

Democracy and Security Dialogue Working Paper Series

Democracy and Terrorism

By Ted Piccone¹

1 Introduction

As a contribution to the Community of Democracies' Democracy and Security Dialogue, Brookings Institution researchers studied how indicators of democracy in each country correlated with their levels of terrorism between 1989 and 2014. The purpose of this working paper is to provide a bivariate analysis of the relationship between democracy and deadly terrorism. We organize countries into groups based on their "level of democracy" between 1989 and 2014, and then analyze the levels of deadly terrorism experienced by each of those groups. The results from these descriptive statistics illustrate the correlation of levels of democracy and terrorism in recent decades. Without controlling for other variables, we found that countries with stronger indicators of democracy had, on average, experienced lower rates of terrorism, and that countries with mixed or lower levels of democracy experienced higher rates of terrorism.

This paper is organized as follows. First, we discuss the two variables of interest: democracy, based on three databases, and terrorism (transnational and total). Second, we perform two different kinds of analysis on these measures: mean analysis and data inspection. Finally, we discuss our results before detailing in a supplementary section how we group countries into four democracy levels before examining their average terror rates.

2 Variables of Interest

2.1 Terrorism

We first consider our dependent variable, terrorism, and its different measures. The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) defines a terrorist attack as "*the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.*" There are two aspects of terrorism that we will consider: its *severity* and its *frequency*. To measure severity, we look at the average number of deaths resulting from these attacks per 100,000 people in the country's population. To measure

¹ This working paper was prepared with major research contributions by Julian Duggan, and research support by Christopher Meserole and Matthew Koo.

frequency, we look at the average number of deadly terrorist attacks carried out each year per 100,000 people in the population. Non-deadly attacks are excluded from our calculations.

Variable	Terrorism Scope	Temporal Scope	Notable Exceptions
ITERATE Casualty Rate	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	Terrorist attacker deaths excluded
ITERATE Attack Rate	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	Non-deadly attacks excluded
GTD-Transnational Casualty Rate	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	Terrorist attacker deaths excluded
GTD-Transnational Attack Rate	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	Non-deadly attacks excluded
RDWTI Casualty Rate	Domestic and Transnational	Average from 1998 to 2008	Military deaths excluded; Terrorist attacker deaths excluded
RDWTI Attack Rate	Domestic and Transnational	Average from 1998 to 2008	Non-deadly attacks excluded
GTD-Total Casualty Rate	Domestic and Transnational	Average from 1998 to 2008	Military deaths excluded; Terrorist attacker deaths excluded
GTD-Total Attack Rate	Domestic and Transnational	Average from 1998 to 2008	Non-deadly attacks excluded

For each country, we track four indicators: the average number of deaths resulting from transnational terrorist attacks per 100,000 people per year, the average number of deadly transnational terrorist attacks per 100,000 people per year, the average number of deaths resulting from all terrorist attacks per 100,000 people per year, and the average number of all deadly terrorist attacks per 100,000 people per year. Each of these four variables is measured twice using two different terrorism databases. For transnational terror rates, we use the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) project and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). For total terror, we use the Rand Database of Worldwide Terrorist Incidents (RDWTI) and the GTD.² Thus, we end up with eight different measures to track levels of terrorism in a country.

We are also interested in two types of terrorism: transnational terrorism and “total” terrorism. This “total” category includes both domestic and transnational attacks, and we analyze it instead of analyzing just domestic terrorism because of limitations in data availability. Some authors estimate that domestic attacks account for upwards of 90 percent of all terror attacks that occur, so this class of terrorism remains of great interest to us.³ Our analyses of transnational terrorism and total terrorism are analogous but separate, and it is important to keep in mind that they draw data from different time periods due to collection limitations. The transnational terror data covers the longer timeframe from 1989 to 2014, and the total terror data covers the decade from 1998 to 2008.

² Though a single database, the GTD measures transnational and total terrorism separately.

³ James A. Piazza, “A Supply-Side View of Suicide Terrorism: A Cross-National Study,” *Journal of Politics* 70 (2008):28-39. In our analysis, the GTD reports that about 83% of terrorist attacks are domestic/not transnational.

2.2 Democracy

Turning to our independent variable, democracy, we distinguish between democracies and nondemocracies in our sample. We consult three databases: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project, Freedom House, and Polity IV. Countries that fall above a particular democracy level in each database are called democracies in the context of that database, with all of the countries below the threshold being called nondemocracies in that same context. Most countries fall in the same categories across all three databases but there are some anomalies.⁴ To probe if our results carry across multiple ways of measuring democracy, every country has a V-Dem, Freedom House, and Polity IV level of democracy.

Variable	Terrorism Scope	Temporal Scope	Scale	Democracy vs. Nondemocracy	Source
V-Dem Level-Transnational	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	0 to 8	4 and above—Democracy Below 4—Nondemocracy	V-Dem
Freedom House Level-Transnational	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	1 to 7	4 and above—Democracy Below 4—Nondemocracy	Freedom House's Civil Liberties and Political Rights scores (inverted)
Polity Level-Transnational	Transnational	Average from 1989 to 2014	-10 to 10, by 2's	6 and above—Democracy Below 6—Nondemocracy	Polity's Polity Score
V-Dem Level-Total	Total (Domestic + Transnational)	Average from 1998 to 2008	0 to 8	4 and above—Democracy Below 4—Nondemocracy	V-Dem
Freedom House Level- Total	Total (Domestic + Transnational)	Average from 1998 to 2008	1 to 7	4 and above—Democracy Below 4—Nondemocracy	Freedom House's Civil Liberties and Political Rights scores (inverted)
Polity Level-Total	Total (Domestic + Transnational)	Average from 1998 to 2008	-10 to 10, by 2's	6 and above—Democracy Below 6—Nondemocracy	Polity's Polity Score

3 Empirical Strategy

3.1 Mean Analysis

In mean analysis, we will look for general ups and downs in the levels of terrorist activity across democracy levels. Notwithstanding its limits, this should allow us to make some preliminary observations about how terrorist activity is distributed across different political systems. The first

⁴ For example, V-Dem classifies Guatemala as a nondemocracy because its average score in the index between 1989 and 2014 falls below the necessary threshold, but both Freedom House and Polity classify Guatemala as a democracy because its average score in these indices is above their established thresholds. Hence we could call Guatemala a “V-Dem nondemocracy,” a “Freedom House democracy,” and a “Polity democracy.”

step in our analysis is to group all 158 eligible⁵ countries into “democracy levels” based on their average scores between 1989 and 2014. Each level contains countries that have similar average scores: the higher the democracy level, the better the average quality of a country’s democracy. It bears mention that the peak observed in level six of each graph is due to Israel, whose terror rates are sometimes over 150 times greater than the next closest country in its democracy level. The following analysis centers on both the severity and the frequency of attacks.

3.1.1 Severity of Transnational Terrorist Attacks

In this section, we look at the severity of terrorism. The tables below show the average number of people killed per 100,000 people per year within democracies and nondemocracies, as defined by each of the three democracy databases. The death rates are reported both by the GTD and by ITERATE. From 1989-2014, the rate of transnational terrorism fatalities *per capita* averaged between 37.1% to 79.5% higher for nondemocracies compared to democracies, depending upon the databases used to measure transnational terror-caused deaths and democracy.

Transnational Casualty Tables

Average Number Killed by Transnational Terrorism Per 100,000 Per Year (1989-2014)

By V-Dem Group	GTD	ITERATE
Nondemocracy	0.0500	0.0193
Democracy	0.0176	0.0081

By Freedom House Group	GTD	ITERATE
Nondemocracy	0.0624	0.0219
Democracy	0.0147	0.0084

By Polity Group	GTD	ITERATE
Nondemocracy	0.0486	0.0170
Democracy	0.0188	0.0107

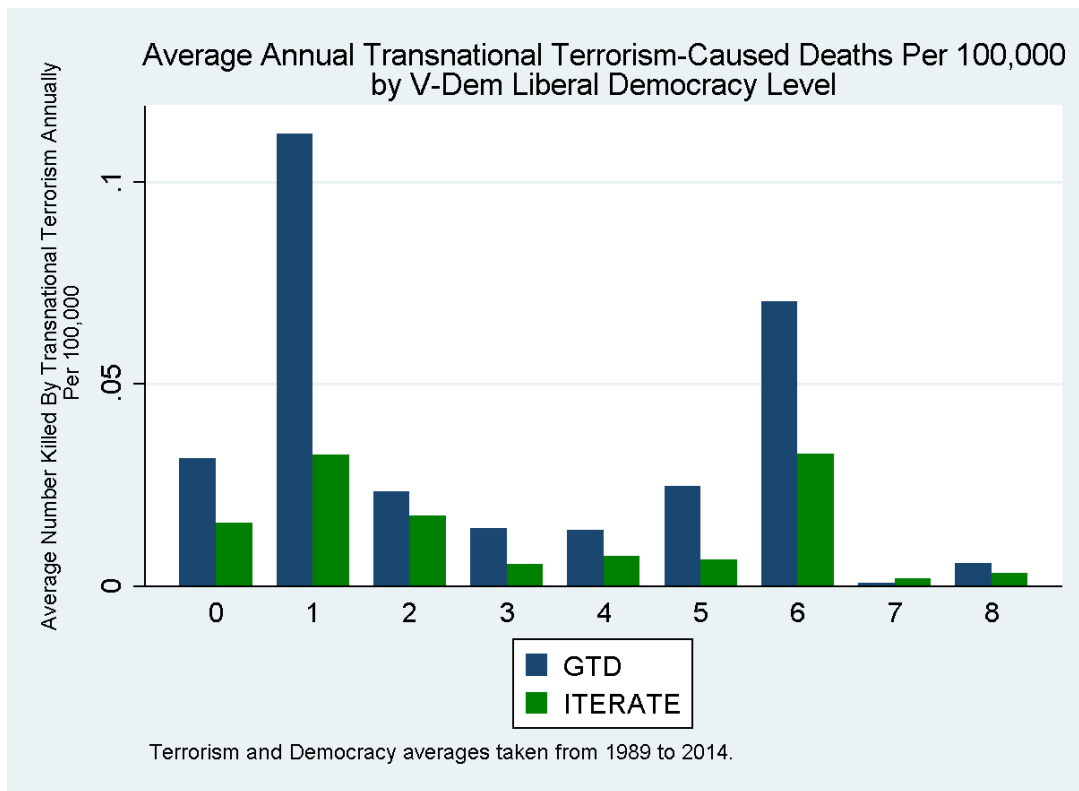
The casualty graphs below show the average number of people killed by transnational terrorism per 100,000 people per year across all democracy levels. In each graph, a greater democracy level number signals that the countries in that level have, on average, a higher quality of democracy.⁶ The blue bars represent the average number killed according to the GTD while the green bars represent the average number killed according to ITERATE.

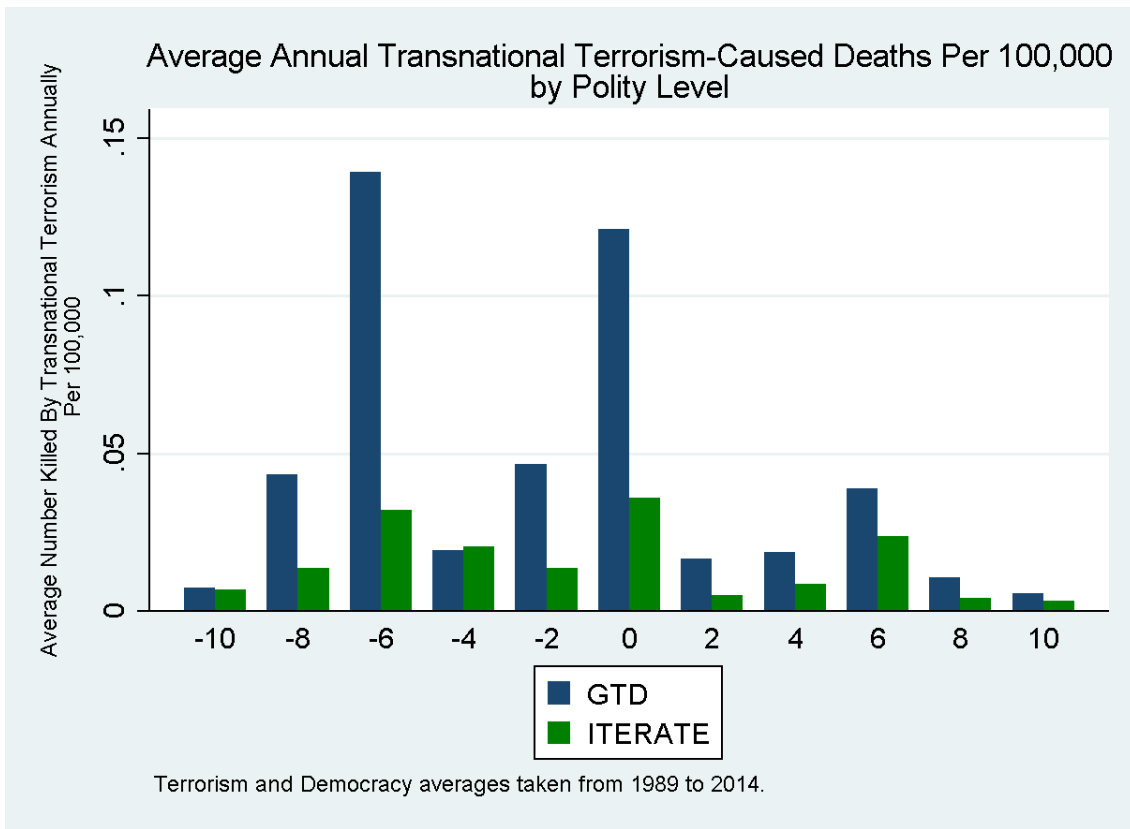
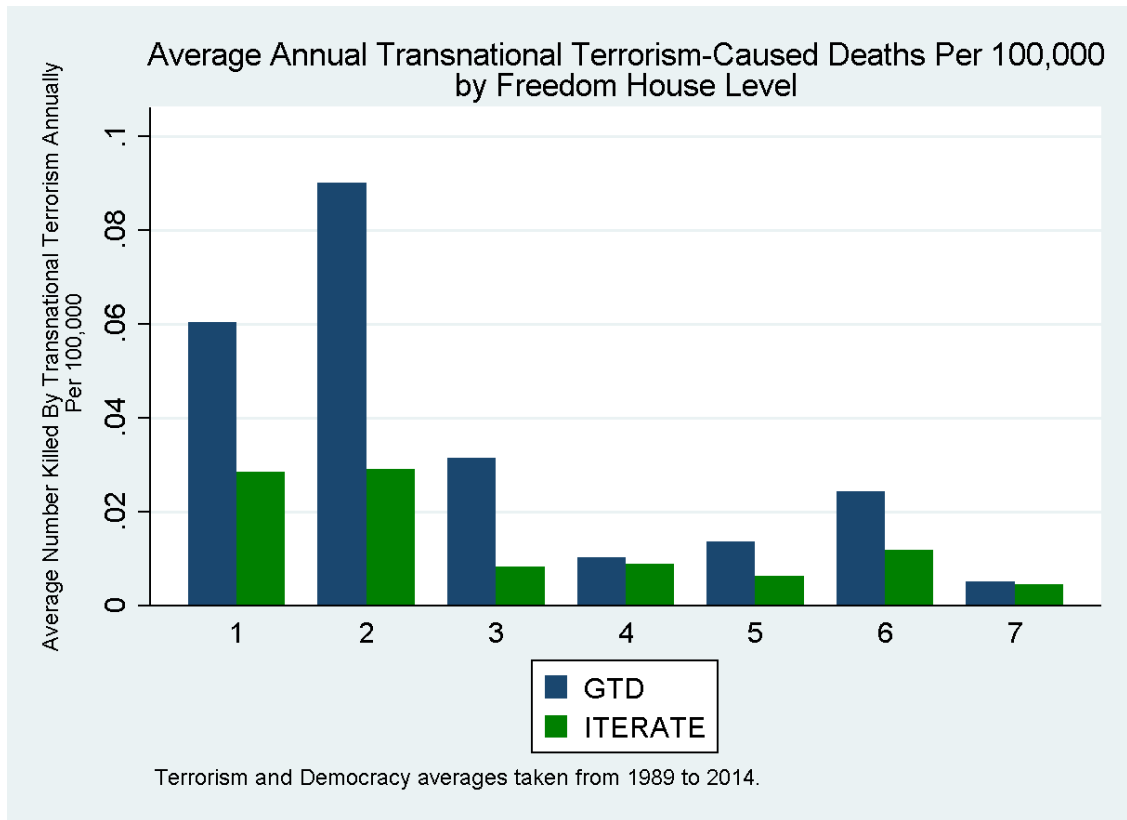
⁵ Eligible countries are those with populations around and above 500,000, substantial existence after 1989, and consistent inclusion across our datasets. For a complete list of included nations, please consult the tables at the end of this working paper.

⁶ For example, Norway is in level eight in the V-Dem graph, level seven in the Freedom House graph, and level ten in the Polity graph; Turkmenistan, on the other hand, is in level zero in the V-Dem graph, level one in the Freedom House graph, and level negative ten in the Polity graph.

Considering the graphs, average casualty rates decrease as one moves from strong autocracies to weaker ones. Casualty rates also increase as one moves from soft autocracies to weaker and middling democracies, and then decrease thereafter.

Transnational Casualty Graphs





3.1.2 Frequency of Transnational Terrorist Attacks

In this section, we look at the frequency of terrorist attacks. This time we consider each country's average number of deadly attacks per 100,000 people per year. The set of tables below reveals that democracies probably average less frequent transnational terrorism, with only one out of six database combinations (GTD and Polity) finding that democracies average more frequent transnational terrorism than nondemocracies do. This anomaly is only slight, with democracies averaging .00067 deadly attacks per 100,000 people per year and nondemocracies averaging .00063 deadly attacks per 100,000 people per year. In fact, if Lebanon had been categorized as a nondemocracy in Polity, as it was by V-Dem and Freedom House, then the results would have tipped handily in the favor of democracies because Lebanon has had unusually high transnational terror rates.⁷

Transnational Attack Frequency Tables

Average Number of Deadly Transnational Terror Attacks Per 100,000 Per Year (1989-2014)

By V-Dem Group	GTD	ITERATE
Nondemocracy	0.00819	0.00362
Democracy	0.00443	0.00166

By Freedom House Group	GTD	ITERATE
Nondemocracy	0.00972	0.00426
Democracy	0.00402	0.00157

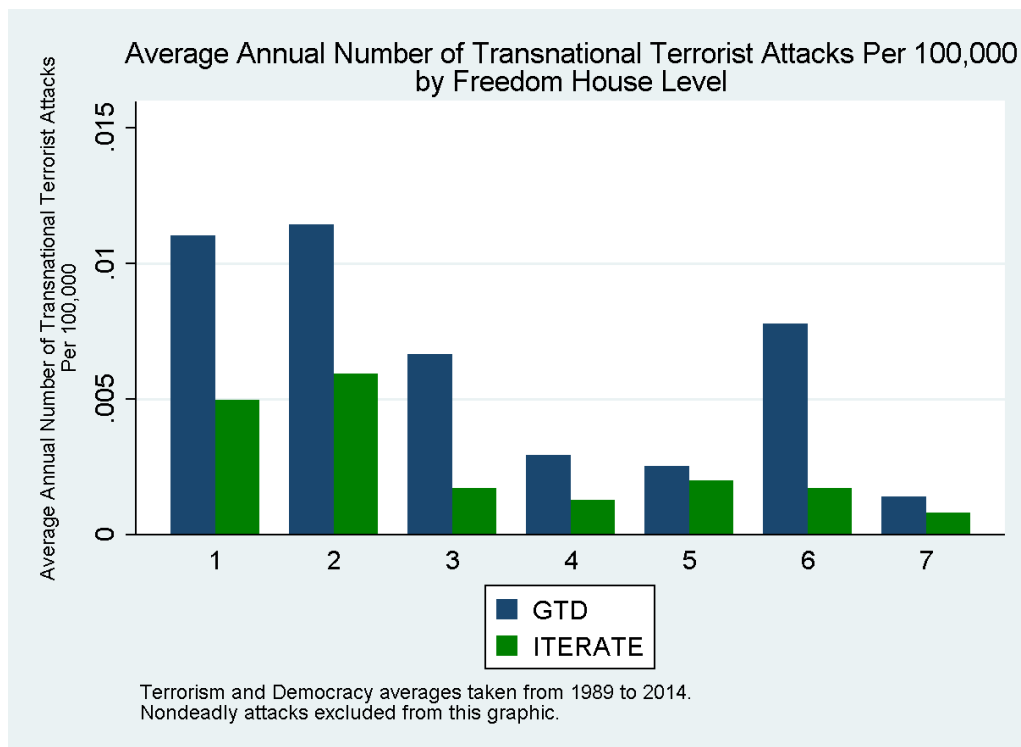
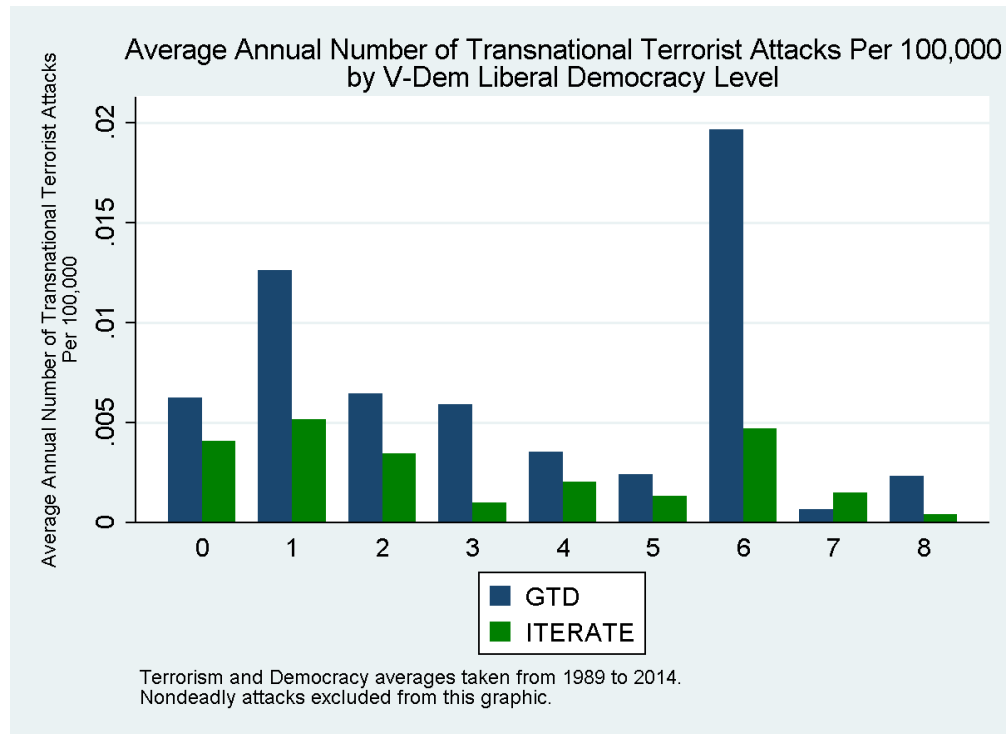
By Polity Group	GTD	ITERATE
Nondemocracy	0.00631	0.00305
Democracy	0.00667	0.00233

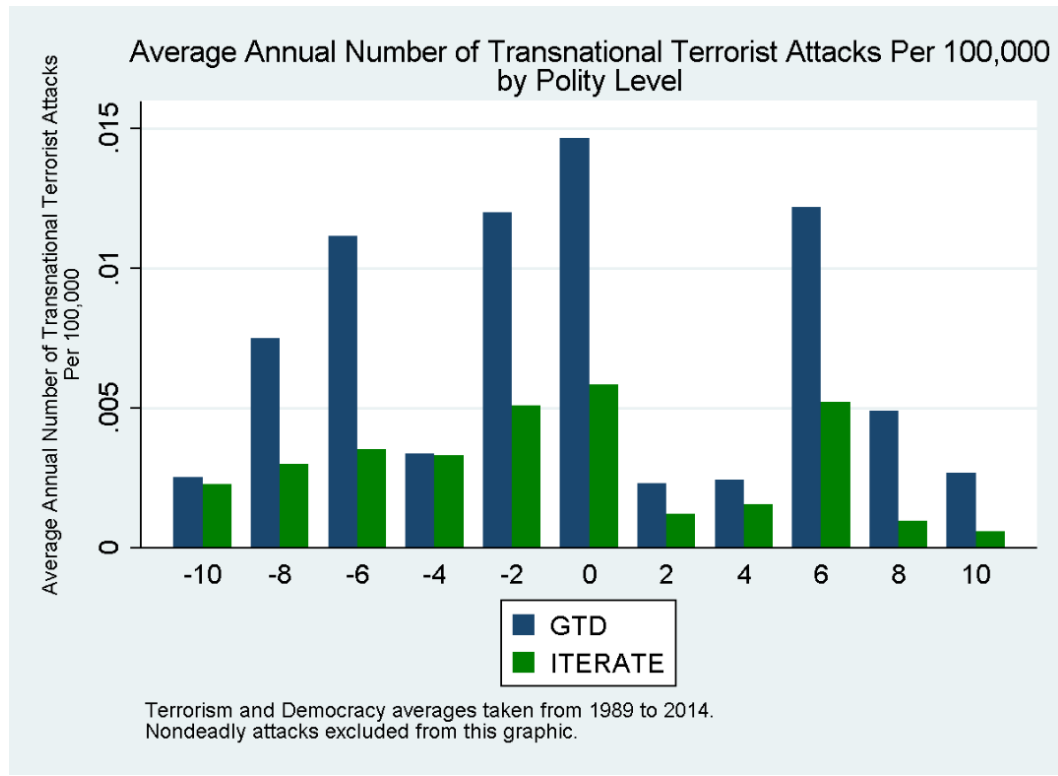
The attack frequency graphs register a very similar trend as the above graphs on casualty rates.⁸

⁷ In fact, the only reason Lebanon was classified as a democracy by Polity is that it was occupied for many of the years between 1989 and 2014. During these years, Polity did not assign it a normal score, while the other democracy databases did.

⁸ It should be noted that Israel is largely responsible for the spike in terrorism rates observed in the mid/high-middle democracies (i.e. the sixth democracy level in each graph), and the sixth democracy level means drop below the means of the fifth level when Israel is excluded in all the V-dem and Freedom House graphs. Finally, it is worth noting that the erratic behavior of the Polity graph in the negative numbers results from the small sample sizes in a number of those Polity groups. All of the countries in these groups are classified as nondemocratic.

Transnational Attack Frequency Graphs





3.1.3 Severity of Total Terrorist Attacks

In this section, we analyze data on “total” (i.e., domestic *and* transnational) terrorist attacks together. The average scores used to compute these levels of democracy are from 1998 to 2008 (instead of 1989 to 2014). We do this so that the time period of the data used to construct the democracy levels in our total terror analysis matches the time period of the available total terror data.

The tables directly below show the average number of people killed by all forms of terrorism per 100,000 people per year in democracies and in nondemocracies. As seen in the casualty tables below, nondemocracies had a higher degree of casualties (77.6% to 88.6%) from domestic and transnational attacks on a *per capita* basis than democracies. In any case, democracies experience significantly lower death rates.

Total Casualty Tables

Average Number Killed by Total Terrorism Per 100,000 Per Year (1998-2008)

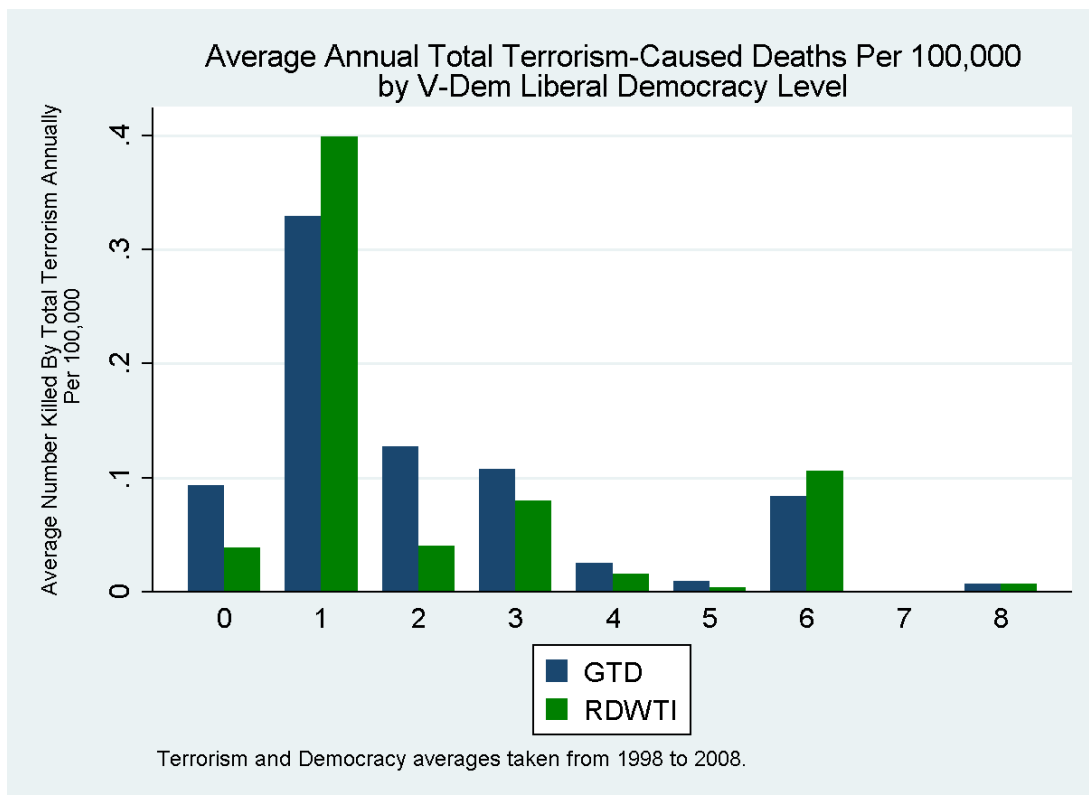
By V-Dem Group	GTD	RDWTI
Nondemocracy	0.185	0.172
Democracy	0.021	0.021

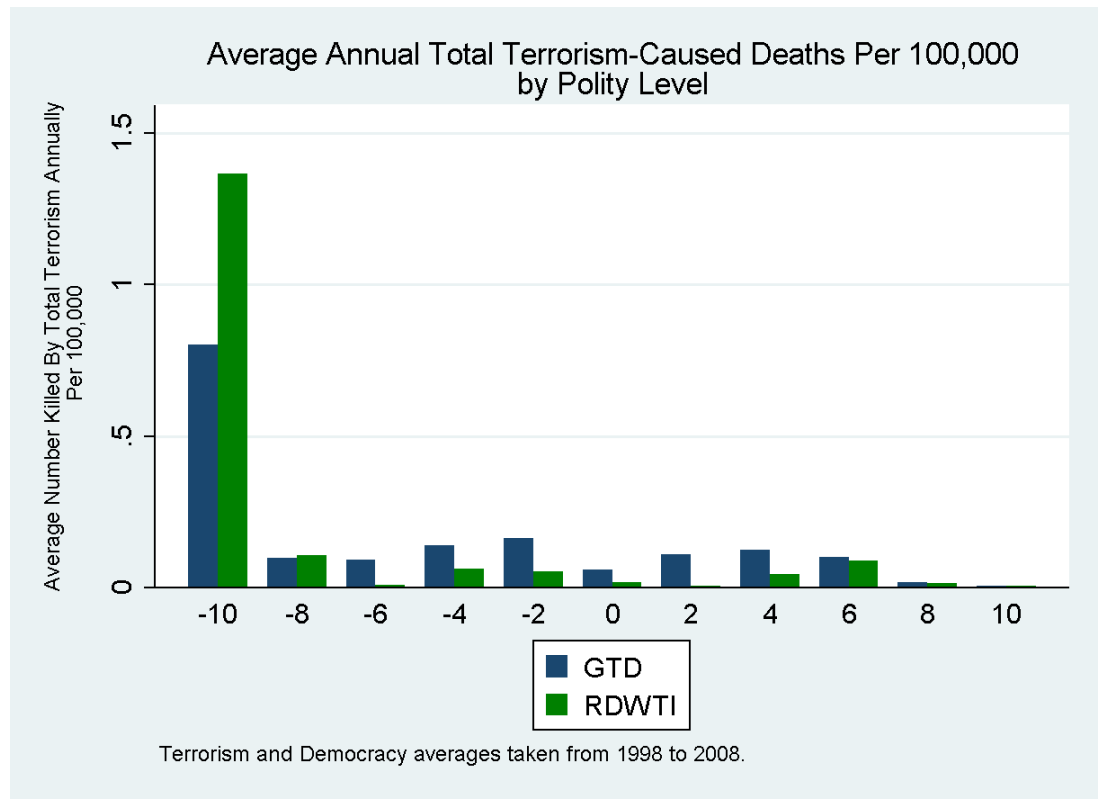
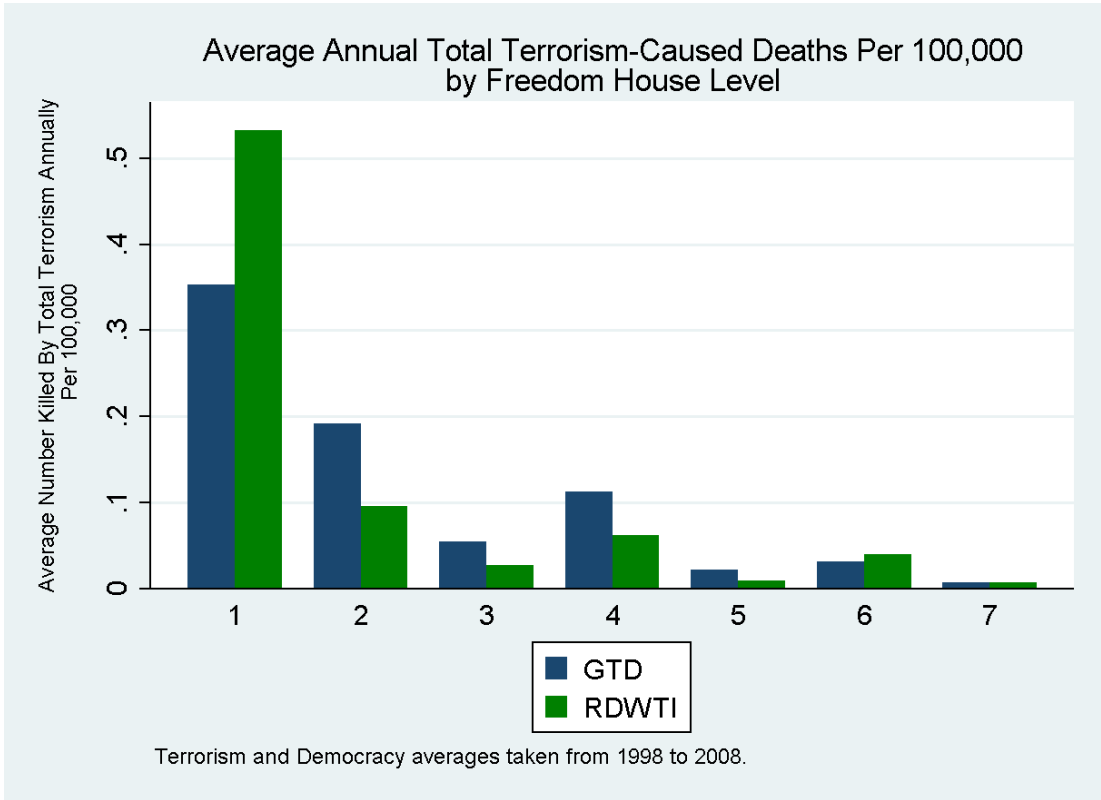
By Freedom House Group	GTD	RDWTI
Nondemocracy	0.201	0.204
Democracy	0.045	0.031

By Polity Group	GTD	RDWTI
Nondemocracy	0.180	0.173
Democracy	0.038	0.034

The three graphs below show the average number of people killed by all forms of terrorism per 100,000 per year across all democracy levels. In each graph, as in the previous section, a greater democracy level number signals that the countries in that level have higher quality democracies. Additionally, the blue and green bars represent the average number killed according to the GTD and RDWTI respectively. The disparity between democracies' terror rates and nondemocracies' terror rates is much stronger in this "total" terror category than it was in the transnational terror category.

Total Casualty Graphs





3.1.4 Frequency of Total Terrorist Attacks

In this section, we track the average number of total terrorist attacks per 100,000 in a year. As seen in the tables below, nondemocracies experienced a higher frequency (61.4%-88.6%) of domestic and transnational terrorist attacks on a *per capita* basis compared to democracies.

Total Attack Tables

Average Number of Deadly Total Terror Attacks Per 100,000 Per Year (1998-2008)

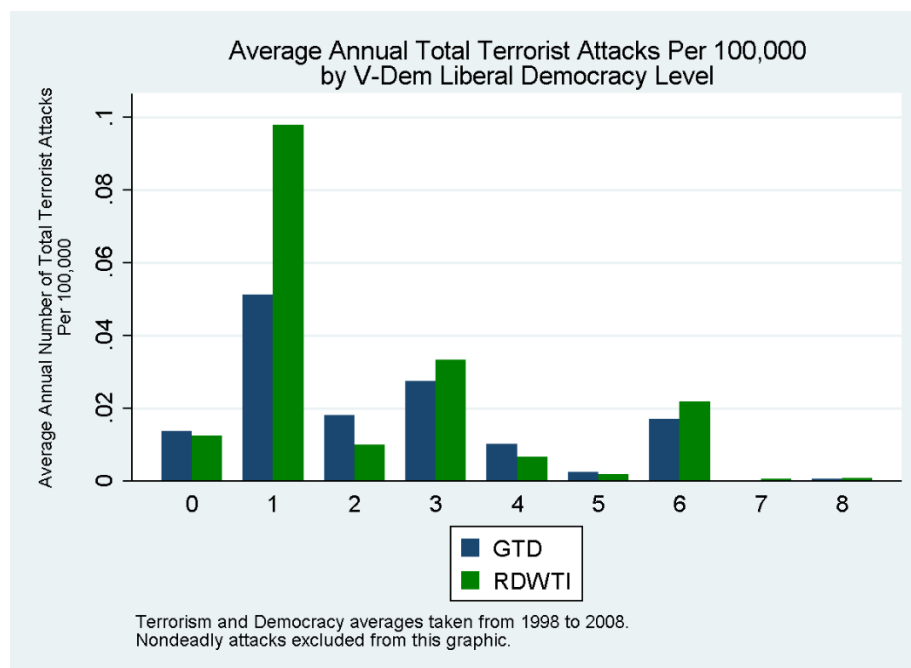
By V-Dem Group	GTD	RDWTI
Nondemocracy	0.0310	0.0463
Democracy	0.0055	0.0053

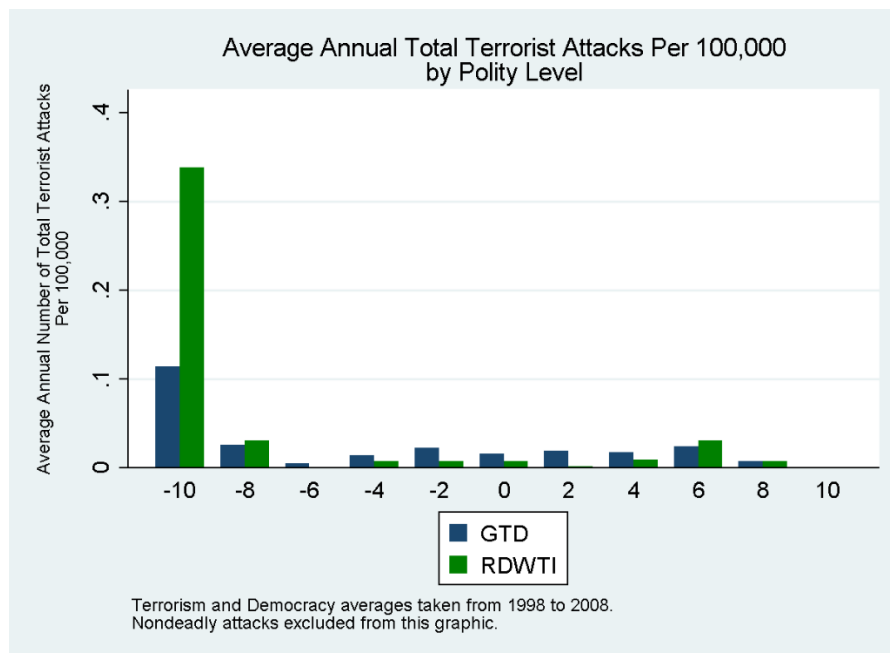
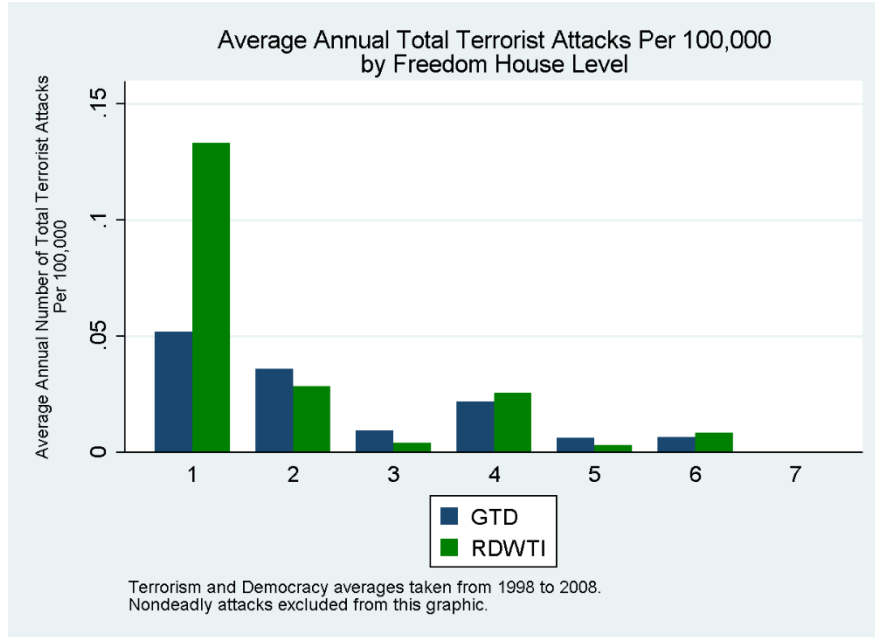
By Freedom House Group	GTD	RDWTI
Nondemocracy	0.0271	0.0417
Democracy	0.0098	0.0106

By Polity Group	GTD	RDWTI
Nondemocracy	0.0264	0.0399
Democracy	0.0102	0.0124

The frequency graphs generally agree that deadly attack rates decrease as one moves from autocracies to less staunch autocracies, increase in some weak democracies, and decline thereafter.

Total Attack Graphs





3.2 Data Inspection

In data inspection, we look directly at each country's democracy and terrorism scores one by one. This kind of analysis allows us to isolate outliers, recognize some simple trends, and take note of a few anomalies.

3.2.1 Countries and Territories Missing from this Analysis

Apart from those excluded because of their small size (many Pacific Islands, Caribbean Islands, and microstates), brief existence between 1989 and 2014 (South Yemen, Yugoslavia, South Sudan), or complicated political situations (Palestine), these states and territories have been left out due to limited data availability across our democracy databases: Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei, Equatorial Guinea, Hong Kong, Kuwait, Oman, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Somaliland, Tibet, United Arab Emirates, South Sudan, and Western Sahara. With the exception of Puerto Rico, none of these nations is considered democratic by the democracy databases that include them.

3.2.2 Orderings

The following pages order countries by their V-Dem levels and their average transnational terrorism casualty rates. Again, these democracy and transnational terror averages are from the years 1989 to 2014. Thereafter, countries are ordered by their V-Dem levels and their average total terrorism casualty rates. The democracy and total terrorism averages in this table come from the years 1998 to 2008. You may also consult these tables if you are looking for a complete list of the countries included in this analysis.

Because the democracy levels are assigned using average scores over 25 years, significant improvements or deteriorations in scores since the 1990s can be dulled or hidden by them. They are *not* meant to be taken as judgments about which countries are or are not democracies in 2016. Instead, they should be understood as rough tools intended to serve our broad, historical purposes.

Country Ordering by V-Dem Level and ITERATE Avg. Transnational Terrorism Casualty Rates

Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1989-2014)	ITERATE Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)	GTD-Transnt'l Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)	Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1989-2014)	ITERATE Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)	GTD-Transnt'l Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)
United States	8	0.040404	0.04188	Panama	5	0.03764	0.039997
Spain	8	0.017394	0.034422	Trinidad and Tobago	5	0.028329	0.006398
United Kingdom	8	0.005937	0.030282	Bulgaria	5	0.003159	0.003285
Austria	8	0.003	0.001575	Croatia	5	0.001665	0.212834
France	8	0.002254	0.00181	India	5	0.001495	0.007911
Belgium	8	0.002226	0.00241	Ghana	5	0.000229	0.000466
Netherlands	8	0.001993	0.000794	Taiwan	5	0.000186	0
Switzerland	8	0.001692	0.000568	Serbia	5	0	0.000567
Denmark	8	0.000731	0	Senegal	5	0	0.000327
Sweden	8	0.000449	0.00092	Mongolia	5	0	0
Japan	8	0.000031	0	Botswana	5	0	0
Ireland	8	0	0.009972	Solomon Islands	4	0.051701	0
Costa Rica	8	0	0.004665	Colombia	4	0.032458	0.032146
Czech Republic	8	0	0.000776	Namibia	4	0.02917	0.045054
Estonia	8	0	0	Peru	4	0.008654	0.01159
Canada	8	0	0	Mali	4	0.006599	0.032932
Norway	8	0	0	Philippines	4	0.006474	0.00867
Uruguay	8	0	0	Venezuela	4	0.00629	0.00217
Australia	8	0	0	Zambia	4	0.002738	0.024857
New Zealand	8	0	0	Turkey	4	0.002644	0.00955
Portugal	8	0	0	Niger	4	0.002561	0.09654
Finland	8	0	0	Bolivia	4	0.002523	0.001751
Lithuania	8	0	0	South Africa	4	0.002121	0.000941
Suriname	7	0.00942	0	Ecuador	4	0.001237	0.002076
Greece	7	0.004804	0.002229	Dominican Republic	4	0.000515	0.000536
Germany	7	0.001948	0.001379	Mexico	4	0.000169	0.000859
Italy	7	0.000736	0	Nicaragua	4	0	0.008159
Chile	7	0.000293	0.000614	Jamaica	4	0	0.0081
Brazil	7	0.000126	0.000175	Moldova	4	0	0.00648
Slovenia	7	0	0.002011	Romania	4	0	0.000174
Poland	7	0	0.000104	Benin	4	0	0
Latvia	7	0	0	Montenegro	4	0	0
Israel	6	0.243656	0.535173	Sri Lanka	3	0.039071	0.019063
Argentina	6	0.014098	0.013406	Ukraine	3	0.025086	0.02663
Cyprus	6	0.005121	0.014487	El Salvador	3	0.006554	0.017085
Hungary	6	0	0.001166	Guatemala	3	0.005958	0.008905
Cape Verde	6	0	0	Indonesia	3	0.004392	0.006485

Mauritius	6	0	0	Thailand	3	0.003757	0.004408
Slovakia	6	0	0	Honduras	3	0.003096	0.008173
Korea_South	6	0	0	Albania	3	0.002398	0.001263

Country Ordering by V-Dem Level and ITERATE Average Transnational Casualty Rates Pt. 2

Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1989-2014)	ITERATE Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)	GTD-Transnt'l Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)	Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1989-2014)	ITERATE Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)	GTD-Transnt'l Casualty (Avg. 1989-2014)
Tanzania	3	0.001462	0.001809	Cambodia	1	0.085065	0.029805
Papua New Guinea	3	0.000925	0.00392	Mauritania	1	0.030364	0.025056
Kosovo	3	0	0.134744	Central African Republic	1	0.029011	0.120646
Macedonia	3	0	0.009879	Angola	1	0.028691	0.058217
Paraguay	3	0	0.00061	Yemen	1	0.024315	0.175479
Malawi	3	0	0	Algeria	1	0.019472	0.03342
Guyana	3	0	0	Tunisia	1	0.014216	0.014767
Burkina Faso	3	0	0	Jordan	1	0.013228	0.045518
Lesotho	3	0	0	Ethiopia	1	0.012581	0.00543
Lebanon	2	0.163602	0.232452	Egypt	1	0.012341	0.044414
Georgia	2	0.07416	0.034155	Djibouti	1	0.010927	0.013696
Togo	2	0.061639	0.001914	Libya	1	0.006744	0.070782
Kenya	2	0.047072	0.077339	Rwanda	1	0.005912	0.790853
Uganda	2	0.020387	0.093124	Congo_Democratic Republic of	1	0.004429	0.127531
Sierra Leone	2	0.018331	0.069165	Cameroon	1	0.002266	0.035189
Liberia	2	0.016947	0.023522	Guinea	1	0.000947	0.004621
Russia	2	0.016811	0.006634	Zimbabwe	1	0.000378	0.013756
Pakistan	2	0.011423	0.032771	Iran	1	0	0.004962
Mozambique	2	0.008175	0.013781	Kazakhstan	1	0	0.002225
Ivory Coast	2	0.003838	0.005542	Malaysia	1	0	0.000543
Morocco	2	0.003623	0.006827	Belarus	1	0	0
Nigeria	2	0.002766	0.003388	Swaziland	1	0	0
Haiti	2	0.002658	0.001014	Somalia	0	0.110719	0.192336
Kyrgyzstan	2	0.000785	0.00242	Tajikistan	0	0.048729	0.026559

Bangladesh	2	0.000737	0.000794	Chad	0	0.024557	0.018569
Nepal	2	0.000165	0.000643	Syria	0	0.023439	0.032752
Armenia	2	0	0.002521	Saudi Arabia	0	0.014531	0.013203
Madagascar	2	0	0.001189	Sudan	0	0.014492	0.141218
East Timor	2	0	0	Qatar	0	0.009849	0.004779
Bhutan	2	0	0	Azerbaijan	0	0.008607	0.066793
Gabon	2	0	0	Eritrea	0	0.008146	0.024649
Guinea-Bissau	2	0	0	Burma_Myanmar	0	0.001164	0.00925
Fiji	2	0	0	Uzbekistan	0	0.000446	0.000619
Comoros	2	0	0	China	0	0.000434	0.000165
Gambia	2	0	0	Laos	0	0	0.007652
Iraq	1	0.222735	0.214043	Cuba	0	0	0.000369
Burundi	1	0.124751	0.825176	Vietnam_Socialist Republic of	0	0	0.0000538
Afghanistan	1	0.106465	0.247859	Turkmenistan	0	0	0
Congo_Republic of the	1	0.090044	0.004411	Korea_North	0	0	0

Country Ordering by V-Dem Level and RDWTI Average Total Casualty Rates

Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1998-2008)	RDWTI Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)	GTD-Total Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)	Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1998-2008)	RDWTI Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)	GTD-Total Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)
United States	8	0.095578	0.095069	Taiwan	6	0	0
Spain	8	0.054167	0.05224	Mauritius	6	0	0
United Kingdom	8	0.019114	0.017267	Ghana	6	0	0
France	8	0.002655	0.000876	Panama	6	0	0
Costa Rica	8	0.002275	0	Cyprus	6	0	0
Netherlands	8	0.001121	0.000558	India	5	0.018889	0.0387
Australia	8	0.000468	0	Serbia	5	0.012118	0.001237
Japan	8	0.000288	0	Bolivia	5	0.00607	0
Poland	8	0.000235	0	Croatia	5	0.00202	0.004108
Ireland	8	0	0.002127	South Africa	5	0.000826	0.003543
Canada	8	0	0.000301	Senegal	5	0	0.038689
Lithuania	8	0	0	Niger	5	0	0.009479
New Zealand	8	0	0	Botswana	5	0	0
Austria	8	0	0	Trinidad and Tobago	5	0	0
Estonia	8	0	0	Benin	5	0	0
Denmark	8	0	0	Philippines	4	0.072684	0.108763
Switzerland	8	0	0	Turkey	4	0.059613	0.03563
Sweden	8	0	0	Macedonia	4	0.04489	0.085384
Uruguay	8	0	0	Peru	4	0.029514	0.024693
Portugal	8	0	0	Moldova	4	0.02531	0.005071
Finland	8	0	0	Indonesia	4	0.019503	0.024832
Chile	8	0	0	Albania	4	0.011762	0.005849
Norway	8	0	0	Ecuador	4	0.009199	0
Belgium	8	0	0	Nicaragua	4	0.001782	0
Czech Republic	8	0	0	Mexico	4	0.001363	0.002699
Latvia	7	0.00384	0	Zambia	4	0.000882	0.000882
Greece	7	0.002518	0.001686	Namibia	4	0	0.095715
Italy	7	0.000634	0.000476	Solomon Islands	4	0	0.045305
Germany	7	0.000111	0.001104	Mali	4	0	0.009803
Brazil	7	4.82E-05	0.0001	Paraguay	4	0	0.003499
Slovenia	7	0	0	Jamaica	4	0	0
Cape Verde	7	0	0	Romania	4	0	0
Hungary	7	0	0	Dominican Republic	4	0	0
Suriname	7	0	0	Sri Lanka	3	0.403667	0.860785
Korea_South	7	0	0	Colombia	3	0.337393	0.523037

Israel	6	1.055194	0.832218	Kosovo	3	0.252081	0.28554
Mongolia	6	0.003859	0	Thailand	3	0.180493	0.082684
Slovakia	6	0.001686	0	Georgia	3	0.153519	0.076735
Bulgaria	6	0.001133	0.005606	East Timor	3	0.150059	0.057727
Argentina	6	0.000235	0	Kenya	3	0.069355	0.129143

Country Ordering by V-Dem Level and RDWTI Average Total Casualty Rates Pt. 2

Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1998-2008)	RDWTI Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)	GTD-Total Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)	Country	V-Dem Level (Avg. 1998-2008)	RDWTI Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)	GTD-Total Casualty (Avg. 1998-2008)
Guyana	3	0.048895	0.158049	Tajikistan	1	0.05023	0.104562
Honduras	3	0.03921	0.037692	Qatar	1	0.02328	0.05481
Montenegro	3	0.014822	0.014967	Egypt	1	0.017478	0.018216
Venezuela	3	0.011353	0.000323	Tunisia	1	0.013988	0.020428
Guatemala	3	0.005857	0.009536	Burundi	1	0.013581	0.57665
Tanzania	3	0.003094	0.009418	Swaziland	1	0.008837	0.008837
Ukraine	3	0.000736	0.000189	Cambodia	1	0.008026	0.043402
Liberia	3	0	0.017733	Iran	1	0.007828	0.012809
Lesotho	3	0	0	Ethiopia	1	0.006083	0
Papua New Guinea	3	0	0	Mauritania	1	0.005463	0.017723
Fiji	3	0	0	Malaysia	1	0.002174	0
Malawi	3	0	0	Kazakhstan	1	0.001186	0
El Salvador	3	0	0	Congo Democratic Republic of	1	0.001103	0.002382
Burkina Faso	3	0	0	Rwanda	1	0	0.09165
Uganda	2	0.18109	0.357696	Guinea	1	0	0.209396
Lebanon	2	0.175141	0.40141	Bhutan	1	0	0.140192
Pakistan	2	0.132173	0.191741	Zimbabwe	1	0	0.126045
Russia	2	0.118645	0.119285	Central African Republic	1	0	0.010446
Nepal	2	0.076249	0.234503	Cameroon	1	0	0.004287
Bangladesh	2	0.015181	0.012452	Gambia	1	0	0.001394
Morocco	2	0.011259	0.010063	Belarus	1	0	0
Armenia	2	0.005922	0.002971	Djibouti	1	0	0
Nigeria	2	0.002394	0.029739	Somalia	0	0.511633	0.599394
Haiti	2	0.002127	0.019461	Saudi Arabia	0	0.046972	0.033833
Ivory Coast	2	0.00052	0.036467	Sudan	0	0.023633	0.039412

Sierra Leone	2	0	0.79009	Eritrea	0	0.018047	0.401927
Guinea-Bissau	2	0	0.080891	Azerbaijan	0	0.015107	0.010862
Mozambique	2	0	0.002439	Uzbekistan	0	0.01336	0
Comoros	2	0	0	Burma_Myanmar	0	0.011004	0.005187
Gabon	2	0	0	Syria	0	0.009632	0.009849
Madagascar	2	0	0	Libya	0	0.007056	0.013812
Togo	2	0	0	Turkmenistan	0	0.001976	0.009204
Iraq	1	9.466478	5.534228	Laos	0	0.001606	0
Afghanistan	1	1.204374	1.016367	Chad	0	0.00101	0.001702
Algeria	1	0.337466	0.933847	China	0	0.000611	0.302946
Angola	1	0.181651	0.667976	Congo_Republic of the	0	0	0.000533
Jordan	1	0.126662	0.104562	Cuba	0	0	0
Yemen	1	0.06626	0.05481	Korea_North	0	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	1	0.050597	0.007241	Vietnam_Socialist Republic of	0	0	0

Distribution of Average Transnational Casualty Rates

Almost every level of democracy has a few countries that have significantly higher average casualty rates than all the other countries listed in that category. The following tables give us a better understanding of how these rates are distributed across democracies and nondemocracies. We can see that 45.6% of countries score high enough to be considered democracies (see the “Total” row in either table). However, among the countries that average zero transnational terror-caused deaths and transnational terrorist attacks a year, 53.6% are democracies when using ITERATE data and 61.5% are democracies when using GTD data. This means that democracies are overrepresented among the countries with no reported transnational terror whatsoever. On the flipside, democracies are disproportionately underrepresented among groups with the highest terror rates (see rows “>.05”, “>.0125”, and “>.003125”) since they always compose less than 45.6% of the nations in these groups. The sole exception to this is the group of countries with >.1 attacks per 100,000 per year according to the GTD. Israel is the only country to register an average rate this high, and it is a democracy according to V-Dem.

Condition on Average Casualty Rate	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to ITERATE	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem Democracies (ITERATE)	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to GTD	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem Democracies (GTD)
>1	0	N/A	0	N/A
>.1	6	0.167	13	0.154
>.05	11	0.182	20	0.150
>.0125	38	0.237	51	0.255
>.003125	63	0.286	79	0.304
>.00078125	87	0.368	102	0.373
0/year	56	0.536	39	0.615
Total	158	0.456	158	0.456

Distribution of Average Deadly Transnational Attack Rates

Condition on Average Attack Count	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to ITERATE	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem Democracies (ITERATE)	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to GTD	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem Democracies (GTD)
>.1	0	N/A	1	1.000
>.05	1	0.000	5	0.200
>.0125	8	0.250	17	0.294
>.003125	31	0.258	54	0.333
>.00078125	68	0.368	89	0.326
>.000390625	81	0.383	104	0.375
= 0	56	0.536	39	0.615
Total	158	0.456	158	0.456

Distribution of Total Casualty Averages

Condition on Average Casualty Rate	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to GTD	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem
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	According to RDWTI	Democracies (RDWTI)		Democracies (GTD)
>1	3	0.333	2	0.000
>.1	17	0.059	26	0.077
>.05	26	0.192	36	0.167
>.0125	45	0.244	57	0.228
>.003125	63	0.270	77	0.273
>.00078125	83	0.337	89	0.315
= 0	65	0.585	62	0.661
Total	158	0.462	158	0.462

Distribution of Deadly Total Attack Averages

Since domestic terrorism accounts for such a large proportion of the total amount of terrorism that takes place, it is unsurprising that these tables show more countries with higher death and attack rates. Just as before, though, democracies are overrepresented in groups of countries with zero terrorism (i.e., > 58.5%) and underrepresented in groups of countries with high terror rates. In many cases, this finding is even more pronounced than it was in the transnational terrorism analysis.

Condition on Average Attack Rate	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to RDWTI	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem Democracies (RDWTI)	Number of Countries that Satisfy the Condition According to GTD	% Satisfying the Condition That Are V-Dem Democracies (GTD)
>.1	7	0.143	7	0.143
>.05	11	0.091	13	0.154
>.0125	23	0.174	31	0.161
>.003125	47	0.298	60	0.233
>.00078125	79	0.342	85	0.306
>.000390625	84	0.357	90	0.322
= 0	65	0.585	62	0.661
Total	158	0.462	158	0.462

4 Conclusion

Our findings suggest that democracies have, on average, both less severe and less frequent terrorism as compared to nondemocracies. This improvement over nondemocracies is greater in the area of total terrorism than it is in the area of transnational terrorism. Both of these findings hold across the different methods of classifying democracies and autocracies, as well as across all of the terror databases used. In addition, we find that terror severity and frequency average higher among staunch autocracies than among soft autocracies, slightly higher among weak democracies than among soft autocracies, and lowest among strong democracies. We are not claiming that this down-up-down movement observed in terror severity and frequency takes place as a single country moves toward or away from strong democracy; instead, we are observing a trend across all countries at once.

Data inspection revealed that most democracy levels have a small group of countries with high terror rates and a much larger group of countries with very low terror rates. Democracies were disproportionately likely to average very low or zero rates of terrorism, and among groups of countries with the highest terror rates, democracies were disproportionately underrepresented. As before, these findings hold across all combinations of terror and democracy databases used in our analysis. Again, Israel stands out for raising the averages of deadly terrorism within the democracy category.

Finally, a word of caution about our findings is in order. Because terrorism databases rely on news reports to collect their data, it is possible that many countries—especially impoverished nations and authoritarian states—have underreported terrorism rates because they do not have—or do not allow—the quality news sources needed to log attacks in the terror databases we use. This bias is not likely to undermine our results, however, because the same countries with underreported terror rates are also less likely to be democratic. It seems more likely that removing this bias would sharpen our results rather than dull them.

5 Supplement: Breaking down the Democracy/Autocracy Categories

In this section, we group countries using V-Dem's categories—strong democracy, weak democracy, weak autocracy, and strong autocracy—and examine their average terror rates.

First, we separate countries into democracies and nondemocracies based on their average scores in each database between 1989 and 2014. Those with average V-Dem scores greater than or equal to .4 are “V-Dem democracies,” and those with average V-Dem scores less than .4 are “V-Dem nondemocracies.” Likewise, those with average Freedom House scores greater than or equal to 4 are “FH democracies,” and those with average Freedom House scores less than 4 are “FH nondemocracies.” Finally, those with average Polity scores greater than or equal to 6 are “P democracies,” and those with average Polity scores less than 6 are “P nondemocracies.” We then split each of these democracy and nondemocracy groups in half. The lower-scoring half of each nondemocracy group has “Strong Autocracies,” and the upper-scoring half of each nondemocracy group has “Weak Autocracies.” Similarly, the lower-scoring half of each democracy group has “Weak Democracies” and the upper-scoring half of each democracy group has “Strong Democracies.” Notice that the democracy-nondemocracy divide is in terms of the

absolute score while the strong-weak divide is in terms of each country's score relative to the others'.

Within each of these four groups, we take the average of all the included countries' average transnational terror rates. We repeat this same process a second time, constructing the four political categories using democracy data from 1998 to 2008 to match the time period of the available total terror data.

5.1 Results

Without controlling for other variables, the strongest democracies had the lowest average terror rates across the board, and the strong autocracies had the highest average terror rates across the board. In the area of transnational terror, weak autocracies report slightly lower average terror rates than weak democracies. Nevertheless, in the realm of total terrorism, weak democracies report lower average terror rates than weak autocracies. Though not included, the results produced when using Freedom House and Polity to create democracy groups show the same disagreement about the relative standing of weak democracies and weak autocracies. The advantage of strong democracies over all other groups and the disadvantage of strong autocracies compared to all other groups are largely supported with these other democracy categories.

There are numerous outlier countries that deserve mention here. In the weak democracy category, Israel consistently averaged the highest rates of terror, often five or six times greater than the next highest rate shown by any other country in that democracy category, and over a dozen times greater than the democracy group's mean. In the realm of total terrorism, Colombia joins Israel as a very high scorer among the weak democracies, with rates between six and 10 times greater than the weak democracies' mean. Among strong democracies, the United States suffered the highest average death rates from both transnational and total terror (largely due to the attacks of 9/11), although it is not a member of the group of strong democracies with the highest attack rates. Its transnational terror-caused death rates were almost 20 times greater than the mean while its total terror-caused death rates were 15.5 and 11 times greater than the mean (depending on the index used). Additionally, Spain had, with few exceptions, the highest or second highest terror rates among the strong democracies, especially in the realm of transnational terror. Every variable we track, except the per capita attack rates measured by ITERATE, shows its average terror rates to be around or above 10 times greater than the strong democracy group's mean.

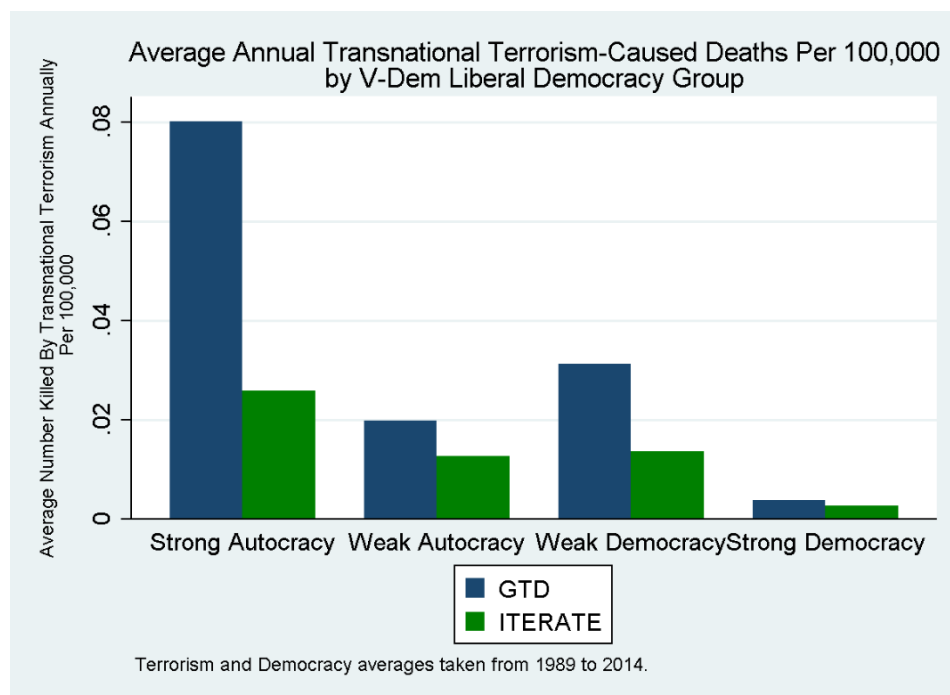
Among the weak autocracies, Lebanon suffered from the highest average transnational terror rates, with average death rates around a dozen times greater than the mean and average attack rates 15 and 22 times greater than the mean. Sri Lanka consistently endured some of the highest total terror rates among the weak democracies, with many rates around eight times greater than the weak autocracies' mean. Finally, Kosovo experienced high average terror levels across the board, with rates often between five and 10 times greater than the mean.⁹ Among the strong autocracies, Iraq had the most dismal rates of terrorism across the board, always greater than 20

⁹ Interestingly, it is missing from the ITERATE database altogether (there is one recorded event from 2008 whose death count and other values are listed as unknown). ITERATE also records no attacks in Serbia, meaning that attacks that happened in Kosovo are not listed as having happened in Serbia either.

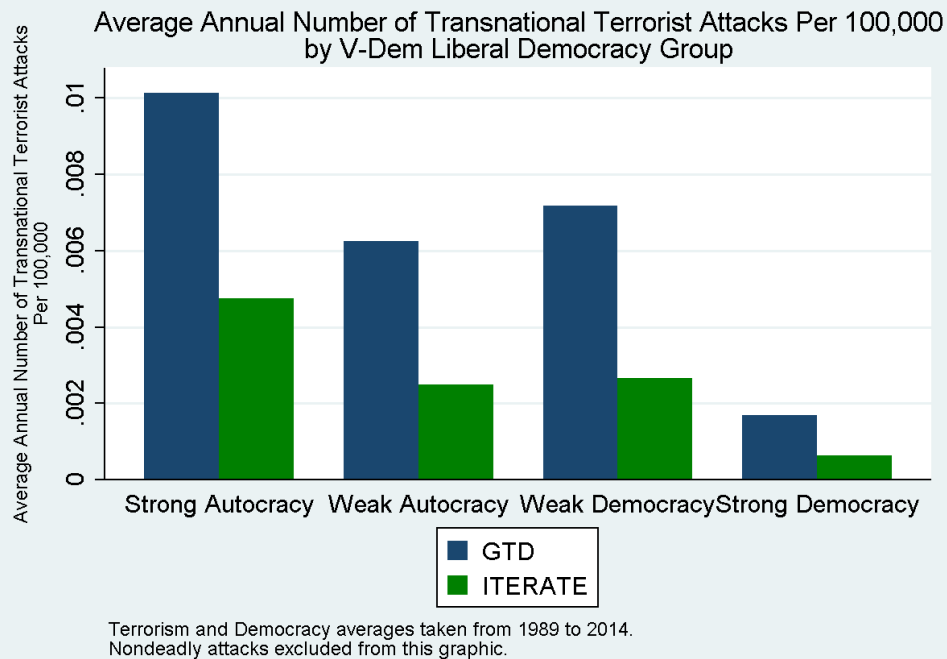
times the group's mean and in some instances as high as 30 times greater.¹⁰ According to the RDWTI, its average transnational death rates were roughly eight times greater than the next closest country's—Afghanistan—and its average rate is almost 150 times greater than the mean of all the other countries in the group. Afghanistan and Somalia also experienced unusually high rates among the strong autocracies.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that certain countries—like Iraq, Afghanistan, and much or all of the developed world—receive unusually high amounts of coverage in the press. This could skew the results that we have offered above since our terror databases rely on media reports to log attacks. Nevertheless, the magnitude of our findings in many of the countries discussed above suggest that this bias does not singlehandedly void the validity of our findings.

Transnational Terror Rates across Four V-Dem Categories



¹⁰ You may expect a higher number here, but keep in mind that it is only possible to have an average rate forty three times greater than the mean given that there are forty three countries in the strong autocracy group.



Total Terror Rates across Four V-Dem Categories

