



The Political Consequences of Terrorism: Terror Events, Casualties, and Government Duration*

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How does transnational terrorism affect the stability of parliamentary governments? Does terrorism cause some governments to fail prematurely and/or does it enhance the probability that some governments will stay in office longer than they otherwise would? Using a duration model on a sample of 18 advanced parliamentary democracies between the late-1960s and 2003, we find that terrorism exacerbates the likelihood of government failure for some governments but not others. Our principal finding is that right-oriented governments are able to keep their hold on power more than left-wing governments when confronted with transnational terrorism.

Keywords: terrorism, government duration, partisanship, casualties

What are the political consequences of transnational terror attacks?¹ While research demonstrates that transnational terror attacks have economic consequences such as reducing growth (Gaibulloev and Sandler 2008), we know less about how terror attacks affect domestic politics in democratic states. If terror attacks affect domestic politics, do these attacks affect all democratic states and governments equally? To address one aspect of this broader question, we ask how terror events and their resulting casualties influence the durability of parliamentary governments. Specifically, we examine whether terror attacks lead to

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¹While we do not question that both transnational and domestic terrorism have economic and political domestic consequences, the causes, goals, and responses to each type of terrorism are likely to be different. As Enders, Sandler, and Gaibulloev (2011) suggest, transnational terrorism is likely to emerge from broader grievances in other countries (see Savun and Phillips (2009) about states' foreign policies and terrorism), which leads to terror attacks aimed at drawing attention to national issues beyond the borders of the attacked country attempting to force policy changes desired by the terrorists. In contrast, they suggest that domestic terrorism emerges either from separatists, individuals trying to overthrow the government, or issue-specific causes such as social justice or environmental degradation (that is, the Earth Liberation Front). Furthermore, responses to transnational and domestic terrorism by the government and the public may differ. Transnational terrorism requires a large increase in defense spending and defense efforts while domestic terrorism is usually dealt with through the police and requires very little international collaboration. Given these differences, we focus on shocks from transnational terrorism.

parliamentary governments failing prematurely or staying in office longer than they might otherwise.

Since our research question examines how terrorism influences government durability, we focus on parliamentary regimes where governments can be terminated prior to the next constitutionally mandated election (for example, via a no-confidence motion or parliamentary dissolution). While governments may lose office through already scheduled elections, as in the case of the March 11, 2004 bombings in Madrid, the terror attack did not cause the government to fall prior to the constitutionally scheduled election date.² Instead, our focus is whether terror events have an extraordinary influence on the ability of governments to survive outside of those periods where they are most at risk of failure—scheduled elections—and not whether terror events directly influence voters' decisions to support the incumbent in a scheduled election.

To do this, we develop and test a set of hypotheses related to terrorism and government turnover. The first hypothesis suggests that parliamentary governments are likely to fail prematurely in the face of a transnational terror attack as the attack can be interpreted as a form of foreign policy failure, or a critical event (for example, Lupia and Strøm 1995; Laver and Shepsle 1998). This event—by itself or as part of a pattern of events—alters the perceptions of the incumbent government and opens up windows of opportunities for other parties to bring down the existing government before the next election (Browne, Frendreis and Gleiber 1984, 1986; Lupia and Strøm 1995; Laver and Shepsle 1996; Diermeier and Stevenson 1999). At the same time, building from recent literature on casualties and elections as well as public opinion and terrorism, terror attacks may allow incumbent governments to remain in office longer than they might have otherwise (Koch 2011; Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister 2007). Furthermore, we test whether some governments have an increased chance of failure in the face of casualty-inducing transnational terror attacks than others. Our results suggest that some incumbent governments do fail in the face of casualty-inducing transnational terror events while others are less susceptible to failure. Specifically, right-oriented governments are more likely to persist after attacks than are more left-oriented governments. Thus, while terror attacks may be critical events for some governments, other governments are unlikely to fail given how the public perceives the incumbent and any potential governments that would form as replacements.

This question highlights an existing gap in the cross-national literature on terrorism. We know a great deal about the causes of transnational terrorism and when and under what conditions terror attacks are likely to occur (Eubank and Weinberg 1998, 2001; Eyerman 1998; Li and Schaub 2004; Enders and Sandler 2006; Savun and Phillips 2009). However, we know much less about the consequences of transnational terrorism beyond the context of either specific events like 9/11 (Jacobson 2003) or within specific countries like Israel (Berrebi and Klor 2006, 2008). If terror events are coercive in nature, then there should be evidence of terror events affecting the tenure of governments cross-nationally beyond just electoral outcomes.³

This research also has implications for the study of government stability in parliamentary democracies. While there are strong theoretical expectations that external events can alter the likelihood of a parliamentary government remaining in office (for example, Laver and Shepsle 1998; Diermeier and Stevenson

²While the Madrid bombings have been connected to the electoral loss of Partido Popular, the true impact of those events is still up for debate. Was the electoral loss solely because of the attacks or was part of the loss tied to the government's quick implication of ETA (a Basque separatist group) rather than Al Qaeda (for example, Gardeazabal 2010)?

³An exception to this is Indridason (2008) who examines how terror events affect cabinet formation.

2000), little of this research empirically tests whether external events affect the probability of removal before the mandated election. By demonstrating that government partisanship moderates the consequences of terrorism, we show that not all terror attacks destabilize governments. Rather, we must consider the influence of these events within the context of electoral considerations and voter perceptions.

The remainder of the paper is divided into the following sections. First, we place this research within the broader literature on the consequences of terrorism. We then develop our set of expectations about critical events and the collapse and continuation of parliamentary governments. In the third section, we describe the methods used to test these expectations. Next, we describe variables employed to analyze our theoretical expectations and describe some key research design choices. We then present the empirical findings from our analyses and conclude by discussing the broader implications of this project.

The Political Consequences of Terrorism

Terror events can have profound political consequences. However, much of the research on the political consequences of terrorism, such as electoral outcomes, focuses on single events or single countries (for example, Holmes and De Piñeres 2002; Berrebi and Klor 2006; Siqueira and Sandler 2007). For example, Montalvo (2007) argues that the Madrid train bombings had a substantial effect on the outcome of the 2004 Spanish general elections. Moreover, using Israeli opinion polls and approval statistics from Peru, respectively, Berrebi and Klor (2006) and Holmes and De Piñeres (2002) demonstrate that terrorism affects the voting behavior of the electorate. For the United States, Jacobson (2003) and Langer and Cohen (2005) point out that a majority of voters listed terrorism as a major concern when deciding their vote choice. Although these studies are limited to how single countries respond to terrorism, we believe that they inform our understanding of how voters react to terror events.

Recently, a variety of cross-national studies have suggested that terrorism profoundly affects individuals and governments. At the individual level, research indicates that terrorism has a dampening psychological effect. Frey, Luechinger and Stutzer (2009) provide evidence that terrorism negatively affects an individual's assessment of life satisfaction. While research at the individual level demonstrates that terrorism may have the desired effect, at the state level terrorism may lead to counter-productive outcomes for the terrorist. Terrorism may draw a society together and decrease the odds of a government acquiescing to terrorist demands. For example, Indridason (2008) demonstrates that in the face of terrorist incidents, surplus coalitions and coalitions with a low degree of ideological polarization are more likely to form. Chenoweth (2010) shows that terror events can produce a rally effect among political parties, leading to a more unified front across parties in opposition to terrorist demands. While these studies highlight how terrorism shapes voters' perceptions and even the formation of governments, they fail to explain varying degrees of government stability in the face of terror.

A notable exception to this is recent work by Gassebner, Jong-A-Pin and Mierau (2011). Using a sample of 150 democratic and nondemocratic countries across 34 years, they find that terrorism leads to cabinet turnover. Unfortunately, their unit of analysis is the country-year, which presents problems for inference given that we do not know when terror events occurred during the year and whether sudden changes in other factors like the economy affected cabinet duration.

While the single-country studies suggest that terrorism influences electoral outcomes, this research fails to address whether terror events can actually hasten the demise of parliamentary governments. And while the cross-national research demonstrates that terrorism has systematic consequences across states, it also

cannot explain why terrorism leads to some democratic governments failing prematurely while others remain in office long past what was expected. Below, we develop a theory of terror events and government failure in parliamentary democracies that highlights the key moderating effects of the government's political orientation.

Events, Leadership Traits, and Alternatives

Beginning with King et al. (1990), theories of government duration incorporated both the attributes and the events approaches. The attributes approach argues that the "qualities of government" present at its formation—attributes such as the number of government parties and majority status—determine its longevity (Dodd 1976; Warwick 1979). The events approach argues that governments start with a constant baseline hazard rate of failure, but external events or shocks hasten governments' downfall (Browne et al. 1986). Incorporating both theoretical frameworks has provided richer and more detailed models of government duration (King et al. 1990; Warwick 1994; Diermeier and Stevenson 1999).

These studies suggest that governments are accountable for policy outcomes. As a result, governments pursue policies that are consistent with how secure they are in office (Koch 2009). The types of policies pursued, and the outcomes of these policies, determine government duration. Warwick, in his examination of government survival and the economy, notes that, "Government survival is viewed as reciprocal rather than one way: governments affect economic conditions as well as being affected by them" (Warwick 1994: 884). Following this line of reasoning, we argue that just as the economy affects governments differently depending on their ability to maintain office, terror events also affect the ability of governments to maintain their hold on office. This is especially the case for casualty-inducing terror events (or costly terrorism) because they garner more publicity and generate loftier public expectations of government responses. As we will show, terrorist events can trigger a reassessment of the current governing arrangement with termination as a possible outcome.

In their analysis of government failure, Lupia and Strøm (1995) argue that governments can fail if they encounter critical events and do not act appropriately. Critical events are exogenous shocks that alter the bargaining space, or win sets, of parties in and out of government. Not all exogenous events are critical but some events, or series of events, are more critical than others. As Lupia and Strøm (1995: 652) note, events are "meaningful only if they affect the politicians' abilities to achieve their legislative and electoral goals." Events commonly thought of as critical are wars, economic downturns, and scandals. All these events affect the public's perception of government and have electoral, and subsequently policy, ramifications.

Laver and Shepsle (1998) also theorize about the influence of these events on government stability. Of the four types of events that Laver and Shepsle (1998) identify, terrorism has the potential to characterize the first three. First, the events may encourage parties to change their policy positions because of shifting constituency interests. Indridason (2008) argues that in the face of terrorist incidents, surplus coalitions and coalitions with a low degree of ideological polarization are more likely to form. That is, stronger governments with similar policy positions are more likely to form following terrorist attacks in order to meet the public's demands for a stronger or more unified government. Second, events can alter the political agenda, raise the profile of certain policies, and force parties to place these issues higher on the agenda (Laver and Shepsle 1998: 37). For example, Jacobson (2003) and Langer and Cohen (2005) point out that after 9/11, a majority of American voters listed terrorism as a major concern

when deciding their vote choice. Also, Kibris (2010) notes that terror fatalities heightened the importance of terrorism as an election issue in Turkey.

Third, plenty of evidence suggests that terrorism influences expectations about upcoming elections as voters punish parties for not fulfilling the basic task of protecting their constituents (Holmes and De Piñeres 2002; Berrebi and Klor 2006; Siqueira and Sandler 2007). Parties out of office may see their own electoral prospects improve because of the public's perception of policy failure by the government. For example, Chovanietz (2011) shows that in France, Germany, Spain, and other countries, repeated attacks promoted criticism of the current government's policies.⁴ Therefore, parties may be willing to alter the current government because the expected benefits outweigh the costs associated with dissolving government. Moreover, the public's disapproval with the government for the terror event may also decrease the opportunity costs of leaving the coalition. If the incumbent government is a coalition, some parties in government may fear an electoral backlash and defect from government. For them, the benefits of office no longer outweigh the costs of trying to form a new government. All told, the expectation is that deadly terror events, by acting as exogenous shocks, can lead to the destabilization of the incumbent government, therefore hastening government failure.

Hypothesis 1: *Incumbent governments will have shorter than expected durations when confronted with costly transnational terror attacks.*

At the same time, however, while the public may view terror events as public failures, they may look to the incumbent government to solve the problem rather than replacing it with a new government. Examples of this would be the boost in approval that George W. Bush received after the 9/11 attacks as well as the rise in Tony Blair's approval ratings after the 7/7 London bombings. While this could solely be attributed to the "rally round the flag" effect (Jordon and Page 1992; Lian and Oneal 1993; Mueller 1973), recent research suggests that, when faced with an international crisis like terror attacks, individuals project strong leadership traits on incumbents even if the leader does not possess those qualities. Specifically, Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister (2007) examine individuals' perceptions of George W. Bush in the context of the 2004 election. A simple vote-as-sanctioning device model would have predicted that President Bush and the Republican Party would have been punished for presiding in office during the attacks of 9/11, yet the President was re-elected in 2004 to continue his "War on Terror." Using experimental methods prior to the 2004 election, Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister (2007) demonstrate that individuals who perceive a "crisis" condition are more willing to overlook poor policy performance, are more likely to attribute leadership traits to individuals who may not possess them, and show a greater willingness to engage in sacrificial behavior on behalf of the incumbent leader. Therefore, according to this argument, a terror event may in fact extend the life of a government as individuals look to the incumbent to solve the crisis.

Hypothesis 2: *Incumbent governments will have longer than expected durations when confronted with costly transnational terror attacks.*

Finally, it may be that some incumbent governments persist in the face of terror attacks while others fail. Governments may not fail if viable, or better, alternative governments do not exist to solve the problem. Thus, it may be that some governments are replaced if the alternative appears better able to solve the

⁴However, the magnitude of the attacks in terms of casualties can also create a rally around the government.

problem while others may persist if the alternatives are no better than the existing government. For example, Clarke et al. (2009) suggests that one factor that allowed Blair to stay in office over the course of British military operations as well as the events of 7/7 was that few saw Michael Howard, the conservative party leader, as a better alternative to Blair.

We develop this hypothesis using the investment model of commitment (Rusbult 1980; Hoffman et al. 2009; Koch 2011). The investment model of commitment suggests that commitment to a relationship is a function of the relative value of the outcome of the relationship (both costs and benefits), the quality of the available alternatives to the current relationship, and the magnitude of the investment in the relationship. Koch (2011) uses the investment model to highlight why incumbent governments may not lose at the polls in the face of rising casualties during a conflict. He argues that the decision to remove the incumbent is driven by partisan leanings (the relative value of the incumbent government), the alternatives to the existing government, and the investments made (for example, casualties). Crucial to this story is whether alternative governments are more likely to solve the problem than the incumbent government. If a left-leaning government is in office at the time of attack, will it be seen as more competent at solving the problem than a potential right-leaning government? What if the opposite situation exists?

We argue that left-leaning governments are more likely to fall in the aftermath of a deadly transnational terror attack than right-leaning governments.⁵ We base this argument on the growing body of evidence that right-oriented governments are perceived as more hawkish than left-oriented governments, and thus better able to defend the homeland. For example, research suggests that right-oriented governments are more likely to use force and fight longer than are more leftist governments (Palmer, London and Regan 2004; Foster and Palmer 2006; Koch and Sullivan 2010). Additional research suggests that parties with conservative political ideologies favor a strong or expanded military presence at home while parties of the left stress a reduced military presence (Eichenberg 1989; Budge and Hofferbert 1990; Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge 1994). Survey evidence of voters' perceptions also confirms this distinction. Evidence tying voters' evaluations to parties indicates that voters connect the issue of national security to one party over another; in the American context, Democrats appear as more competent on dealing with unemployment while Republicans appear as more competent on national defense (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994). In the Israeli context, Shamir and Arian (1999) found that individuals who they classified as hawks were much more likely to vote for Likud over Labor.

Our expectation is that when faced with a terror attack, right-oriented governments are less likely to be replaced as both parties and voters weigh the alternative governments that might form next. Conversely, left-oriented governments are more likely to fall early as voters express preferences for more hawkish polices to protect the homeland and end the transnational attacks.

Hypothesis 3: *Left-oriented governments will experience a greater risk of government termination when confronted with costly transnational terror events than right-oriented governments.*

⁵One possibility is that terrorism by different ideologically motivated groups may affect which governments are targeted as well as their ability to remain in office. As far as we know, no evidence suggests that, for example, extreme left terror groups only target right-wing governments or *vice versa*, which could potentially create some kind of selection bias. The Red Brigade in Italy provides a good example of why we think the ideological makeup the terror groups is not related to the governments attacked. Though the Red Brigade is an extreme left terror group, it directed much of its terror activities on the center-left coalition between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists. We also are unsure about any evidence that suggests that right and left terror groups use differing tactics or that there is systematic variation in the amounts of violence that these groups use.

Data and Methods

To test our hypotheses, we assemble a data set of government duration for 18 advanced parliamentary democracies⁶ from the late-1960s through 2003 with the government-month as the unit of analysis.⁷ The start dates for each country reflect either the availability of terrorism data (1968 for ITERATE, described below), the first democratic election (Greece, Portugal, and Spain), or the availability of economic data (Germany). The governments are coded from Woldendorp, Keman and Budge (2000). However, because the last government in their data ends in the late-1990s, we extend the data using the annual reports of the *European Journal of Political Research* and *Keesing's World Archives* to collect the necessary government data (that is, composition, beginning and ending dates, reason for termination).⁸

The 18 countries under investigation were chosen for the following reasons. First, we exclude presidential systems (such as Switzerland and the United States) from the analysis because of the fixed timing of elections and the inability of the opposition to “remove” the existing government except under extreme circumstances, such as impeachment. Second, the countries under investigation have institutionalized mechanisms of accountability between the electorate, political parties, and the government, which stands in contrast to developing democracies that are fraught with varying mechanisms of accountability and party differences that are often orthogonal to economic or social dimensions (Stokes 1999; Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez-Liñán 2001). This sample provides ample variance in government strength and duration yet focuses on those advanced parliamentary democracies that experience the opportunity for transnational terrorism to affect duration.⁹

Our dependent variable is the failure of government, or more specifically how long it took for a government to fail. Parliamentary governments can fail for many reasons, including elections (either early or at the end of the election cycle), replacement of the Prime Minister, dissension within government, or lack of parliamentary support (Woldendorp et al. 2000: 10). There are also governments that end for reasons beyond the scope of our theory. We account for these failures by employing the censoring practice of Diermeier and Stevenson (2000: 636). We censor those governments that fall for “technical” reasons or reach the end of the constitutional inter-election period (CIEP).¹⁰ Of the 7550 government-month observations in the data set, 264 are coded as government failure.¹¹ We

⁶The sample countries (and start dates) are as follows: Australia (1968m4), Austria (1968m4), Belgium (1968m4), Canada (1968m4), Denmark (1968m4), France (1968m4), Germany (1970m1), Great Britain (1968m4), Greece (1975m2), Ireland (1968m4), Israel (1968m4), Italy (1968m4), Japan (1968m4), the Netherlands (1968m4), Norway (1968m4), Portugal (1976m10), Spain (1977m10), and Sweden (1968m4).

⁷We conduct our analysis with Stata 11.0 (StataCorp, College Station, TX, USA), where we “stset” the data based on a binary termination variable (described later) with variables determining when governments become at risk and the exact days that they fail. Because our unit of analysis is the government-month, the date that the government becomes at risk is the start of the month that the government takes office. The failure date is the day of that government’s termination. Multiple governments can be in the same month, though no government tenures overlap because of the precision of the variables. Since we code the exact month that termination occurs, we can utilize continuous-time duration models.

⁸Though our sample is only through 2003, updated government data are available through 2009 on the corresponding author’s personal website. Another potential source (Muller and Strøm 2000) is restricted to only Western European nations, so it is not ideal for the broader sample in this project.

⁹Since we analyze the political consequences of terrorism, we exclude from the sample those advanced parliamentary democracies that do not experience a terror event in the sample time period (Iceland, Luxembourg, and New Zealand). The countries in the sample therefore change as we modify the source of the terrorism data.

¹⁰We censor all cases where an election occurs with less than three months left in the CIEP. Moreover, we censor three types of termination: death of the Prime Minister, intervention by Head of State, and those terminations in which their causes are unknown (Woldendorp et al. 2000).

¹¹There are 78 caretaker government observations excluded and 47 terminations that are censored due to technical reasons.

use a Weibull duration model to estimate the model. King et al. (1990) demonstrates that duration models effectively model the underlying baseline risk (events) as well as the covariates that change that risk (attributes). Our theoretical expectation is that the underlying risk of a government's removal increases the longer that it is in office. This occurs for a number of reasons, most notably because there are constitutional limits on the length of the electoral cycle. Moreover, other scholars have demonstrated support for a monotonically increasing hazard rate (Warwick 1994).¹²

Our three hypotheses require us to measure both terrorism and government partisanship. To create a measure of terrorism, we draw on Enders and Sandler's (2000: 309) definition of terrorism. They define it as the premeditated or threatened use of extra-normal violence or force to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through the intimidation of a large audience. Following this definition, we include only transnational terrorist incidents, or those that, in a given country, involved victims, perpetrators, targets, or institutions of another country. Overall, our focus is on terrorist attacks initiated by foreign terrorists against some domestic target or committed by domestic terrorists against some foreign target (Li and Schaub 2004; Li 2005).¹³

We create two variables to measure terror activities. The first is a 3-month moving average of the number of all such terrorist incidents in a country in a given month. To tally the number of terrorist incidents in a country, we follow the lead of Li and Schaub (2004) by coding the terrorist event location at its beginning (that is, country of origin).¹⁴ We call this variable *Number of Incidents*. The second variable is also a 3-month moving average of all deaths (including members of the terrorist group, government officials, and civilians) due to terrorist events. We call this variable *Total Killed*. Our hypotheses focus on casualties as important in influencing the ability of government to retain office. However, we also examine the number of terror incidents so that we can control for the occurrence of terrorism in that state. These measures are from the ITERATE data set (Mickolus 1982; Mickolus, Sandler, Murdock and Fleming 1989, 1993, 2002) and are available for 1968–2003.¹⁵

We utilize a 3-month moving average for two theoretical reasons. One is that rather than just using a single lagged variable, it allows time for the terror event

¹²Empirically, the log-likelihood, Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) suggest that a Weibull model is a better fit of the data than a Cox model. In a set of robustness checks available by request, we describe a series of robustness checks that estimates a Cox regression model, which relaxes the assumption of a specific distribution for the underlying hazard of government termination. The Cox regression model echoes our finding that left governments are more vulnerable to removal following costly terrorism.

¹³We focus on transnational terrorism for the following reasons. First, we are interested in how critical events that have their roots outside the borders of a country affect a country's domestic politics. Transnational terrorism is likely to become a national security issue while domestic terrorism is more likely to fall under the purview of the state police apparatus (Cote, Lynn-Jones and Miller 2004). Second, work by Huddy, Feldman, Capelos, and Provost (2002) demonstrates that at the individual level, personal threat is less important than national security threat in shaping individuals' preferences about terrorism and government responses. Also, we expect that transnational terrorism is likely to magnify the psychological aspects of fear inducement created by terrorism, more so than most domestic terrorism (see Breckenridge and Zimbardo 2007). Finally, identifying domestic terror attacks can be problematic at times (Schmid and Jongman 1988). While an event like the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma was clearly a terror attack, delineating between such as events as hate crimes versus terror attacks becomes more difficult.

¹⁴Differences in starting and ending locations typically result from hijackings, in which a terrorist group hijacks a plane or other vehicle in state A and uses said vehicle to travel to state B" (Li and Schaub 2004: 240). As Neumayer and Plumper (2011) recently suggest, terror groups want to gain a significant political influence on their country of origin, which makes analyzing the country of origin appropriate. Furthermore, the number of terrorist incidents that have different start and end locations is only 352 out of 5427 incidents so, "their effect on the estimation results is likely to be small" (Li and Schaub 2004: 240).

¹⁵We also conduct robustness checks with the Global Terrorism Database (LaFree and Dugan 2007) and the TWEED data set (Engene 2007). As we discuss in the Results section, these models provide the same substantive conclusions as those estimated on the ITERATE data.

to influence the behavior of parties, yet not so much time that we falsely attribute an unrelated government termination to a terror event. Two, terrorism rarely occurs in single isolated incidents. Instead, terrorism often occurs in waves or campaigns. Related is a methodological issue. Many studies that analyze terrorism use moving average models of various types. Since our dependent variable is government duration and not the occurrence of terrorism, we are somewhat limited in the ability to incorporate this process. However, we think that the moving average approach captures this dynamic.¹⁶

Because our third hypothesis argues that partisanship conditions the effect of terrorism on government survival, we create a measure called *Government Partisanship*, which is the average of left–right scores (“rile” variable) of the parties in government as determined by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) (Klingemann et al. 2006),¹⁷ weighted by the percentage of seat shares in government. Theoretically, the CMP scale runs from –100 to 100 with negative numbers indicating a more leftist political orientation and positive numbers indicating a rightward political orientation. Empirically, the range of government orientation in the sample is –54.3 to 48.5 with a median value of –2.97. To test whether government partisanship conditions the effects of costly terrorism on government duration, we multiply *Total Killed* with *Government Partisanship*.

Parliamentary Government Durability

Because a variety of characteristics may determine when a government fails, it is important to build a model of government durability that reflects these characteristics. The literature on durability highlights that two of the most important characteristics that predict government survival are the size of government and its cohesion. Our first measure, *Majority Governments*, accounts for government size. This variable is coded one if there is a single-party majority, minimum-winning coalition, or surplus coalition (Woldendorp, Keman and Budge 2000). Majority governments usually have longer durations than minority governments, given that they are less vulnerable to removal via no-confidence motions. We exclude caretaker governments from the analysis because of their shortened tenures and their limited autonomy in policymaking.

We also account for the cohesiveness of governments. Warwick (1994) contends that the ideological makeup and complexity of government are perhaps the most important causes contributing to government duration. Dodd (1976:58) argues similarly, “the cleavage system is thus a major source of the quest for power and, at the same time, a major constraint on the behavior that is possible in the quest.” To measure the government’s ideological complexity and thus its possibility of defection, we produce a count variable of the *Number of Government Parties*.

Beyond characteristics that emerge from the government formation process—size and cohesion—we also control for several factors that previous research has identified as causes of (in) stability. First, we include a variable measuring the *Constitutional Inter-Election Period* (CIEP), which measures the percentage of time

¹⁶As another robustness check, we estimate our models using a 6-month moving average, which provides more time for the terror event to influence domestic politics. At the same time, this may allow other issues to occupy higher places on the policy agenda, which may diminish the impacts of terrorism. These robustness checks support our hypothesis that the effects of terrorism on government duration are conditional on partisanship. These results are available upon request.

¹⁷While some have questioned whether the manifestos data can accurately measure partisanship (Harmel, Janda and Tan 1995; Laver and Garry 2000), there is evidence to suggest that the data still provide reasonable estimations of party positions (Kim and Fording 1998; Gabel and Huber 2000). Ultimately, the CMP is the most appropriate data set for our purposes given that it is the only time series data set on ideological positions for our sample countries for the time under examination.

left before the next constitutionally mandated election. This variable ranges from 100 to 0, where a value of 100 occurs immediately after the election and represents 100% of the election cycle remaining.¹⁸ The effects of the election cycle on duration may depend on whether the government has a majority. Minority governments will be more vulnerable early in the election cycle (with higher values of *CIEP*) because it is not yet apparent whether the support from non-governing parties is reliable. We create an interaction variable, *Majority*CIEP*, to test this conditional expectation. We also coded whether a vote of *Investiture* is required for government formation (coded one, if required) (Strøm, Muller and Bergman 2003). We expect that governments that face a formal vote on investiture are likely to last longer than those that do not. Finally, we control for the economic situation within a given country with the *Real GDP Per Capita* from the Penn World Tables, Version 6.2 (Heston, Summers and Aten 2006), with the expectation that governments in countries with stronger economic performance will remain in office longer.

Results

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are competing hypotheses while hypothesis 3 is conditional. We present the results of all four Weibull regression models in Figure 1.

For presentation purposes, we exclude the country-specific fixed effects and the constant from Figure 1 (the full set of results is available upon request).¹⁹ Since Model 1 tests the first two hypotheses, it is an additive specification of the two terrorism variables, the partisanship measure, and all the control variables. Neither of the terror variables is significant at conventional levels of statistical significance, failing to support either Hypothesis 1 or 2.²⁰ At first, this would seem to indicate that terrorism has no influence on government stability in advanced parliamentary democracies, though Hypothesis 3 explains this null finding due to a conditional effect that is masked by an omitted variable.

Among the control variables accounting for government failure, *CIEP*, the interaction between *CIEP* and *Majority* as well as *Real GDP Per Capita* are all significant and in the expected direction. For example, as time until the next mandated election becomes closer, minority governments are more likely to fail, while in comparison majority governments generally are more stable. In addition, as *Real GDP Per Capita* increases, governments are more likely to retain office.

In Model 2, we test the third hypothesis that government partisanship conditions whether governments survive or fail when confronted with terrorism. We hypothesized that terrorism threatens left-wing governments more because their perceived issue competencies are not in national security. This means that terror events will threaten their ability to maintain office as other potential governments become alternatives that are more attractive. At the same time, right-wing governments, because of their perceived competence in the issue of national security, will remain in office because the alternatives—left-oriented governments—are likely to be more dovish, while the public is likely clamoring for more hawkish policies. We test this hypothesis by multiplying our measure of a critical event, *Total Killed*, with *Partisanship*. By doing so, we can determine

¹⁸This variable standardizes the electoral cycle, so that we can effectively compare across countries with different lengths of the electoral cycle (for example, Australia's 3-year election cycle to France's 5-year election cycle).

¹⁹As an alternative to fixed effects, we conduct a series of robustness checks (results available upon request) to take into account the institutional variations in the sample countries with respect to the ease of passing a no-confidence motion (De Winter 1995) as well as the powers of parliamentary dissolution (for example, Strøm and Swindle 2002; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009).

²⁰Given that the correlation coefficient of the two terrorism variables in our sample is only 0.15 (p -value < .001), we can be reasonably confident that the lack of statistical significance in the two terrorism variables suggests a lack of an additive effect rather than a methodological concern such as high multicollinearity.

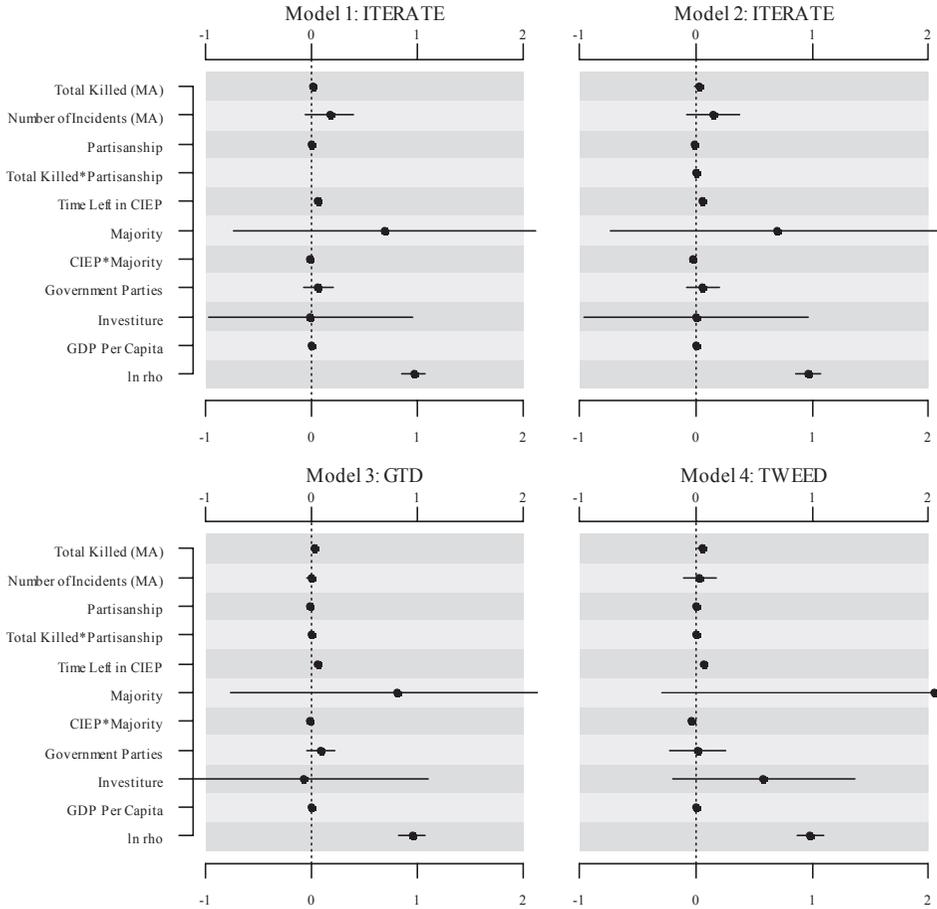


FIG. 1. Weibull Regression Results of the Interactive Relationship between Terrorism, Partisanship, and Government Duration

whether having costly terrorism, controlling for the number of incidents, influences governments of different ideologies in different ways (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006).

In Model 2, *Total Killed* is positive and significant, while *Partisanship* is negative and significant. Furthermore, the interaction is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that terrorism hastens left-leaning government failure but staves off government failure for more right-leaning governments. We present Figure 2 to gauge a better understanding of the substantive meanings of these results.

Figure 2 presents the marginal effects of *Total Killed* on government stability across *Partisanship* for all three interactive models (Models 2–4). For example, the figure shows that the marginal effect for *Total Killed* in Model 2 is statistically significant and positive for more left-oriented governments (when *Partisanship* = -30). One additional terror casualty increases the hazard rate by 8.6% for left-wing governments.²¹ This effect decreases in substantive significance (and becomes statistically insignificant at the 95% confidence level) as the government's partisanship shifts to the right. For right-wing parties (when *Partisanship* = 30), an additional terror casualty actually decreases the hazard rate by

²¹This is calculated by changing the coefficient into a hazard ratio: $\exp(0.08) = 1.105$.

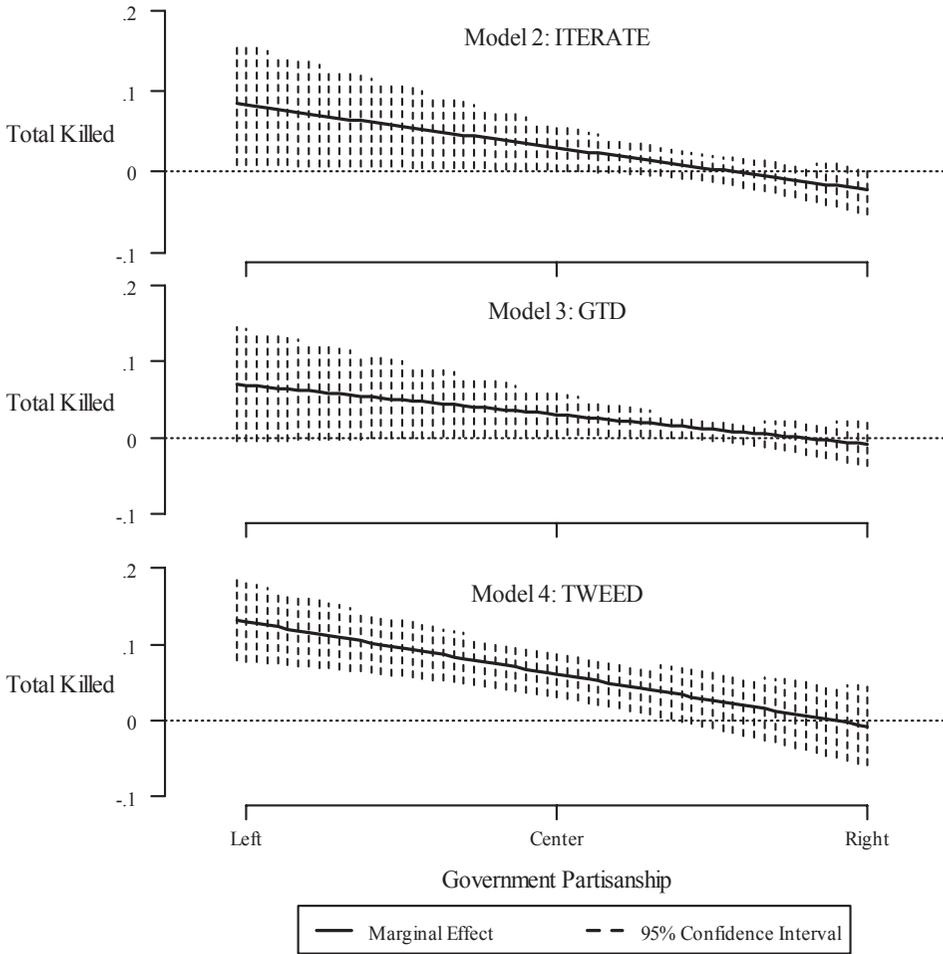


FIG. 2. Marginal Effect of Terrorism Casualties on the Risk of Government Termination across the Range of Government Partisanship

2.3%, but this is not statistically distinguishable from zero. While terrorism has a statistically significant effect on more left-oriented parties, it has no discernible effect on right-oriented parties. Indeed, since the confidence intervals do not overlap, we can infer that casualties from terrorism have a statistically more damaging influence on left-wing governments’ survival than right-wing governments providing empirical support for Hypothesis 3.

Furthermore, to illustrate the effects of costly terror on governments of varying strength, we present Figure 3. Figure 3 graphically displays the effects of costly terrorism on the difference in predicted survival rates of termination for right governments (top two lines) versus left governments (bottom two lines).²² This figure shows how governments of different ideologies respond to costly terrorism. First, consider the survival rates for right governments. Right-oriented

²²For the “Under Attack” scenario, the moving average for casualties is held constant at five. The “Left” government has a *Partisanship* value at the fifth percentile while the “Right” government is held at the 95th percentile. The interaction is simply a product of the moving average for casualties and the value of partisanship for that scenario. The rest of the unspecified variables are held at their means (for the continuous variables) or their modes (for binary variables).

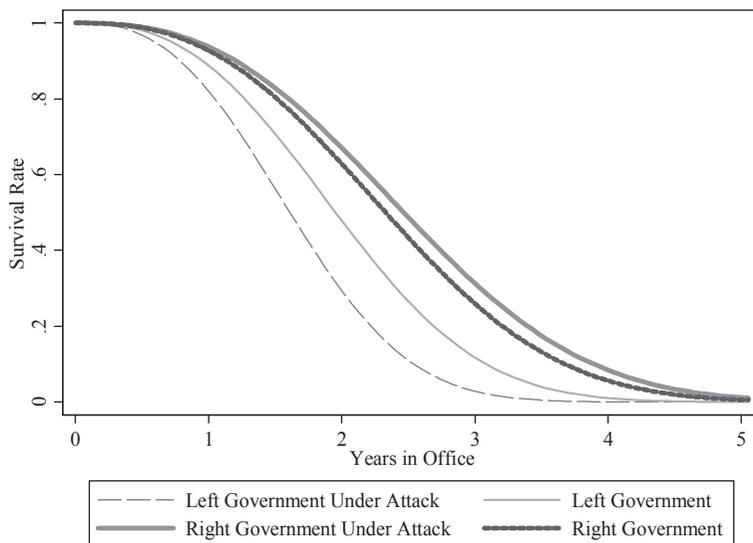


FIG. 3. The Effects of Costly Terrorism on the Hazard Rates of Termination for Left and Right Governments

governments that experience costly terrorism actually have *higher* survival rates than the baseline right governments. Left-oriented governments, on the other hand, are much more vulnerable to removal following costly terror events. The difference in survival rates for governments of the left is about 0.07 for a terror event occurring at year one of its tenure and is at its maximum at year two (a difference of 0.19). This is a substantively significant change over the course of a government's tenure since this is the hazard of termination *in any given month*. When one considers the effects of terrorism on the cumulative hazard—the risk of termination over an entire year—terrorism appears much more dangerous for left governments than right governments. It is also illuminating to look at the difference in survival rates for right and left governments experiencing costly terrorism. While there is little difference early in their tenure (at year = 0), the difference is quite substantial two years into office. More substantively, having a right government in office rather than a left government decreases the hazard of government failure by 0.39. Thus, any analysis of the domestic consequences of terrorism must take into account the conditioning effects of government partisanship.

Figure 4 illustrates the substantive effects of the interactions between *CIEP* and *Majority* for Models 1–4. The marginal effect of *CIEP* (that is, being farther away from the next mandated election) is positive and statistically significant for both minority governments (that is, when *Majority* = 0) and majority governments (that is, when *Majority* = 1). The marginal effect of *CIEP* is higher for minority governments, which means that minority governments are at the highest risk of removal immediately following an election, but become more stable as time goes on. Since the marginal effect for majority governments is smaller, it suggests that the stability of majority governments is not as dependent on the stage of the electoral cycle.

Robustness

While some research suggests that there are very few distinctions between domestic and transnational terrorism (for example, Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle

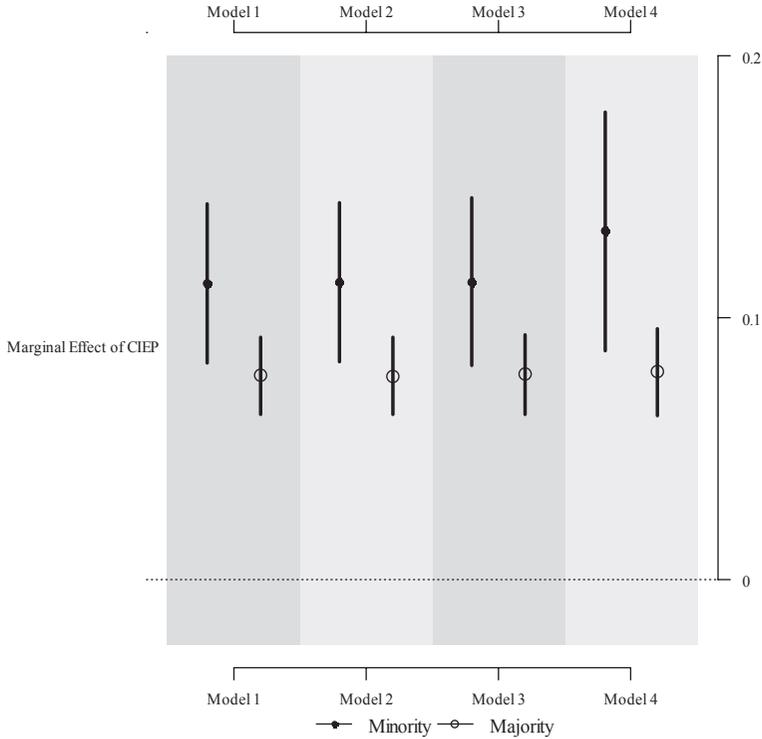


FIG. 4. Marginal Effect of Time Left in Constitutional Inter-Election Period (CIEP) on the Risk of Government Termination across Majority Support in Parliament (Models 1–4)

2009), other research suggests that there are fundamental differences. For example, in their study of welfare policy and terrorism, Krieger and Meierrieks (2010) find that while domestic terrorism responds to shifts in a state's welfare policies, transnational terrorism does not. Additionally, Enders, Sandler and Gaibulloev (2011) note in their comparisons of transnational and domestic terrorism that the consequences of each are different in how they affect factors such as GDP growth and tourism. This suggests that there are fundamental differences between the two. Others suggest that there are different grievances as well. For example, evidence suggests that trade-dependent relationships can increase transnational terrorism (Koch and Cranmer 2007). This raises some concerns about whether the ITERATE data are the most appropriate measure of terrorism and also raises questions about the transportability of our theoretical expectations to other types of terrorism.

To test whether differences exist between different types of terrorism and our expectations, we conduct additional empirical analyses. By doing this, we hope to ensure the robustness of our key finding that partisanship conditions the relationship between terrorism and government duration as well as see if our theoretical expectations may transcend our initial expectations. The first check is to determine whether our key finding is robust to our choice of terrorism data (ITERATE). Therefore, in Model 3 of Figure 1, we replicate Model 2 using the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) measure of terrorist events (LaFree and Dugan 2007). And although our concern is with transnational terrorism and national security, we perform an additional robustness check (Model 4) in Figure 1 by replicating Model 2 using the TWEED data (Engene 2007), which focuses solely on domestic terror events. While our hypotheses only specify

transnational terrorism, a similar finding with different data sources would indicate greater generalizability of our theory. For both types of terrorism, the damaging effects of terrorism are mitigated as the government shifts farther to the right, to the point where right-wing governments are unaffected, in terms of duration, by costly terrorism. There is also some evidence to suggest that the effects of domestic terrorism are even more contingent on partisanship than international terrorism, as the slope of the marginal effect is steeper and the confidence intervals are more narrow for Model 3 (TWEED) compared with Model 1 (ITERATE). Thus, we have considerable evidence in favor of Hypothesis 3, even in the face of different samples, varying time periods, and conceptualizations of terrorism.

Discussion

The results suggest that political outcomes from institutional arrangements and political contests make some governments more sensitive to the costs of transnational violence than others. Partisanship and political stability condition the effects of terror attacks on government duration. For example, the results imply that governments of the left are more likely to fail after an attack than governments of the right. This is consistent with how parties and voters view issue competency and the likely policies of alternative governments. An attack on a left government may attract criticism from the parties on the right about weakness in national security and may create an impetus to put a more hawkish government in power. This is consistent with recent work by Berrebi and Klor (2008) on electoral politics and terrorism in Israel. However, unlike previous single-country studies, our systematic, cross-national empirical examination suggests that similar patterns exist across countries and over time. The results support our theory that left-oriented governments are removed not only because they are seen as less competent in national security but right-oriented governments appear become more attractive alternatives.

Additionally, there may be policy consequences that emerge from the failures of left-oriented governments and the continuation of right-oriented governments following costly terrorism. For example, we would expect that right-oriented governments might be able to increase security and defense budgets and at the same time perhaps limit or infringe upon the civil rights in the name of security. Indeed, the general population may tolerate these infringements as well as crack-downs of suspected terror groups and individuals. This is especially meaningful as left-oriented parties may struggle to regain the reins of government as long as the threats of terrorism, real or perceived, persist. We think that further research should examine these possibilities.

Our results also have implications for terrorists and terror strategies. If terrorists are rational and goal-oriented and government partisanship conditions the effect of terrorism on government duration, then terrorists may need to rethink their strategies when selecting targets. For terrorists, attacking a secure government to achieve some policy goal may not be fruitful. It may not increase the risk of that government failing, which implies that the government does not have to give in or even negotiate with the terrorists to maintain stability. This is consistent with Koch and Cranmer's (2007) finding that terrorists target right-oriented governments less frequently than left-oriented governments.

It also highlights that there may be strategic consequences for attacking left-oriented governments. Terrorists must use proportional means of violence when attacking a democratic government if their goal is to obtain some political objective. If they use too much violence, then they may cause the downfall of an existing government and have it replaced by either a more hawkish government or at least a more unified government. This implication is consistent with Indridason's

(2008) results that government coalitions are more likely to be surplus coalitions and more likely to have a low degree of ideological polarization in periods following terrorist activity.

Finally, our results raise new questions for the peace through insecurity literature (Chiozza and Goemans 2003; Koch 2009). This research suggests that institutional arrangements that make governments more secure (that is, increased duration in office makes replacement less likely) also make international conflict more likely. Our results suggest that terror events do not affect potentially more secure governments (that is, right-oriented) and only lead to the downfall of more insecure governments (that is, left-oriented). This raises several questions for national security. While politically secure governments may be less vulnerable to attack and perhaps less likely to be attacked, it also makes them more inclined to use force abroad to address the transnational problem that may in fact erode security at home. Future research should focus on this question of how the political vulnerability of governments affects both the use of force abroad and the use of force by nonstate actors.

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