AT THE EDGE OF PEACE: CAN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE DISARM TERRORISM?

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is meant to address a critical gap in the literature at the intersection of transitional justice, conflict and terrorism studies, by examining how transitional justice mechanisms (TJMs) influence terrorism in transitional contexts. While previous research had explored TJMs in relation to state repression, conflict recurrence and human rights, the impact of TJMs on non-state violent actors, particularly terrorist groups, remains largely unexplored. Building on the frameworks of deterrence, bargaining and grievance theories, this study investigates whether amnesties, trials and truth commissions affect terrorism levels, and under what conditions. For this purpose, the study employs a large-N quantitative study of 1970-2020, and negative binomial regressions models are used to evaluate both raw terrorism counts and terrorism weighted by severity. The findings reveal that truth commissions are robustly associated with short-term reductions in terrorist attacks, while trials appear to exert a longer-term, soft deterrent effect on terrorism frequency, regardless of state capacity. Trials in strong states are also weakly associated with short-term decreases in both frequency and severity of terrorism, but also long-term influences on the severity of attacks. Amnesties show limited and inconsistent effects. Overall, the results lend initial evidence that TJMs can influence terrorism, but their effects are highly contingent on timing, mechanism type and institutional context.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the highly acclaimed Good Friday Agreement was reached in Belfast, Northern Ireland. This effectively put an end to a decades-long asymmetric conflict in the United Kingdom known as "The Troubles", fought between Irish nationalists seeking a united Ireland and loyalist forces. UK is a non-paradigmatic case of a country undergoing transitional justice; unlike others, the country neither underwent a systematic regime change away from autocracy, nor generated systematic human rights atrocities, as was the case with South Africa, Rwanda or Sierra Leone. However, the Good Friday Agreement perfectly illustrates how transitional justice mechanisms (TJMs for short) can be adapted in terrorism-related conflicts, and how they can build the necessary institutional infrastructure for long-term peace.

Transitional justice, as a scholarship, is preoccupied with addressing legacies of widespread human rights abuses or societal trauma during a society's transition from conflict to peace. These mechanisms may aim to address the victims' need for accountability (prosecution, lustration), recognition (memorialisation), acknowledgement (truth commissions), but also the facilitation of the reintegration of former combatants (amnesties). TJMs have been extensively studied in relation to human rights, international law, democracy, psychology and civil war. Yet terrorism, as a form of political violence, is often similarly present in the same contexts of conflict and postconflict transition that the transitional mechanisms spearhead.

Despite that, there is a surprising disconnect between the two academic literatures, even though it is entirely plausible that, through its many components, these mechanisms might directly influence the prominence of terrorism. Against the backdrop of contemporary new conflicts, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine or the armed conflict between Israel and Hamas, this intersection is especially relevant, as states must make evidence-based decisions about whether

and how to employ TJMs in ways that avoid unintended consequences such as terrorist activity or a return to conflict. This involves, among others, employing TJMs that address potential factors that might fuel terrorism, such as impunity, political polarisation and unresolved grievances. But first, this intersection must be scrutinised much more closely so as to aid policymakers in taking appropriate, evidence-based decisions.

This thesis represents a first exploratory endeavour into whether and how the main TJMs – specifically trials, amnesties and truth commissions, influence terrorism in transitional societies. To explore these dynamics, the thesis employs two main theoretical lenses, the deterrence and bargaining theory, to the context of transitional justice. Deterrence would suggest that trials decrease terrorism by increasing the costs of political violence, while bargaining theory indicates that amnesties could reduce violence by signalling goodwill, or could backfire by signalling lack of resolve. The grievance theory is also marginally used, so as to guide the interpretation for why truth commissions might decrease terrorism by addressing the underlying frustrations fuelling terrorism.

Methodology-wise, this thesis will employ a large-N quantitative design, using data covering the period from 1970 to 2020. To this end, negative binomial regressions are used to provide initial evidence for the effects of the three TJMs over terrorism. The dependent variable will be measured both as raw count data and with a weighted formula by severity, while lagged independent variables will also be considered in another batch of models. The initial findings lend credibility to the claim that different mechanisms do influence terrorism, but in divergent ways and influenced by institutional context.

The dissertation is structured as follows. The first chapter represents a conceptual framework and a literature review on transitional justice and terrorism. Here, the theoretical framework is also discussed, by addressing the deterrence, bargaining and grievance theories and how they

inform the overall expectations of the TJM effects. The second chapter outlines the research design, presenting the variables and their operationalisation, the hypotheses and subsequent models. Additionally, two short qualitative illustrations of the effects that TJMs have had in United Kingdom and Colombia will be presented, so as to see how the hypotheses might fare in real-life situations. The third chapter presents descriptive statistics and the quantitative analysis itself, together with an interpretation of the findings. Lastly, the conclusion will present the limitations and future avenues of inquiry.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Conceptual Framework

This subsection defines the key concepts of this thesis, namely transitional justice and terrorism. According to the United Nations, transitional justice is understood as "the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation".[2] Following this principle, the Secretary General outlined these mechanisms can include criminal prosecutions, truth and reconciliation mechanisms, victim reparation programmes, institutional reform and vetting or dismissals. In practice, many of those mechanisms are combined, as states seek to balance accountability, reconciliation and stability.[3]

Teitel, one of the foundational thinkers in the field, argued for the conceptualisation of transitional justice as a normative project that emerges in periods of dramatic political changes.[4] This project, as she states, is inherently paradoxical, as it has to combine backward-looking (enforcing legal accountability) with forward-looking measures (reconciliation and democratic consolidation).[5] Building on this perspective, the Transitional Justice Research Collaborative (TJRC) project narrowed the term to represent only those trials, truth commissions and amnesties that directly confront violations tied to the prior non-democratic regime.[6] Thus, under

[2] UN. Secretary-General, "The Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies" (UN, August 2004), 4, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/527647.
[3] Tricia D Olsen, Leigh A Payne, and Andrew G Reiter, "The Justice Balance: When Transitional Justice Improves Human Rights and Democracy," *Human Rights Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (February 2010): 980–1007, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40930342.
[4] Ruti G Teitel, *Transitional Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.
[5] Teitel, 6.
[6] "Frequently Asked Questions – TJRC," Transitional Justice Research Collaborative, accessed April 27, 2025, https://transitionaljusticedata.com/faq.html.

its scope, transitional justice was tightly linked to regime change and the redress of abuses committed by the previous authoritarian rule.

More recent approaches expanded on this definition considerably. Transitional Justice Evaluation Tools (TJET), on whose dataset this study relies, defines TJMs as institutional processes implemented "in a variety of contexts–during and after democratic transition, during and after intrastate conflicts, in stable democracies, and in stable autocracies", with an explicit purpose of addressing past human rights abuses.[7] This broader framing enables the inclusion of what some scholars would describe as "non-paradigmatic cases", i.e. cases where TJMs are implemented in the absence of full regime rupture, often with ongoing democracies or hybrid regimes, while still experiencing transitional contexts.[8] This is congruent with a branch of transitional justice scholars that argue the field has expanded far beyond its original model, which focused primarily on post-authoritarian or postconflict transitions. Instead, they suggest that transitional justice processes have emerged across a variety of regime types and even in contexts of ongoing repression and violence.[9] The TJET framework therefore enables the analysis of transitional justice across a much wider range of settings than what was previously possible.

The second key concept addressed in this thesis is terrorism. The definitions of terrorism are even more complex and heterogeneous, as the employment of a universally agreed definition is further complicated by the politicisation of the term. This complexity is illustrated by the fact that the US government has developed over 20 definitions of terrorism and the State Department

[7] "Methods & Frequently Asked Questions – Transitional Justice Evaluation Tools," Transitional Justice Research Collaborative, accessed April 18, 2025, https://transitionaljusticedata.org/en/faq.html.
[8] Amaia Alvarez Berastegi, "Transitional Justice in Settled Democracies: Northern Ireland and the Basque Country in Comparative Perspective," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (September 2017): 3–4, doi:10.1080/17539153.2017.1336290.
[9] Tine Destrooper, Line Engbo Gissel, and Kerstin Bree Carlson, "Introduction: Transitional Justice in Aparadigmatic Contexts," *Transitional Justice in Aparadigmatic Contexts: Accountability, Recognition, and Disruption*, March 2023, 1–21, doi:10.4324/9781003289104-1/INTRODUCTION-TINE-DESTROOPER-LINE-ENGBO-GISSEL-KERSTIN-BREE-CARLSON.

altered its official definition seven times between 1982 and 2004.[10] Within the academic scholarship, however, certain core elements are generally recognised. Terrorism is consistently described as a form of violence that is inherently political, being deeply tied to actions meant to bring about political change, yet it differs significantly from other forms of political violence. Hoffman, for example, defines terrorism as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change", outlining the crucial psychological component of terrorism.[11] Similarly, Rapoport characterises terror as "violence employed for a religious or political objective and is not limited by the accepted moral norms that limit violence".[12] Unlike insurgencies or civil wars, terrorism is distinct because its primary objective is not direct military victory, but rather the manipulation of public opinion through acts of violence aimed at evoking emotional responses and, in turn, influence broader audiences.[13] This additionally makes terrorist groups hungry for attention from media coverage, and their activities are many times designed to be spectacular or dramatic.[14]

Despite these common elements, terrorism remains a deeply contested term, as the perception of an actor as terrorist or a freedom fighter often depends heavily on political and historical context. To address this, I will consider as "terrorists" any entities that employ tactics which are terroristic in kind, i.e. make use of force and fear in order to influence a broader audience, a view consistent with a wide academic consensus.[15] Here, terrorism is better understood as an instrument, rather than the defining characteristic of an actor. Entities can engage in conventional military activities, while also employing terrorist tactics aimed at civilian

[10] Alex P Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (Taylor & Francis, 2011), 44.
[11] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, REV-Revi (Columbia University Press, 2006), 135, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hoff12698.
[12] David C Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in *Transnational Terrorism* (Routledge, 2019), 3.
[13] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*; Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*; Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism."
[14] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*.
[15] Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, 61.

populations, such as Hezbollah, FARC, LLTE, ISIS among many others.[16] Additionally, it is helpful to conceptualise terrorism as a triangle, as the direct victims of terrorism are not the ultimate targets; rather, victims serve as a modus of communication towards a wider audience.[17] This indirect targeting strategy further differentiates terrorism from more conventional forms of political violence, where the immediate and ultimate aims often involve territorial control, the seizure of power or the repression of political opponents or segments of society, rather than influencing an indirect audience.[18]

Naturally, any definition of terrorism that is used in this thesis must be closely similar with the one used by the employed dataset. The GTD defines terrorism 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".[19] Moreover, the GTD allows researchers to apply three additional criteria to further restrict the definition: 1. The act must aim to achieve a political, economic, religious or social goal, 2. There must be an intention to coerce, intimidate or otherwise send a broader message beyond the immediate victims, and 3. The action must fall outside the context of legitimate warfare between state actors.[20] Accordingly, the combination of the operational definition and the criteria perfectly aligns with the conceptual understanding that will be employed in this thesis.

[16] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 36–44.
[17] Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, 61.
[18] Schmid, 4–7.
[19] Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan, "Introducing the Global Terrorism Database," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 2 (2007): 183–184.
[20] "Global Terrorism Database (GTD) | Methodology," START, accessed April 27, 2025, https://www.start.umd.edu/using-gtd.

1.2. The overall effects of TJMs

This subsection will present the work that has been done on the effects of TJMs on diverse social science variables such as human rights, democracy, violence, reconciliation and others. In many cases, the results are mixed; for the sake of clarity, I will present the main "good", "bad" and "murky" effects that each separate TJM has.

Research on prosecutions or trials reflects much of their value as accountability-establishing processes which are ubiquitous in today's practices. Many studies report positive impacts on reducing state repression and improving human rights. For example, some scholars find that countries using prosecutions also experience lower levels of repression.[21] This is because prosecutions increase the cost of repression for state officials, who might risk sanctions in the future such as incarceration or loss of income.[22] This rational choice idea is also supported by other research that outlines the deterrent role that trials can play in different contexts, such as criminal violence or civil war.[23] Additionally, trials might support healing through addressing the needs of victims for retributive justice and by serving as a mechanism for holding the perpetrators accountable and acknowledging the suffering of victims.[24]

However, other studies note the limits of trials' effectiveness and their context-dependency. Some authors note that the deterrent effect of trials is not automatic; rather, just like other TJMs,

[21] Hunjoon Kim and Kathryn Sikkink, "Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Prosecutions for Transitional Countries1," *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 2010): 939–963, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2478.2010.00621.x.
[22] Kim and Sikkink, 10.
[23] Guillermo Trejo, Juan Albarracín, and Lucía Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes: Why Transitional Justice Processes Deter Criminal Violence in New Democracies," *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 6 (September 2018): 787–809, doi:10.1177/0022343318793480; Geoff Dancy et al., "Behind Bars and Bargains: New Findings on Transitional Justice in Emerging Democracies," *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (March 2019): 99–110, doi:10.1093/isq/sqy053.
[24] Roman David, "What We Know About Transitional Justice: Survey and Experimental Evidence: What We Know About Transitional Justice," *Political Psychology* 38 (February 2017): 151–177, doi:10.1111/pops.12395.

it depends on the political circumstances.[25] In the absence of complementary mechanisms such as truth commissions, trials can even be a stimulant for violence. In such a case, trials might be seen as "victor's justice", provoking spoilers instead of facilitating justice.[26] Moreover, there is evidence that indicates trials can increase PTSD symptoms and retraumatize victims, as it happened to some witnesses at the ICTY in Yugoslavia or in the Rwandan gacaca courts.[27] Trials could also provoke resistance and negative reactions among members of perpetrator groups. Such members may even exhibit reduced interest in justice processes, as it happened with Serbs regarding the ICTY.[28]

Regarding amnesties, their strong point seems to be an association with improvements in civil and political rights, although they do not seem to correlate significantly with enhanced protections of physical integrity.[29] According to Dancy et al., this finding challenges the notion that one has to pick between prosecutions or amnesties, as they both contribute to human rights and democracy in different ways.[30] Amnesties can also be seen as bringing "law to a previously lawless domain", essentially being an important tool for the reassertion of state sovereignty and rule of law.[31]

Despite this, some scholars note the negative effects of amnesties. An influential idea has been that amnesties foster a culture of impunity, where criminals are not held responsible for their

[25] Kate Cronin-Furman, "Managing Expectations: International Criminal Trials and the Prospects for Deterrence of Mass Atrocity," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7 (October 2013), doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijt016; Leslie Vinjamuri and Jack Snyder, "Law and Politics in Transitional Justice," *Annual Review of Political Science* 18, no. Volume 18, 2015 (May 2015): 320, doi:10.1146/ANNUREV-POLISCI-122013-110512/CITE/REFWORKS.
[26] Andrew Reiter, Tricia Olsen, and Leigh A Payne, "Transitional Justice and Civil War: Exploring New Pathways, Challenging Old Guideposts," *Transitional Justice Review*, January 2012, 1–34, doi:10.5206/tjr.2012.1.1.6; Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes: Why Transitional Justice Processes Deter Criminal Violence in New Democracies."
[27] David, "What We Know About Transitional Justice."
[28] David.
[29] Dancy et al., "Behind Bars and Bargains: New Findings on Transitional Justice in Emerging Democracies," 10.
[30] Dancy et al., 2.
[31] Kieran McEvoy and Louise Mallinder, "Amnesties in Transition: Punishment, Restoration, and the Governance of Mercy," *Journal of Law and Society* 39, no. 3 (September 2012): 410–440, doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6478.2012.00591.x.

actions.[32] By not holding perpetrators accountable for atrocities, the state essentially erodes its own rule of law and could create an expectation that the future could also bring more exceptions along the way.[33] Impunity also has been qualitatively documented as provoking negative outcomes for victims such as a feeling of powerlessness, PTSD, depression and fear of reoccurrence.[34] Additionally, they are "associated with higher levels of post-authoritarian criminal violence."[35]

In contrast, truth commissions have been shown to exert a deterrent effect on violence by advancing human rights norms and contributing to accountability. Truth commissions can act as a "focal point" for mobilising the civil society in the defence of human rights.[36] Additionally, some scholars report associations between truth commissions and decreased murder rates and state repression, as well as a restoration of victims' dignity.[37] Truth commissions may provide victims and societies with healing, dignity and closure, while also attempting to cultivate social norms of non-violence and respect for human rights, though the effect of the latter is difficult to quantify.[38] However, when implemented in isolation, truth commissions can have a negative effect on subsequent human rights protection.[39] Their role in facilitating reconciliation is also contentious; as some claim, they can sometimes deepen social divisions or retraumatize

[32] Diane Orentlicher, "Settling Accounts: The Duty to Prosecute Human Rights Violations of a Prior Regime," *Yale Law Journal* 100, no. 8 (January 1991), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/facsch_lawrev/1709; Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes."
[33] Orentlicher, "Settling Accounts," 2542.
[34] Mengyao Li and Bernhard Leidner, "Transitional Justice," 2023, 8, doi:10.17192/es2022.0076.
[35] Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes: Why Transitional Justice Processes Deter Criminal Violence in New Democracies," 799.
[36] Alexander Dukalskis, "Transitional Justice in Burma/Myanmar: Crossnational Patterns and Domestic Context," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 26 (February 2015): 93, doi:10.3318/isia.2015.26.9.
[37] Dukalskis, "Transitional Justice in Burma/Myanmar: Crossnational Patterns and Domestic Context"; Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes: Why Transitional Justice Processes Deter Criminal Violence in New Democracies."
[38] David, "What We Know About Transitional Justice"; Onur Bakiner, "Truth Commission Impact: An Assessment of How Commissions Influence Politics and Society," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 8, no. 1 (March 2014): 7, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijt025.
[39] Eric Wiebelhaus-Brahm, "Truth Commissions and Transitional Societies: The Impact on Human Rights and Democracy," *Truth Commissions and Transitional Societies: The Impact on Human Rights and Democracy*, January 2010, 138, doi:10.4324/9780203862025/TRUTH-COMMISSIONS-TRANSITIONAL-SOCIETIES-ERIC-WIEBELHAUS-BRAHM.

victims.[40] Lastly, truth commissions can be vulnerable to politicisation and to be structured in such a way so as to obscure key information and limit real consequences.[41]

Given these varied findings for individual mechanisms, many scholars have argued for a "justice balance" approach that combines the strengths of prosecutions/trials, amnesties, and truth commissions. To this end, Olsen et al. emphasize that the accountability achieved through trials is effectively complemented by the stabilizing effect of amnesties and the healing potential of truth commissions.[42] This belief is echoed by many other scholars who find that combining TJMs in different ways could be more effective in reducing repression, violence and human rights violations.[43]

1.3. TJMs and civil war, terrorism

Over the last decade, scholars in conflict studies and civil war research have increasingly examined the effects of TJMs on peace and conflict outcomes. These studies are particularly relevant given the conceptual proximity between civil war dynamics and terrorism. Research on trials suggests an ambivalent effect: while they can contribute to closure and deterrence, they may also increase the risk of conflict renewal.[44] International prosecutions, for instance, have been linked to a decreased likelihood of conflict termination, as they may discourage warring parties from negotiating peace by increasing the personal costs of surrender.[45] Another study

[40] David, "What We Know About Transitional Justice," 172.
[41] Jetnor Kasmi, "Dealing with the Past and the Path to Transitional Justice: A Comparative Analysis of South Korea and Albania," *Asian Politics and Policy* 16, no. 1 (January 2024): 57–77, doi:10.1111/ASPP.12727.
[42] Olsen, Payne, and Reiter, "The Justice Balance."
[43] Kim and Sikkink, "Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Prosecutions for Transitional Countries1"; Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes"; Dancy et al., "Behind Bars and Bargains: New Findings on Transitional Justice in Emerging Democracies."
[44] David, "What We Know About Transitional Justice: Survey and Experimental Evidence" 164.
[45] Alyssa K Prorok, "The (In)Compatibility of Peace and Justice? The International Criminal Court and Civil Conflict Termination," *International Organization* 71, no. 2 (2017): 213–243, doi:DOI: 10.1017/S0020818317000078.

argues that that fairness is a key determinant of the effect of trials, and partisan (or unfair) trials seem to stabilise peace through coercive means.[46]

Amnesties, by contrast, show a mixed relationship with conflict dynamics. One view is that, as per the bargaining theory, amnesties facilitate negotiated settlements by reducing commitment problems and mitigating incentives for continued fighting.[47] When offered postconflict, amnesties have been associated with a lower risk of conflict recurrence[48], and they may serve as a strategic tool for marginalizing spoilers and securing peace agreements.[49] However, their use remains controversial, as they often come at the cost of accountability. Dancy warns that while amnesties can help end civil wars, they may also be perceived as "deals with the devil" because they shield perpetrators of mass killings, torture, and sexual violence from prosecution.[50] Furthermore, amnesties offered during active conflict have been associated with a lower probability of conflict termination, as they may embolden perpetrators to continue violence rather than seek peaceful resolutions.[51] This is because amnesties might be interpreted as a sign of weakness by the opposite warring faction.

Truth commissions, while generally associated with fostering reconciliation and long-term stability, show limited direct effects on conflict resolution. As already mentioned, truth commissions might contribute to violence reductions and human rights norms; however, their impact on conflict termination and recurrence seem to be understudied. After a conflict has been terminated, there is some scepticism that truth commissions are efficient in carrying out

[46] Christoph V Steinert, "Trial Fairness before Impact: Tracing the Link between Post-Conflict Trials and Peace Stability," *International Interactions* 45, no. 6 (November 2019): 1003–1031, doi:10.1080/03050629.2019.1657114.
[47] Lesley-Ann Daniels, "How and When Amnesty during Conflict Affects Conflict Termination," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 9 (March 2020): 1612–1637, doi:10.1177/0022002720909884.
[48] Geoff Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, September 2017, doi:10.2139/SSRN.2978889.
[49] Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri, "Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice," *International Security* 28 (January 2004): 5–44, doi:10.1162/016228803773100066.
[50] Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace."
[51] Dancy.

their mandates despite their widespread use, as they are often overwhelmed and have to face weak institutions.[52]

While the conflict studies scholarship had started to incorporate transitional justice, terrorism remains largely disconnected from this agenda. This is despite a large body of literature focusing on other determinants of terrorism. To this end, a wide range of "root causes" have been identified by scholars and policymakers, many of them related to economic factors such as sanctions, poverty, social inequality, malnutrition and macroeconomic stagnation.[53] Dissenting views exist however, as some scholars found no significant relationships between terrorism and those factors and instead pointed towards, *inter alia*, political factors.[54] Kis-Katos et al. explicitly found that terrorism is deeply influenced by contexts of low state capacity (or, in their words, failing states), but also regime transitions, especially democratisation.[55] Others found that specific forms of political repression stimulate terrorism if they close off peaceful instruments of expressing dissent.[56] On the other end of the spectrum, democracy and its subcomponents, such as political and civil rights, have also been associated with terrorism, yet the direction of this effect is contested across studies, with contradicting results.[57] The role of

[52] Matiangai V S Sirleaf, "The Truth About Truth Commissions: Why They Do Not Function Optimally in Post-Conflict Societies," *Cardozo L. Rev.* 35 (2013): 2263.

[53] Edward Newman, "Exploring the 'Root Causes' of Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 8 (December 2006): 749–772, doi:10.1080/10576100600704069; James A Piazza, "Rooted in Poverty?: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages 1 ," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no. 1 (March 2006): 159–164, doi:10.1080/095465590944578; William Shughart II, Atin Basuchoudhary, and William Shughart, "On Ethnic Conflict and Origins of Transnational Terrorism," *Defence and Peace Economics* 21 (February 2010): 76, doi:10.1080/10242690902868343; Seung-Whan Choi and Shali and Luo, "Economic Sanctions, Poverty, and International Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis," *International Interactions* 39, no. 2 (April 2013): 217–245, doi:10.1080/03050629.2013.768478.

[54] Piazza, "Rooted in Poverty?: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages 1 "; Krisztina Kis-Katos, Helge Liebert, and Günther G Schulze, "On the Origin of Domestic and International Terrorism," *European Journal of Political Economy* 27 (2011): S17–S36, doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2011.02.002.

[55] Kis-Katos, Liebert, and Schulze, "On the Origin of Domestic and International Terrorism," 527, 529.

[56] James A Piazza, "Repression and Terrorism: A Cross-National Empirical Analysis of Types of Repression and Domestic Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 1 (January 2017): 114, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.994061.

[57] Quan Li, "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (May 2005): 278–297, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30045112; Shughart II, Basuchoudhary, and Shughart, "On Ethnic Conflict and Origins of Transnational Terrorism"; Kis-Katos, Liebert, and Schulze, "On the Origin of Domestic and International Terrorism."

ideology is similarly contested by various bodies of scholarship, with insufficient evidence to convincingly link it with violent extremism.[58] Against this rather ambiguous empirical backdrop, the question of whether TJMs might themselves stimulate/suppress terrorism presents many opportunities of exploration.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

In this section I am going to delve into the theoretical backbone of the paper: the deterrence and bargaining theories. The two theories have some notable similarities as they both rest on rationalist foundations. On the other hand, they diverge in focus, as deterrence theory seeks to understand how undesirable actions can be deterred through threats, whereas bargaining theory examines why conflict occurs when peaceful settlements are preferable.

The two frameworks are particularly suited for the aims of this study because they clearly operate within the logic of trials and amnesties. The core idea of trials is to impose legal consequences on unlawful actions, while the strategic logic of deterrence relates to increasing the costs of such actions.[59] Amnesties, by contrast, are typically offered within negotiating contexts, many times being conditioned on disarmament, reintegration or cooperation.[60] Therefore, they function as tools to signal commitment, reduce uncertainty and incentivise compliance, which are core mechanisms at the heart of the bargaining theory.[61] In this sense, the two theories reflect the strategic logic reflected in the mechanisms themselves.

[58] Donald Holbrook and John Horgan, "Terrorism and Ideology: Cracking the Nut," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 6 (2019): 2–15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26853737.
[59] Kim and Sikkink, "Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Prosecutions for Transitional Countries1."
[60] Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace," 391.
[61] Max Abrahms, "Does Terrorism Really Work? Evolution in the Conventional Wisdom since 9/11," *Defence and Peace Economics* 22, no. 6 (December 2011): 583–594, doi:10.1080/10242694.2011.635954.

This section proceeds in three parts: it begins with a discussion of the intellectual roots of each theory, then looks at how they have been applied to broader literatures, and finally explores their relevance to this study's variables of interest. A third, grievance-inspired model is also briefly touched upon. While not representing a central theory in this study, it provides a supporting conceptual lens that may explain a supposed effect that truth commissions might have in reducing victim traumatisation and radicalisation in transitional contexts.

1.4.1. Deterrence Theory

The strategic logic of deterrence is, in many ways, closely linked with the Cold War, realist-driven thinking. With the new technological advancements and the bipolar geopolitical landscape, a lot of attention has been brought to the role that deterrence plays in preventing a nuclear standoff.[62] While deterrence was only formalised as a rationalist theory with the international relations scholarship's 90s shift, some of the rationalist assumptions can still be observed in the works of that era. By the 60s, Schelling's influential work, revisited in 1980, defined deterrence as a strategic concept, "concerned with influencing the choices that another party will make, and doing it by influencing his expectations of how we will behave. It involves confronting him with evidence for believing that our behaviour will be determined by his behaviour".[63] His widely influential idea of deterrence as "the threat that leaves something to chance" was, however, deeply contingent on making threats credible. But in order for something to be credible, one must inherently rely on an assumption of rationality, where actors weigh costs and benefits to maximise expected value.[64]

[62] Stephen L. Quackenbush, "General Deterrence and International Conflict: Testing Perfect Deterrence Theory," *International Interactions* 36, no. 1 (2010): 741, doi:10.1080/03050620903554069.
[63] Thomas C Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict: With a New Preface by the Author* (Harvard university press, 1980), 13.
[64] Schelling, 15.

These classical understandings of deterrence were however criticised by later scholars for making "restrictive assumptions unrelated to rationality" and effectively focus solely on threats, while neglecting inducements, perception, or personal motivations behind high-level decisions.[65] In response to many of the theoretical limitations, Zagare and Kilgour developed *perfect deterrence* theory, a rationalist model of deterrence grounded in non-cooperative game theory.[66] Unlike classical approaches that assumed deterrence should work in theory but could not account for the reason it sometimes fails, perfect deterrence specified precise conditions under which deterrent threats are unsuccessful. To this end, they went beyond Schelling's credibility deficit, and also included when actors prefer war over peace, when signalling is ambiguous and when state capacity of enforcement is limited, among others.[67] This theoretical refinement was also paralleled by another comprehensive review of empirical deterrence studies, which distinguished between general and immediate deterrence.[68] Huth's findings revealed inconsistent empirical support for classical deterrence theory, reinforcing the need for more rigorous and systematic analysis grounded in rationalist (therefore "perfect deterrent") assumptions.[69]

All these developments took place in the broader intellectual and geopolitical shift following the end of the Cold War. As the bipolar order dissolved, scholars turned their attention away from nuclear standoffs and realism, and turned towards frameworks that would facilitate understanding conflict in fragmented, post-bipolar environments. This reconceptualisation laid the groundwork for applying deterrence theory beyond great-power politics, and was adopted

[65] Robert Jervis, "Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence," *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (1989): 190.
[66] Frank C Zagare and D Marc Kilgour, *Perfect Deterrence*, vol. 72 (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[67] Zagare and Kilgour.
[68] Paul K. Huth, "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 25–48, doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.25.
[69] Huth.

by civil war, asymmetric threats, terrorism and law scholarships, where classical deterrence theory was often more difficult to adapt.

Nowadays, deterrence became influential in fields related to criminology and domestic law enforcement, as findings echoed rationalist assumptions that potential offenders can be (dis)incentivised to take certain decisions. Meta-analyses suggest that the effectiveness of such interventions unexpectedly depend less on the severity of punishment, and rather more their certainty and swiftness of apprehensions, echoing the earlier notion that actors respond to risk calculations.[70] However, deterrence tends to present significant limitations in conditions where perceived impunity, uneven enforcement undermine credibility, problems that would later resonate with conflict and transitional settings.[71]

Still in the realm of non-state-actor research, deterrence theory has influenced the civil war and political violence scholarships, where deterrence is about shaping the calculation of former combatants, civilians in volatile environments. Earlier contributions by Walter and Fortna demonstrated that external enforcement mechanisms can reduce the risk of conflict recurrence, provided they are credible, visible and have a degree of perceived legitimacy and enforcement capability.[72] This, again, confirms some of the underlying assumptions of rational choice-informed deterrence. However, the logic of deterrence has proven especially difficult in contexts of conflict, as the political instability and ideological fragmentation, common in postconflict settings, can lead to failure of deterrence. This, as some scholars argue, is not because of irrationality but rather because of the position of the leader and the fact that

[70] Anthony A Braga and David L Weisburd, "The Effects of Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Evidence," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 49, no. 3 (September 2011): 323–358, doi:10.1177/0022427811419368; Daniel S Nagin, "Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century," *Crime and Justice* 42, no. 1 (April 2013): 199–263, doi:10.1086/670398.
[71] Nagin, "Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century," 215.
[72] Barbara F Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton University Press, 2002).

instability can distort strategic signalling, undermine threat credibility and weaken the ability to follow through on punitive measures.[73]

In recent years, deterrence theory has also been applied, to a lesser degree, to the domains of terrorism and transitional justice, where its underlying assumptions faced even greater stress. Due to their direct relevance of these scholarship for this paper, they will be discussed more in-depth than previous sections. Within transitional justice, there have been some clear applications of deterrence theory, as different mechanisms serve as a signal against impunity. In an article, Kim and Sikking explore the empirical backing of the widely held belief that human rights trials effectively use accountability to deter further violations by individual state officials.[74] Through a quantitative analysis, they found that transitional countries with such prosecutions in place are less repressive (understood as violence, summary execution, disappearances and political imprisonment) than countries without prosecutions. They hypothesise that this happens because prosecutions increase the perceived costs of repression for these officials; both material (arrest, loss of income) and symbolic (prestige, legitimacy).[75] However, they fell short of exploring the intersection with state capacity, and how the credibility of the prosecutions might affect their deterring effect.

Similarly, Trejo, Albarracin and Tiscornia argued that transitional justice can deter future violence by targeting the security apparatus of former regimes. In their analysis of 76 post-authoritarian transitions, they showed that when truth commissions and trials are combined, they generate a credible, twofold threat of punishment: it imprisons repressive state specialists in violence, and also "sends a signal to all state actors that impunity will no longer be

[73] Livio Di Lonardo and Scott A Tyson, "Political Instability and the Failure of Deterrence," *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 1 (May 2021): 180–193, doi:10.1086/715258.
[74] Kim and Sikkink, "Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Prosecutions for Transitional Countries1."
[75] Kim and Sikkink.

tolerated."[76] At the same time, they found that amnesty laws appear to stimulate violence, because the individuals that held positions of power do not update their beliefs, and they might be used to impunity from the past authoritarian regime.[77] This is especially relevant for this thesis, as even when the dependent variable is changed (from elite violence to terrorism counts), deterrence might have a similar effect of incentivising violence through impunity.

Dancy offers further nuance to this discussion by looking at conflict recurrence and impunity. In his analysis of conflict amnesties, he argues that the absence of punitive mechanisms can signal tolerance rather than deterrence.[78] This negative signalling is especially relevant when states issue amnesties that are broad, unconditional, or offer immunity for serious violations during fighting. Through a cross-national analysis of civil war outcomes and transitional justice practices, Dancy finds that unconditional amnesties are associated with increased risks of renewed conflict and lower respect for human rights in the long run.[79] This approach reflects the core logic of deterrence: that actors must believe punishment is possible, even if not universal, in order to adjust their behaviour. Where transitional justice mechanisms fail to project credible consequences for abuse, the deterrent value of postconflict accountability is likely to diminish.

A striking limitation on the applications of deterrence in the transitional justice scholarship is that it focuses almost exclusively on violence from state perpetrators and how they respond to TJMs. By doing so, however, they tend to neglect how non-state actors, especially those engaged in postconflict violence, respond to deterrence signals. This is a notable gap, given that countries in postconflict settings might make use of amnesties much more than others, meaning

[76] Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes: Why Transitional Justice Processes Deter Criminal Violence in New Democracies," 788.
[77] Trejo, Albarracín, and Tiscornia, 792.
[78] Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace."
[79] Dancy.

more opportunities for developing a culture of impunity. The limitation is especially relevant for the present study, which examines whether TJM deterrent logics, so far theorised for state actors, can also influence terrorism dynamics in fragile transnational contexts.

While deterrence has occasionally been applied to the study of terrorism, the literature remains limited, dated and quite sceptical. One of the few large-scale empirical assessments is provided by LaFree, Dugan and Korte, who evaluate six British counterterrorism interventions during The Troubles.[80] While one operation demonstrated a deterrent effect, the other interventions produced significant backlash effects, increasing the likelihood of subsequent attacks.[81] These results suggest that deterrence is context-specific and highly dependent on legitimacy, proportionality and context. Remarkably, all interventions studied were coercive and kinetic in nature, emphasising physical force rather than normative or legal mechanisms of deterrence.[82]

This exclusive focus on hard power neglects instruments like TJMs, which may also function as forms of deterrent signalling, especially when applying criminal trials. The omission exposes a gap in the rather small literature, as effects of institutional forms of accountability are not studied in the context of terrorist non-state actors. Other research outline the scepticism of the efficacy of deterrence, but defends the plausibility of denial strategies, deterrence of supporters, or delegitimation.[83] Despite that, systematic empirical research remains very scarce.

[80] Gary LaFree, Laura Dugan, and Raven Korte, "The Impact of British Counterterrorist Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Comparing Deterrence and Backlash Models," *Criminology* 47, no. 1 (2009): 17–45.
[81] LaFree, Dugan, and Korte, 19.
[82] LaFree, Dugan, and Korte, "The Impact of British Counterterrorist Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Comparing Deterrence and Backlash Models."
[83] Robert F Trager and Dessislava P Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005): 90–91.

1.4.2. Bargaining Theory

Both deterrence theory and bargaining theory are deeply linked, as they assume that rational actors are strategic, maximise utility and make decisions based on calculations and expectations about others' behaviour. The latter emerged from a theoretical puzzle similar to perfect deterrence. However, it operates at a more broader level of abstraction: instead of asking why does deterrence sometimes fail, bargaining theory posed the broader question of why war occurs at all, if it is costly and inefficient.

To this end, in 1995, Fearon formalised the theory identifying three mechanisms that explain the breakdown of peaceful negotiation.[84] First, information asymmetries sometimes do not allow "rational leaders to clarify relative power or resolve without generating a real risk of war".[85] In other words, this occurs when one side lacks accurate knowledge of the other's intentions and capabilities, increasing the risk of miscalculations and violence. Second, commitment problems occur when one or both parties cannot credibly commit to uphold an agreement over time, due to power shifts, future incentives to renege, or the absence of enforcement mechanisms. Third, mechanism, while evoking slight scepticism on its applicability by the author, it related to issue indivisibilities. This refers to deals on subjects that are non-negotiable, in which case bargaining fails not because of uncertainty or distrust, but because no compromise is seen as acceptable by one or two sides.

Bargaining theory has been widely adapted to intrastate conflict and postconflict peacebuilding, not only to explain why conflict starts, but also why negotiated settlements collapse. A central red thread across multiple articles is the significance of commitment problems in civil wars and

[84] James D Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 381–382.
[85] Fearon, 381.

its role in breakdown and/or continuation of conflict.[86] Scholars have argued that fragmented and internally divided opposition groups, along with power asymmetries, shifting dynamics, and weak state institutions, represent structural obstacles to credible bargaining.[87] During negotiations, a key concern is that demobilisation could potentially embolden the other party to opportunistically take advantage of the situation in the future; this situation therefore needs to be accounted for, not only through fear-reducing measures, but also cost-increasing provisions such as peacekeeping, separation of troops or withdrawal of foreign forces.[88] Similarly, post-treaty transition periods are considered especially dangerous, requiring third-party guarantees to ensure that peace agreements are implemented and that parties and that parties hold their end of the deal.[89]

Despite the clear theoretical relevance of bargaining theory to postconflict dynamics, it has been largely underutilised in the study of TJMs. To the best of my knowledge, Dancy provides the only systematic application of bargaining theory for this field.[90] Although his analysis focuses on wartime decisions, his central concern is postconflict stability, and he argues that amnesties granted during conflict affect the durability of peace after the conflict ends. His theoretical expectation is that amnesties can signal impunity and undermine the credibility of elite commitments to peace, and this can have long-term consequences for conflict recurrence.[91] This work provides a clear example of how one TJM can be analysed through the bargaining lens; however, the two literatures remain to a great degree disconnected. This appears to stem

[86] Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*; Barbara F Walter, "Bargaining Failures and Civil War," *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 243–261; Michaela Mattes and Burcu Savun, "Fostering Peace After Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design," *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (September 2009): 737–759, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2478.2009.00554.x.
[87] Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*; David E. Cunningham, "Preventing Civil War: How the Potential for International Intervention Can Deter Conflict Onset," *World Politics* 68, no. 2 (2016): 307–340, doi:10.1017/S0043887115000404; Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace."
[88] Mattes and Savun, "Fostering Peace After Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design," 742–745.
[89] Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*, 6.
[90] Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace."
[91] Dancy.

from historical disciplinary divergences: while bargaining theory is concerned with conflict onset, duration and termination, transitional justice has been dominated by legal and normative principles and application such as reconciliation, truth and accountability. Yet there is no theoretical reason why TJMs should not be treated as strategic signals that shape incentives and expectations in postconflict bargaining environments for terrorist actors as well.

Some scholars have adapted bargaining core mechanisms to explain terrorism as a strategic behaviour in asymmetric conflict.[92] Most notably, terrorism was conceptualised as a signalling strategy designed to manipulate beliefs and expectations in order to "produce concessions from their enemy and obedience and support from their followers".[93] The authors identified five distinct strategies (attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling and outbidding) used by terrorists, all of which exploit informational asymmetries and commitment problems.[94] However, other scholars challenged the strategic utility of such actions, as evidence shows terrorism is counterproductive in bringing about governmental concessions.[95]

Taken together, the insights of deterrence theory, bargaining theory and the limited applications to both transitional justice and terrorism reveal a clear theoretical gap. A very small number of studies have considered how TJMs might shape the incentives for violent actors, and none have explored how they affect the strategic calculations of terrorist groups in fragile postconflict settings. In addressing gap, the study builds on the work of Dancy and others by shifting the dependent variable to terrorism and systematically applying both deterrence and bargaining theory to a new context.

[92] Abrahms, "Does Terrorism Really Work? Evolution in the Conventional Wisdom since 9/11," 584–586.
[93] Andrew H Kydd and Barbara F Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (April 2006): 78, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137539.
[94] Kydd and Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism."
[95] Abrahms, "Does Terrorism Really Work?," 584.

While this dissertation primarily relies on the two aforementioned theories, the truth commission's intended use to promote reconciliation and reduce grievances, instead of punishing or bargaining, begs the limited inclusion of grievance theory.[96] This theory has seen various applications in the terrorism scholarship. Here, it is used in a secondary capacity, given its application and relevance solely for the truth commissions.

Under the lens of grievance theory, political violence can be understood as a reaction to collective unmet needs. This can stem from a variety of factors, such as a sense of perceived injustice, exclusion from political life and a sense of retribution.[97] The political exclusion of certain groups from state power, or related competition along ethnic lines, have been shown to strongly correlate with the onset of rebellions, especially in lower income countries.[98] Strikingly, the oral reinforcement of traumatic victimhood narratives might also reinforce these trends and serve as a basis of violence.[99]

Truth commissions seek to engage precisely with such grievances. Rather than focusing on establishing judicial accountability, truth commissions seek recognition and lift "the lid of silence and denial from a contentious and painful period of history".[100] In this sense, truth commissions address the preconditions of radicalisation, especially when grievances are tied to collective memory and identity. Therefore, grievance theory presents a natural lens through which to hypothesise the potential effect of a reconciliation-based transitional instrument over

[96] Matt Qvortrup and Arend Lijphart, "Domestic Terrorism and Democratic Regime Types," *Civil Wars* 15 (December 2013): 471–485, doi:10.1080/13698249.2013.853415; Jacob Ravndal, "Explaining Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Grievances, Opportunities and Polarisation," *European Journal of Political Research* 57, no. 4 (November 2018): 845–866, doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12254; Caitlin Clemmow et al., "Disaggregating Lone-Actor Grievance-Fuelled Violence: Comparing Lone-Actor Terrorists and Mass Murderers," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34, no. 3 (April 2022): 558–584, doi:10.1080/09546553.2020.1718661.

[97] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379–399; Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (US Institute of Peace Press, 2000); Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min, "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis," *World Politics* 62, no. 1 (2010): 87–119, doi:DOI: 10.1017/S0043887109990219.

[98] Cederman, Wimmer, and Min, "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis."

[99] Cederman, Wimmer, and Min, 97.

[100] Priscilla B Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (Routledge, 2002), 20.

terrorism. However, the theory is only applied conceptually here, without being directly measured or tested due to the absence of relevant grievance data at the country-year level.

Drawing from the mechanisms outlined by deterrence, bargaining and grievance theories, Table 1 summarises the expectations about how each TJM might affect terrorism. These expectations are not direct empirical findings, but rather reflect a theoretical application of the core logic of both theories applied to the context of terrorism in transitional environments.

Table 1: Broader Theoretical Expectations

Theory	Amnesties	Truth Commissions	Trials
Deterrence Theory	(1) No effects due to lack of accountability; (2) Increased terrorism if groups expect future pardons regardless of their actions.	(1) Reduces terrorism by signalling accountability, but to a lesser degree due to lack of sanctions.	(1) Decreases terrorism, *but only in high-capacity states* that can enforce punishment.
Bargaining Theory	(1) Could decrease terrorism if seen as a credible peace signal, or (2) Could increase terrorism if seen as a signal of weakness.	Ambiguous, as it lacks direct commitment signals, but might build trust or reduce uncertainty indirectly.	(1) Increases terrorism by signalling unwillingness to bargain or reconcile; escalatory approach.
Grievance Theory (supporting)		(1) Truth commissions are designed to reduce grievances, leading to reduced terrorism.	

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN

There is a clear gap in understanding how certain transitional mechanisms are influencing the incidence of terrorism within a country. This chapter will outline the research methodology employed by this study, which takes a large-N, quantitative approach. In doing so, it seeks to respond to the following research question: *What effects do TJMs have on terrorism counts in transitional contexts?* To this end, statistical models will be developed to provide a first exploration aiming to outline the initial evidence for a causal claim, yet without claiming causality.

The structure of this chapter is based on four main sections. First, it outlines the key variables and hypotheses, followed by an illustration of whether two case studies support the hypotheses. Next, the processes of data collection and operationalisation of the variables will be discussed, together with outlining the types of analysis used, including the models applied and the potential limitations of the research design.

2.1. Variables and hypotheses

The dependent variable in this research is the incidence of terrorism, measured in the number of terrorist attacks that a country has experienced in any given year. In this sense, the unit of analysis is the country-year, spanning from 1970 to 2020. Although terrorism can be conceptualised in various ways, the choice to use both yearly attack counts and a weighted formula as the outcome is driven by both theoretical and practical considerations, as it tries to strike a balance between representing the raw number and the severity of the cases. This variable is believed to be influenced by three independent variables: truth commissions,

prosecutions and amnesties. The three mechanisms differ significantly in the reasons for which they are designed and the theoretical expectations attached to their activities.

To reiterate, prosecutions are mechanisms of retributive justice. Through their accountability-establishing component, trials are expected to overall decrease terrorism. Trials act as a deterrent by increasing the costs of engaging in political violence; trials also signal that the state is committed to enforcing the rule of law, which reduces the uncertainty component of the bargaining model. However, real consequences of judicial processes can be lacking in weak states, possibly even escalating violence as it can be interpreted as a confrontational approach that casts doubt on the state's commitment to a genuine peace settlement.

Amnesties, by contrast, represent something that is given, not something that is imposed, by the state. Amnesties are meant to allow former combatants to reintegrate into society without fear of prosecution, removing the cost associated with abandoning unlawful activities. However when it comes to terrorism, amnesties might send different counterintuitive signals; in strong states, they might paradoxically appear as signs of appeasement that would only be logical if the state is in a weaker than anticipated position. This might lead to emboldened terrorists, rather than the opposite.

Truth commissions are in an intermediate position, accountability-wise. They aim to uncover past abuses, often attempting to foster reconciliation and a sense of catharsis. These mechanisms are typically non-punitive and do not result in criminal sanctions, yet they still establish some sense of accountability by acknowledging victimisation and allowing perpetrators to repent. By validating the victims' experiences and rewriting the historical narrative, they might reduce grievances by addressing the foundations of radicalisation.

State capacity and institutional capacity will be used as moderating variables. Specifically, state capacity refers to a government's ability to assert authority across its territory, which is

especially relevant in moderating the effect of trials. This is because countries with less control should be increasingly unable to establish the accountability of perpetrators, which is the main aim of prosecutions. On the other hand, institutional capacity concerns itself with the stability and effectiveness of governance, which should be a crucial moderator of the effect of amnesties and their persuasiveness, because in some contexts, amnesties may appear inappropriate and unnecessary.

Table 2: Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Basis	Expected effect
H1 – TJMs are significantly associated with terrorism levels.	Deterrence and Bargaining Theory	TJMs influence terrorism in certain ways, direction depending on the mechanism.
H2 – The effect of trials on terrorism is conditional on state capacity	Deterrence Theory	In high-capacity states, trials deter terrorism; in weak states, they fail or decrease violence.
H3 – The effect of amnesties on terrorism is conditional on institutional capacity	Bargaining Theory	H3a: in countries with stable regimes, governments can more credibly commit to amnesties, leading to reduced terrorism. H3b: in countries with high government capacity, amnesties might signal leniency, which terrorists can interpret as weakness or lack of resolve, leading to increased terrorism.
H4 – Truth commissions are associated with lower levels of terrorism.	*Grievance Theory*	Truth Commissions reduce terrorism by addressing grievances that might otherwise fuel radicalisation.

2.2. Illustrative cases: the United Kingdom and Colombia

After laying out the hypotheses that will be addressed in the quantitative study, it is important to also look at how they might be illustrated by real-life cases. These cases are not part of a comprehensive analysis, but rather they serve as contextual grounding before turning towards the statistical analysis. The following two cases will therefore shed light on the structural conditions that might be necessary for TJMs to support a reduction in political violence.

The United Kingdom is used as a non-paradigmatic but widely acknowledged success case. For decades, Northern Ireland has been the place of a protracted conflict that became known as The Troubles, marked by violent confrontations between unionist forces and a paramilitary group known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The conflict, which intensified from 1960s onwards, claimed the lives of several thousands of people[101] through a series of bombings, assassinations and armed clashes, leaving deep social and psychological scars in an already-divided society. A major turning point came with the successful negotiation of the GFA in 1998, marking a shift from an asymmetric conflict towards a postconflict environment.[102]

Perhaps due to "constructive ambiguity", the contents of the GFA were not explicitly employing TJMs.[103] However, the direct consequences of the treaties created the space for significant efforts towards positive peace. Strikingly, the GFA addressed the following important points.[104] It addressed the Northern Ireland right of self-determination and a power sharing design; it mandated the release of paramilitary prisoners under the 1998 Sentences act; it offered amnesty-

[101] Alvarez Berastegi, "Transitional Justice in Settled Democracies: Northern Ireland and the Basque Country in Comparative Perspective," 545.
[102] Berastegi, 548.
[103] Nevin T Aiken, "The Bloody Sunday Inquiry: Transitional Justice and Postconflict Reconciliation in Northern Ireland," *Journal of Human Rights* 14, no. 1 (January 2015): 102, doi:10.1080/14754835.2014.987740.
[104] *The Agreement: Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations* (Northern Ireland Office, 1998).

like provisions for individuals cooperating in locating disappeared persons[105], and also included a series of truth-seeking and accountability measures. Among these was the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, launched in 1998 and concluded in 2010, which attributed the responsibility to British soldiers for the 1972 killing of 13 unarmed civilians and led to a public apology by the Prime Minister David Cameron.[106] In parallel, at least eight domestic prosecutions had taken place in connection to the conflict, targeting both state agents and paramilitary agents.[107] Additionally, two reparative initiatives were introduced to support victims of the conflict, in 2012 and 2020, providing financial, psychological and symbolic support to survivors and their families.[108]

Despite some dissenting voices, the overall legacy of the GFA and subsequent processes is positive, marked by a clear reduction in violence, despite not entirely eradicating it.[109] This illustrates H1, as TJMs coincided with reduced terrorism. H2 also finds support; although prosecutions were limited, their presence within a high-capacity country sent deterrent signals, indicating that combatants might take the state more seriously if it is in a position of holding them accountable. Interestingly, H3b may be contradicted, because the amnesties did not appear to signal state weakness, possibly because they were embedded in a broader and credible institutional framework, and the other mechanisms might have been enough to decrease terrorism. However, the case study is consistent with H3a, as the UK exhibits a regime with high political durability, positioning it as a credible actors within the settlement.[110] Finally, H4 is illustrated through the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, which addressed long-standing grievances and contributed to community healing.

[105] "Northern Ireland (Location of Victims' Remains) Act," 1999.
[106] Aiken, "The Bloody Sunday Inquiry."
[107] "United Kingdom – TJET," Transitional Justice Evaluation Tools, accessed May 24, 2025, https://transitionaljusticedata.org/en/Europe/UnitedKingdom.html.
[108] Berastegi, "Transitional Justice in Settled Democracies"; "United Kingdom – TJET."
[109] James B Steinberg, "Ending War and Ending Conflict in Northern Ireland," 2019, 100.
[110] As also reflected in the State Fragility Index that is used for the operationalisation of regime stability.

For the Colombian politicians, GFA presented a clear model of inspiration; even the President Santos himself admitted to having copied many aspects of the peace process and adapted them to the Colombian situation.[111] However, the Colombian structural context differed substantially from that of Northern Ireland, in terms of magnitude, fragmentation and state capacity. The multi-actor conflict had persisted for over five decades, involving a multitude of groups, including the FARC and ELN Marxist-Leninist guerrillas. By 2016 the conflict caused over 260.000 deaths and displaced millions, while the state presence in its rural territories remains patchy.[112]

The 2016 peace agreement with FARC was initially rejected in a national referendum but was subsequently revised and ratified by the Colombian Congress.[113] The agreement included clauses on a permanent ceasefire, decommissioning of weapons, security guarantees, amnesties for lesser crimes and the reincorporation of FARC by the transformation in a political party.[114] A Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) was established to manage the cases of prosecutions for those most responsible[115], alongside continued implementation of the reparatory 2011 Law on Victims and a creation of a truth commission which delivered a final report in 2022.[116]

The process was a big success in the disarmament of FARC and a substantial reduction in violence.[117] However, striking peace with only one actor in a fragmented environment led to a significant power vacuum that the state failed to fill. Instead, other groups, most notably the ELN, gained in prominence and quickly expanded their territorial control and illicit operations,

[111] "Colombia's Santos: I Copied Aspects of Northern Ireland Peace Agreement," Al Jazeera, November 17, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/17/colombias-santos-i-copied-aspects-of-northern-ireland-peace-agreement.
[112] Ted Piccone, "Peace with Justice: The Colombian Experience with Transitional Justice," 2019, 3.
[113] Piccone, 3.
[114] Piccone, 10–23.
[115] Piccone, 10.
[116] "Colombia – TJET," Transitional Justice Evaluation Tools, accessed May 25, 2025, https://transitionaljusticedata.org/en/Americas/Colombia.html.
[117] Piccone, "Peace with Justice" 4.

even expanding their activity into Venezuela.[118] This led to a significant undermining of the state ability to enforce justice for such groups particularly in regions where the state lacked territorial control and where communities virtually never experienced a functioning formal justice system.[119] As a result, H2 finds partial support; while trials were established, their deterrent effect was negated by the state's limited presence in key regions, allowing terrorists to operate in pockets of safe havens both inside and outside the country.

The Colombian judicial system attempted to strike a balance between incentivising demobilisation and being in line with international commitments, leading to amnesties for political crimes and reduction of sentences for those who collaborated with the authorities.[120] Despite criticism for impunity, the devised system was widely successful and large numbers of FARC rebels demobilised without fear of prosecution.[121] This is consistent with H3b, because the amnesties were successful in a clear context of lack of governance, where the Colombian state had to compete with rebel groups in providing essential services in rural areas.[122] In such settings, amnesties might reflect necessary steps toward peace.

At the same time, despite the Colombian administrative weakness, the country's regime stability remained high: there was no real threat of executive overthrow, coups or regime breakdown.[123] This durability likely made the amnesty offers more credible, supporting H3a by offering trustworthy signalling.

[118] Piccone, 7.
[119] Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón, "Transitional Justice and the 'Colombian Peace Process,'" in *Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Colombia* (Routledge, 2018), 4.
[120] Annika Björkdahl and Louise Warvsten, "Friction in Transitional Justice Processes: The Colombian Judicial System and the ICC," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 15, no. 3 (November 2021): 649–651, doi:10.1093/ijtj/ijab018.
[121] Piccone, "Peace with Justice" 4.
[122] Piccone, 9.
[123] Benjamin Marshall, Monty; Cole, "Table 1: State Fragility Index and Matrix 2016" (Vienna, VA, 2014), Center for Systemic Peace, https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/SFImatrix2016c.pdf.

For ELN however, related efforts within the government's "Total Peace" agenda have failed. In 2022 and 2023, the Colombian government suspended the arrest warrants for 31 commanders in a trust-building exercise; however, violence persisted, and a renewed offensive in January 2025 led to the revoking of those suspensions.[124] The breakdown appears less as a function of signalling in bargaining terms and more a reflection of the ELN's lack of political goodwill. Lastly, Colombia's Truth Commission was praised as being the best-staffed and best-funded commission to date, also producing a detailed report with actionable recommendations.[125] However, while symbolically meaningful, the commission has been unable to prevent violence, though not contradicting H4.

All in all, Colombia illustrates the limits of implementing a transitional justice framework in an environment that is not yet conducive to peace, with limited state authority and political willingness. It also confirms that the analysis should include a control for the number of rebels. Compared with Northern Ireland, the two cases outline that the effects of TJMs are highly contingent on the ability of the state to control its own territory and other institutional contexts.

2.3. Data collection and Analysis

The main dataset was built based on multiple reliable and acknowledged sources of data in the social sciences. For measuring the dependent variable, the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) has been used.[126] The GTD is a project that systematically included information on every terrorist event that happened across the globe, spanning from 1970 to 2020. As of now, this project is the most comprehensive database on terrorist attacks available open-source, and it

[124] "Colombia's Prosecution Reactivates ELN Arrest Warrants," Colombia Reports, accessed May 25, 2025, https://colombiareports.com/colombias-prosecution-reactivates-eln-arrest-warrants/.
[125] "Colombia – TJET."
[126] "Global Terrorism Database (GTD) | Methodology."

includes information on the attack type, casualties, location, perpetrator and target type, among others.

For the independent variables, I have used the Transitional Justice Evaluation Team (TJET), a project compiling a global database of transitional justice mechanisms around the world.[127] The period is conveniently similar to GTD's, as it spans from 1970 to 2020, and the collected data is event-based. For enhancing its analytical power, TJET also draws from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) for including data on intrastate conflict, and other projects such as V-DEM or Polity5 for data on democratic transitions. All three TJMs are coded as binary variables and are present in any given year if there is at least one instance of trials, amnesties or truth commissions in that year, irrespective of the magnitude.

The resulting dataset from combining the dependent and independent variables is an unbalanced panel, meaning that not all countries are observed in every year between 1970 and 2020. This can lead to issues if the missingness appears as a result of a systematic bias (such as missing data due to conflict). That being said, due to the nature of the observed phenomena, the recording of both variable types is event-driven, as only those country-years in which either terrorism or TJMs is observed have been included in their respective datasets. Therefore, the absence of data is the result of a lack of activity, rather than a systematic bias. Additionally, the resulting panel is appropriate for use in negative binomial regressions models, which are well suited to deal with unbalanced panels.

The two moderating variables, state capacity and institutional capacity, are operationalised from different sources. For state capacity, V-DEM's indicator of state authority is used, which measures a state's ability to control its territory.[128] After running diagnostic tests, it was

[127] "Frequently Asked Questions – TJRC."
[128] "The V-Dem Dataset – V-Dem," accessed January 15, 2023, https://www.v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/.

revealed that the variable of trials and its interaction with state capacity were having a high degree of collinearity, inflating the significance of the estimated coefficients. In order to fix this, the moderating variable was mean-centered, resulting in a normal VIF score.

Institutional capacity is captured through two distinct proxies: government effectiveness and regime stability. The former refers to perceptions of institutional quality and the provision of basic utilities by the state and is drawn from the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators, whereas the latter reflects regime stability and susceptibility to leadership non-election change, drawn from the State Fragility Index.[129]

For some control variables I have made use of a number of variables from Geoff Dancey's study on the effect of amnesties on conflict resolution, which might be relevant for the context of terrorism as well.[130] These are rebel strength (proxy for balance of power), population number, number of dyads (number of rebel groups might influence bargaining effectiveness as seen in Colombia). As a standard practice in terrorism studies, GDP per capita has also been included in the final model, so as to control for differences in economic development that are the backbone of the "rooted-in-poverty hypothesis" of earlier studies.[131]

Another common control variable in quantitative terrorism analyses is the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable (LDV). Terrorism tends to be path-dependent or, in other words, past terrorism has been consistently correlated with present terrorism in previous studies.[132] That being said, a significant methodological concern is that the LDV can account for so much

[129] "Worldwide Governance Indicators," World Bank, accessed May 25, 2025, https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators; "Fragile States Index," accessed May 25, 2025, https://fragilestatesindex.org/.
[130] Dancy, "Deals with the Devil? Conflict Amnesties, Civil War, and Sustainable Peace."
[131] Piazza, "Rooted in Poverty?: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages 1 ," 163.
[132] Li, "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?"; Indra De Soysa and Ragnhild Nordås, "Islam's Bloody Innards? Religion and Political Terror, 1980–2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2007): 927–943; Choi and and Luo, "Economic Sanctions, Poverty, and International Terrorism"; Piazza, "Repression and Terrorism."

variation that it becomes really difficult to assess the independent variables' effect.[133] Additionally, LDVs can lead to biased estimates, because unobserved influences from previous years spill over into the next, if there is autocorrelation in the error term.[134] In other words, there is a serious risk that past terrorism will be correlated with the model's error term, which violates key regression assumptions, distorting the effect of other variables.

However, according to Wilkins, the solution is not to exclude LDVs, but rather to include additional lags, which can help correct residual autocorrelation.[135] Others adopted various strategies; Kis-Katos et al. constructed a five-year average of terrorism levels, while others relied on a single lag or logarithmic transformations to normalise distributions.[136] This study adopts a compromise approach: it includes a three-year logged mean LDV, representing a good balance between controlling for temporal dependence, preserving variance and reducing bias.

The quantitative analysis is structured around six negative binomial models, in which robust standard errors are clustered at the country level. This setup is common in panel data settings, where there is a need to account for potential serial autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity within countries over time. Each model is re-estimated using two measurement choices; both the raw terrorism count data and the weighted terrorism index as dependent variables, so as to assess both the frequency and intensity of terrorism. The models are as follows:

[133] Christopher H Achen, "Why Lagged Dependent Variables Can Suppress the Explanatory Power of Other Independent Variables," in *Annual Meeting of the Political Methodology Section of the American Political Science Association, UCLA*, vol. 20, 2000, 7–2000.
[134] Arjun S Wilkins, "To Lag or Not to Lag?: Re-Evaluating the Use of Lagged Dependent Variables in Regression Analysis," *Political Science Research and Methods* 6, no. 2 (2018): 393.
[135] Wilkins, 409.
[136] Li, "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?"

Table 3: Models

	Scope
Model 1 (H1, H4) – 1970-2020	Baseline relationship between TJMs and terrorism.
Model 2 (H2) – 1970-2020	The moderating effect of state capacity on the trials-terrorism relationship.
Model 3 (H3a) – 1995-2018	The moderating effect of institutional capacity (measured as regime stability) on the amnesties-terrorism relationship.
Model 4 (H3b) – 1995-2020	The moderating effect of institutional capacity (measured as government effectiveness) on the amnesties-terrorism relationship.
Model 5 (H2, H3b, H4) – 1995-2020	Model with full set of control variables (+ government effectiveness).
Model 6 (H2, H3a, H4) – 1995-2018	Model with full set of control variables (+ regime stability).

Additionally, the analysis considers the possibility that TJMs may have lagged effects on terrorism. This is due to two reasons. First, as an example, a trial initiated in December may only begin to influence terrorism in the following year, therefore it is only logical to address timing in separate models. Second, TJMs might overall have a delayed impact, especially in the case of reconciliation-based mechanisms. Therefore, the models will be remade with lagged versions of the TJM variables as well.

While the study adopts a rigorous quantitative design, there are many inherent limitations that must be acknowledged. Due to the observational nature of this research, the ability to make causal inferences is constrained, and any potential associations cannot be taken as a definite claim for causality. Second, while the GTD represents the most comprehensive dataset of terrorist attacks, it is equally important to acknowledge its limitation such as noise levels,

underreporting, variability in data quality.[137] Some limitations were mitigated in the cleaning process; for example, only those observations were picked which satisfied certain criteria that were more restrained than the original dataset, for example making sure that the attacks constituted a form of political violence where the intention was to intimidate a larger audience. Additionally, cases in which there was an ambiguity in whether they constituted terrorism were dropped. Despite the inherent limitations, the GTD remains the best option for measuring our dependent variable because it is the most reliable and encompassing database on terrorist events. Third, the inclusion of control variables and moderators ultimately reduce the sample size significantly, by truncating data. This affects external validity, especially when interpreting models with extensive controls.

[137] Zonghuang Xu et al., "Risk Assessment and Categorization of Terrorist Attacks Based on the Global Terrorism Database from 1970 to 2020," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 11, no. 1 (2024): 1103, doi:10.1057/s41599-024-03597-y.

CHAPTER 3: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The primary objective of this analysis is to determine whether there is any association between the implementation of TJMs and terrorism, the latter serving as the dependent variable. However, terrorism can be measured in various ways. In one approach, it can be measured as purely count data, where each terrorist attack is counted as one unit. Parsimony is the biggest advantage of this approach, since it is the most straightforward. However, simplicity is also its strongest weakness: it assumes that all attacks are of equal significance. For instance, it equates the impact of a large-scale attack, such as 9/11, to a casualty-free small bomb in Northern Ireland.

Alternatively, terrorism can be weighted to account for the intensity of attacks. In order to explore this option, a formula for intensity was created by assigning a value of 0.8 for each death and 0.2 for each injury. In other words, one death is considered as 4 times more impactful than one injury. The rationale of this scale is empirically inspired by the Global Terrorism Index, which introduced a weighting scale for calculating terrorism country scores and assigned weights of 3 for fatalities, 1 to incidents, 0.5 to injuries and up to 3 for property damage depending on severity.[138] While keeping proportions in mind, this thesis' scale narrows down

[138] Daniel Hyslop and Thomas Morgan, "Measuring Terrorism with the Global Terrorism Index," *Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development* 22 (January 2014): 97–114, doi:10.1108/S1572-8323(2014)0000022010.

on human-centered losses, as they are the more socially-relevant, stringent and immediate aspects of terrorism.

Both measures clearly exhibit overdispersion, or variance that greatly exceeds the mean, especially when weighting (Table 4). Figures 1 and 2 present histograms that further illustrate the heavily right-skewed distribution of the data; with some cases representing very high counts of terrorism (up to 3771 in Figure 1 and 9884 in Figure 2), yet with a dense cluster of low-count observations.

This skewness, combined with the count-based nature of terrorism, makes standard linear regressions inappropriate due to their assumptions of normally distributed residuals and homoskedasticity (the spread of residuals being constant), which do not hold in this context. Poisson regression is designed to address these limitations; however, overdispersion violates its assumption of equality between the mean and the variance, therefore it does not represent a solution. Relatedly, although log transformations are often used to address skewness, they are less appropriate here because they would alter the discrete, count-based nature of data, while complicating interpretations due to the fact that zeroes would become small positives on the transformed scale.

Given these challenges, negative binomial models are employed, which extend the Poisson model by making it suitable for count data with overdispersion.[139] However, this model assumes that the data is in count format, and as such I considered two options to convert the weighted data into a suitable form: either multiply the values by 10, or round them to the nearest integer. In the end, I decided on the latter, as multiplying by 10 further unnecessarily exacerbates the overdispersion, while rounding to the nearest integer results in slightly lower precision but ensures the data remains in a suitable format for analysis.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	SD	NA's	Overdispersion
Terrorist attack counts	0	3371.00	39.81	4.00	155.83	0	609.02
Weighted terrorist attacks count	0	9884.00	83.09	2.00	448.91	0	2424.45
Terrorist attacks counts (log)	0	8.12	2.00	1.61	1.58	0	0.24
Weighted terrorist attacks count (log)	0	9.20	1.83	1.10	2.01	0	1.20

[139] William Gardner, Edward P Mulvey, and Esther C Shaw, "Regression Analyses of Counts and Rates: Poisson, Overdispersed Poisson, and Negative Binomial Models.," *Psychological Bulletin* 118, no. 3 (1995): 392.

Figure 1: Histogram of Terrorist Attacks Count

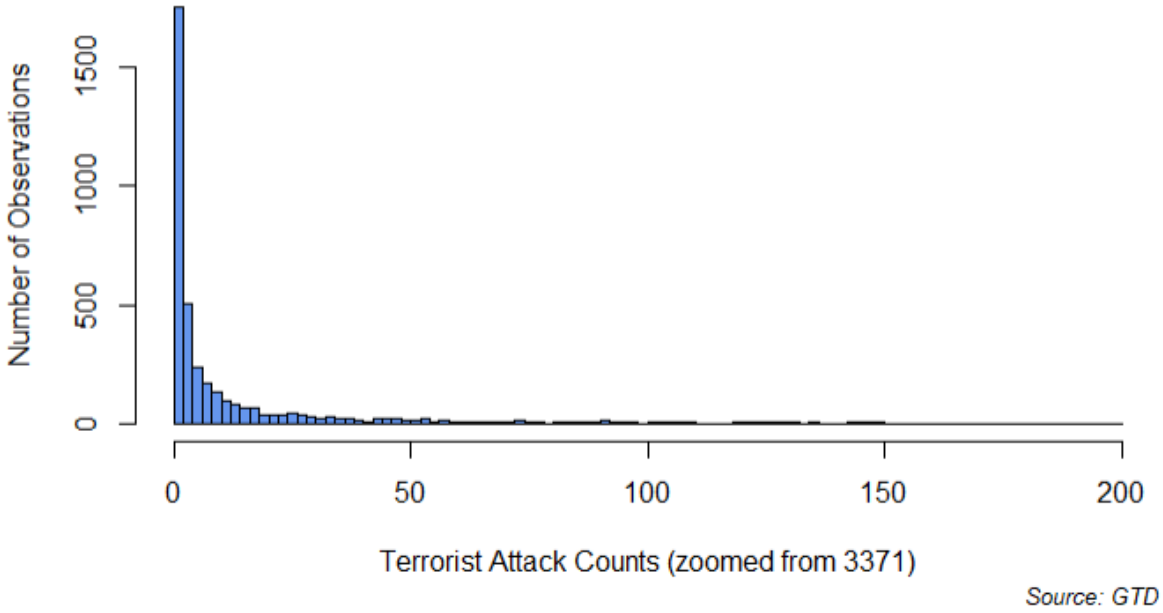
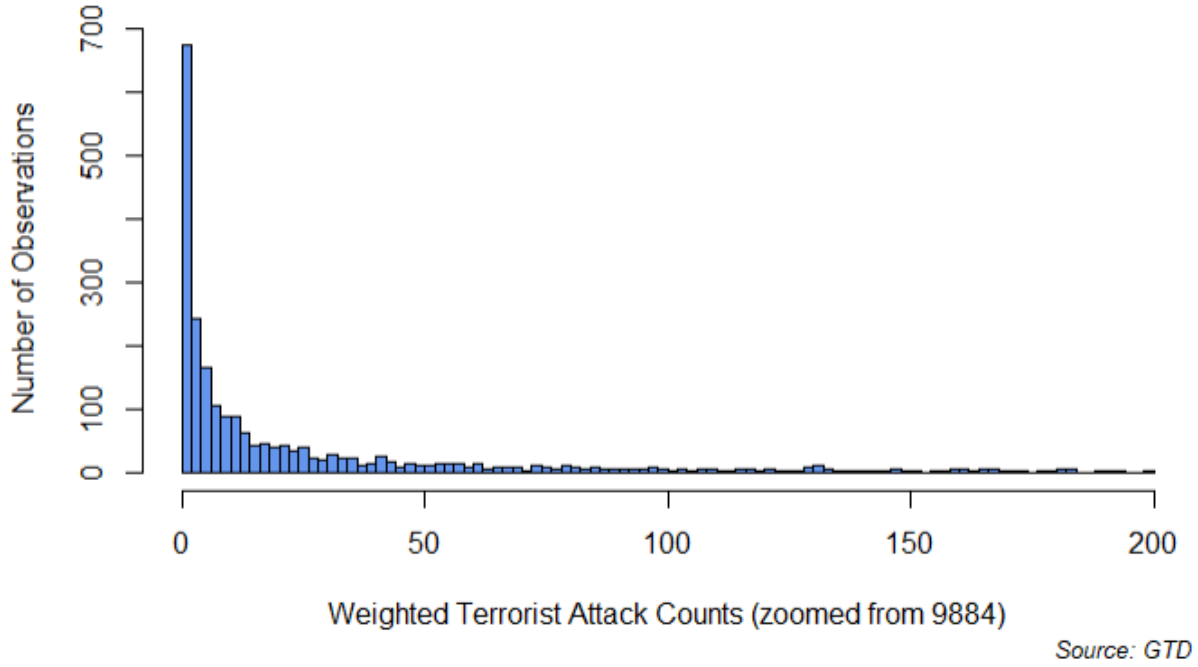


Figure 2: Histogram of Weighted Terrorist Attack Counts



3.1.1. Other variables

This section presents the independent variables (amnesties, truth commissions, trials) and moderating variables that are used in the regression models, together with some descriptive statistics. The TJMs of interest are all stored as dummy variables, with the value of 0 representing the absence of said variable in a country-year. Truth commissions are coded as 1 in the year in which the instrument concluded its work. This is because truth commissions tend to operate across multiple years, and by focusing on the end year it is possible to ensure a similar interpretation with amnesties and trials, which are similarly marked by the year they enter into force. As expected from datasets of this nature, a higher number of years show an absence of TJMs, reflecting country-years in which terrorism has happened without the presence of the independent variables.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for TJMs

Variable	0	1	NA's	Mean
Amnesty	3733	424	0	0.1026442
Truth Commission	4077	80	0	0.0192308
Trial	3514	623	0	0.1546789

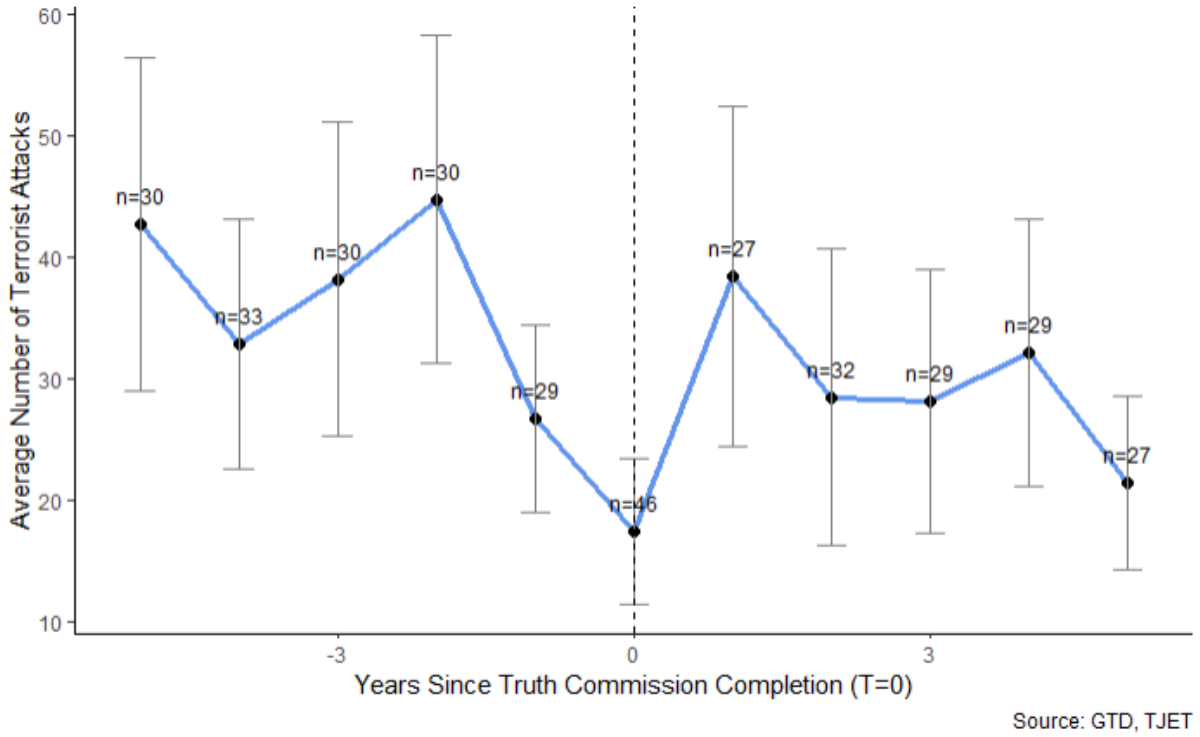
In Appendix 1-3, it is possible to see a mapping of TJM implementation across countries and their association with the average number of terrorist attacks per country. The patterns further indicates that a small number of countries, such as Sri Lanka (seven truth commission years), Chile and Colombia (32 and 30 trial years), and Sudan (16 amnesty years) dominate the

landscape in terms of high TJM use combined with significant terrorism numbers.[140] While observations with zero TJMs have been excluded for visual clarity, the distributions remain heavily skewed toward the lower end of the scale. This reinforces the need for a statistical approach that accounts for such data characteristics, as employed in the subsequent regression analysis.

Before turning to moderating variables, it is helpful to take an exploratory look at how truth commissions relate to terrorism, as they are the only variable with a supposed direct bivariate relationship. This initial visualisation (Figure 3) shows that, as anticipated, truth commissions at T-0 are associated with a notable drop in terrorism levels as compared to the preceding years. This suggests the timing might matter; since some truth commissions take multiple years to complete, the pacifying effects of the truth commission might be most effective closer to the end of the process. However, the effect does not seem to be sustained in the following years, even when keeping in mind the considerable variation captured by the wide standard deviation segments. This raises potential questions regarding the long-term effects of truth commissions.

[140] Some observations have been dropped for not fulfilling the criteria of being transitional under the TJET definition.

Figure 3: Before vs After Truth Commissions (Up to Five Years)



This analysis includes two moderating variables. State capacity is the degree to which the government can project power and influence across its entire territory. As it can be seen in Figure 4, most of the observations happen in countries which can exert authority over most, if not all of their territory, with some exceptions. The lower the score becomes, the more countries may struggle to enforce the accountability for rule breaking individuals, which should directly inform the behaviour of terrorist actors.

Figure 4: Histogram of State Capacity

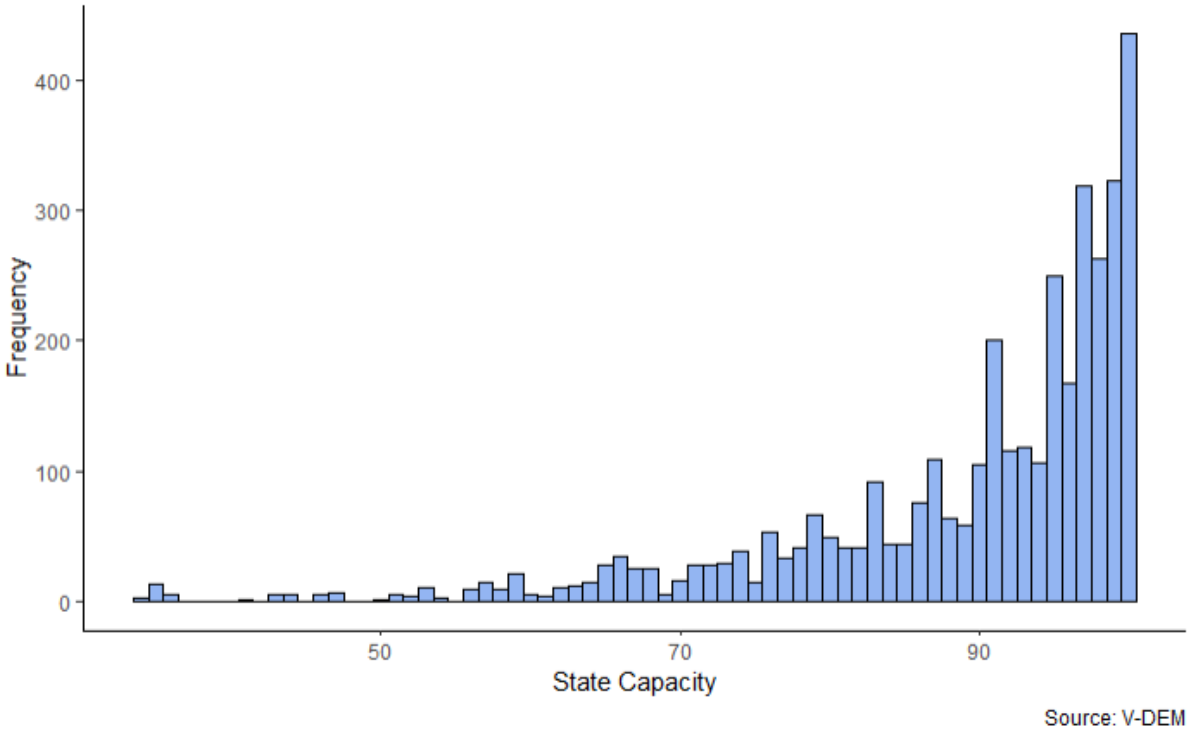
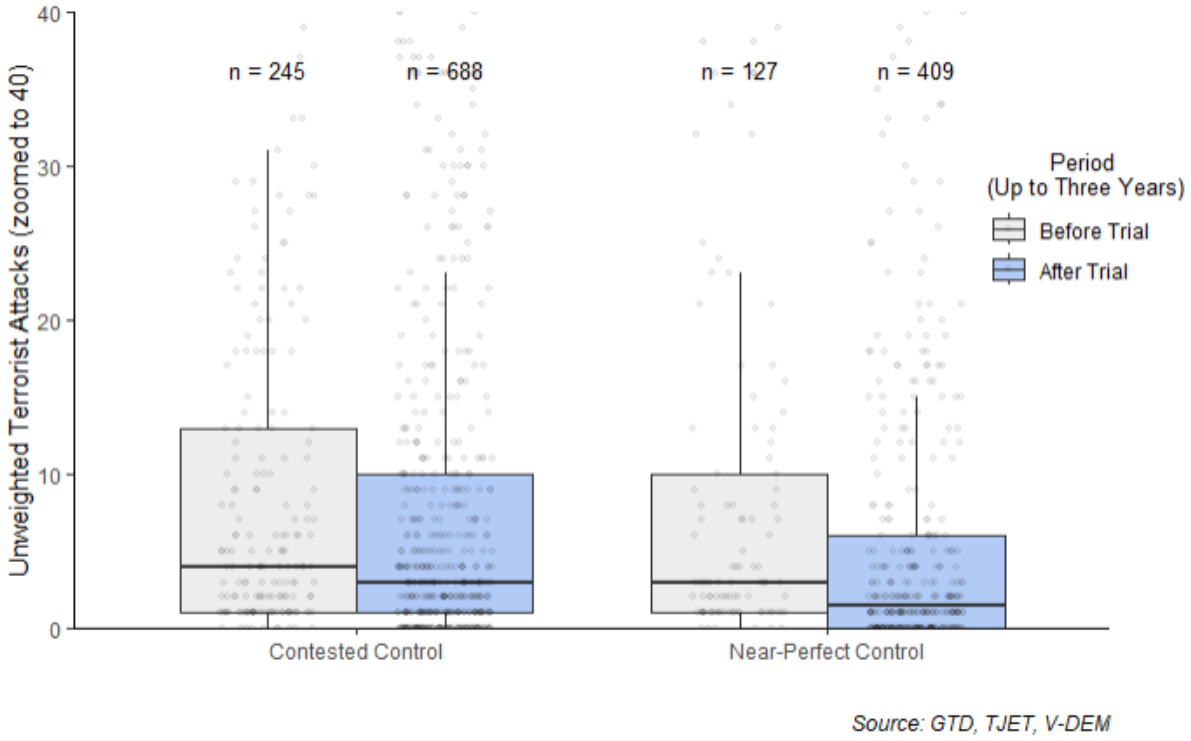


Figure 5 examines terrorist attacks in the three years before and after the implementation of trials, stratified by state capacity. While this approach mirrors the earlier visualisation on truth commissions, the use of boxplots here (and later for amnesties) allow for incorporating the second dimension of potential moderators. For ease of visualisation, state capacity was split into two bins: countries with contested control over their territory (state capacity less or equal to 95) and countries with near-perfect control (state capacity more than 95). A couple of observations have been dropped due to lacking state capacity in those respective country-years despite having had trials.

The plot reveals several patterns. First of all, low-capacity states also see higher overall terrorism levels in terms of the median number of attacks, yet the difference between the trial and no-trial groups is quite small. Second, in near-perfect control countries, trials appear to be

associated with a lower median level of terrorism and reduced data variability. While the difference in medians is modest magnitude-wise, they are more pronounced than in the contested-control category, lending initial support to the conditional hypothesis that the effectiveness of trials in reducing terrorism depends on state capacity.

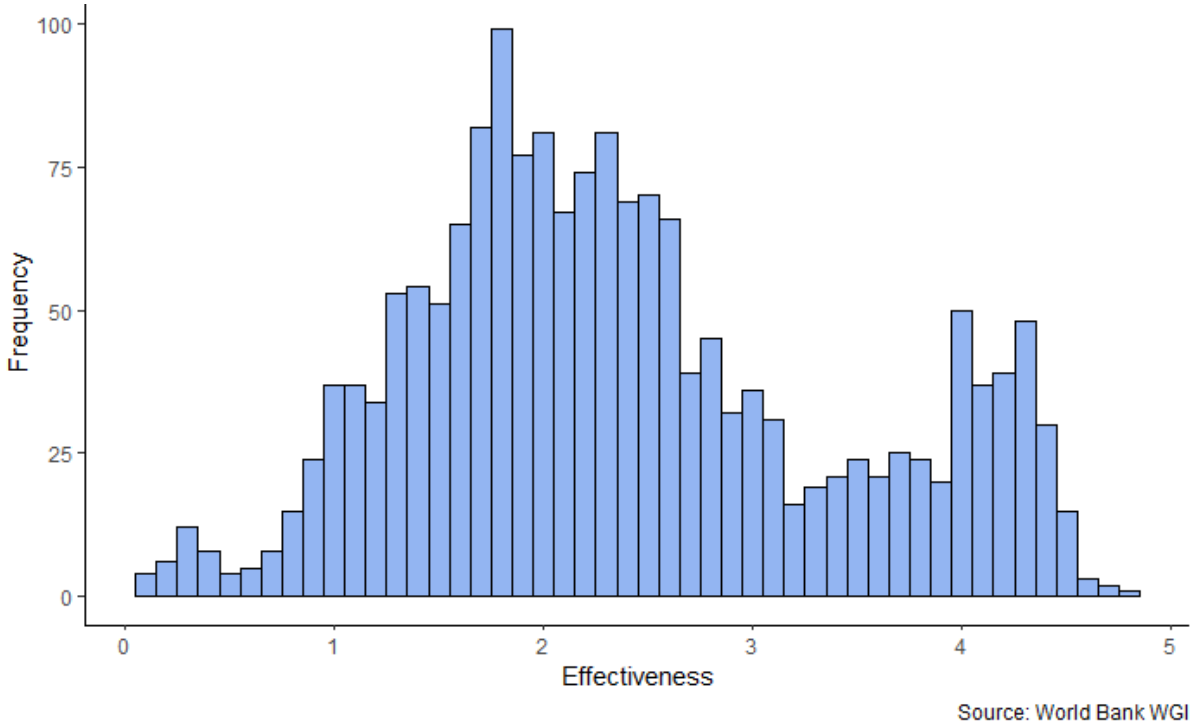
Figure 5: Terrorism Before vs. After Trials, by State Capacity



The second moderating variable in this analysis is institutional capacity, which informs the state's ability to follow through with policies and commitments. This variable is operationalized in two ways to capture different aspects of the same concept. The first operationalization is government effectiveness, reflecting perceptions of the quality of public services, the strength and independence of the civil service from political pressures, the quality of policy

implementation and the credibility of the government's commitments.[141] This variable ranges from 0 to 5, the latter being the best score for government effectiveness. As seen on Figure 4, most country observations fall around the middle, representing a rough bell curve.

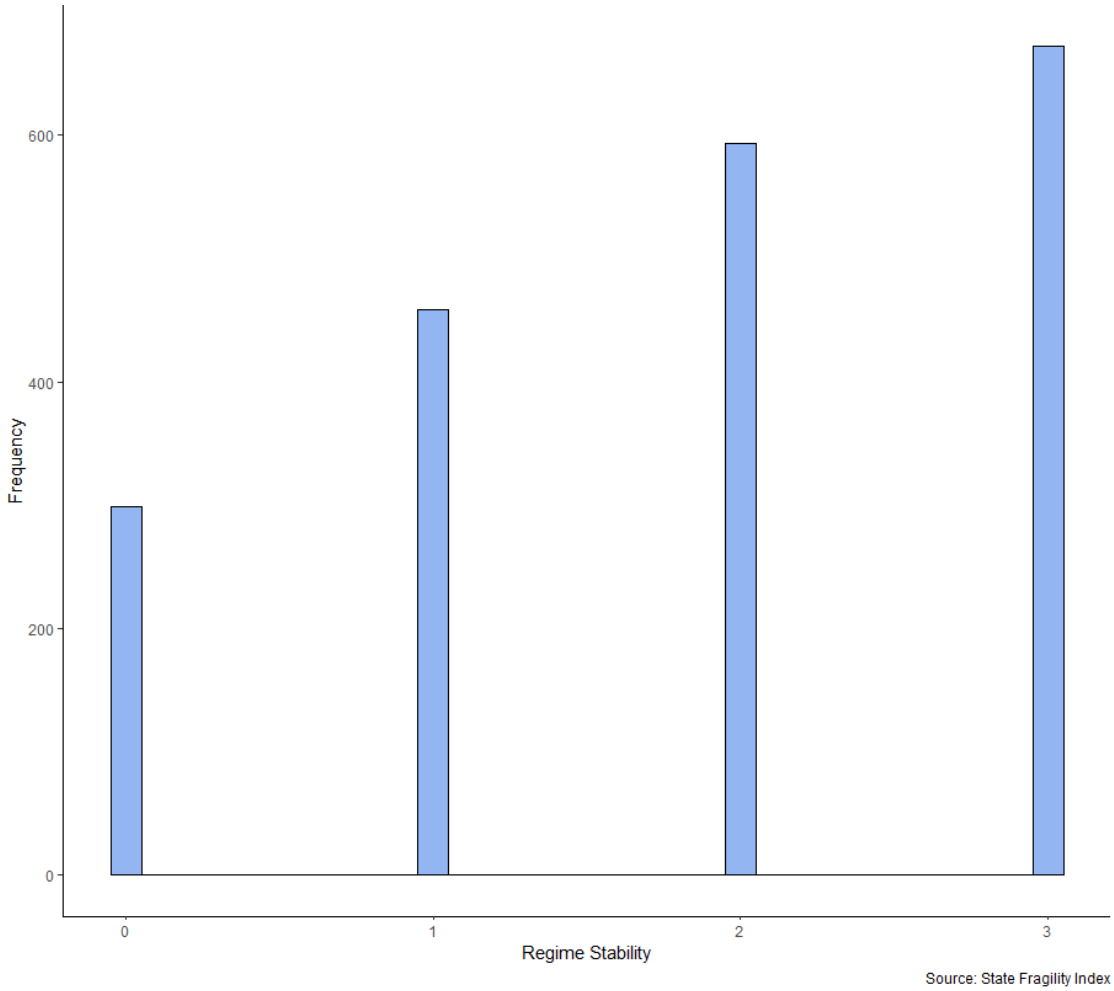
Figure 6: Histogram of Government Effectiveness



The second operationalization is regime stability, which reflects the solidity and resilience of a country's political regime. It is composed of factors such as regime durability, leadership duration and the frequency of coups, which should all influence a government's ability to maintain control and carry out policies. Together with government effectiveness, they capture key dimensions of institutional capacity that might moderate the effect of amnesties over terrorism. According to Figure 5, the scale goes from 0 to 3, and the spread indicates a prevalence of high regime stability in the sample.

[141] "Government Effectiveness: Definition," World Bank Data, accessed May 28, 2025, https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/worldwide-governance-indicators/series/GE.EST.

Figure 7: Histogram of Regime Stability



For plots exploring the association of terrorism with amnesties across the levels of the two variables, two separate binnings have been constructed. For government effectiveness, a median-split was made as, unlike state capacity, the dividing line is less intuitive (government effectiveness can be relatively low even in seemingly stable countries). Conversely, regime stability was split between near-perfect regime stability (equal or more than 2) or weak regime stability (less than 2). As usual, the figures only take into account the countries on a period of up to three years before or after the amnesty had taken place.

Figure 8 indicates that across governance categories, there is an associated lower level of terrorism after amnesties have been implemented, when looking at the median. However, the data is highly variable, especially in the above-median governance group, where several

extreme cases raise the upper range of the distribution. This can be interpreted as heterogeneity in outcomes or, in other words, the existence of cases in which countries experienced much more terrorism after amnesties, possibly suggesting a backfire or breakdown in negotiation. Nevertheless, the lower median of the post-amnesty category indicates that, more often than not, amnesties are associated with a lower level of terrorism. If the association holds, then the pacifying effects would be more pronounced in the above-median governance group, which would indicate that it is less common to interpret the provision of amnesties in high-effectiveness countries as a signal of weakness. However, at this stage it is difficult to draw some clear conclusion from this figure alone due to the wide dispersion of the binnings made for illustrative purposes.

Figure 9, which switches the moderator with regime stability, shows that outcome heterogeneity is smaller in the post-amnesty periods, as shown by the smaller upper ranges; though variability remains high. Interestingly, the reduction in terrorism is more pronounced for regimes with weaker stability, contrary to the theoretical expectation that more stable regimes can offer more credible commitments. However, the interpretation must be taken with a grain of salt due to the lack of the inclusion of other covariates, and will be examined more thoroughly in the regression models that follow.

Figure 8: Terrorism Before vs. After Amnesties, by Government Effectiveness

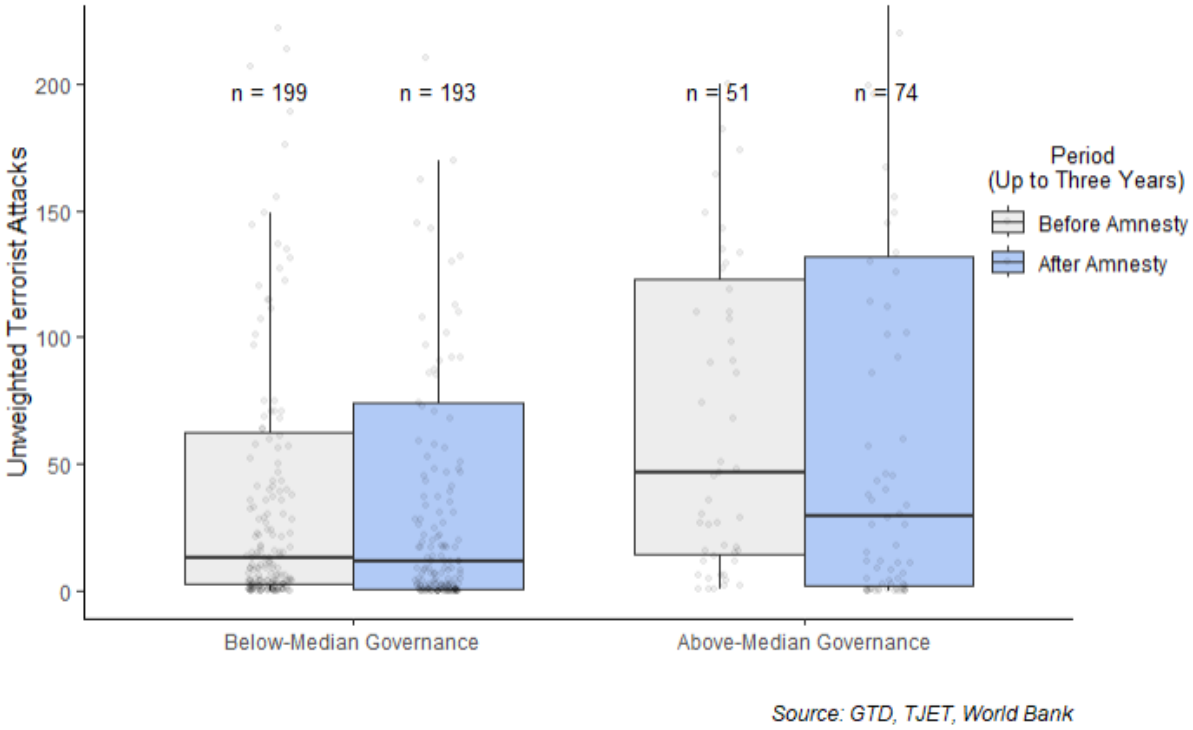
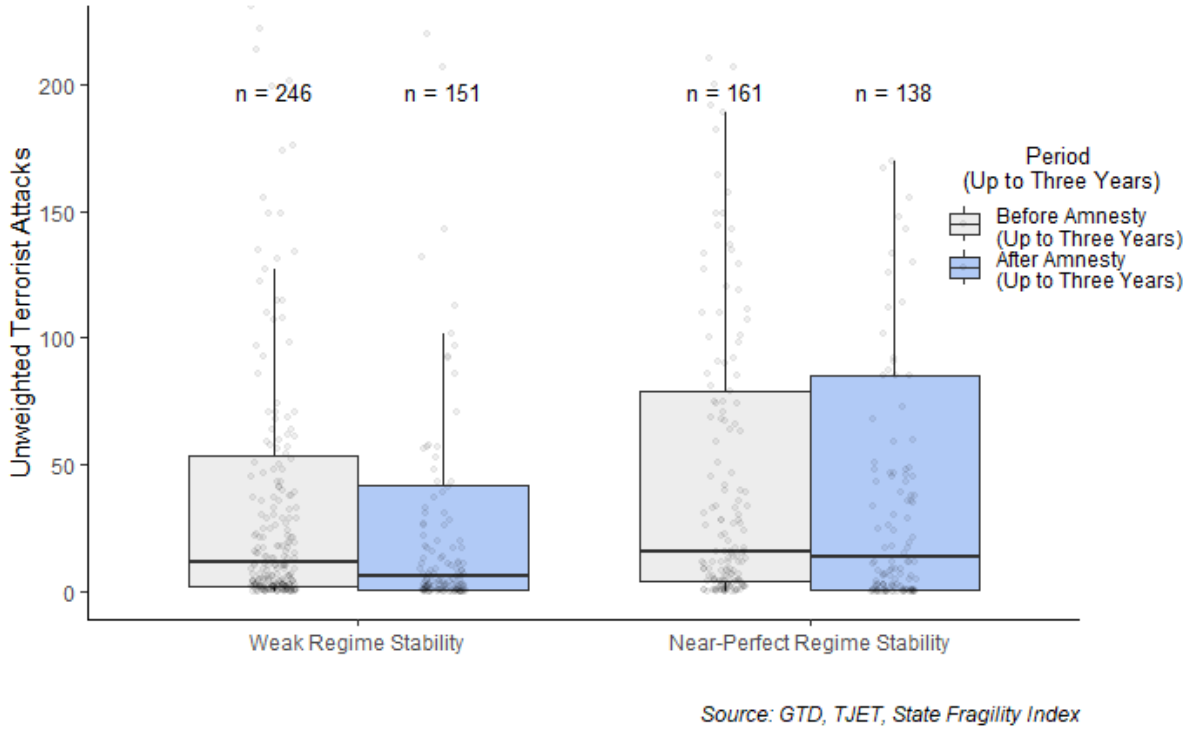


Figure 9: Terrorism Before vs. After Amnesties, by Regime Stability



3.2. Analysis

In this section the results of the quantitative analysis will be presented, followed by a short discussion about the control variables and an interpretation subsection. The analysis is organised into two sets, or versions. The Present-Day version (PDV) is the main set, estimating the relationship between TJMs and terrorism using same-year data. The Lagged Variable version (LDV) set, on the other hand, introduces a one-year lag for all three TJMs so as to account for potential delayed effects.

Each set includes two outcome types: one measured as the raw number of terrorist attacks, while the other applies a weighted formula so as to account for severity of attacks. Within each regression table, six models are estimated, which are designed so as to incrementally build complexity by adding controls and interaction terms.

3.2.1. PDV-Raw

Starting with the PDV, Table 6 presents the estimated effects on the number of attacks dependent variable. Amnesties, both on their own and interacted with other covariates, show no significant effect in any model; this can be said about trials on their own as well. The interaction between trials and state capacity is consistently negative and significant in Models 2-3 suggesting a conditional effect. When adding the full set of controls however, the interaction remains significant when institutional capacity is operationalised by regime stability, and insignificant when government effectiveness is included; this might be attributed to the differences in timeframe coverage in the later years, which also present much greater number of terrorist attacks. Truth commissions have a strong association with reduced number of terrorist attacks which holds across models even when including the full-control set.

Table 6: Models with Number of Attacks DV

	Dependent variable:					
	Number of Attacks					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amnesty	0.260	0.101	0.026	0.062	0.019	-0.226
	(0.173)	(0.155)	(0.218)	(0.403)	(0.423)	(0.224)
Amnesty X Regime Stability			0.125			0.202
			(0.176)			(0.158)
Amnesty X Government Effectiveness				0.128	0.069	
				(0.257)	(0.246)	
Truth Commissions	-0.668***	-0.645***	-0.770***	-0.631***	-0.456***	-0.618***
	(0.173)	(0.171)	(0.170)	(0.192)	(0.174)	(0.158)
Trials	-0.161	-0.171	-0.092	-0.083	-0.143	-0.164
	(0.127)	(0.118)	(0.134)	(0.151)	(0.139)	(0.119)
Trials X State Capacity		-0.019**	-0.025**	-0.022*	-0.015	-0.019**
		(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.008)
State Capacity		-0.013***	-0.012***	-0.015***	-0.018***	-0.016***
		(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Regime Stability			-0.042			-0.119*
			(0.050)			(0.063)
Number of Dyads					0.378***	0.389***
					(0.072)	(0.077)
Population (log)					0.179***	0.221***
					(0.034)	(0.034)
Strength of Rebels					0.077	0.094
					(0.101)	(0.086)
Year	-0.0004	-0.001	0.026***	0.017***	0.027***	0.030***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Government Effectiveness				0.025	0.024	
				(0.049)	(0.093)	
Past Terrorism	0.983***	0.959***	0.969***	0.958***	0.839***	0.828***
	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.035)	(0.033)
GDP per capita					0.022	0.069*
					(0.068)	(0.039)
Constant	1.006	2.654	-51.139***	-33.935***	-56.901***	-63.059***
	(5.009)	(5.125)	(11.383)	(13.014)	(14.242)	(11.337)
Observations	3503	3159	1847	1601	1580	1826
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

3.2.2. PDV-Weighted

Switching the dependent variable, truth commissions are not associated with a credible decrease in the severity of terrorism, similar with the effect of the other two independent variables. Turning to interactions, the one between trials and state capacity is significant and negative across models 2-4 at the $p<0.05$ level, yet loses significance in the full-control models, therefore the association is only modestly supported by the results. In parallel, no moderator of amnesties seem to have any effect over terrorism even when switching the dependent variable from raw to weighted.

Table 7: Models with Weighted Attacks DV

	Dependent variable:					
	Number of Attacks					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amnesty	0.299	0.109	-0.234	-0.654	-0.521	-0.589**
	(0.246)	(0.181)	(0.328)	(0.444)	(0.504)	(0.292)
Amnesty X Regime Stability			0.186			0.250
			(0.227)			(0.181)
Amnesty X Government Effectiveness				0.401	0.193	
				(0.270)	(0.262)	
Truth Commissions	-0.688*	-0.481	-0.739	-0.734	-0.232	-0.302
	(0.403)	(0.403)	(0.484)	(0.508)	(0.631)	(0.607)
Trials	-0.455*	-0.346*	-0.230	-0.256	-0.307	-0.310
	(0.237)	(0.185)	(0.242)	(0.270)	(0.291)	(0.256)
Trials X State Capacity		-0.028**	-0.038**	-0.041**	-0.026	-0.025
		(0.013)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.020)
State Capacity		-0.023***	-0.016***	-0.018**	-0.027***	-0.024***
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Regime Stability			-0.085			-0.137
			(0.089)			(0.088)
Number of Dyads					0.483***	0.507***
					(0.095)	(0.090)
Population (log)					0.305***	0.340***
					(0.062)	(0.066)
Strength of Rebels					0.081	0.066
					(0.139)	(0.115)
Year	-0.003	-0.004	0.013	0.001	0.017	0.018
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.012)
Government Effectiveness				-0.086	0.047	
				(0.124)	(0.182)	
Past Terrorism	0.812***	0.777***	0.842***	0.777***	0.616***	0.669***
	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.046)	(0.057)	(0.045)
GDP per capita					-0.113	0.006
					(0.119)	(0.083)
Constant	7.974	10.177	-24.472	-0.547	-36.644	-40.742*
	(7.299)	(9.375)	(21.991)	(33.032)	(35.602)	(23.295)
Observations	3503	3159	1847	1601	1580	1826
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

3.2.3. LDV-Count

Switching to the LDV, the picture changes significantly. Here, both lagged trials and amnesties, by themselves, are significantly associated with a reduction in the number terrorism; the only exception is for amnesties in the third model, where its interaction with regime stability renders it insignificant. What is interesting is that the interactions of the lagged independent variables do not seem to be good predictors of terrorism in general, as the only significant interaction of the table, at $p<0.1$, would be the one between amnesty and government effectiveness, which is not necessarily persuasive. Lagged truth commissions do not hold significance neither in this table, nor in the following one.

Table 8: Models with Lagged Independent Variables and Number of Attacks DV

	Dependent variable:					
	Number of Attacks					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amnesty T-1	-0.255***	-0.259***	-0.355	-0.862**	-0.964***	-0.587**
	(0.090)	(0.095)	(0.231)	(0.345)	(0.361)	(0.237)
Amnesty T-1 X Regime Stability			0.060			0.182
			(0.129)			(0.130)
Amnesty T-1 X Government Effectiveness				0.239*	0.279*	
				(0.141)	(0.146)	
Truth Commissions T-1	-0.066	-0.116	-0.028	-0.022	0.132	0.125
	(0.218)	(0.170)	(0.164)	(0.162)	(0.168)	(0.186)
Trials T-1	-0.287***	-0.294***	-0.275***	-0.256**	-0.238*	-0.258**
	(0.088)	(0.091)	(0.104)	(0.120)	(0.121)	(0.107)
Trials T-1 X State Capacity		-0.009	-0.009	-0.007	-0.012	-0.013*
		(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)
State Capacity		-0.015***	-0.015***	-0.019***	-0.018***	-0.016***
		(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Regime Stability			-0.032			-0.115*
			(0.049)			(0.064)
Number of Dyads					0.400***	0.405***
					(0.091)	(0.087)
Population (log)					0.188***	0.225***
					(0.037)	(0.034)
Strength of Rebels					0.070	0.106
					(0.095)	(0.087)
Year	-0.001	-0.002	0.025***	0.015***	0.026***	0.029***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Government Effectiveness				0.010	-0.028	
				(0.044)	(0.091)	
Past Terrorism	0.975***	0.954***	0.967***	0.958***	0.830***	0.825***
	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.032)
GDP per capita					0.045	0.069*
					(0.064)	(0.037)
Constant	2.460	3.397	-50.755***	-30.838***	-54.852***	-62.372***
	(5.079)	(5.041)	(10.313)	(10.709)	(13.863)	(10.851)
Observations	3503	3159	1847	1601	1580	1826
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

3.2.4. LDV-Weighted

In this table, lagged trials and truth commissions do not seem to be persuasively associated with any effect over the dependent variable. That being said, lagged amnesties start with a significant negative association with terrorism severity. When interacting with regime stability, the results indicate that this variable might be an important moderator of the effect on severity, yet the relationship does not hold up against further scrutiny in the sixth model, weakening the evidence for a robust effect. The interaction between lagged trials and state capacity is negative and significant in Models 2 and 6, yet its absence in the other models suggests the lack of consistency of the interaction in these specifications.

Table 9: Models with Lagged Independent Variables and Weighted Attacks DV

	Dependent variable:					
	Number of Attacks					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amnesty T-1	-0.783***	-0.625***	-0.315	-0.515	-0.448	-0.546*
	(0.196)	(0.132)	(0.327)	(0.502)	(0.496)	(0.305)
Amnesty T-1 X Regime Stability			-0.301**			-0.213
			(0.137)			(0.131)
Amnesty T-1 X Government Effectiveness				-0.193	-0.239	
				(0.177)	(0.193)	
Truth Commissions T-1	0.019	-0.139	-0.367	-0.308	-0.244	-0.310
	(0.521)	(0.399)	(0.253)	(0.293)	(0.327)	(0.289)
Trials T-1	-0.315	-0.273	-0.203	-0.280	-0.275	-0.216
	(0.236)	(0.176)	(0.222)	(0.257)	(0.263)	(0.227)
Trials T-1 X State Capacity		-0.029**	-0.023	-0.030	-0.035*	-0.031**
		(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.016)
State Capacity		-0.022***	-0.018***	-0.018**	-0.022***	-0.021***
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Regime Stability			-0.042			-0.112
			(0.083)			(0.082)
Number of Dyads					0.470***	0.482***
					(0.102)	(0.093)
Population (log)					0.347***	0.364***
					(0.057)	(0.064)
Strength of Rebels					0.060	0.071
					(0.149)	(0.111)
Year	-0.007*	-0.006	0.013	0.002	0.013	0.018
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.011)
Government Effectiveness				-0.062	-0.072	
				(0.128)	(0.188)	
Past Terrorism	0.811***	0.780***	0.847***	0.789***	0.608***	0.668***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.045)	(0.049)	(0.039)
GDP per capita					-0.036	0.005
					(0.113)	(0.070)
Constant	14.748**	12.983	-25.086	-1.837	-29.390	-41.554*
	(7.225)	(9.080)	(20.512)	(30.858)	(34.617)	(22.429)
Observations	3503	3159	1847	1601	1580	1826
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

3.2.5. Control variables

Across all regression versions and dependent variables, several fixed terms seem to be consistently statistically significant for terrorism outcomes. Past terrorism stands out as the most powerful and robust predictor of terrorism, which aligns with the findings of past literature outlining the self-reinforcing nature of political violence.[142] Similarly, logged population size is positively associated with terrorism, aligning with the expectation that countries with more population are also likely positioned to experience more terrorism, all else being equal.

The number of dyads is also positively associated with terrorism, for two plausible reasons. First, the existence of multiple rebel groups complicates the security landscape, as TJMs employed in dealing with one actor might be abused by others, as was the case in Colombia. This finding is consistent with previous literature on the role of dyads, even when looking at terrorism instead of conflict termination as a dependent variable.[143] Second, the number of dyads may proxy for deeper conflict dynamics and fragmentation, something only marginally captured by a second variable in the tables, strength of rebels.

The time variable is inconsistently significant, indicating that the assumption of a linear time trend does not necessarily hold; at most, it suggests that the overall number of attacks have increased over time, though not in severity. GDP per capita and the strength of rebels compared to the central government consistently failed to hold predictive power, perhaps due to controlling for other stronger, more significant predictors.

[142] Li, "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?"; De Soysa and Nordås, "Islam's Bloody Innards?"; Choi and and Luo, "Economic Sanctions, Poverty, and International Terrorism"; Piazza, "Repression and Terrorism."
[143] Dancy, "Deals with the Devil?"

3.3. Interpretation

The findings of the statistical analysis offer a nuanced view of how TJMs might influence terrorism, with some results closely aligning with the theoretical expectations, while others introduce new questions for future research.[144]

The PDV models show that, short-term, trials only become effective in reducing terrorism when backed by a country with strong state capacity. This lends partial H2 which posits that the deterrent effect of a trial is also tied to the state's capability to exert authority over its own territory and enforce its rules. However, this moderating effect is not entirely robust and would require future research.

In the LDV, the models might reflect a more complex mechanism. The most robust finding regarding trials across tables is that, long-term, the main effect of trials is significantly associated with lower terrorism counts across models, regardless of state capacity, contradicting H2. One explanation for why trials matter longer-term, but not short-term, could be that they shape expectations over time by appealing to rule-based, accountability norms. It is plausible that this process could happen in fragile states as well, as states signal a political shift through trials, showing that the rules are changing. In a sense, this could be understood as some kind of soft deterrence that leads low-level actors to disengage from political violence. On the other hand, trials by themselves do not influence the severity of the attacks; however, the interaction with state capacity might, as modestly supported by evidence. High-severity attacks reflect more than will, as they pertain to the groups' capabilities and coordination as well. The actors undertaking those might be less deterred by soft deterrence and instead only be discouraged by credible threats of enforcement. If this interpretation is true, then trials may reduce the

[144] Appendices 4 and 5 plot the marginal effects of relevant interactions.

frequency of attacks over time, but only reduce severity based on the coercive capacity of the state, aligning with the logic of deterrence.

The findings on amnesties are nuanced and partially supported. First of all, there is no indication of an immediate effect of amnesties on terrorism counts or severity. However, in the lagged models, amnesties by themselves seem to lead to a reduction of terrorist attacks, regardless of institutional capacity; this supports H1. When disaggregating institutional capacity however, the results on regime stability are weak, as the full-control model indicates that other variables are more predictable, such as the number of dyads or the population number. Despite that, there is a hint of an increase of the pacifying effect over severity of terrorism, the more stable a regime is. This would align with theoretical expectations that amnesties are more credible signals of commitment if they come from stable regimes, though the evidence only weakly supports H3a.

While the effects of the interaction between government effectiveness and amnesties over the number of terrorism in the lagged set are robust, they are only at $p<0.1$, nearing significance but not attaining it. The effects show that the more government effectiveness there is, the less of a pacifying effect amnesties have, even becoming counterproductive at the very high government effectiveness. This means that while the theoretical expectations are not contradicted, the evidence is not enough to claim support for H3b, as the results might also be caused by the relative low amount of countries with high government effectiveness.

Truth commissions seem to be strongly associated with reductions in terrorism number, though not their severity; this provides sufficient support for H4. However, truth commissions do not seem to have a longer-term impact, or at least not in the year following the end of the activity. This is interesting, because as per the grievance theory, truth commissions are more plausibly having longer-term, rather than short-term effects. One explanation could be that the element of catharsis or symbolic reparations dissipates once the truth commissions finish their activities

and they are no longer visible in public discourse. Or, it could be a reflection of the difficulty to assess the real, though more diffuse effect that reconciliation processes might have within a society. Future research could explore whether any of these interpretations hold when additional lags are introduced, or alternative ways to measure the delayed effect of truth commissions.

Table 10: Post-analysis Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Support	Short Justification
H1 - TJMs are significantly associated with terrorism levels.	Partially supported	All three TJMs exhibit some main effects association with terrorism: trials (in LDV), amnesties (in LDV), truth commissions (in PDV).
H2 - The effect of trials on terrorism is conditional on state capacity.	Partially supported short-term (both severity and frequency) and long-term (severity), Contradicted long-term (when terrorism is measured through frequency).	In LDV, trials reduce terrorism counts unconditionally, weakening the conditional claim. Additionally, evidence supports the conditional effect of state capacity, but with inconsistent evidence.
H3a - The effect of amnesties on terrorism is conditional on political stability	Weakly supported	Hinting at a moderation effect seen on severity in LDV, but becomes insignificant in full-control model.
H3b - The effect of amnesties on terrorism is conditional on government effectiveness	Not supported	Weakly negative association, yet not significant enough ($p<0.1$).
H4 - Truth commissions are associated with lower levels of terrorism.	Supported (short-term)	Strong, robust effect in PDV model on terrorism frequency.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined whether TJMs influence terrorism in transitional societies, and under what conditions these effects emerge. According to the results, there is a robust association between truth commissions and short-term reductions in terrorist attacks. Additionally, while the short-term pacifying effect of trials on terrorism number and severity seems to be the strongest in states with high capacity, long-term trends indicate that regardless of state capacity, trials may have a soft deterrent effect that leads to a reduction in raw terrorism numbers, but not necessarily in their severity. In contrast, there is insufficient proof of association between amnesties and terrorism.

This study presents several limitations that must be considered. First, since this is an observational study, its capacity to make causal claims is inherently limited. While the lagged models mitigate some of this limitation, unobserved confounders and potential reverse causality remain concerns. For example, it is plausible that a government might impose TJMs due to anticipating future violence. Relatedly, limited data availability of some variables restrict the scope of Models 3-5, limiting generalisability to smaller time periods.

Second, the coding and timing of TJMs are simplified. Each mechanism is treated as a binary variable that can either be present or absent in a country-year. For truth commissions and trials, despite the fact they can unfold over several years, only the year of conclusion has been used in the analysis. This was a pragmatic choice to harmonise the interpretation across mechanisms, since amnesties are more temporally fixed to one single year, whereas trials for example could span for most of the timeframe for some countries, if the whole process would be present. Therefore, only taking into consideration the moment each TJM enters in effect, or is finalised,

made intuitive sense. However, this compromise means that there is an inherent blindness to the magnitude of TJMs in a year. Third, the analysis does not account for the quality or fairness of the TJMs themselves, which might influence their real-life impacts.

Fourth, the study does not differentiate between conflict and postconflict periods. This choice was made for both conceptual and pragmatic reasons. Conceptually, TJMs are themselves markers of transition, however incomplete that transition might be. In this sense, the presence of a truth commission, trial or amnesty is interpreted as evidence that the state in engaging in peacebuilding, regardless if violence has entirely ceased. Pragmatically, systematically coding clear-cut postconflict periods across countries is highly problematic. Datasets such as the UCDP often apply thresholds that obscure nuance, such as labelling Colombia as continuously at war except for one year, or coding the United Kingdom as being in peacetime between 1991 and 1997 despite the continued low-intensity conflict in Northern Ireland; but not in 1998, which represents a one-year conflict.[145] Manually recoding conflict and postconflict for the purposes of this study would have been unfeasible. As a mitigating measure, the models include controls for rebel strength and number, which capture some ongoing conflict dynamics even in the absence of a formal postconflict variable.

Lastly, the study rests on the assumption of rationality of actors, which are believed to be responsive and pay attention to the institutional signals within the deterrence and bargaining frameworks. In reality, terrorist organisations may interpret signalling differently from one another and their decision-making could be influenced by factors such as ideology or a devolved type of internal hierarchy. All these, combined with the agency of the actors, represent strong actor heterogeneity that the models cannot account for.

[145] "Colombia – TJET"; "United Kingdom – TJET."

Future research could attempt to replicate this research design while also addressing the limitations mentioned above, possibly by adding more time lags of the independent variable as well. Additionally, attempting to understand why truth commissions might only have short-term effects, despite expectations that they should influence societies more long-term, could be further scrutinised by adding additional grievance-related data; perhaps the long term effects of truth commissions are simply not captured under the current design. It is also possible that the longer term effects of truth commissions on terrorism are conditional on the comprehensiveness of the surrounding peace process. Scholars have argued in the past for holistic, multilevel peace processes as a solution for effective de-escalation.[146] Therefore, it could be that truth commission's long-term effects are more visible in such frameworks.

Additionally, it might be worthwhile to investigate whether there might be such a thing like a soft deterrent effect that trials have over terrorism. As preliminarily hypothesised, long-term use of trials might actually lead to reduced number of terrorist attacks even in fragile countries because of the reinforcement of norms promoting accountability and a rule-based order. Future studies could investigate this qualitatively, for example by focusing on countries with weaker enforcement powers which nonetheless employ trials.

[146] Christine Bell and Laura Wise, "Peace Processes and Their Agreements," *Contemporary Peacemaking: Peace Processes, Peacebuilding and Conflict*, 2022, 381–406.

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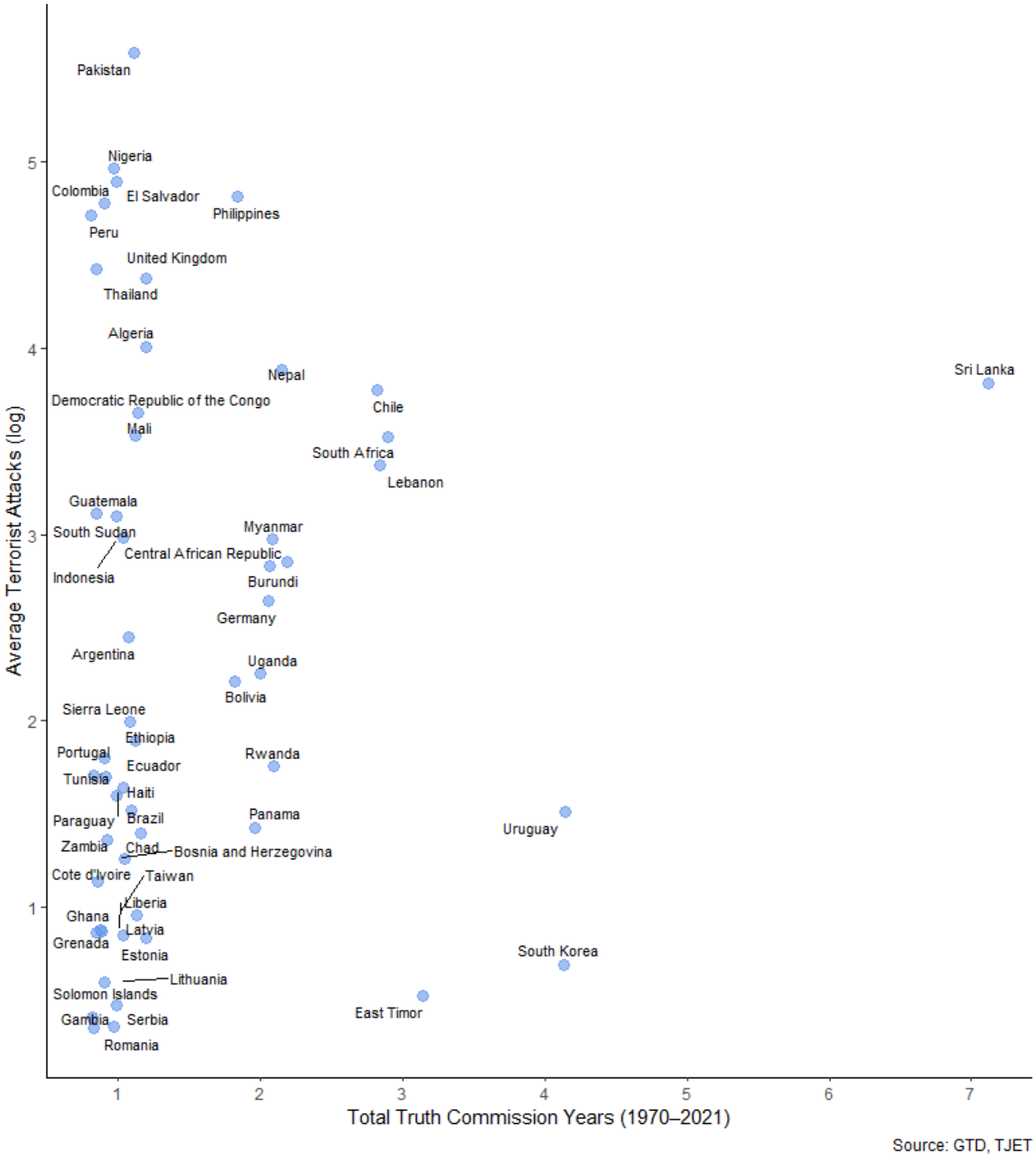
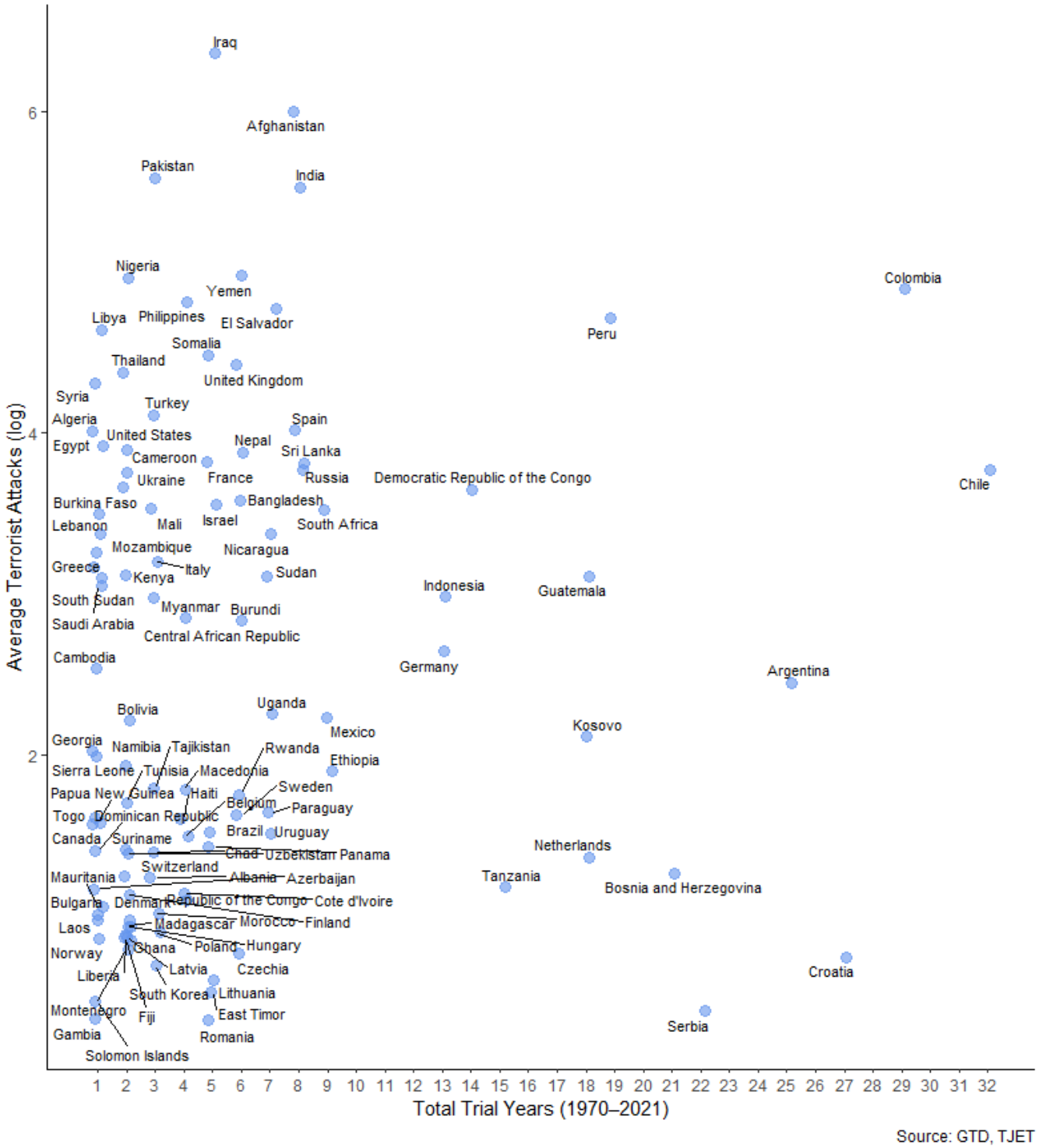
APPENDIX

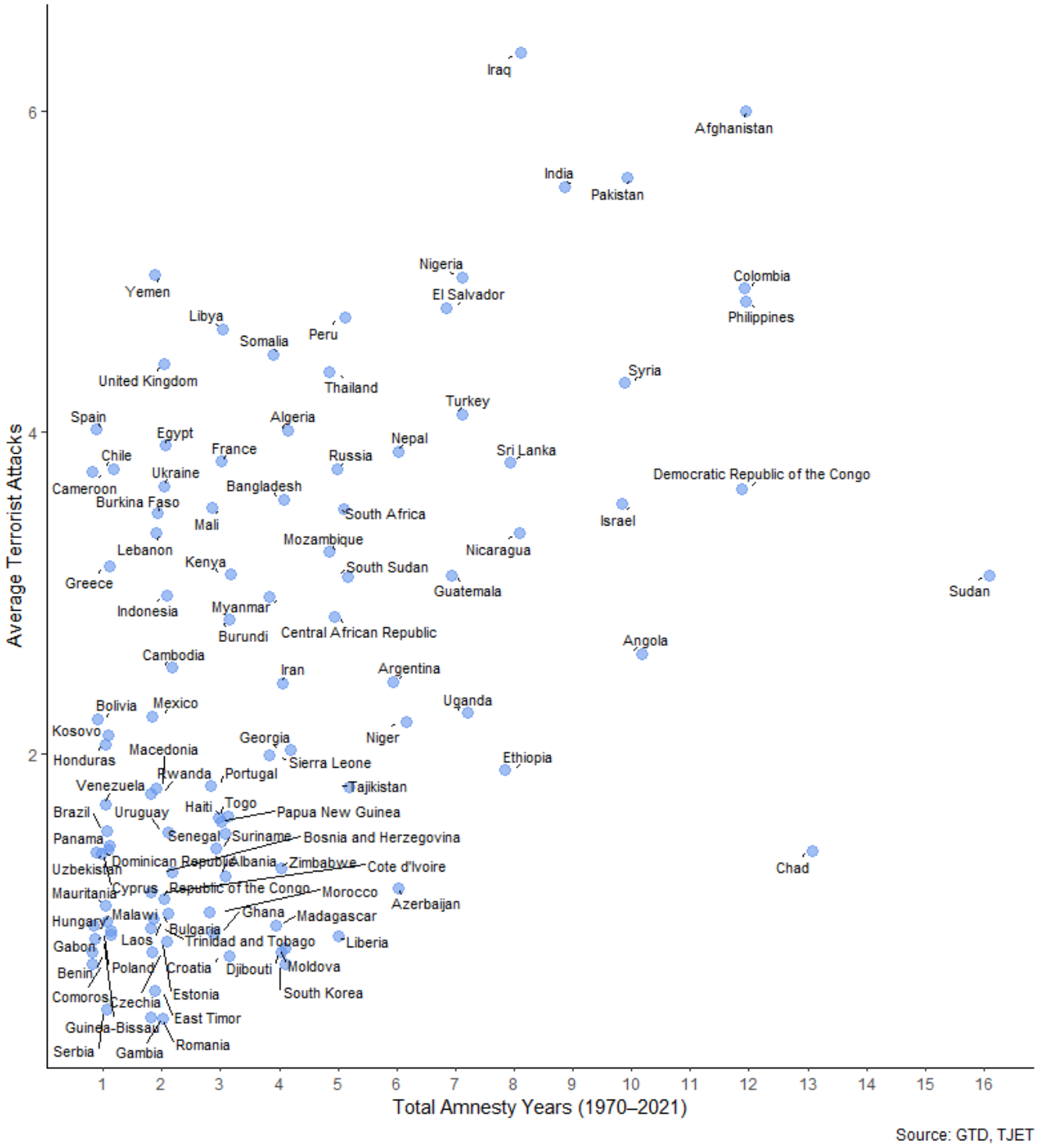
Appendix 1: Countries by Truth Commission Completion Years and Terrorism Number



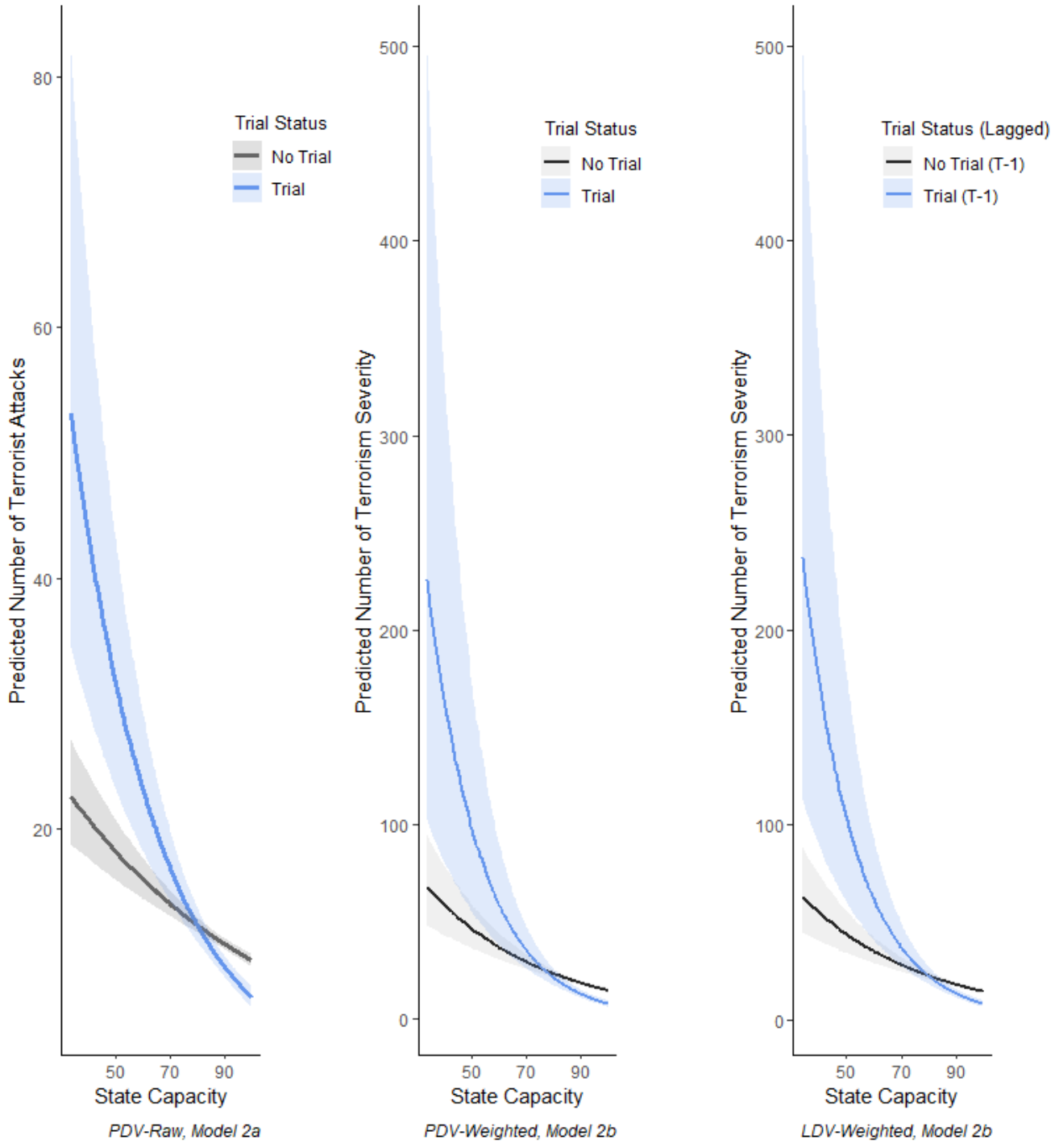
Appendix 2: Countries by Trial Years and Terrorism Number



Appendix 3: Countries by Amnesty Years and Terrorism Number

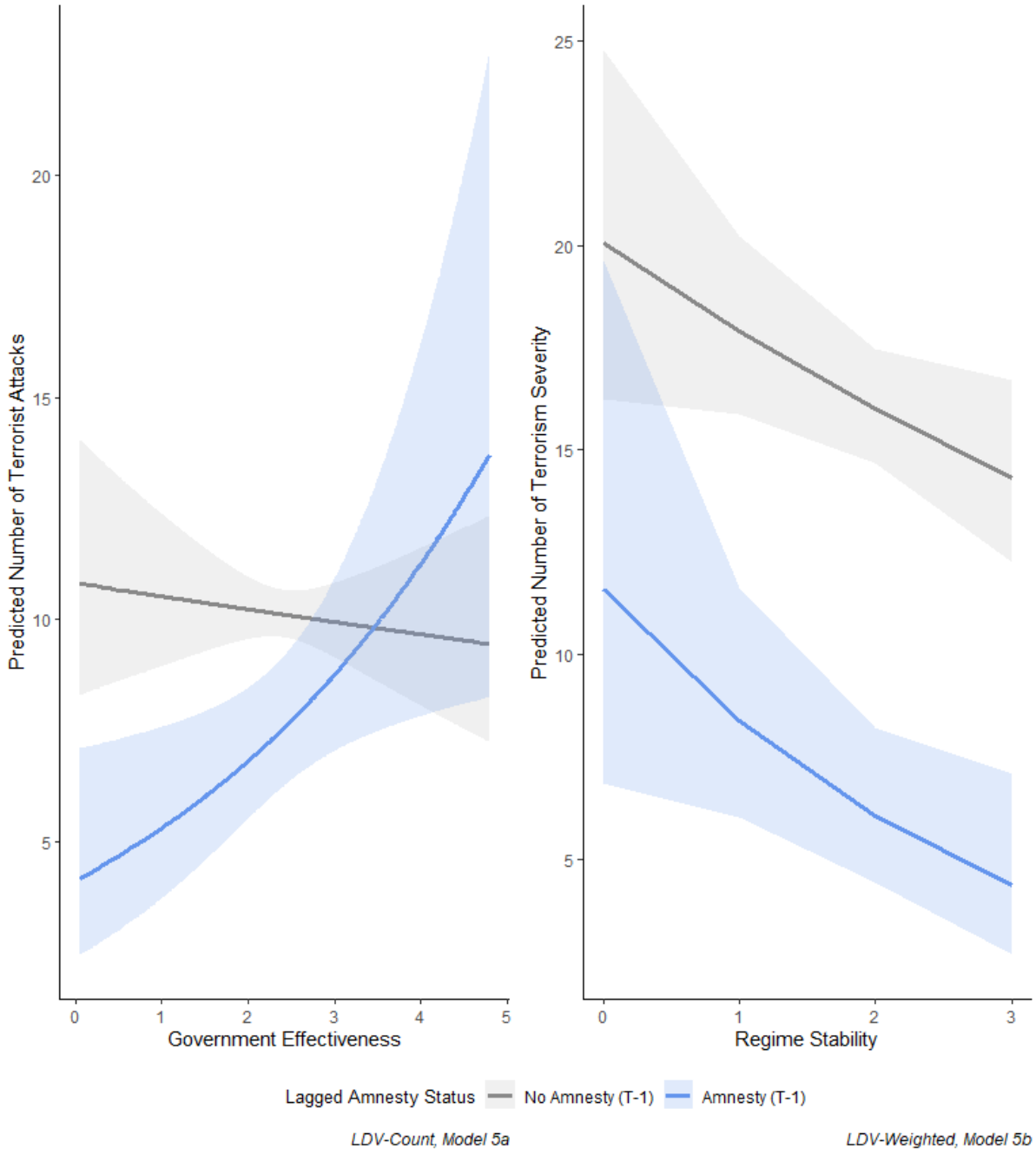


Appendix 4: Marginal Effects of Relevant Trials X State Capacity Interactions



Data source: GTD, TJET, V-DEM

Appendix 5: Marginal Effects of Amnesties Interactions with Institutional Capacity



Data source: GTD, TJET, World Bank, State Fragility Index