests of the argument that include the rapid increase of major Islamist groups affiliated with al Qaeda and ISIS since the early 2000s. Our results show that controlling for a wide variety of variables, Islamist terrorist perpetrators committed significantly higher casualty attacks when compared to other terrorist attacks over the past half century. However, we found that religious attacks motivated by non-Islamist groups produced even more casualties. Some of the deadliest of these groups include the Lord’s Resistance Army, the various groups associated with “the troubles” in Northern Ireland and a variety of Sikh extremist groups. In general, these findings are in line with researchers who claim that there is nothing inherent in Islam that promotes violent political extremism—indeed terrorism was relatively rare in most of the Middle East and Southeast Asia three decades ago. These results are consistent with Juergensmeyer who claims that when groups (both Islamist and non-Islamist) are able to coopt religion’s organization and imagery for political purposes it may weaken norms against violence and elevate conflicts to a “cosmic” level where ordinary rules no longer apply.[82]

Our results also show that the impact of diasporas on levels of violence differs starkly for non-Islamist and Islamist groups. For non-Islamists, having a diaspora is associated with higher casualty attacks. This finding is consistent with some previous case study evidence showing that diasporas are crucial partners and constituents for terrorist movements[83], and that in addition to boosting the capacity of terrorists, diasporas affect the strategic and tactical decisions that terrorists make.[84] However, for Islamist groups, diasporas instead appear to play an important role in inhibiting Islamist perpetrators in the homeland, prompting affiliated terrorist organizations to commit lower casualty attacks. It is especially interesting that this pattern holds for Islamist terrorists, an ideological type that compared to other groups has been less inhibited in terms of the deadliness of their attack behaviors. This finding has important implications for scholars and policymakers in that it suggests that diaspora communities associated with Islamist organizations may be important for moderating the threat posed by Islamist terrorism.

The study leaves some unanswered questions that are fodder for future research. For example, while we find evidence that diasporas play a significant role in affecting casualty rates of attacks, we can only speculate as to how and why this occurs. First, why do diasporas seem to have a moderating effect on violence for Islamist

groups but not for other groups? We have seen that diasporas increase casualties and we have a straightforward story for that: diaspora support boosts group capacity allowing for higher attacks. Now, it is true that Islamist groups, a priori, launch higher casualty attacks. However, many of these Islamist groups are very high capacity anyway (e.g., ISIS, Hezbollah, al Qaeda) so perhaps the boost that other groups seem to get from diasporas in terms of capacity is negligible for them. Without a major advantage in terms of capacity maybe the main effect remaining is the need to keep diaspora communities content and prevent backlash. Also, several of the Islamist groups without diasporas are part of the al Qaeda and ISIS constellations. We know that ISIS and al Qaeda and their affiliates and franchises are famously uninhibited and deadly. So, perhaps it is the case that these groups, as non-diaspora linked Islamist groups in our sample, are helping to drive the results. This would be an ideal area for further investigation.

Second, future research should examine in greater detail how links to transnational diaspora communities affect the specific targeting decisions of affiliated terrorists. Do diaspora links prompt terrorist perpetrators to minimize or maximize casualties by selecting hard versus soft targets? Do they similarly influence the weapon type of the perpetrating group, again as a way to affect the number of casualties? Are diaspora affiliations important for terrorist group decisions to use suicide attacks or other extreme tactics? Is there evidence that diaspora communities maintain, increase or withhold support from terrorist movements in order to shape or respond to terrorist group attack behavior? Future research should further explore these important questions.

Finally, rapid changes in communication through social media are drastically changing the way diasporas are able to make claims and express interests.[85] Diasporas constitute a large and increasing minority in many countries. Social media make it far easier to sustain cultural and political connections across boundaries. These changes have the potential to increase the effects of diasporas on a range of political outcomes, including terrorism-related violence. Future research should examine the impact of social media and other emerging communication changes and their consequences for diaspora communities.

Our results support the argument that religiously motivated terrorist attacks are especially deadly but do not support the conclusion that Islamist attacks are deadlier still. The results also support the conclusion that Islamist groups with diasporas are significantly less deadly. Prior research on the impact of diasporas on the frequency and intensity of terrorist attacks has been strongly divided. Perhaps this is because the relationship between terrorism and diasporas is complex and variable. In the case of Islamist attacks over the past half century it appears that diaspora communities have operated to reduce the violence associated with religiously inspired attacks. We suspect that the Islamist terrorists with pronounced diasporas have been, at least in part, sensitive to the potential backlash produced from indiscriminate violent attacks. Our findings are robust to several different specifications. These results suggest that investing more energy into understanding the complicated relationship between terrorist organizations and their diasporas may be an important avenue for both research and policy.

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Appendix Table 1. List of Islamist Groups with Diaspora Links

Group Name	Affiliated Diaspora
Abu Sayyaf Group	Moros
Afghan Mujahideen	Pashtuns
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade	Palestinians
Al-Ashtar Brigades	Iraqi Shi'is
Al-Khobar	Moros
Al-Mansoorian	Kashmiris
Al-Shuda Brigade	Kashmiris
Al-Umar Mujahideen	Kashmiris
Al-Ummah	Indian Muslims
Ansar al-Dine	Tuaregs
Ansar al-Islam	Kurds
Ansar al-Sunna	Kurds
Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq	Iraqi Shi'is
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement	Moros
Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN)	Patanis
Black Widows	Chechens
Boko Haram	Kanuris
Caucasus Emirate	Chechens
Chechen Rebels	Chechens
Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat	Chechens
Deccan Mujahideen	Kashmiris, Indian Muslims
Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement	Uighurs
Great Easter Islamic Raiders Front	Uighurs
Hamas	Palestinians
Haqqani Network	Pashtuns
Harkat ul Ansar	Kashmiris
Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-yi Afghanistan	Hazaras
Hezbollah	Lebanese Shi'is
Hizbul Mujahideen	Kashmiris
Iraqi Mujahideen	Iraqi Sunnis
Islambouli Brigades of Al-Qaida	Kashmiris
Islamic Front	Kashmiris
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	Uzbeks
Jaish al-Adl	Baluchis, Iranian Sunnis
Jaish al-Fatah	Syrian Sunnis
Jaish-e Islam	Pashtuns
Jaish-e-Mohammad	Kashmiris
Jamaat-al-Fuqra (Pakistan)	African Americans
Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	Pashtuns
Jamiat ul-Mujahedin	Kashmiris
Jund al-Sham for Tawhid and Jihad	Palestinians
Jundallah	Baluchis, Iranian Sunnis
Kashmiri Extremists	Kashmiris

Lashkar-e-Islam (India)	Pashtuns
Lashkar-e-Islam (Pakistan)	Pashtuns
Lashkar-e-Taiba	Kashmiris
Liwa Ahrar al-Sunna	Lebanese Sunnis
Mahdi Army	Iraqi Shi'is
Maute Group	Moros
Moro Islamic Liberation Front	Moros
Mujahideen-e Khalq	Iranians
Mujahideen Ansar	Pashtuns
Mujahideen Kashmir	Kashmiris
Palestinian Islamic Jihad	Palestinians
Pattani United Liberation Organization	Pattanis
People's United Liberation Front	Indian Muslims
Popular Resistance Committees	Palestinians
Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance	Chechens
Rohingya extremists	Rohingya Muslims
Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK)	Pattanis
Shaykh Subhi Al-Salih Forces	Lebanese Sunnis
Sipah-I-Mohammed	Pakistani Shi'is
Students Islamic Movement of India	Indian Muslims
Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution	Iraqi Shi'is
Taliban	Pashtuns
Taliban (Pakistan)	Pashtuns
Tehrik al-Mojahedin	Kashmiris
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	Pashtuns
Thai Islamic Militants	Pattanis
Turkish Hezbollah	Kurds

Appendix Table 2. Terrorist Group-Year Analysis

Y:	[1] Casualties	[2] Casualties
Islamist ¹	1.798*** (0.124)	1.089*** (0.110)
Diaspora ¹	0.182* (0.113)	0.012 (0.083)
Islamist * Diaspora ¹	-0.490** (0.163)	-0.669*** (0.134)
Religious, Non Islamist ¹	-0.300** (0.114)	0.074 (0.099)
Left ¹	-0.050 (0.092)	-0.636*** (0.073)
Right ¹	0.054 (0.130)	-0.006 (0.109)
Nationalist-Separatist ¹	-0.032 (0.101)	0.106 (0.074)
Suicide Attack ²		0.070*** (0.013)
Government Target ³		0.042*** (0.002)
Constant	3.937*** (0.086)	3.332*** (0.070)
Obs.	5,588	5,588
LR χ -square	654.81***	2310.46***
Pseudo R ²	0.0136	0.0479

Notes:

Data collapsed into terrorist group-year unit of analysis

*** $p \leq .000$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .1$

Y = count of casualties (deaths + injuries) in the attack

Standard errors, in parentheses

¹ Feature of perpetrator, criminal perpetrator is reference category² Average number of suicide attacks conducted by group per year³ Average number of government/hard target attacks conducted by group per year**Notes**

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- [44] See Byman et al. (2001)
- [45] See Antwi-Boateng (2011)
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- [47] See Piazza 2018
- [48] See Collier 2000
- [49] Saideman, Steven & R. William Ayers (2008) *For Kin or Country*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- [50] Asal, V., & Ayres, R. W (2018) Attention Getters: Diaspora Support for Ethno-Political Organizations in the Middle East. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41(1):24-38.
- [51] Data from 1993 were lost by the original data collectors and we treat them here as missing.
- [52] An alternative unit of analysis would be terrorist organization-year, rendering the study a terrorist organizational level analysis. This would be advantageous in that terrorist attacks launched by the same group are likely affected by terrorist organization features that make them interdependent as incidents. However, a terrorist organization level analysis would also present significant analytical limitations given that we are interested in explaining terrorist attack casualty rates. In particular, it would preclude us from modeling incident-level factors, such as attack mode and type of target, that are critical for explaining casualty rates. As a consequence, we opt to use an incident/event unit of analysis but to conduct terrorist organization and year-fixed effects to account for cross-sectional (terrorist organization) and temporal (year) dependencies.
- [53] Hilbe, J. M (2011) *Negative Binomial Regression*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [54] The average casualty rate (persons injured + persons killed) per terrorist attack increased around 340 percent from the 1970s to the 2010s, according to our calculations using GTD data. Moreover, casualty rates spiked by between 180 and 260 percent in 1998, 2001, 2004, further suggesting that temporal trends in casualties per attack should be controlled for in the estimations.
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- [57] LaFree, Gary, & Laura Dugan (2007) Introducing the Global Terrorism Database. *Terrorism and Political Violence* (19):181-204.
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- [59] Jones, S. G. & M. C. Libicki (2008) *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
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- [62] Accessed fall 2017 from <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/>.
- [63] Crenshaw, M. & J. Pimlott (2015) *International Encyclopedia of Terrorism*. New York: Routledge.
- [64] Chalk, P (2013) *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* (Vol. 1). ABC-CLIO.
- [65] Our coding includes both ethnic and what we refer to as "ethno-sectarian" community links. Ethnic communities are simply ethno-linguistic groups that might be associated with a particular terrorist organization. "Ethno-sectarian" groups are commu-

nities that are distinguished both by a particular ethnicity as well as a particular religion or religious sect. Examples of ethnic communities with links to terrorist movements are the Kurds, the Basques and the Armenians. Examples of ethno-sectarian communities linked to terrorist movements are the Provisional IRA, which was linked to Catholic Irish communities worldwide; and Hezbollah, which is linked to Lebanese Shi'i Muslims. We expect both types of communities—ethnic and ethno-sectarian—to function similarly. Both have a cohesive community identity and both coordinate political efforts on behalf of that identity.

- [66] Levinson (1998) is a reference work on ethnic groups worldwide.
- [67] Minorities at Risk Project (2009) *Minorities at Risk Dataset*. College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Retrieved from: www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/data.aspx on May 1, 2017. The Minorities at Risk (MAR) database includes data on major ethnic and sectarian minority communities, measured as comprising at least one percent of the national population in countries. MAR also includes data on whether an ethnic or sectarian community have kin abroad in significant numbers in other countries.
- [68] In coding our diaspora indicator, we use some of the same sources that Piazza (2018) used, but our sample of terrorist groups is different.
- [69] Source: United Nations Statistics, National Accounts Main Aggregates Database.
- [70] Source: United Nations Statistics, National Accounts Main Aggregates Database.
- [71] Source: Polity IV Project, Center for Systemic Peace
- [72] We use the global regions identified in GTD: North America, Central America and the Caribbean, South America, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Former Soviet Union, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Australasia and Oceania.
- [73] Source: Major Episodes of Political Violence database, Center for Systemic Peace. Data and codebook available online at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
- [74] Source: Fearon (2003). Note that we interpolated missing years by using the most temporally proximate year.
- [75] Source: Composite Indicator of National Material Capabilities (CINC). Data and codebook available online at: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities>
- [76] See Carter, D. B., & Signorino, C. S. (2010). Back to the future: Modeling time dependence in binary data. *Political Analysis*, 18(3), 271-292.
- [77] Enders and Sandler (2006), p. 384; Hoffman (1999); Chasdi (1997).
- [78] All results available from authors
- [79] For a full description of the four data collection periods for GTD, see LaFree, Dugan and Miller (2015). We constructed dichotomous measures to indicate each of the four coding periods.
- [80] To separate domestic from transnational terrorist attacks in the GTD, we used the “INT-ANY” variable which identifies attacks in which the perpetrator and victim are different nationalities, attacks where the perpetrator is from a foreign country and attacks that transpire across international borders as international or transnational.
- [81] A significant disadvantage of the group-year models in Appendix 2 is that they either compromise the measurement or do not allow the inclusion of crucial covariates. In order to include covariates, like whether the attack was a suicide attack or an attack against a government target in group-year estimations, we had to have total counts of such events for each group for each year. This, of course, makes them highly aggregated and disconnected from the actual event. We were forced to drop venue-country attack factors such as the presence of wider civil conflict, ethnic fractionalization, state capacity, level of economic development or state political regime type altogether. The end result is that the estimations in Appendix Table 2, while reproducing the main results, are not fully specified.
- [82] See Juergensmeyer (2017).
- [83] See Orjuela (2008); Victoroff, Adelman and Matthews (2012).
- [84] See Byman (1998); Lyons (2004); Hoffman (2006).
- [85] Brinkerhoff, J (2009) *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Georgiou, M (2013) Diaspora in the digital era: minorities and media representation. *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 12(4): 80-99.