

A Comparison Study of the Typologies of Terrorist Organizations Using Geographic Information Systems

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Abstract

This study uses a geographic information system (GIS) and a zero-inflated negative binomial regression model to evaluate if terrorist organizations that display a higher level of *abstract/universal* characteristics are more lethal in individual terrorist attacks than those organizations that exhibit a higher level of *limited/political* characteristics. The results from the zero-inflated negative binomial regression model indicate that indeed there is an association between organizations that demonstrate a higher degree of *abstract/universal* characteristics and higher fatality rates in individual attacks. Likewise, terrorist organizations with a greater degree of *limited/political* characteristics were determined to produce less fatalities in individual attacks.

Introduction

Terrorism has become one of the central issues of our time. Academic interest in the phenomenon has crossed disciplines as widely diverse as economics, political science, sociology, psychology, and criminology. Much of this scholarship classifies terrorism as a single phenomenon that moves across time and space, from country to country, and from situation to situation. However, viewing terrorism as a single social phenomenon drastically minimizes the unique differences that exist among terrorist organizations in terms of their motives, ideologies, leadership styles, organizational structures, and methods of operation. In short, there is not one type of terrorist organization but many. These differences in the typologies of terrorist organizations may be seen in how their ideological motivations have drastically changed over time. For most of the 20th century, the motivations behind terrorism were largely confined to nationalism, separatism, and Marxism, but since the end of the Cold War, a new kind of international terrorism has started to take shape: one that ascribes more ethereal objectives to its governing ideology – often influenced by extreme religious viewpoints (Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, and Steen, 2010, p.829; Rapoport, 2001, p. 421-422).

The current study focuses on how the uniqueness in the typologies of terrorist organizations impacts their behavior in terms of their lethality. The study begins by describing the socio-demographic characteristics of the terrorist organizations themselves and of their members and provides a review of the literature concerning the typologies of terrorist organizations. In the methodology portion of the study, the geographic information system (GIS) software ArcGIS was utilized to provide a visual portrait of the fatality rates for 20 of the most active terrorist organizations for the years 1970 – 2015. Each of the 20 organizations used in this study were ranked on a continuum between organizations with *limited/political* characteristics and organizations with *abstract/universal* characteristics. A zero-inflated negative binomial regression model was then used to assess how organizations that display a high degree of

abstract/universal characteristics compare with organizations that display a high degree of *limited/political* characteristics in terms of their fatality rates. The paper concludes with a discussion of the study's findings, implications for policymakers concerning the construction of counterterrorism policies, and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Perspectives

What is Terrorism

The first step in any research endeavor devoted to the study of terrorism is to define what terrorism is, or perhaps more importantly, what it is not. Unfortunately, terrorism is notoriously tricky to define. No known universal legal definition of it has ever been officially established (Schmid, 2012, p. 158). Even the most fundamental of questions such as: What is terrorism? What makes an act a terrorist act? What makes a group a terrorist group? – are still actively being debated among scholars in the field today (Silke, 2002). However, one cannot even approach the study of terrorism until parameters are set establishing exactly what the phenomenon to be studied truly is. Otherwise, the lines between what is and what is not terrorism may too easily become blurred. For example: Can acts committed by state actors be considered terrorist events? Do guerilla warfare tactics conducted in the context of legitimate warfare count as terrorism? Since establishing a definitive definition of terrorism is well beyond the scope of this study, an operation definition of terrorism has been adopted to advance the study forward. Therefore, this study uses the following definition of terrorism: *The premeditated use or threat of use of systematic violence by sub-national groups in order to obtain political, religious, and/or ideological objectives through intimidation of a larger audience (or audiences) outside the immediate victims, usually not directly involved in the decision making process* (Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, & Steen, 2010; Enders & Sandler 2000, 2012).

Individual Characteristics

Concerning the demographic information of individual terrorists, it is almost universally accepted by scholars that acts of terrorism are predominantly conducted by young males (Chermak & Gruenwald, 2015; Sageman, 2008; Russell & Miller, 1977). Traditionally, research has identified perpetrators of terror as being unmarried (Berrebi, 2007; Chermak & Gruenwald, 2015). However, to the contrary, Sageman (2008) determined that the vast majority of jihadist terrorists are married and have children. Most researchers have found that terrorists are generally well educated, and come from middle to upper-class backgrounds (Berrebi, 2007; Chermak & Gruenwald, 2015; Sageman, 2008). The fact that terrorists are often well educated and come from upper-class backgrounds is quite intriguing since the very opposite is true for individuals who engage in most other forms of social deviance. This highlights how distinct the individual motivations of terrorist are from those of the common criminal and suggests that terrorism needs to be studied as a unique form of social deviancy.

Targets and Operational Methods

Regarding how terrorist groups choose targets and carry out operations, some of the most common quarries of terror are military installations, public transportation systems, major business-related institutions, and tourist destinations. The majority of terrorist attacks are

directed at civilian businesses and infrastructure. These targets are likely chosen more frequently than political and military sites due to their accessible and limited security measures (Czinkota et al., 2010, p. 829). Often, terror attacks occur randomly in order to achieve a high level of paranoia among the general populace and to give the impression that terror is unpredictable and can occur anywhere (Czinkota et al., 2010, p. 828). Although the seeming randomness and unpredictability of terrorist attacks often strikes much fear into the hearts of the general public, historically speaking, most terrorist attacks have not been very lethal. More than half of the terrorist attacks since 1970 involved no fatalities (LaFree, 2011, p.425). Many terrorist attacks target property rather than civilians. Of the ones that do target civilians, many of them fail. In some cases, terrorist groups have provided advance warning to civilians before carrying out their assaults. This was a commonly known practice for organizations like the ETA, IRA, and Weather Underground (LaFree, 2011, p. 425-426).

Terrorist attacks are practically divided into two categories: domestic and transnational. Domestic terrorism occurs when perpetrators carry out an incident in their home-country. Transnational terrorism occurs when an incident in one country involves perpetrators, victims, institutions, governments or citizens of another country (Enders & Sandler, 2012). In recent times, international terrorism has been able to make its ascension through the nourishment provided by the expansion of globalization, communication technologies, and the liberalization of trade, investment, and finance practices (Czinkota et al., 2010, p. 830-831). The results of this has led the terror networks of today to be more fragmented, fluid, and erratic than their more structuralized predecessors. Many of today's terrorist operatives function throughout the world as lone actors or in small intimate groups; radicalized through websites and social media, and are physically disconnected from the powerbases to which they have aligned themselves with. This liquidation and scattering of terror networks have made their global threat more opaque with an almost omnipresent capacity (Sageman, 2008). When considering the quantity of domestic versus transnational attacks, it is apparent that the vast majority of terrorist operations are domestic attacks. When studying the attack patterns of fifty-three foreign organizations that were identified by the U.S. government as especially dangerous to the United States for the years 1970 – 2007, LaFree, Yang, and Crenshaw (2009), discovered that more than 93% of terrorist attacks were domestic attacks.

Although terrorist attacks have occurred in many parts of the world, attacks do tend to be concentrated in specific areas. Over time, the regions of the world where terrorism has aggregated has varied considerably. Historically, terrorism has been viewed as a way in which marginalized groups could retaliate against much stronger government forces. This means that terrorists were most likely to direct their grievances at strong and stable governments. This idea is empirically demonstrated by the fact that, from 1970 – 1980, 54% of all terrorist attacks occurred in North America and Western Europe (Hendrix & Young, 2014, p. 330). However, this trend seems to have made a rather drastic shift in recent years. Following the end of the Cold War, 54% of attacks occurred in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. During this same period of time, North America and Western Europe experienced only 10% of the global total of terrorist attacks (Czinkota et al., 2010; Hendrix & Young, 2014, 330). Hendrix and Young (2014) summarizes this alteration in the regional concentration of terrorism through the statement, "Terrorism, long considered a weapon of the weak, may now be more accurately characterized as a weapon targeting the weak" (p. 330).

Furthermore, even within the regions of the world where terrorism is most prevalent, acts of terrorism are often restrained to a relatively few number of countries. From 1970 – 2007, the

top twenty countries in terms of terrorist attacks accounted for 72% of all terrorist attacks, but only 10% of all the countries in the world (LaFree, 2011). This is validated further by a report from the Institute for Economics and Peace (2016) which found that five countries within the Middle East and North African (MENA) (Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria) were responsible for 72% of all deaths from terrorism in 2015. With regard to how acts of terrorism have been aimed at the United States, LaFree et al. (2009) found that, from 1970 – 2004, just 3% of attacks by organizations identified as being anti-U.S. were actually directed at the United States. Moreover, 99% of attacks targeting the United States did not occur on U.S. soil but were aimed at U.S. targets in other countries.

Typologies of Terrorism

When viewing terrorism through a historical lens, it becomes quite clear that the goals, ideology, and behavior of terrorist organizations have altered substantially over the years. Rapoport (2001) expounds upon this idea in the author's formation of four waves of modern global terrorism: anarchism, anti-colonialism, left-wing radicalism, and religious terrorism. In the first wave, anarchists believed that the state was the source of all evil and through its elimination, a utopian society would be brought about. In the second wave, anti-colonialists believed the independence from colonial powers would lead to political and economic prosperity for their countries. In the third wave, radical leftist believed that capitalism was the root of all of society's evils and its elimination would lead to more equity for all people. Today, in the fourth wave, radical jihadist organizations associate Western cultural with secularism, materialism, globalization, mass media, tolerance, and diversity. From their perspective, they believe that they are struggling to restore a social order based on the fundamentals of religion, family, and community (things they believe Western society denigrates and discards).

For sure, there are many similarities to be found in the four waves of terrorism described above. All these situations involve a great deal of external social upheaval and social polarization among ideologically incompatible groups. All the groups mentioned above are similar in that they tend to justify their use of terror through the viewpoint that they are engaged in a morally just struggle to restore the social order against a rootless dominant culture which is leading their societies towards an abyss (Black, 1990; de la Roche, 1996; Rapoport, 2001; Rosenfeld, 2004). However, the exact circumstances under which these overarching paradigms exist vary considerably from environment to environment and from organization to organization. Terrorism, at its most basic level, should not be viewed as a single ideological perspective adopted by a particular type of organization, but rather as a method of operation assumed by a variety of organizations to advance their particular cause forward (Laqueur, 2003, p.8; Mullins & Thurman, 2011).

By and large, scholars have refrained from classifying the unique differences among terrorist organizations into distinct categories. Nor have there been many empirical examinations into how these differences impact the behavior of these organizations. Two notable exceptions to this are Asal and Rethermeyer (2008) and Piazza (2009). In examining the organizational characteristics of terrorist groups (e.g., ideology, size, age, state sponsorship, alliances, connections, and control of territory) Asal and Rethermeyer (2008) answers the question: "Why are some terrorist organizations so much more deadly than others?" (p. 2). Their findings show that size, ideology, territorial control, and connectedness are essential predictors of lethality while state sponsorship, organizational age, and host country characteristics are not. In another

evaluation of casualty rates of terrorist attacks, Piazza (2009) examined the organizational and goal-structure of Islamic terrorist groups. The author concluded that terror attacks perpetrated by strategic groups (those focused primarily on political and territorial ends) had significantly fewer casualties than *abstract/universal* groups (those focused primarily on religious or intangible ends).

Expanding on the ideas of Piazza (2009), the current study looks specifically at 20 of the most active terrorist organizations in terms how many attacks they conducted during the years 1970 – 2015. Unlike Pizza (2009), the current study does not just focus on organizations which have affiliations with the Islamic religion but includes organizations from all across the spectrum. Further, the current study does not classify the terrorist organizations under consideration into dichotomous variables (i.e., strategic or abstract/universal) but instead uses set criteria to score each organization along a continuum with two polarized typologies existing at either end. On one side of the continuum contains a species of terrorism which is very pragmatic and secular in nature. These types of organization usually operate under the direction of well defined political aspirations which are both limited and achievable. The Marxist/leftist groups are great exemplars of this. These mostly nationalistic organizations were focused on bringing political change to their country of origin and employed terrorist tactics in order to gain enough leverage to aid them in their attempts. This end of the terrorist organizational continuum is titled *limited/political*. On the other end of the continuum, are terrorist organizations with very abstract goals which attach no boundaries to their scope and ambition.

These mostly international organizations devoutly operate under a universalized ideology which they intend to project upon the world. This form of terrorism is expressed most clearly by radical jihadist organizations. This end of the terrorist organizational continuum is tilted *abstract/universal*. When comparing these two ends of the continuum, it seems reasonable to suspect that organizations that display a higher degree of *abstract/universal* characteristics are deadlier than organizations that display a higher degree of *limited/political* characteristics. This is because politically motivated terrorist groups tend to be somewhat self-conscious about their public image due to their desire to gain support from those who sympathize with their cause. They wish that others will see them as liberators rather than as murderers. Contrastingly, organizations with a higher level of *abstract/universal* characteristics are often so singularly focused on and feel justified through their ideology that they give little regard to public perception or making any kind of appeal to sympathizers. Therefore, these types of organizations are often less discriminating about whom they target and use little if any discretion in their methods of operation (Hoffman, 1998).

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were proposed in this study:

H1. The higher a terrorist organization's total *abstract/university* score is the more fatalities they will produce in individual terrorist attacks.

H2. The higher a terrorist organization's total *limited/political* score is the less fatalities they will produce in individual terrorist attacks.

Methodology

To answer the two research questions posed above ArcGIS was utilized so that trends in the lethality of some of the most active terrorist organizations from 1970 – 2015 could be presented in visual form. In addition, correlation and zero-inflated negative binomial regression analyses were conducted to assess the relationships between where terrorist organizations fell on the organizational continuum and the fatality rates of these organizations in individual attacks.

Data on terrorist organization was obtained from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). GTD is an open source database operated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. GTD contains information on over 150,000 domestic and transnational terrorist attack from 1970 – 2015 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism [START], 2016). From these data, 20 terrorist organizations were selected based on which organizations engaged in the highest frequency of attacks during the years 1970 – 2015. Each organization was then rated on a three-point Likert scale consisting of five indicators representing the ideal organization with *limited/political* characteristics. These scores were then added up for a total *limited/political* score (the highest possible score being 15). Next, the same 20 organizations were again rated on a three-point Likert scale consisting of five indicators representing the ideal organization with *abstract/universal* characteristics. These scores were then added up for a total *abstract/universal* score (the highest possible score being 15) (see Appendices A and B for the criteria used for classifying terrorist organizations). Finally, a total fatality rate for each of the 20 organizations was calculated based on the number of people killed during terrorist attacks conducted by these organizations during the years 1970 – 2015. These data were then be graphed onto shapefiles using ArcGIS to create four maps so that the lethality of these organizations could be visually assessed and contrasted based on where the organizations fell on the terrorist typology continuum. Data for each organization were geographically placed onto ArcGIS maps in accordance with the host country of the organization.

In addition to using ArcGIS, Pearson correlation and zero-inflated negative binomial regression analyses were conducted using the statistical software STATA. The zero-inflated negative binomial regression analysis assessed how organizations that display a high degree of *abstract/universal* characteristics compare with organizations that display a high degree of *limited/political* characteristics in terms of their fatality rates. A zero-inflated negative binomial regression model was chosen specifically because *GTD* is an event dataset, and the dependent variable – total fatality rate – was measured as a discrete count rather than as a continuous variable. Therefore, a negative binomial regression model was selected as a suitable method of analysis because it is an alternative approach to the Poisson distribution which is useful when carrying out analyses using count data. The reason for this is because variables that are designed to measure the count of some phenomenon do not follow a normal distribution. Instead, count variables measuring rare events (e.g., incidents of terrorism) often display three distinct characteristics: one, they do not contain negative numbers; two, the numbers are discrete integers; and three, count variables often measure rare phenomena resulting in a tail skewed to the right or what is known as a Poisson distribution (Hoffmann, 2004).

However, one stringent assumption of a Poisson regression model is that the mean must equal the variance. In cases where the variance is larger than the mean, the distribution is said to be overdispersed. In such situations, a negative binomial model, which accounts for overdispersion, is usually found to be the better fit (Hoffmann, 2004). The data used in this study

was found to be overdispersed, and therefore, a negative binomial regression model was utilized. Moreover, a zero-inflated binomial regression model was chosen to be the best fit for the data because a zero-inflated model allows for frequent zero-valued observations in the distribution. The underlying rationale for the excess zeros is that some observations within a population have a zero percent chance of occurring, while others had a chance of occurring but ultimately did not. Zero-inflated models are designed to measure both of these processes simultaneously (Hoffmann, 2004).

Results

Figures 1 – 4 are ArcGIS maps displaying information regarding the 20 terrorist organizations of interest in this study, the host countries of these organizations, and the total number of people killed by each organization in individual attacks for the years 1970 – 2015.

Figure 1 below presents the host countries of the terrorist organizations and uses a graduated color scheme to show the total number of people killed in individual terrorist attacks conducted by the organizations of interest. As shown on the map, the highest number of fatalities were generally concentrated in the countries of the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. Additionally, the organizations which operate within this region tend to rank higher in terms of *abstract/universal* characteristics.

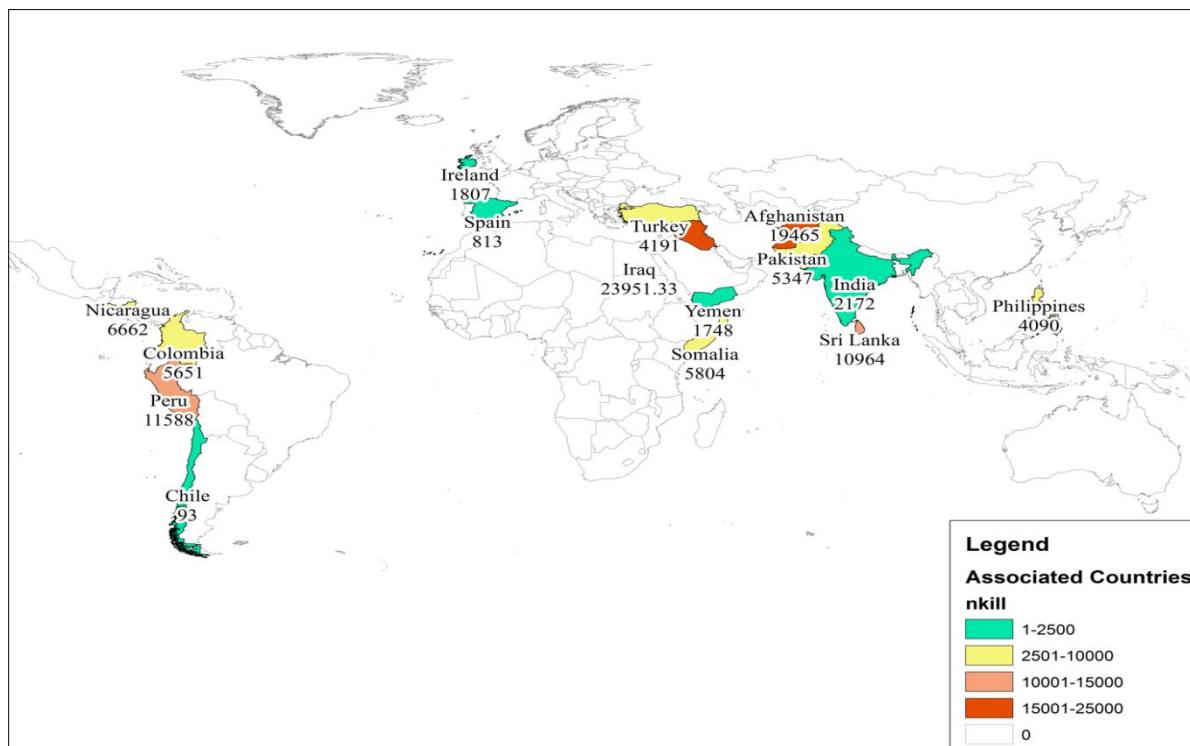


Figure 1. Countries Associated with 20 Terrorist Organizations and Fatality Rates 1970-2015

Figure 2 in the next page offers a more concentrated view of the terrorist organizations within Europe (i.e., IRA and ETA) and shows the number of fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks committed by these two groups for the years 1970 – 2015. Figure 2 indicates that these organizations produce relatively minor fatality rates. Further, these two organizations ranked

much higher in terms of *limited/political* characteristics than they did in terms of *abstract/universal* characteristics.

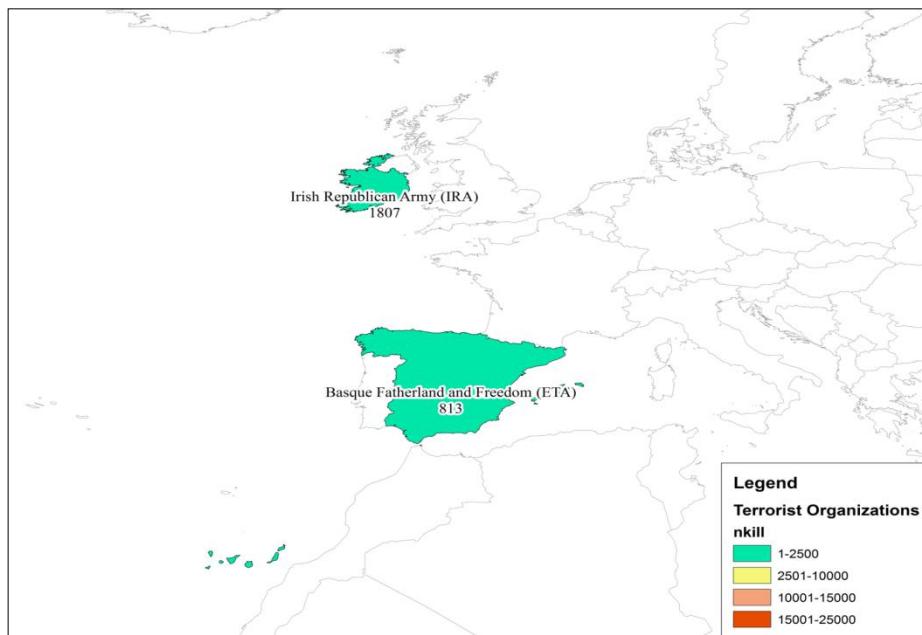


Figure 2. European Terrorist Organizations and Fatality Rates 1970-2015

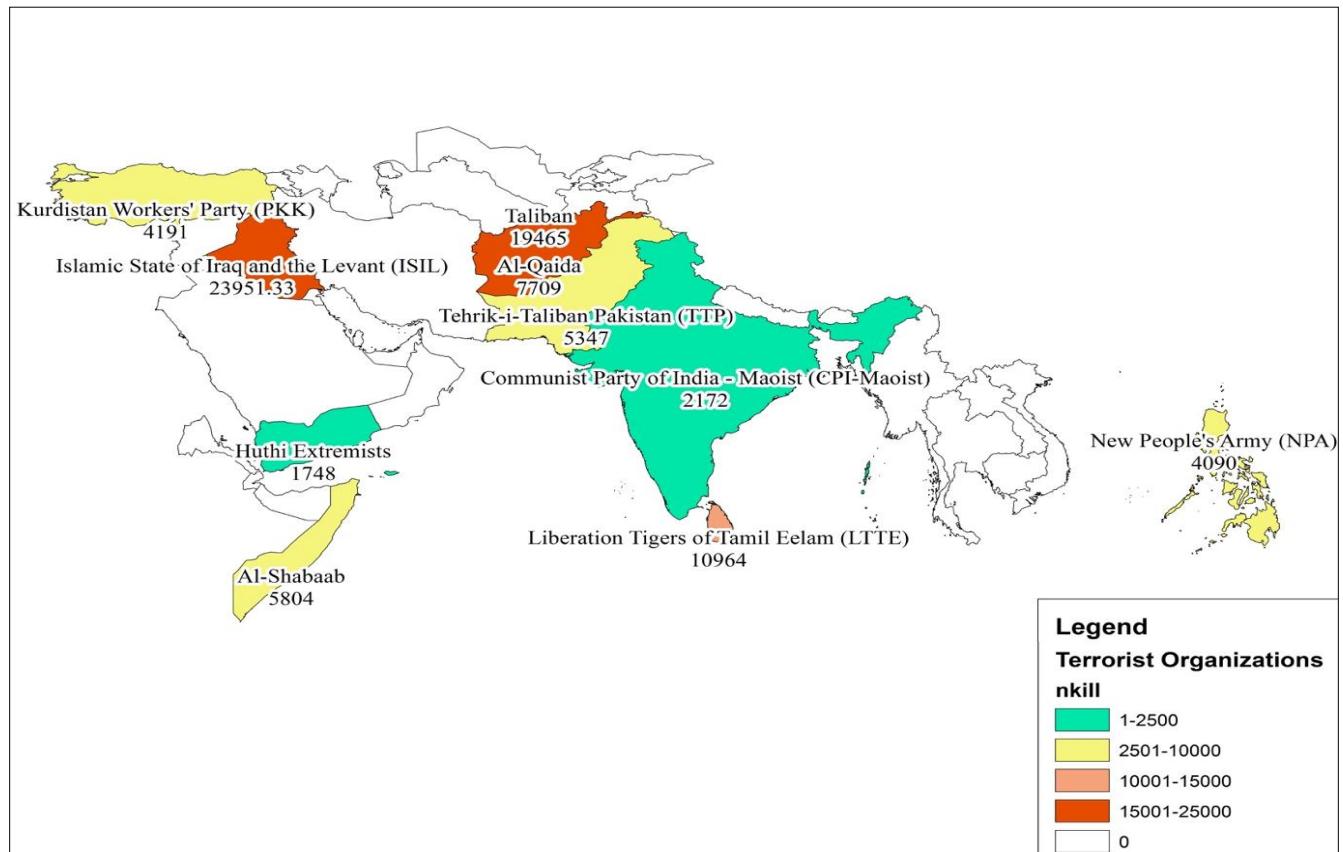


Figure 3. MENA Region Terrorist Organizations and Fatality Rates 1970-2015

Figure 3 in the previous page displays the organizations associated with the countries of MENA region (i.e., PKK, ISIL, Taliban, TTP, CPI-Maoist, NPA, LTTE, Huthi Extremists, and Al-Shabaab) and the number of fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks committed by these groups for the years 1970 – 2015. Figure 3 clearly shows that the fatality rates produced by these organizations were high. In addition, the majority, of these organizations tended to rank high in terms of *abstract/universal* characteristics.

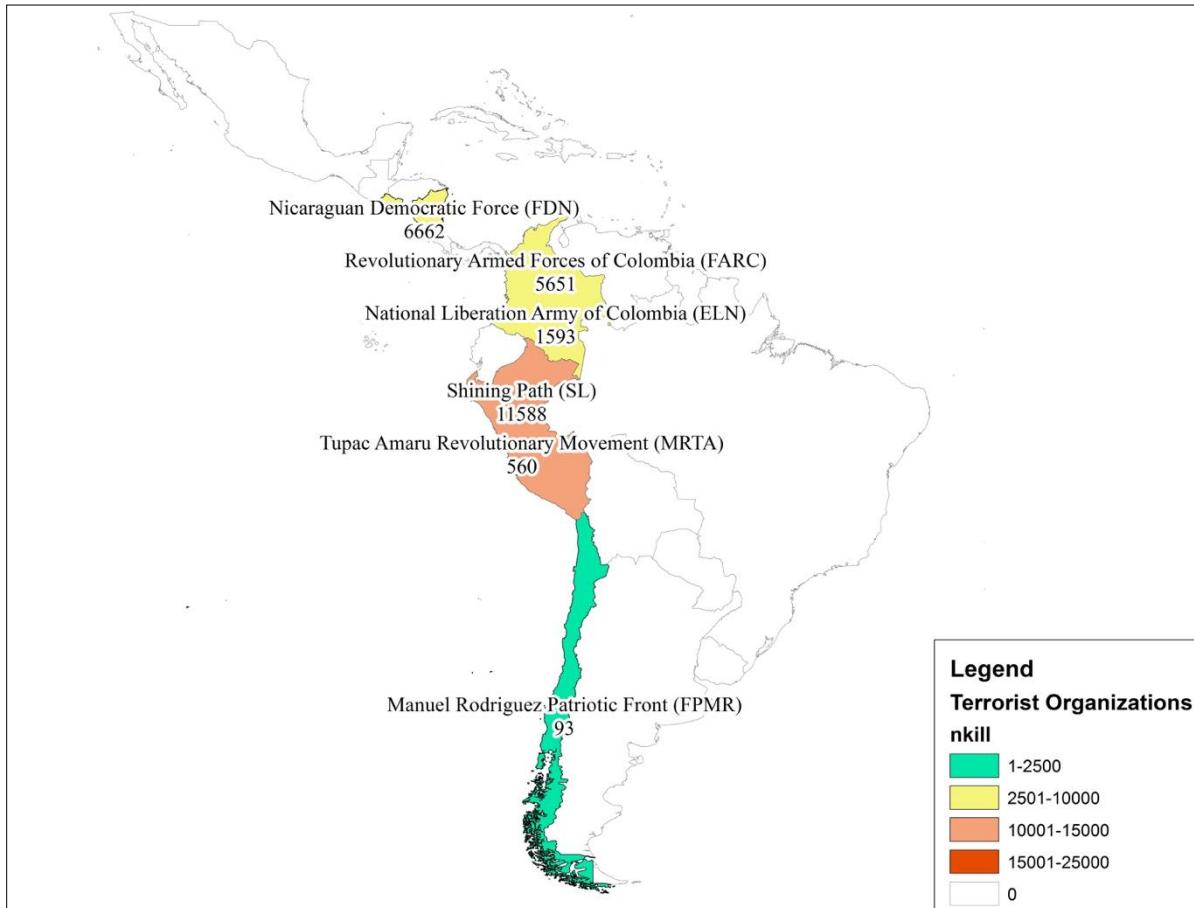


Figure 4. South American Terrorist Organizations and Fatality Rates 1970-2015

Figure 4 above shows the terrorist organizations associated with the countries of South America (i.e., FDN, FARC, SL, and FPMR) and the number of fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks committed by these groups for the years 1970 – 2015. Figure 3 shows that the fatality rates produced by these organizations were moderately high to very low. These organizations ranked much higher in terms of *limited/political* characteristics than *abstract/universal* characteristics. The moderately high fatality rates might seem to somewhat mitigate the idea that organizations with a high degree of *abstract/universal* characteristics are more lethal than those with a higher degree of *limited/political* characteristics, but the organizations within these regions, generally, were active for very long periods of time. For example, FARC has been active for over 40 years. Therefore, the long time span of these groups existence might be more of a factor in their moderately high fatality rates than the actual typologies of the groups. The regression analysis used in this study accounts for the wide variations in time spans in which terrorist organization

were active by measuring fatality rates in terms of individual attacks rather than as the combined total number of people killed.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for terrorist organizations' *abstract/universal* score totals, *limited/political* score totals, and fatality rates are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Terrorist Organizations' Total Abstract/Universal and Limited/Political Scores and Fatality Rates

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Abstract/Universal	40,625	8.489	3.71	4	15	.4227	1.798
Limited/Political	40,625	11.66	3.87	3	15	-1.9023	3.052
Fatalities	37,268	3.281	16.688	0	1,500	55.07	4,373.843

As shown in Table 1, the mean for the 20 terrorist organizations total *abstract/universal* scores was calculated to be 8.489 with a standard deviation of 3.71 for a total of 40,625 observations. The minimum total *abstract/universal* score was 4 and the maximum 15. The skewness and kurtosis for this variable were .4227 and 1.798 respectively. The mean for the 20 terrorist organizations total *limited/political* scores was 11.66 with a standard deviation of 3.87 for a total of 40,625 observations. The minimum total *limited/political* score was 3 and the maximum 15. The skewness and kurtosis for this variable were -1.9023 and 3.052 respectively. Finally, the mean number of fatalities from the terrorist incidents committed by these organizations was 3.281 with a standard deviation of 16.688 for a total of 37,268 observations. To clarify, some cases within the GTD database do not include an actual number for the variable representing the number of people killed in an individual terrorist event; this is most likely due to some confusion regarding the actual outcome of the incident. These missing cases are what accounts for the difference between the total number of observations for the 20 terror groups (40,625) and the total number of observations for fatalities (37,268). The minimum number killed in individual attacks was 0, and the maximum was 1,500. The skewness and kurtosis for this variable were 55.07 and 4,373.843 respectively.

Correlation Results

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if there is a significant relationship between terrorist organizations' total *limited/political* score, total *abstract/universal* score, and fatality rates in incidents of terrorism. The results are presented in the form of a correlation matrix in Table 2 in the next page.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix Among Total Limited/Political Scores, Total Abstract/Universal Score, and Fatality Rates

	Limited/Political	Abstract/Universal	Casualties
Limited/Political	1		
Abstract/Universal	- 0.9338***	1	
Casualties	- 0.0988***	0.0937***	1

Note: *** Correlation is statistically significant ($p < .001$)

As seen in Table 2, a weak negative correlation ($-0.0988 = p < .001$) was found between total *limited/political* scores and fatality rates. This suggests that there is an association between terrorist organizations ranking high in terms of *limited/political* characteristics and fewer people dying in terror incidents committed by these organizations. Similarly, a weak positive correlation was found ($0.0937 = p < .001$) between total *abstract/universal* scores and fatality rates. This indicates that there is an association between terrorist organizations ranking high in terms of *abstract/universal* characteristics and more people dying in individual attacks perpetrated by these organizations. As can be seen from the correlation matrix, total *limited/political* and *abstract/universal* scores were found to have a strong negative correlation ($-0.9338 = p < .001$). Having such a strong correlation between these two variables suggests that these two typologies are actually measuring a single dimension in terms of the way they categorize terrorist organizations. In other words, the same terrorist organizations that were high in *abstract/universal* characteristics were low in *limited/political* characteristics and vice versa. Therefore, because these two variables were shown to essentially be measuring the same thing twice – just from opposite perspectives – it was decided that it would be best to just use the *abstract/universal* total score variable as a single predictor in the zero-inflated negative binomial regression equation since confirmation of this hypothesis would in turn confirm the other hypothesis posed in this study.

Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Regression Results

A zero-inflated negative binomial regression was conducted to determine whether terrorist organizations' total *abstract/universal* scores significantly impacted fatality rates. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Regression Results for Abstract/Universal Totals and Terrorist Fatality Rates

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	z	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	.071	.025	2.89	.004	.023	.119
Abstract/Universal Total	.119	.003	45.73	.001***	.114	.124

Note: $z(1, 37,266) = .119$, $N = 37,268$

Note: *** Correlation coefficient is statistically significant ($p < .001$)

As shown in Table 3, a significant regression equation was found ($z(1, 37,268) = 45.73, p < .001$). Fatality rates from terror attacks were equal to $0.71 + .119$ (*abstract/universal* total). Meaning that fatality rates increased by .119 for every one unit increase in the total *abstract/universal* score.

Discussion

This study examined if the typologies of terrorist organizations impact their behavior in terms of lethality in the individual terrorist attacks they commit. The above analyses indicate that terrorist organizations that rank higher in terms of their *abstract/universal* characteristics produced higher fatality rates per individual attacks than those organizations that rank higher in terms of *limited/political* characteristics. Such findings do make sense when considering the contrasts in the central motivators and end goals of these two typologies.

Organizations with a higher degree of *abstract/universal* characteristics tend to view the world as a zero-sum game – where their goals can only be obtained if those who oppose them do not achieve theirs. In this way, the goals of such organizations become paramount to their existence, and anyone or anything that stands in their way is eligible for elimination. These groups tend to be motivated by transcendental factors which they see in terms of moral absolutes. It is these factors which they feel brings righteousness to their cause and reduces the death destruction that result for their actions to be of little moral relevance. From this perspective, there is no need to place parameters or limitations on fatality rates, as long as such killings stay in alignment with advancing the organization's cause forward.

Contrastingly, organizations with a high degree of *limited/political* characteristics often desire goals that are bounded by political and sociological factors that are both strategic and restrained in their scope. Such organizations deal less in moral absolutes and more in tactical advantageous. For these groups, terrorism is one method among many, which they can use to increase their political leverage and force those in power to capitulate to their demands. In this way, the amount of death and destruct that they render onto society must be carefully factored into their larger agenda so that a delicate balance may be struck. Such organizations, ideally, hope to create so much havoc within their society that it becomes more beneficial for those in government to seek concessions rather than to continue to fight with them. However, they must keep in mind that if too many people die as a result of their actions than the government's will to seek conciliation with them may be superseded by its need for retribution – disavowing any political leverage they may have obtained.

Conclusion

The findings from this study suggest that terrorist organizations that exhibit a greater degree of *abstract/universal* characteristics produce more fatalities in individual terrorist attacks than those with more *limited/political* characteristics. These findings indicate that there are fundamental differences among terrorist organizations based on the specific typology of the organization. This is an essential idea for policymakers to understand in their effort to develop effective policies aimed at counteracting terrorism since what may be an effective strategy against one organization may not necessarily work against another. Therefore, in any endeavor to create counterterrorism policies, terrorist organizations must first be assessed by their unique characteristics, and specific policies should be constructed in a manner that tailors to these characteristics. To assist in this effort, future research is needed so a more in-depth analysis of

the distinct characteristics of various terrorist organizations can be made and more definitive typologies of these organizations developed. Moreover, future research should investigate how social, political, and economic factors within a terrorist organization's host country influence its typology. Special consideration should be made as to how factors such as a nation's style of governance, social, political, and economic stability, and rule of law relate to the typologies of terrorist organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Criteria Used to Assess Terrorist Organization on Limited/Political Characteristics:

1. *Clearly defined limited political goals and/or affiliations*

The political goals of the organization are clearly defined and limited in their scope and the terrorist operations carried out by the organization serve as a strategic method for achieving these goals. There should be a distinct pathway through which the organization hopes to achieve these goals. Largely, political ambitions should be aligned with a desire to want to try and maintain some of the elements of the political system which they desire of reform, rather than wishing to completely discard and replace the established system.

2. *History of compromise or mitigation in tactics*

There should be some points in the history of the organization where they have compromised or have attempted to compromise with the institutions to which the majority of their aggression is focused. This could take the form of such things as a cease-fire, peace negotiations, and/or the establishment of an officially recognized political party with an active role in the nation's legislative process.

3. Strong sense of nationalism

The organization has a clearly defined national identity, and for the most part, the organizations goals, ambitions, and tactics are restricted to their country of origin.

4. A sense of communicating the organizations cause through attacks

Some elements of the terrorist operations carried out by the organization seem to be intended towards trying to make their grievances known to the world and to position those they oppose as being the true oppressor.

5. Centralization of the organization

The organization has a concrete clearly defined structure and exists in a distinct physical and/or geographical manner. There are clearly established parameters and boundaries to obtain membership to the organization.

Appendix B: Criteria Used to Assess Terrorist Organization on Abstract/Universal Characteristics:*1. Unlimited and abstract goals and aspirations*

The goals and ambitions of the organization are very complex and unlimited in their scope. The true end points of the organizations goals are somewhat ambiguous because these goals are driven more by ideology than by political strategic thinking. The organization has expressed a desire to unite many countries around the world to their cause.

2. High level of international involvement

The organization is operating in multiple countries at the same time.

3. Clearly defined moral and/or social demands

The organization imposes a high level of social and ethical expectations among their members and/or the civilian population they come into contact with. Violations of these expectations are met with severe consequences.

4. Religious or supernatural belief in the organization's cause

The organization has a clear affiliation with a religion and/or believes supernatural or abstract forces are driving their movement forward.

5. Unwavering Ideological Purity

The organization is not willing to compromise their ideological beliefs to achieve at least part of their goals, even during times where it might seem pragmatic for them to do so.