Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity

Forthcoming in *Journal of Politics* 2010

(10,204 words including front material)

Erica Chenoweth  
Assistant Professor of Government  
Wesleyan University  
238 Church Street  
Middletown, CT 06459  
(860) 685-2504 (office)  
eechnoweth@wesleyan.edu

**Acknowledgments:** I received many helpful comments on previous iterations of this project while I was a fellow at the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. I thank the faculty and members of my cohort for their constructive suggestions. Replication materials and supplementary tables are available at my website: [http://echenoweth.faculty.wesleyan.edu](http://echenoweth.faculty.wesleyan.edu).
Abstract: Why is terrorist activity more prevalent in democracies than in nondemocracies? I argue that the main motivation for terrorist attacks in democracies is inter-group dynamics, with terrorist groups of various ideologies competing with one another for limited political influence. I conduct a cross-national, longitudinal analysis of 119 countries for the period 1975-1997, using political competition as the key independent variable and the number of transnational terrorist incidents originating in the country as the dependent variable. I find preliminary support for the hypothesis that inter-group competition, motivated by the competition of the political regime, explains an increase in terrorist incidents originating in a state. Evidence also reveals a positive relationship between political competition and the number of terrorist groups that emerge within a state, and a positive relationship between the density of domestic interest group participation and terrorist activity. Officials should consider inter-group dynamics to predict terrorist activities and derive effective counterterrorism policies.

Key words: terrorism, counterterrorism, democracy, interest group, competition
Why are terrorist incidents more prevalent in democracies than in nondemocracies? Extant literature posits several possible theoretical interactions between democracy and terrorism. One theoretical perspective argues that democracy reduces terrorism because democracies offer avenues for interest articulation among citizens and endorse nonviolent resolutions of conflicts (Schmid 1992). Because of the increased opportunity to express grievances, individuals and groups pursue nonviolent alternatives to terrorism.

Another common argument expects the opposite effect. Eubank and Weinberg (1994) argue that political and civil liberties are positively correlated with terrorism because of the permissiveness of democratic systems. The freedoms of movement and association enjoyed within democracies provide opportunities for terrorist groups to take root in societies and perform actions against either their own governments or foreign governments.

A third perspective argues that different elements of democracy have competing effects on terrorist incidents. For instance, Quan Li (2005) has suggested that democracy both promotes and reduces transnational terrorist incidents; whereas democratic participation through voting in elections seems to have a negative effect on terrorist incidents, the constraints on democratic executives seem to have a positive effect.

A fourth argument is that the relationship between democracy and terrorism is nonlinear—that middling levels of democracy should produce the conditions that are optimal for terrorism to thrive (Abadie 2006). A fifth perspective is that terrorists are able to coerce democracies more easily than nondemocracies, such that terrorists focus
their energies on democratic targets (Pape 2003; 2005), although this finding is contested (Abrahms 2007).

While this article does not test such explanations exhaustively, I contribute to the debate by exploring the causal processes linking the competitive nature of democracies to terrorism. I argue that terrorist activities proliferate in democratic countries because of political competition, which motivates groups of various ideologies to compete with one another for limited political influence given a multitude of competing interests. To test this claim, I conduct a cross-national, longitudinal analysis of 119 countries for the period 1975-1997, using political competition as the key independent variable and the number of transnational terrorist incidents and the number of terrorist groups emerging as two separate dependent variables. In additional models, I test an alternative specification of the argument by estimating the effects of domestic interest group activity on terrorist group activity. These models tend to outperform extant arguments about the relationship between democracy and terrorism.

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it departs from current trends by considering both domestic and international terrorism in democracies—a distinction often neglected in the current literature. Second, the article contributes an additional explanation about why terrorism seems to prosper in democracies. With few exceptions (Bloom 2005), many studies have neglected the dynamics existing between groups or the significance of such dynamics in explaining the relationship between regime type and terrorism. A further goal is to critique policies that endorse democracy as an antidote to terrorism (Windsor 2003). Improved knowledge about how regime type
affects the origins and development of terrorist groups is necessary for policymakers to weigh the potential consequences of democracy-promotion as a foreign policy.

Political Opportunities for Terrorist Activity

There are numerous theoretical arguments concerning the relationship between democracy and terrorism. First, some have argued that the lack of opportunities for expression of political grievances motivates terrorism (Crenshaw 1981), so dissenters are less likely to resort to terrorist violence in expressing their grievances where freedom of expression is encouraged, a perspective associated with the “social breakdown” approach (Schmid 1992; Birch 1984). Democracy should lower the opportunity cost of achieving one’s goals through legal means, thereby making terrorism less attractive to would-be perpetrators (Li 2005; Eyerman 1998).

In addition, the presence of civil liberties may undermine the root causes of terrorism, since those who reside in countries with abundant political freedoms may be less likely to resort to terrorist violence as a form of political expression. In general then, opportunities for political expression diminish the root causes of terrorism because citizens in democratic countries are more likely to be satisfied in the first place.

A second line of argumentation expects the opposite effects, arguing that democracy will encourage terrorism on balance. Most scholars in this camp have suggested that democracy provides a permissive environment for terrorist growth because of the necessity of adherence to certain civil liberties (Schmid 1992; Eubank and Weinberg 1994, 1998, 2001; Eyerman 1998). This perspective draws on the political opportunity and resource mobilization literatures (Oberschall 1973; McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow 2001). Guarantees such as freedom of assembly reduce the costs of conducting
terrorist activities. Moreover, legal systems are less able to quickly pursue and prosecute potential terrorists because of the constraints placed on them by civil rights. Political leaders in the United States, for instance, have expressed frustration about the constraining effects of civil liberties in conducting the war on terrorism: “the spirited defense of civil liberties is a ‘tactic that aids terrorists…erodes our national unity…diminishes our resolve [and] gives ammunition to America’s enemies’ ” (Ashcroft, quoted in Crank and Gregor 2005, 158).

Press freedom may positively affect terrorism through two distinct processes. First, and most bothersome to researchers, is the problem of underreporting bias across different regime types (Drakos and Gofas 2006b). Autocracies avoid reporting the existence of oppositional violence by restricting media content. The free media within a democracy, on the other hand, has an incentive to report transparently and sensationally (Nacos 2002), and the government places fewer restrictions on such media content (Li 2005). Reporting bias may thus lead researchers to an erroneous conclusion that civil liberties contribute to terrorist violence.

Press freedom may have a more direct causal effect on terrorism, however. Without media coverage, terrorist groups are essentially obsolete. Widespread fear and panic are fundamental elements of terrorist strategy. Because of the existence of free press in most democracies, terrorists have increased incentives to grow in, move to, and conduct their violence within such countries. Sensational media coverage serves the terrorists in recruiting, teaching, and training techniques.

Li suggests that the positive effect of civil liberties and press freedom may be epiphenomenal of a crucial aspect of democratic governance, which is the presence of
institutional constraints on the decision-making power of the government. If institutional checks and balances constrain the executive, state violations of civil liberties should be less frequent (Li 2005). A democratic government is thus unlikely to engage in counterterrorist activities that could be perceived as undermining core democratic values, due to checks and balances, electoral incentives, and norms of fair play. Authoritarian regimes, on the other hand, are less constrained and more able to find and crush terrorist organizations (Crenshaw 1981; Wilkinson 2001).

Moreover, as institutional constraints add more veto players to the game through separation of powers, disagreements among policymakers can lead to immobility and exacerbate public frustration. Policy gridlock will increase the grievances of these isolated groups, encouraging them toward violence. Young and Dugan have found a strong correlation between domestic veto players and terrorist incidents (2008).

Given these theoretical discrepancies, Li (2005) posits that democracy may actually reduce and promote terrorism through different mechanisms. Li (2005) finds support for both the democratic participation and the institutional constraints hypotheses, suggesting that these features of democracies may have competing effects on the propensity for terrorist groups to attack a regime.\(^4\)

Additional perspectives suggest a possible relationship between electoral systems and violence (Li 2005, 284). For instance, Marta Reynal-Querol (2002) has found that proportional representation reduces the probability that groups will rebel within a state. In effect, proportional representation systems are less likely to experience civil wars or terrorism than majoritarian or mixed systems, because the motivations for engaging in
conflict are lower in a proportional representation system than any of the others (Li 2005).\footnote{5}

Finally, instead of focusing on linear correlations, some scholars suggest that political freedom, poverty, and terrorism have a curvilinear relationship. That is, it is neither the freest nor the most repressive states, but rather the intermediate states that experience the most terrorism. Ostensibly democratic transitions are particularly vulnerable events, as the fragile country attempts to overcome the potential backlash of internal and external actors opposing the transition or its implications (Gleditsch, Walkensteen, et al 2002; Chenoweth 2007). Using data from the World Market Research Center’s “Global Terrorism Risk” index for 2003 and 2004, Abadie (2006) finds a non-monotonic relationship suggesting that terrorism is more likely in countries undergoing a democratic transition. Eyerman (1998), Lai (2003), and Drakos and Gofas (2006a) have confirmed these findings, suggesting that intermediate regimes are likely targets of terrorism.

To summarize, scholars have found that democracy both encourages and reduces terrorist incidents, albeit through different causal mechanisms. That is, democratic participation may reduce transnational incidents in ways indicated by Crenshaw and Schmid. On the other hand, quantitative analyses have also supported the claim that institutional constraints on democratic governments actually exacerbate transnational terrorism by creating policy deadlock and weakening the government’s ability to fight terrorism—or, essentially, creating the opportunity structure in which terrorism can thrive (Li 2005). Democratic design, transitions, and policies may also affect the propensity of a state to be attacked (Li 2005; Burgoon 2006; Berrebi and Klor 2006).
Despite these important findings, the literature stops short of explaining several lingering questions. One particularly enduring question is whether democracy attracts transnational terrorist attacks, or whether democracies indeed encourage terrorism within their own borders. Are democracies the most common targets of terrorist attacks, or are they the most likely inadvertent hosts of terrorism from within?

As a demonstration of this enduring puzzle, Li’s analysis suggests that democratic participation increases citizen satisfaction for the domestic government and therefore reduces transnational terrorist incidents (2005). While citizen satisfaction might prevent domestic terrorist attacks against a democracy, it is unclear how citizen satisfaction would affect the occurrence of transnational terrorist incidents, whose perpetrators are often outside of the polity and therefore unable to participate in the domestic political process through voting regardless.

Part of the confusion rests with data issues. Li’s measure of transnational terrorist attacks counts the number of transnational terrorist attacks that originate within a country, not the number of terrorist attacks that target a country. Although some of these counts are identical because the attack may actually originate and occur in the same country, the distinction is important theoretically and empirically. As for measuring executive constraints, POLITY IV variables do not necessarily capture deviations from such constraints, since these may occur on an ad hoc basis in response to security crises and may not be reflected in state constitutions.

Beyond data problems, however, some of the empirical tests are problematic. Specifically, institutional constraints may provide a permissive environment for terrorism to thrive in democracies, but they do not necessarily prohibit democracies from pursuing
repressive counterterrorist tactics in practice. Indeed, some democratic electorates quickly and easily grant their executives extra powers in responding to terrorism. The United Kingdom’s perpetual adoption of Emergency Powers since the 1920s—often with a great deal of immediacy and virtually no resistance from the legislative and judiciary branches—is another example (Donohue 2001). Thus democratic governments are quite capable of circumventing civil liberties during terrorist crises, and they have historically done so often with the public’s blessing (Abrahms 2007; Wright 2009).

Finally, even if constraints on the executive branch allow terrorists to thrive, this explanation fails to account for the motivation to use terrorism. Why would terrorist groups (especially domestic groups) use violence to disrupt conventional politics in spite of legal channels to pursue their interests? In other words, what motivates citizens of democratic countries to engage in costly, violent acts to express their political preferences in spite of legal means to do so? The opportunity structure alone is insufficient to explain the proliferation of terrorist groups in democracies. There must be some other factor(s) that affect the growth of terrorism as well.

The Motivation for Terrorist Group Activity in Democracies

I argue that the pivotal dimension of the relationship between democracy and terrorist activity rests with inter-group competition—a controversial but critical feature of democracies (Schumpeter 1942, Bartolini 1999, 2000). Mia Bloom (2005) has described how terrorist groups compete with each other in continual outbidding processes to attract recruits and resources for armed struggle. I contend that the groups also seek political influence through notoriety—a prize they pursue through violence (Richardson 2007). The main difference is that in democracies, terrorist groups tend to compete against
conventional interest organizations and with one another, whereas in nondemocracies, opposition groups tend to cooperate with one another. Given these dynamics, mobilization is high in the most politically competitive regimes, thereby encouraging conventional and unconventional forms of political activity.

\[ H_1: \text{Political competition increases terrorist activity.} \]

The interest group literature provides insights by which we can examine the dynamics of democratic interest group competition. In democracies interest groups compete for space on the public agenda, which is dominated by numerous issues. The public agenda is comprised of “those political controversies the polity deems worthy of attention” (Flemming, Wood, and Bohte 1999). Because the political process is highly competitive, various political organizations or interest groups are pitted against one another, even if they have similar interests at stake. Often, these groups are in direct conflict with one another and may even be hostile at times. For instance, in their study of civil rights leaders in fifteen U.S. cities in the 1960s, McWorter and Crain (1967) found that cities with minimal competition had low levels of militancy among leaders, whereas cities with higher levels of competition had more militant leaders.

One reason why competition has produced such extreme manifestations of political preferences is that the policy process is susceptible to “crowding effects,” which result in different interest groups competing to obtain or maintain a position on the agenda and exclude other issues, especially those in ideological opposition to the given issue (Lowrey and Gray 1995). Crowding effects occur at two interrelated levels: at the institutional level (i.e. within parliamentary chambers) and at the media level (i.e. print and broadcast news). Crowding effects are often most observable in the media, where
print space is available only relative to the presence of “competing” stories (Scott 2001; Armstrong, Carpenter, and Hojnacki 2002; 2006). “Winning” issues are those that can maintain attention for a long period of time, or that appear with more frequency relative to competing issues. Winning stories are typically those with a degree of novelty or sensationalism, such as AIDS, violent crime, wars, and scandals. The intensity of competition for space in the media is indicative of the intensity of the competition for space and influence on the public agenda in general.

Like more conventional interest groups, terrorists seek either to preserve the status quo or bring about political change. According to the logic of terrorists (Group A, for instance), well-timed articulations of violence may bring their grievances to the awareness of the public and succeed in putting issues of political salience on the agenda. Congleton (2002) writes:

Both terrorist networks and ordinary political interest groups attempt to influence controversial public policies in a manner disproportionate to their votes....Terror is, analytically, simply another method that groups may use to influence decisions reached by government….terrorism is simply another form of interest-group politics.

Terrorist groups differ from normal interest groups in several important ways, however. First, whereas conventional interest groups use inducements through positive sanctions (such as financial rewards, campaign support, etc) to influence legislative voting on the agenda, terrorist groups use negative sanctions (violence) to influence policy. Second, whereas conventional interest groups participate in the political process through generally accepted means of public discourse, terrorist violence is always perceived as illegitimate and outside the range of acceptability in democratic societies. Thus, while normal interest groups may eventually gain access to the political process, terrorist groups are
perpetual outsiders unless they denounce violence and become legally recognized political parties (as with Sinn Fein).

To illustrate, let us consider two hypothetical terrorist groups—Group A and Group B. Individuals in Group A, whose preferences may be marginalized in mainstream political discourse, view conventional means of political expression useless. Ultimately, given perceptions that well-financed or well-mobilized interest groups are winning the game of political influence, these individuals may resort to terrorist violence to express their grievances with the hope that they will be able to compensate for their limited resources with violent collective action.

Within Group B, several processes may occur as a reaction to Group A’s initial violent action. First, because of the competitive nature of the political process in democracies, Group B may find Group A’s violent expression as threatening to Group B’s ability to add its own interests to the public discourse. Second, if Group A is a right-wing terrorist group, a left-wing group has an even greater incentive to adopt violent strategies. Ideological opposition becomes especially salient in this dynamic, because the incompatible interests of the respective groups cause competition for public influence to be a zero-sum game. Paying attention to Group A necessarily diverts the audience’s attention away from Group B. Beginning in 1969, for example, right-wing terrorist groups in Italy pursues a “strategy of tension” to prevent the Italian government from succumbing to left-wing political parties, interest groups, and the ever-escalating tactics of the Red Brigades (Tarrow 1991). Violent escalation among the competing groups resulted in a dramatic cycle of violence throughout the 1970s and 1980s in Italy.
Moreover, in the conflict in Northern Ireland, reactionary groups such as the Ulster Defense Force have arisen in response to the Irish Republican Army as a way to abet the possible effects of Northern Irish violence on British policies in the region. An action-reaction battle ensued among Loyalists and Republicans as each group attempted to seize political influence through violent escalation to divert attention away from conventional interest groups as well as competing terrorist groups. In fact, the groups experienced such a high intensity of issue incompatibility and competition that they frequently attacked one another (Chenoweth 2007, 117-120).

**Political Competition and Transnational Terrorism**

Domestic competition has straightforward implications for homegrown terrorism, but what is the effect on transnational terrorism? In this article, I argue that inter-group competition could affect domestic and transnational terrorist activities. In fact, domestic political competition may produce significant externalities if terrorist groups perceive the internationalization of their struggle as a possible way to outbid competing groups. Sean Macstiofan, the IRA chief of staff, argued as much when he explained IRA attacks against British targets in Continental Europe as attempts to demonstrate to the Official IRA that the Provisional IRA was organizationally superior (Chenoweth 2007, 123-132).

Moreover, political competition could motivate foreign terrorists to attack democracies from abroad. Political competition within the polity signals to terrorists that such attacks will not be in vain—some parts of society may potentially align with the terrorists’ interests and pressure the state to accommodate them. For this reason, it is precisely the *competitiveness* of the state that produces expectations that citizens within the democracy will sympathize with the terrorists, organize a sufficient movement to
support them, and effect political change. These expectations in turn make democracies appealing targets even to transnational terrorists from abroad.

In autocratic regimes, on the other hand, a transnational attack is unlikely to provoke a mass uprising against a government even if there is widespread sympathy for such an act. Groups such as Al Qaeda have demonstrated their propensity to attack targets whose agendas are vulnerable to public opinion, such as the United States in 2001, Spain in 2004, and the United Kingdom in 2005. Other studies have concluded that international groups may purposefully attack democracies with particularly gruesome methods such as suicide terrorism because of democracies’ sensitivities to domestic public opinion (Pape 2003; 2005). Others have argued that Al Qaeda decided to become more international in scope because of its competition with other regional Islamist groups, which were competing for hegemony within Middle Eastern countries (Gerges 2005). Thus, a regime’s competitiveness attracts terrorist activity from both at home and abroad, adding an additional layer of complexity in the battle for limited political influence. Due to this dynamic, we should observe increases in domestic terrorist activity following foreign attacks and vice versa.

In fact, the relationship goes both ways. Terrorists often pay close attention to the actions of homegrown terrorists in foreign countries, and they may target competitive states in which an active domestic terrorist group is pursuing a policy objective that diverges from that of the foreign terrorists. In Algeria, for instance, the National Liberation Front (FLN) followed the actions of the Secret Armed Organization (OAS), a terrorist group that was engaged in terrorist attacks in France with the goal of coercing France to maintain its occupation of Algeria (Crenshaw 1995, 502-509). The FLN and
the OAS were true competitors engaged in tit-for-tat attacks at times due to divergent preferences about a similar policy issue within the same competitive state. Each terrorist group saw the other as gaining ground against France, a competitive democracy, unless a countermovement represented the other side of the debate (Crenshaw 1995, 509).⁶

\[ H_2: \text{Homegrown terrorist activity should increase in response to transnational terrorist attacks in democracies.} \]

Most research on terrorism acknowledges that through their actions, terrorists speak to media, governments, and civilians as primary audiences. However, in addition to these conventionally-acknowledged audiences, terrorist groups are speaking to each other, and they do so across borders—a claim seldom made in the existing literature.⁷

This discussion of Hypotheses 1 and 2 produces four observable implications that I test in this article. First, the most politically competitive countries should be the most likely originators of transnational terrorist attacks. Second, homegrown terrorist groups should be more common in politically competitive countries than regimes that are closed to political competition. Third, new homegrown terrorist groups should emerge after transnational terrorist attacks have taken place. Fourth, among democratic countries, terrorist activity will be highest in those countries with the densest interest group sectors.

**Alternative Expectations**

Domestic political competition may diminish the motivation for terrorism for several reasons. First, because of a plurality of ideas represented in the legislature, potential terrorist groups may actually find violence unnecessary because the likelihood of their viewpoint being represented will increase. Second, there may be more citizen satisfaction due to the openness of the agenda, therefore diminishing the underlying
causes of terrorism in general (Crenshaw 1981). Closed competition could increase
terrorism because of exclusion—groups may be most likely to adopt violence when they
have no other alternatives for interest articulation.

Third, competition for space on the political agenda could actually discourage
groups from forming due to its saturation. In contrast to Mancur Olson’s (1971)
proposition that interest groups can engage in infinite proliferation due to competition,
Lowrey and Gray (1995) have argued that there is a certain threshold at which
competition actually diminishes incentives to compete due to the decreased probability of
success. Since groups may be overwhelmed by the need to assemble, organize, and
engage in sustained collective action with minimal resources, they may be discouraged
from participating in the polity altogether.

Fourth, we may expect press freedom, executive constraints, and participation to
have the greatest effects on terrorist incidents and domestic terrorism, as found in Li
(2005). Thus I consider the following alternative hypotheses.  

\[ H_3: \text{Press freedom increases terrorist activity.} \]

\[ H_4: \text{Institutional constraints on the executive increase terrorist activities.} \]

\[ H_5: \text{Democratic participation decreases terrorist activity.} \]

A final possibility is that I will find no relationship between competition and
terrorism. Piazza (2008b) finds that democracy has no effect on the number of terrorist
attacks based on the U.S. State Department’s list of Significant Terrorist Incidents, a list
that has been subject to numerous, nontrivial criticisms (Glasser 2005; Krueger and
Laintin 2004). I use multiple data sources and indicators of terrorist activity to overcome
some of the common concerns about reliability.
Empirical Analysis

To test the dynamics hypothesized here, I subject the argument to a large-n study using separate independent and dependent variables. The first test investigates why politically competitive regimes are the most likely sites for transnational terrorist incidents. The second examines why democracies are the most likely hosts of new terrorist groups, and the third estimates the relationship between interest group density and domestic and transnational terrorist group activity. The research design is modified from Li and makes use of his data, as I test his alternative explanation as well.

I conduct a cross-national, longitudinal study of transnational terrorist incidents in 119 countries (democracies and nondemocracies) for the period 1975-1997. The unit of analysis is the country year, and the dependent variable is the number of attacks that originated in that country, lagged (t-1) since terrorist attacks may affect some of the independent variables (such as press freedom). The data is taken from the ITERATE data set, which is commonly used in existing studies. In the ITERATE data set, a transnational terrorist attack involves citizens of more than one country. The political goals of the attackers could be domestic or international, with some “accidental” deaths of foreigners in the case of domestic incidents. The terrorist incident may originate in and target the same country, or it may originate in one country and occur in another. For the purposes of this article, however, I am mostly interested in the origins of the attack.

The independent variable I use to test Hypothesis 1 is Political competition. Taken from the POLITY IV dataset, Political competition is a 10-point scale, with 1 meaning that all competition is restricted by a hegemonic regime, and 10 meaning that no political groups, issues, or types of conventional political action are routinely banned
from political participation (Marshall and Jaggers 2003). I use this measure as a proxy for political competition, since this index measure demonstrates the ability of citizens to influence the government without restrictions. This is an adequate proxy since it captures the possible restrictions on ways in which the political agenda can be influenced. 

*Political competition* should have a positive effect on terrorist incidents.

To test Hypotheses 3 through 5, I introduce several additional variables. First, *Press freedom* is based upon Van Belle’s measure of descriptive summaries of the International Press Institute’s annual reports, country reports by experts, and country-specific historical documents (Van Belle 1997; Li 2005). Van Belle codes levels of press freedom into five classifications: nonexistent press, free press, imperfectly free press (due to corruption or unofficial influence), restricted press, and government-controlled press. Press freedom is coded 1 if a country’s press is free and 0 otherwise. Using this operationalization, Li (2005) and Drakos and Gofas (2006b) find that press freedom has a positive, statistically significant relationship on terrorist incidents. Therefore, I expect the relationship between *Press freedom* and terrorist incidents to be positive as well.

To test Hypothesis 4, I introduce an independent variable called *Institutional constraints*, which is based on the executive constraints variable in the POLITY IV dataset. This variable features a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that the executive has unlimited authority, and a value of 7 indicating executive parity or subordination. It is centered to avoid collinearity (Li 2005; Aiken and West 1991). According to Li (2005), *Institutional constraints* should have a positive effect on terrorist incidents.

To test Hypothesis 5, *Democratic participation*, taken from Li 2005, combines the electoral participation variable in Vanhanen’s Polyarchy dataset with a dichotomous
indicator of democracy from POLITY IV (Vanhanen 2000). The dichotomous indicator comes from the polity score of democracy minus autocracy score, which is on a scale of -10 to 10. If the polity score is equal to or greater than 6, then the democracy score is coded as 1. If the polity score is less than 6, this country is not a democracy, and therefore receives a score of 0. Then, Vanhanen’s democratic participation index measures the percentage of the population that voted in general elections. Democratic participation is coded as equal to Vanhanen’s index if the country is a democracy (a polity score of 6 or higher), and 0 if the country is not a democracy (lower than a 6 on the polity score). This removes the threat of including high voter turnout that may result from forced voting in autocracies. According to Li (2005) and Schmid (1992), Democratic participation should have a negative effect on terrorist incidents.

In all models, I control for size, which measures the total population logged (World Bank 2002). Size should have a positive effect on terrorist activity, since more populous nations have a higher probability of producing terrorist groups. Government capability is also expected to have a negative effect on terrorist incidents, because the less able governments are more likely to experience widespread internal turmoil (Gleditsch, et al 2002). This measure is the logged annual composite percentage index of a state’s share of the world’s total population, GDP per capita, GDP per unit of energy, military manpower, and military expenditures (Li and Schaub 2004; Li 2005). I expect it to have a negative effect on the number of terrorist incidents.

History of attacks is the number of transnational terrorist incidents that have occurred in a country in the previous year. This variable was computed using the ITERATE data, and I expect it to have a positive effect due to the contagion effects of
terrorism (Mickolus, et al 2003; Crenshaw, et al 1980; Li 2005). I also control for conflict, which is coded 1 if a state is engaged in an interstate war, and 0 otherwise. This measure comes from Gledistch, et al (2002), and I expect it to have a positive effect.

Finally, I include a Post-Cold War dummy, coded 1 since 1991 and 0 otherwise, since terrorist attacks have decreased since the end of the Cold War due to the end of Soviet funding of left-wing groups (Enders and Sandler 1999). This dummy is expected to have a negative effect on terrorist attacks. Together with the History of attacks variable and time dummies reported in the supplements, I control for intertemporal effects. Because the hypotheses are directional, one-tailed tests are applied. I also include robust standards errors clustered by country to produce standard errors that are robust to both heteroskedasticity and serial correlation within the cross-sectional unit, following Li (2005, 286).

The initial results appear in Table 1. Because the dependent variable is an event count, I use negative binomial regression analysis (zero-inflated negative binomial tests are available in the supplementary material). Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Model 1 reports a test of Hypothesis 1: that political competition has a positive effect on terrorist incidents. As anticipated, political competition has a positive and significant effect on terrorist incidents. Government capability has a positive and significant relationship with terrorist incidents, as does the log population variable. This means that despite a government’s increasing resource base, terrorist violence is more likely to occur in the most equipped countries. This may be due to the widespread availability of resources, which can be used by the terrorists themselves. Size also
features prominently in the results: the larger a population, the more likely is terrorist violence. The conflict dummy has no effect on terrorist incidents. Therefore, states that are involved in international conflicts with other states are no more likely to experience terrorist violence than states not engaged in international conflict. These controls remain consistent throughout subsequent models.

As expected, the negative and significant effect of the post-Cold War dummy variable and the positive and significant effect of the history of attacks suggest temporal variation, in that terrorist attacks were less common from 1992-1997. However, a state with a history of terrorist attacks in the previous year continues to experience more terrorist attacks the following year. The latter finding is consistent with the explanation that terrorist violence is competitive: the more attacks perpetrated by Group A, the higher Group B’s incentive becomes to escalate its own activities.

Model 2 estimates a negative binomial regression testing Hypothesis 3, which posits that press freedom increases terrorist incidents, holding other variables constant. In this model, press freedom has no effect on terrorist incidents, thus ruling out this important alternative argument. This finding deviates from common expectations that press freedom has a positive effect on terrorist incidents.\textsuperscript{11}

Model 3 tests Hypothesis 4 on the relationship between executive constraints and terrorist incidents, holding other variables constant. In this model, Institutional constraints have a positive, significant effect on terrorist incidents. Based on this test alone, I cannot reject Hypothesis 4.

Model 4 tests Hypothesis 5, which posits that democratic participation will reduce terrorist incidents. Deviating from previous findings, I find that Democratic participation
has a positive and significant effect on terrorist incidents—further support of the political competition conjecture.

Model 5 estimates a unified negative binomial regression that incorporates all of the potential features of a democracy that might affect terrorist incidents according to Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, and 5. *Institutional constraints, Democratic participation, and Press freedom* are insignificant, while *Political competition* continues to have strong effects. A joint significance tests shows that including *Institutional constraints, Democratic participation, and Press freedom* does not significantly improve the model (p=.61). Therefore, the significant effect of *Institutional constraints* in Model 3 is misleading.

To better discern these competing effects, I ran a series of diagnostics to test the robustness of these models over several alternative specifications, including models with fixed effects, tests to measure multicollinearity among the key independent variables, and zero-inflated negative binomial models to account for excessive zeroes in the dependent variable. The results support Hypothesis 1—political competition is a robust predictor of terrorist incidents. Notably, however, Hypotheses 3 through 5—that press freedom and executive constraints increase terrorist attacks and democratic participation reduces them—do not hold up to these robustness checks. The variables are insignificant in zero-inflated negative binomial models, which are available in the supplementary materials.

I also test the potential curvilinearity of the relationship (*Political competition squared*), but I find no support for this claim. In an additional model, I include dummies for type of democracy—specifically, variables called *proportional, majority, and mixed*, all of which are coded 1 if they contain that type of system and 0 otherwise, exclusively in democracies (Golder 2005; Li 2005). I find support for the argument that proportional
representation systems are more likely to experience terrorist incidents—a further confirmation of the political competition explanation. Full results and interpretations are available in the supplementary materials.

Together with the robustness checks and tests of alternative arguments, the results in Table 1 indicate that political competition is a robust predictor of transnational terrorist incidents even when accounting for variations in time and political system and compared to key alternative hypotheses. Next I test its relative explanatory value vis-à-vis an alternative dependent variable—the number of new terrorist groups in a country.

**Alternative Dependent Variable: Number of New Terrorist Groups**

Domestic terrorism accounts for 90 to 95 percent of terrorist activity (LaFree and Dugan 2004). If my argument is correct, the political competition model should apply to domestic terrorism within democracies as well as to transnational terrorism. To test whether this is the case, I created a variable called *Emergence*, which identifies the number of new terrorist groups that emerge within a country for each year. The data was taken from the RAND-MIPT database of terrorist groups, whose profiles designate the date of group formation and (where applicable) group demise. I include only groups with primarily domestic political objectives.¹²

Using terrorist groups as a dependent variable is controversial because of obvious reliability concerns (see Sandler’s 1995 response to Eubank and Weinberg 1994). First, it runs the risk of omitting terrorist groups that were in existence and active but unknown to the country and therefore unreported. Second, it is difficult to determine whether actual “groups” exist, or whether these are ad-hoc gathering of individuals whose
membership is fluid. These are difficult and obvious problems that all terrorism researchers face, and I do not claim to solve them here.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite these issues, there are good reasons to use this alternative indicator of terrorist activity. First, given my interest in the effects of the posited relationship between competition and terrorism, it makes sense to include a measure of domestic terrorism. However, there are few suitable databases that capture domestic and transnational incidents over large periods of time.\textsuperscript{14} Recent attempts to do so (Engene 2004) include terrorism in Western European countries only and are therefore inappropriate for my purposes, since in most cases the independent variables remain constant during the entire period under investigation.

Second, the theoretical argument discussed above suggests that a more competitive political environment would compel more individuals to overcome collective action problems by forming violent groups to express their political preferences. Thus group formation—indicated by the number of new terrorist groups—should be an appropriate measure for determining whether competition exacerbates terrorism on the whole. One caveat is that not all formation and ending dates were available or known in the RAND-MIPT database. When such dates were unclear, I used the dates of the first attack claimed by that group as the respective formation date.

To capture the dynamics of inter-group competition, I use the \textit{History of attacks} variable as the main independent variable. If Hypothesis 2 is correct, we should expect to see transnational terrorist attacks provoking terrorist groups to emerge within democracies. We should not see these effects in uncompetitive regimes, where transnational attacks should be less likely to produce new groups. Thus, I measure the
effects of *History of attacks* on terrorist group emergence, comparing these effects in “uncompetitive states” where the index of political competition is less than 7, and in “competitive states” where the index of political competition is 7 or higher.

Holding all other variables constant, I compare these effects using a negative binomial regression. Table 2 contains the results.

[Table 2 about here]

Model 6 shows that the number of transnational attacks in the previous year has no effect on the number of new terrorist groups emerging in uncompetitive countries. However, government capability and population size have positive effects, as in the models reported previously. Differing from previous findings, conflict has a positive effect on the number of terrorist groups. This suggests that uncompetitive states in conflict are likely to have more new terrorist groups within their borders. The post-Cold War variable has no effect on these relationships.

Model 7 estimates the effects of attack history on the propensity to produce new terrorist groups within competitive states only. In this model, the history of attacks is positive and statistically significant, which differentiates competitive states from uncompetitive ones. As expected, population size and government capabilities are positive and significant, and conflict has no effect on the relationship. One interesting change from previous models is that the number of new terrorist groups in competitive states has grown significantly since the end of the Cold War. Despite the lack of funding for terrorist groups by major powers, these groups have proliferated in order to counteract the effects of competing groups.
Consistent with Hypothesis 2, in competitive states, the existence of terrorism in the past leads to the emergence of new terrorist groups who perceive a race against other domestic and international groups that are trying to influence the polity. In competitive countries, transnational attacks produce more domestic terrorist groups than in closed regimes. In uncompetitive states, these dynamics do not occur.

**Alternative Indicator of Competition: Interest Group Density and Terrorist Activity**

Despite the clear correlations between political competition and terrorist group activity across multiple specifications, political competition remains a fairly unsatisfying proxy for supporting undeniably the causal mechanisms argued here. I have posited that political competition increases mobilization in democratic countries in general, thereby encouraging groups to escalate their tactics to compete with one another for influence. We also know, however, that there is considerable variation in the amount of such mobilization occurring within democracies. Consequently, if my argument is correct, we should expect to see the most terrorist activity in the countries with the highest degree of conventional mobilization, such as interest group activity. The democracies with the most vibrant interest group sectors should therefore contain the highest amounts of terrorist group activity.\(^{15}\)

I estimate the effects of interest group mobilization on terrorist group activity using Arend Lijphart’s measure of interest group density, \(\text{Igdensity}\), as an independent variable (Lijphart 1997). This variable ranges from 0 to 4, with 4 indicating an extremely dense interest group sector. The sample for this test is considerably smaller, including only democratic countries from 1967-1994.\(^{16}\) Table 3 reports the results.

[Table 3 about here]
Models 8 and 9 estimate negative binomial regressions; confirming zero-inflated negative binomial models are available in the supplementary materials. As evidenced in Model 8, the effect of interest group density on the number of new terrorist groups in democracies is positive and significant. Using terrorist incidents as the dependent variable yields similar results in Model 9. These models tell us that democracies with vibrant interest group sectors are likely to contain more terrorist groups and produce more transnational terrorist attacks than democracies with lower amounts of interest group activity.

**Conclusions**

The empirical analysis supports the claim that terrorist groups within democracies tend to compete with other actors. The most common origins of transnational terrorist attacks are politically competitive polities, which produce aggressive dynamics between groups vying for influence. Within the state, political competition leads to the proliferation of terrorist groups due to competition between domestic and foreign interest groups that have adopted violence to provoke mobilization within the democratic target. Conversely, I find little support for the arguments that press freedom, executive constraints, or political participation can predict terrorist activity.

Thus terrorism proliferates in democracies not due to the presence of civil liberties, but rather because of inter-group dynamics, when political organizations are motivated to escalate their activities due to political competition. Because such competition results in crowding effects, the groups then perceive a need to “out-do” one another for influence thereby resulting in an overall escalation of violent activity.

Some studies have identified these competitive dynamics among terrorist groups (Bloom 2005), but they do not relate such dynamics to the nature of the political system
within which they operate. For further research, scholars should consider creating indexes of inter-group competition between terrorist groups and employing case studies to test whether the causal mechanism is indeed at work. Future iterations of this study will attempt to do so.\textsuperscript{18} Also, in order to further assess the robustness of the theoretical framework, future research should attempt to apply formal models to theorize competition among terrorists.

Most studies that establish a positive relationship between terrorism and democracy find themselves in awkward positions because of the implications of their results—namely, that undermining democracy may also undermine terrorism. Some scholars are obliged to imply that democracies should forego their institutional constraints in this policy arena and restrict civil liberties, or that terrorism is something that contemporary democracies must learn to live with. In fact, the most obvious implication of this article is that governments cannot eradicate terrorist groups by simply implementing democracy at home or abroad. While democracy is certainly desirable in many other respects, it also inadvertently encourages terrorist activity. Even if democracies attempted to reduce civil liberties and crush terrorists within their borders, however, the competitive nature of democracy remains beyond anyone’s control.

The alternative to democracy may be normatively unacceptable, though, so governments must seek ways to disrupt the inter-group dynamics that cause terrorist groups to constantly escalate their activities. The implications of group-level analyses may in fact be more hopeful, because they suggest that rivalries among terrorists may be exploitable.
The most productive possibility is to focus on covert infiltration of terrorist groups to dismantle the groups from the inside out. While this strategy is supported by governments internationally, the intelligence required to be successful has not yet been developed. A second possibility is to alter the incentive structure to encourage individual exit from groups, as with the *pentiti* legislation in Italy (Della Porta 1995).

Regardless, officials must take into account competition among groups to forecast terrorist group emergence and derive effective counterterrorism policies. Governments should increase their efforts at preventing inter-group competition while promoting innovative ways to infiltrate terrorist groups to contribute to their self-destruction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Competition</td>
<td>.061*** (.016)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.104*** (.038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Freedom</td>
<td>.154 (.165)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.229 (.214)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Constraints</td>
<td></td>
<td>.069*** (.025)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.021 (.063)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.009*** (.005)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.002 (.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Capability</td>
<td>.526*** (.091)</td>
<td>.717*** (.126)</td>
<td>.588*** (.107)</td>
<td>.605*** (.115)</td>
<td>.598*** (.107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-.011 (.143)</td>
<td>-.041 (.147)</td>
<td>-.013 (.140)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.051 (.144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>.251*** (.045)</td>
<td>.290*** (.043)</td>
<td>.257*** (.045)</td>
<td>.265*** (.048)</td>
<td>.251*** (.049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Cold War</td>
<td>-.674*** (.092)</td>
<td>-.255*** (.095)</td>
<td>-.552*** (.089)</td>
<td>-.492*** (.087)</td>
<td>-.412*** (.102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Attacks</td>
<td>.020*** (.004)</td>
<td>.018*** (.005)</td>
<td>.020*** (.005)</td>
<td>.021*** (.005)</td>
<td>.018*** (.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.72*** (.808)</td>
<td>-6.90*** (.860)</td>
<td>-5.77*** (.851)</td>
<td>-6.00*** (.876)</td>
<td>-6.17*** (.968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2650</td>
<td>2199</td>
<td>2568</td>
<td>2569</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald chi2</td>
<td>193.08</td>
<td>125.09</td>
<td>157.06</td>
<td>141.44</td>
<td>157.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; chi2</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.1
Table 2: The Relationship Between Transnational Terrorist Attacks on the Emergence of New Terrorist Groups, 1975-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Uncompetitive Regimes (Political Competition &lt; 7)</th>
<th>Competitive Regimes (Political Competition &gt; 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transnational Attacks (lagged)</td>
<td>-.007 (.036)</td>
<td>.008*** (.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Capability</td>
<td>.687*** (.330)</td>
<td>.657*** (.188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>.322 (.415)</td>
<td>.163 (.272)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>.475*** (.228)</td>
<td>.494*** (.068)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Cold War</td>
<td>.456 (.390)</td>
<td>.155*** (.143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-13.181*** (4.077)</td>
<td>-12.908*** (1.632)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 522 1339

Wald chi2 15.29 87.00

Prob > chi2 .0092 .0000

*** p<.1
Table 3: The Relationship Between Interest Group Density and New Terrorist Group Emergence (Model 8) and Transnational Terrorist Incidents (Model 9) in European Democracies, 1975-1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model 8</th>
<th>Model 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest Group Density</td>
<td>.259***</td>
<td>.212***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.146)</td>
<td>(.114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Capability</td>
<td>.693***</td>
<td>1.09***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.260)</td>
<td>(.146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>-.280</td>
<td>-.254***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.250)</td>
<td>(.152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (log)</td>
<td>.549***</td>
<td>.316***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.074)</td>
<td>(.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Cold War</td>
<td>.338***</td>
<td>-.428***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.171)</td>
<td>(.125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Attacks</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.016***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.005)</td>
<td>(.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-14.75***</td>
<td>-9.29***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.05)</td>
<td>(1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald chi2</td>
<td>95.36</td>
<td>147.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; chi2</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.1
References


Notes

1 For my purposes, terrorism is the deliberate use or threat of force against noncombatants by a non-state actor in pursuit of a political goal. Terrorism is distinguished from other forms of violence (such as civilian victimization during civil war) by its randomness and its attempt to convey a political message beyond the targets themselves. See Hoffman (2006) for a detailed discussion about defining terrorism.

2 In this article, the main elements of “political competition” include (1) stable, enduring, secular, political groups that “regularly compete for political influence at the national level;” (2) “ruling groups and coalitions regularly, voluntarily transfer central power to competing groups;” and (3) “competition among groups seldom involves coercion or disruption” (Marshall and Jaggers 2007, 25-27). Such elements correspond to Schumpeter’s main standard of democracy, in which regimes are democratic if officials are selected from contested elections (Schumpeter 1942).

3 A notable exception is Young and Dugan (2008).

4 Robert Pape (2003; 2005) argues that suicide terrorism is an effective tool against democracies engaged in foreign occupation. Following a sustained campaign of suicide bombing, domestic audience costs and aversion to casualties act as constraints on democratic governments, compelling them to withdraw from the occupations. Critics such as Moghadam (2006), Abrahms (2006), Wade and Reiter (2007), and Piazza (2008a) have disputed Pape’s findings on the grounds of selection bias and omitted variable bias, offering several alternative hypotheses for the complex relationship between suicide terrorism, target selection, and conflict outcomes. Although I do not address this line of argumentation here, it is worthy of further inquiry.

5 Some democracies experience less terrorism because of domestic policies that mitigate the grievances of would-be terrorists. Increased spending on social welfare, for example, has been found to reduce both domestic and transnational terrorist incidents within democracies (Burgoon 2006). Burgoon’s findings suggest that more socially accommodating policies, often supported by left-wing governments, are ideal in addressing the root causes of terrorism. Diverging from these findings, however, Berrebi and Klor (2006) have discovered that left-wing governments in Israel are more likely to experience terrorism than right-wing governments, suggesting that left-wing policies have failed to mitigate the grievances of terrorists in Israel.

6 Against a nondemocracy, on the other hand, such a countermovement might be unlikely. Instead of emerging as a countermovement, the opposing group might simply wait for the state to destroy its terrorist opponent. On the other hand, a countermovement could offer aid to the state in destroying the terrorist group, forming a state-sponsored death squad or militia that is a distinct phenomenon from what we usually consider as non-state terrorism.
One question that arises is why some groups choose not to claim responsibility for their attacks. Bloom (2005) argues that some groups avoid taking credit for fear of alienating their constituencies. If public opinion reflects disgust for a terrorist act, then a group is likely to deny its involvement. Thus the failure to take credit does not necessarily negate the argument that terrorist groups are competing with one another. It merely adds a degree of complexity to their strategy.

There may be a nonlinear relationship between competition and terrorist incidents, meaning that the intermediate cases are most likely to experience terrorist attacks (Eyerman 1998; Abadie 2006; Lai 2003; Drakos and Gofas 2006a). Thus the period when a state may be most susceptible to manipulation may be during periods of transition, when the public and elites are first attempting to coordinate their preferences as in Iraq and Afghanistan. I report results testing this claim in the supplementary materials.

Further research (either instrumental variables or case study designs) should ascertain whether terrorist incidents and political competition are endogenous. Conceptually, however, political competition should remain relatively constant in this sample regardless of terrorist incidents, because competition is a static, structural feature of the regime rather than a flexible element in most cases.

These data were obtained from Quan Li via the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* data repository.

To account for potential collinearity concerns, I generated a log version of the dependent variable and estimated the model using OLS regression so as to calculate the variance inflation factor, which found no collinearity between political competition and press freedom.

Groups are included in the RAND-MIPT database if they qualify as “a collection of individuals belonging to an autonomous non-state or subnational revolutionary or anti-governmental movement who are dedicated to the use of violence to achieve their objectives.” They must have engaged in at least one terrorist act, which is defined as an act of violence, or a threat of violence, intended to create an atmosphere of fear or alarm to achieve a political objective. It is generally targeted against civilians. For a more thorough description of terrorism and the database’s inclusion criteria and methodology, please see the supplementary materials.

Although I treat each new group as theoretically equal in its potential, I recognize that this is unlikely to play out in reality. In capturing the relative strength of these groups, one alternative is to count the number of attacks committed by each group. This is simply not possible with the available data, because over half of all terrorist attacks are unattributed. A second possibility is to measure each group’s size and capabilities—also impossible based on existing data.
The Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland is a recent move in the right direction, but it does not differentiate between domestic and transnational incidents.

Additionally, measures of party density could also provide useful extensions to this project. Due to space considerations, I do not consider it here. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

Lijphart generated the sample using a random sampling function.

Even if this finding is distorted due to measurement error conflating the origins and targets of transnational terrorist attacks, democratic countries would still be the most common targets of transnational terrorist incidents.

For a preliminary attempt, see Chenoweth 2007.