

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

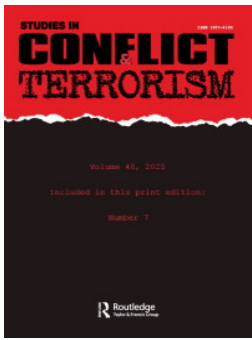
*“The Smallest Act You Do in Their Lands is More Beloved to Us than the Biggest Act Done Here”:
When Do an Armed Movement’s Transnational Supporters Turn to Terrorism at Home?*

This is the Published version of the following publication

Zammit, Andrew (2024) “The Smallest Act You Do in Their Lands is More Beloved to Us than the Biggest Act Done Here”: When Do an Armed Movement’s Transnational Supporters Turn to Terrorism at Home? *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. ISSN 1057-610X

The publisher’s official version can be found at
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2403059>
Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/49498/>



“The Smallest Act You Do in Their Lands is More Beloved to Us than the Biggest Act Done Here”: When Do an Armed Movement’s Transnational Supporters Turn to Terrorism at Home?

Andrew Zammit

To cite this article: Andrew Zammit (15 Sep 2024): “The Smallest Act You Do in Their Lands is More Beloved to Us than the Biggest Act Done Here”:
When Do an Armed Movement’s Transnational Supporters Turn to Terrorism at Home?, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, DOI:
[10.1080/1057610X.2024.2403059](https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2403059)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2403059>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published with
license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.



View supplementary material [↗](#)



Published online: 15 Sep 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1161




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

“The Smallest Act You Do in Their Lands is More Beloved to Us than the Biggest Act Done Here”: When Do an Armed Movement’s Transnational Supporters Turn to Terrorism at Home?

Andrew Zammit 

Applied Security Science Partnership, Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia

ABSTRACT

What explains whether someone who supports an armed movement in a foreign war turns to plotting a terrorist attack at home? Using data on 129 Australian supporters of Islamic State, this paper examines the impact of contextual and dynamic factors relating to strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures. It finds that the strategic priority Islamic State publicly placed on transnational terrorism at a given time was most important, followed by whether the supporter was subjected to travel restrictions and law enforcement interactions, only then followed by micro-level factors traditionally focused on in quantitative studies of individual involvement in terrorism.


ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 7 May 2024
Accepted 5 September 2024

The academic field of terrorism studies has long been concerned with explaining individual involvement in terrorism. This has never been the sole focus, as the field routinely examines the causes, conduct and consequences of terrorism at many levels of analysis.¹ Nonetheless, the field has consistently sought to explain why some individuals engage in terrorism when others do not. It is evident from theoretical work,² empirical research,³ and experimental approaches,⁴ that knowledge in this area has grown rapidly. These advances are particularly apparent in quantitative research, with a recent systematic literature review on radicalisation to violent extremism in OECD countries identifying 179 putative risk and protective factors, the specific outcomes they relate to, and their relative importance.⁵ That such a review is possible contrasts starkly with the state of the field in earlier decades.

However, these efforts invariably face the specificity puzzle: what differentiates the extremely small number of people who engage in terrorism from the much larger number of people, affected by the same presumed factors, who do not? The puzzle holds great analytical importance; if factors proposed to influence involvement in terrorism “apply equally well to a wider set of individuals who did not become violent”, then their explanatory value is limited by the lack of granularity.⁶ To the extent that terrorism

CONTACT Andrew Zammit  Andrew.Zammit@vu.edu.au  Applied Security Science Partnership, Institute for Sustainable Industries & Liveable Cities, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2024.2403059>.

© 2024 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

research informs counter-terrorism practice, the specificity puzzle also has moral importance given the implications that false positives pose for public safety and human rights.⁷

One commonly proposed approach to address the specificity puzzle is to conduct more studies with larger samples and greater use of control groups.⁸ This is inherently valuable but is often hampered by data difficulties. The clandestine nature of the phenomenon poses obstacles to gathering information on people who engage in terrorism, and also complicates the identification of suitable control groups.⁹ Even if the necessary information was consistently available and reliable, the relative rarity of terrorism works against developing larger samples and the heterogeneity of terrorism complicates efforts to work around this problem by combining cases from many different contexts.¹⁰ Another commonly proposed approach is to move beyond finding more factors to instead identify the mechanisms through which factors exert any causal influence or the pathways (involving combinations of mechanisms) that can lead to engagement in terrorism.¹¹ These approaches are unarguably worthwhile. However, a valuable path ahead may also lie in including a wider range of contextual and dynamic factors than quantitative studies on individual involvement in terrorism have tended to examine so far.¹²

This paper contends that examining three sets of factors inherently related to violent political mobilisations – strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures – will have distinct analytical payoffs for addressing the specificity puzzle. These sets of factors are widely examined in the political science literature on terrorism and the broader literature on other forms of political violence including civil war. Yet quantitative studies on terrorism that use the individual person as their unit of analysis, which are the studies most likely to have their findings incorporated into systematic literature reviews that in turn inform applied research efforts, tend not to explicitly examine such factors. This limits progress on building knowledge about the relationship between these broader factors and individual outcomes.

The relevance of these factors is particularly apparent when narrowing in on an important subset of terrorism, that which occurs as part of the mobilisation of transnational support by armed movements. By narrowing in on terrorism in the context of transnational mobilisation, the specificity puzzle can be reframed as the question of *what explains whether an armed movement's transnational supporters plot terrorist attacks at home*. This will necessarily involve some cost in generalisability, as terrorism also occurs in other contexts such as purely domestic mobilisations, but one that should prove worthwhile. Seeking to differentiate why one person who supports an armed movement abroad tries to engage in act of terrorism at home, while another person in the same country who provides support to the same armed movement abroad does not, also allows for the identification of a suitable control group and a level of granularity helpful for tackling the specificity puzzle.

This paper therefore examines whether factors relating to strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures help to explain individual involvement in terrorist plots in the context of the mobilisation of transnational support by armed movements. The paper first provides a theoretical discussion proposing the specific factors for inquiry, leading to hypotheses that the strategic priority an armed movement's leadership publicly places on transnational terrorism at the time someone supports the movement, the mobilising structures that connect (or fail to connect) the supporter to the movement, and the security measures the supporter is subjected to, differentiate

those transnational supporters who plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence from those who do not. It then outlines the methods to assess these hypotheses, using a dataset of 129 people who provided transnational support to Islamic State from within Australia between 2013 and 2020. The paper then presents the results of the bivariate and multivariate analyses, finding support for the first and third hypotheses but not the second. It finds that the priority Islamic State publicly placed on transnational terrorism at particular times was far more important than any other factor, followed by whether the supporter was subjected to travel restrictions and law enforcement interactions, and only then followed by micro-level factors. The paper then discusses the implications of these findings for explaining whether an armed movement's transnational supporters plot terrorist attacks at home, showing how this advances progress on the specificity puzzle for understanding individual involvement in terrorism.

Theory

Terrorism as a Tactic in Transnational Mobilisation

Quantitative studies of individual involvement in terrorism tend not to address factors at the meso-level (organisation and movement) or macro-level (state and societal). For example, the 179 risk and protective factors identified in the 2021 Michael Wolfowicz et al. systematic review include few factors that could be considered to operate above the micro-level.¹³ Similarly, Bart Schuurman and Sarah L. Carthy note that the overwhelming majority (124 of 159) of the factors they examine in their 2023 study of jihadists and far-right extremists were micro-level precisely because these factors dominated the current literature.¹⁴ Michael Jensen and Gary LaFree likewise note the dominance of micro-level factors in such studies.¹⁵ The recently released *Routledge Handbook on Radicalisation and Countering Radicalisation* highlights that “in terrorism studies, the individual level has undoubtedly received the widest attention to date” and notes “growing recognition of the benefits of multi-level explanations”.¹⁶

To be clear, plenty of terrorism research examines the causal impact of meso-level and macro-level factors on the phenomenon of terrorism more broadly, such as the role of organisational structure and strategy or the impact of democratisation or economic development.¹⁷ Yet this research tends to be concerned with outcomes at the same level of analysis as the factors themselves, such as why some organisations engage in terrorism and some do not, or why different societies experience different amounts of terrorism. This is a separate body of research to studies where the outcome of interest is whether or not an individual person engages in terrorism.

When quantitative studies of individual involvement in terrorism do address higher level factors, they tend to be of a limited range. Often, the main meso-level factors addressed involve social relations (such as whether the individual had extremist peers or an extremist family) and the main macro-level factors involve socio-economics (such as the individual's education or employment level, which can serve as a proxy for structural disadvantage).¹⁸ These factors have immense value, as they speak to questions of social psychology, social identity and social structure, the importance of which is recognised throughout the field.¹⁹ They highlight issues like the role that social exclusion can play in terrorism, and show that the rise of the concept of

radicalisation has not necessarily come at the expense of research on root causes.²⁰ However, these factors also have limits. They tend to be static rather than dynamic, encompassing social positions rather than political processes. There are other meso-level and macro-level factors equally worthy of inquiry, that result not from the structure of the social order but from the contingencies of political mobilisations, and which reflect the contentious interactions between many different types of political actors that are routinely part of the context in which terrorism occurs.

Terrorism, the “intentional threat or use of force by a nonstate actor to evoke fear in a population to affect a political outcome”, is a tactic used in political mobilisations. These mobilisations necessarily involve actors beyond individuals (such as networks, groups and organisations) and a broader political context.²¹ This applies whether the political mobilisation involves a broadly non-violent social movement where terrorism develops only at the fringes, or an armed movement in a civil war whose leadership embraces terrorist tactics. This is not a novel point, as the importance of understanding terrorism as one tactic among many in a broader political mobilisation is emphasised throughout influential works in terrorism studies. This includes many multi-level qualitative studies such as Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko’s work on mechanisms of radicalisation, the social movement theory approaches of Thomas Hegghammer and others drawing on the pioneering work of Donatella Della Porta, or the foundational contributions to terrorism studies by scholars like Martha Crenshaw.²² Nonetheless, quantitative studies of individual involvement in terrorism have not tended to explicitly examine some key factors reflecting the political role of terrorism, with important exceptions that show the value of overcoming the earlier neglect of such factors. This is particularly evident in the case of three sets of factors: strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures.

First, political mobilisations are adversarial, in that other political actors are necessarily being mobilised *against*. This points to the importance of strategic logic, as tactical choices will depend in part on whether they will help political actors achieve some desired objective while in conflict with one or more adversaries seeking to prevent the achievement of that objective.²³ Some studies have begun to explicitly incorporate strategic logic into quantitative analyses on individual involvement in terrorism, with promising results. Schuurman and Carthy found that the most significant factor differentiating extremist individuals who engaged in terrorist violence from those who engaged in other extremist activities was whether the group or movement they aligned themselves with had a strategic logic that “that unreservedly favors violence as a means of achieving extremist goals.”²⁴

Second, political mobilisations are collective, in that they involve individuals acting in concert, and therefore involve various forms of organisation and collaboration to overcome collective action problems. This points to the importance of mobilising structures, the organisational forms through which a movement instigates action, ranging from formal and even militarised organisational forms through to informal groups and networks.²⁵ In some contexts, less formal or closely-knit structures may be associated with a greater likelihood of individual involvement in terrorism. For example, Jensen and LaFree found that extremists embedded within large networks were less likely to engage in terrorism than extremists who were either isolated or in small cliques.²⁶

Third, political mobilisations that involve a degree of terrorism (whether at their fringes or core) are inherently part of contentious politics rather than routine politics. This means that the adversarial dimension goes beyond the routine competition seen

every day in “market relations, lobbying, or representative politics” and instead brings “ordinary people into confrontation with opponents, elites, or authorities.”²⁷ This typically involves conflict with the state, which deploys its coercive arms (the police, security and sometimes military services) against such contentious challengers. This points to the importance of security measures, as state responses (or anticipated responses) can be expected to similarly influence the choice of tactics used in a political mobilisation. For example, Schuurman and Carthy found that membership of an extremist organisation was counter-intuitively associated with a lower likelihood of terrorist violence, provided that these organisations operated within states with functional police and security services and had to at least present themselves as operating within legal thresholds and eschewing violence.²⁸

The potential importance of strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures for explaining individual involvement in terrorism is particularly apparent when narrowing in on an important subset, terrorism which occurs as part of the mobilisation of transnational support by an armed movement. This narrower focus makes some of the empirical observations more feasible. For example, armed movements mobilising support across borders will often need to publicly communicate their strategic preferences, to reduce the likelihood of their transnational supporters acting at odds with them, making it easier for scholars to identify elements of their strategic logic through public sources. Similarly, the tendency of states to criminalise a wide range of different support activities for certain armed movements results in a larger body of public information that can facilitate the identification of suitable control cases.

Focusing on this subset, terrorism in the context of transnational mobilisation, necessarily entails some loss of generalisability. However, this subset of terrorism does account for a substantial proportion of incidents in many countries. For example, Europol’s annual European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend reports consistently note that jihadism poses the most concerning terrorist threat in Europe, being responsible for most of the deadliest plots in recent decades.²⁹ These plots were routinely launched in support of armed movements operating abroad, first the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, then al-Qaeda, then Islamic State.³⁰ In earlier decades, transnational supporters of various Palestinian, Armenian, Croatian, and Sikh armed movements participated in terrorist plots in Europe, North America and Australia.³¹ Indeed, the most prominent terrorist campaigns of interest to the field of terrorism studies developed as part of transnational mobilisations by movements like al-Qaeda and Islamic State, or earlier movements such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).³² One consequence is that extensive scholarly work addresses the strategic logic of armed movements that engage in transnational terrorism, what connections different terrorist plots have to the armed movements they are carried out in the name of, and how state counter-terrorism measures influence efforts at transnational mobilisation, all of which can be drawn on to theorise how these factors influence individual outcomes.

Strategic Logic: Whether the Armed Movement Publicly Prioritises Transnational Terrorism at the Time

Strategic logic refers to the core principles underlying an actor’s strategy, including how the advantages and disadvantages of different tactics have been weighed.³³ The

prioritisation of one tactic over another tactic reflects a political actor's strategic logic. Political science research has often inquired into the strategic logic of terrorism, noting that terrorism tends to be a high-cost tactic and providing explanations as to why an organisation would judge its advantages to outweigh its disadvantages.³⁴ This includes a stream of research on why a minority of armed movements participating in civil wars adopt the tactic of transnational terrorism.³⁵ However, for this paper the concern is not with explaining why an organisation develops a specific strategic logic, but with identifying the outcome that an armed movement's strategic logic has on individual involvement in terrorism.

It was noted earlier that Schuurman and Carthy found that the most significant factor differentiating extremist individuals who engaged in terrorist violence from those who did not was whether the organisation they had aligned themselves with had a strategic logic that "that unreservedly favors violence as a means of achieving extremist goals."³⁶ How does this reasoning apply when individuals are supporting an armed movement in another country that is waging a violent struggle as a participant in a civil war? Such organisations by definition have a violent strategic logic, but it does not follow that their supporters would necessarily turn to terrorism at home, unless the armed movements emphasise *transnational* terrorism.

Furthermore, an armed movement's strategic logic does not tend to be static. The leadership may view transnational terrorism as more or less important at different times and communicate this to their supporters. For example, the priority that al-Qaeda has publicly placed on transnational terrorism has changed over time. Al-Qaeda was established in the late 1980s, but it was not until 23 February 1998 that Osama bin Laden unambiguously asserted that, "[t]o kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim in all countries."³⁷ For several years after this declaration, al-Qaeda did not generally encourage its supporters to act solely at their own initiative. Yet by the late 2000s, al-Qaeda placed a higher priority on encouraging its transnational supporters to act on their own, through publications like *Inspire* magazine.³⁸ As discussed in detail below, Islamic State's public declarations similarly demonstrated shifts in the movement's strategic priorities by initially prioritising travel to the "Caliphate" and later prioritising attacks in the supporters' countries of residence. Variations in an armed movement's strategic logic, in the form of the extent to which it publicly prioritises transnational terrorism at a particular time, could be expected to influence whether the movement's transnational supporters plot terrorist attacks at home. This leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: Individuals who provide transnational support to an armed movement at a time when it prioritises transnational terrorism more highly will be more likely to plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence.

Mobilising Structures: Whether the Transnational Supporter Lacks Close Connections to the Armed Movement

Mobilising structures for an armed movement's transnational support can vary greatly, taking several conceivable forms. These can include overt political offices (embassy-like outposts in friendly states)³⁹ and front organisations (public-facing organisations that deny or downplay their support for the armed movement).⁴⁰ Less formally, the

mobilising structures can include local networks of individuals clandestinely working together to provide transnational support for the armed movement. Local networks may be directly established by individuals dispatched by an armed movement, or form independently but include people in contact with the armed movement, or have no direct connection to the armed movement but still seek to provide support. Most informally, locally isolated individuals can provide transnational support to an armed movement without interacting with other supporters inside their country of residence.

Could variations in these mobilising structures be expected to influence the likelihood of transnational supporters plotting terrorist attacks at home? There are grounds for expecting that the more formal mobilising structures would reduce the likelihood of transnational terrorism. For example, if an armed movement were to engage in terrorism inside a state that hosts its overt political offices, this could place those offices at risk. Such terrorist activities could also result in state crackdowns on front organisations.

Another way that variations in the mobilising structures could influence the likelihood of terrorist plots is that individuals less directly connected to the armed movement may not be able to adopt other roles in support. For example, lacking access to a local network, they may not know how to send money to the movement or how to travel as a foreign fighter, but could still attempt a local terrorist attack. Jensen and LaFree's study of American supporters of Islamic State found that those "who did not have strong local network connections, and thus lacked the knowledge, resources, and relationships to make travel a viable option, chose instead to plan acts of terror on U.S. soil."⁴¹ This suggests that variation in the mobilising structures can help to explain whether an armed movement's transnational supporter plots a terrorist attack at home, and that an aspiring supporter's lack of connections to the armed movement may counter-intuitively increase the likelihood of a terrorist plot. This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: Transnational supporters who lack close connections to the armed movement or other supporters are more likely to plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence.

Security Measures: Whether the Transnational Supporter is Subjected to Travel Restrictions and Law Enforcement Interactions

An armed movement's transnational supporters can be subjected to a range of domestic security measures, which can depend on their country of residence's policy towards the armed movement. Some states may allow an armed movement to operate from its territory to undermine a rival. For example, Kashmiri-focused insurgents fighting India have long had opportunities to organise, propagandise, fund-raise and train in Pakistan.⁴² In other circumstances, a state might be relatively passive towards some forms of support for particular armed movements, such as the United States tolerating a degree of domestic fund-raising for the Provisional Irish Republican Army during the 1970s.⁴³ However, even in such cases a state rarely tolerates an armed movement's transnational supporters carrying out terrorist attacks within the state's own territory, and may at least monitor the supporters to prevent local attacks. Alternatively, some states will strongly oppose certain armed movements and prohibit their residents from supporting

them in any way, including through funding, travelling to join, and advocacy. One common approach is for states to proscribe specific armed movements as terrorist organisations, thereby criminalising a range of conduct in support of the movement.⁴⁴

How might these security measures influence whether an armed movement's transnational supporter attempts a terrorist attack at home? Given that states are most likely to prioritise the prevention of attacks within their own territory, it might be expected that security measures reduce the likelihood of individuals attempting such attacks rather than engaging in less risky support activities. However, somewhat counter-intuitively, state security measures could make terrorist plotting more likely despite helping to prevent plots from turning into successful attacks. When a wide range of support activities are criminalised, the transnational supporters may have less incentive to eschew terrorist plotting if they are likely to face lengthy prison sentences for less threatening activities like funding or advocacy. Moreover, the experience of facing police action for their support activities, or seeing their friends or family arrested, could potentially strengthen their grievances against the host state and make a terrorist attack at home more appealing. This is consistent with the mechanism of *escalating policing* that scholars like Della Porta have identified, in other contexts, as contributing to terrorist outcomes.⁴⁵ Even when police investigations into an armed movement's transnational supporters are carried out covertly rather than overtly, they may still increase the likelihood of the supporters plotting local terrorist attacks as undercover officers may sometimes play an escalatory role.⁴⁶

States can also restrict their residents from travelling to support an armed movement. If the supporter is unable to travel to the conflict zone yet intends to carry out violence in support of the armed movement, it follows that they may engage in such violence inside the country they now remain in. Robin Simcox has noted the "threat to Europe from frustrated travelers", finding that many terrorist plots in Europe involved people prevented from travelling to Syria to join Islamic State.⁴⁷ Timothy Holman likewise noted an inherent trade-off between countering foreign fighter mobilisations and countering terrorism, where the former could undermine the latter.⁴⁸

Therefore, the host state's deployment of security measures may in several different ways inadvertently increase the likelihood of the movement's supporters plotting terrorist attacks at home. This leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: Transnational supporters subjected to travel restrictions and law enforcement interactions due to their support for the armed movement are more likely to plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence.

Scope Conditions: Armed Movement Mobilises Physical Travel and Ideologically Legitimises Transnational Terrorism

The hypotheses above posit that three sets of factors, under the broad umbrella concepts of strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures, help to differentiate individuals who plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence from those who reside in the same country and support the same armed movement abroad but do not plot local attacks, and thereby contribute to addressing the specificity puzzle in terrorism studies. However, due to assumptions embedded in the reasoning behind each hypothesis, these factors can only be posited to apply under certain conditions that restrict the theoretical scope.

First, travel restrictions can only be a relevant factor in circumstances where the armed movement mobilises physical travel. There are many armed movements that fit this criteria, as foreign fighters are an appealing source of recruits for a wide range of movements.⁴⁹ It is proposed that the hypotheses only apply in such circumstances, as the reasoning behind all three hypotheses includes references to difficulties in travelling (such as an armed movement calling on supporters to no longer travel but prioritise local attacks instead, a supporter struggling to travel due to lacking connections to others in the movement to facilitate access to the conflict zone, or state authorities preventing a supporter from travelling).

Second, it is apparent that there are many cases where states have suppressed transnational support for certain armed movements without experiencing a surge in terrorism. For example, Germany banned the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 1993, making overt support for the PKK much more difficult.⁵⁰ Transnational funding for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) dropped after the US, UK, Canadian and other governments implemented new anti-terrorism laws in the 2000s.⁵¹ In neither case was there a subsequent surge in European or North American terrorist attacks by PKK and LTTE supporters. While this could be partly attributable to neither movement strongly emphasising transnational terrorism in their strategic logic (consistent with H1), that few if any supporters plotted such attacks at their own initiative suggests that other factors played a role, such as ideology. The ideological output of the PKK, LTTE, and indeed many armed movements does not stress the ideological legitimacy of acts of terrorism outside the conflict zone. In contrast, if a supporter of Islamic State or al-Qaeda is prevented from providing support to these movements in one way, they do not have to make much of an ideological leap to turn to a terrorist attack at home. This may apply to several other movements, with one study finding 95 armed movements that had engaged in transnational terrorism from 1970 to 2013, a number of which would presumably have sought to ideologically legitimise such activities.⁵² Therefore, the theoretical approach behind the hypotheses assumes that the armed movement's ideology legitimises transnational terrorism to the extent that some supporters would see attacks at home as a legitimate option even if not their preferred option.

Methods

Population of Interest and Sample Selection

To assess the three hypotheses, data was gathered on the activities of Australian residents who provided transnational support to Islamic State between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2020. Islamic State fits within the scope conditions of the theoretical approach as the movement extensively mobilised physical travel and ideologically legitimised transnational terrorism, building on the ideological groundwork of earlier jihadist armed movements such as al-Qaeda.⁵³ To narrow down the focus to Islamic State's mobilisation of transnational support from a single country, Australia was chosen. Large numbers of Australian residents are estimated to have provided some form of transnational support to Islamic State during the years of its territorial peak in Syria and Iraq. This includes not just plotters of attacks but people who adopted other roles

such as funding, facilitating recruitment, advocacy, technological support, and travelling to join the movement's self-proclaimed "Caliphate". This ensures the necessary variation across the outcome of interest, of whether or not a transnational supporter plotted a terrorist attack at home.

To develop a sample of individuals who resided in Australia and provided transnational support to Islamic State between 2013 and 2020, a wide net was initially cast with the broad inclusion criteria of: individuals from Australia who have faced a *public allegation* of providing support to Islamic State between the time period. These included formal allegations such as criminal charges, but also included media reporting of Australians fighting in Syria or Iraq. The data was initially gathered as part of the author's doctoral dissertation at Monash University and later supplemented with data from the Applied Security Science Partnership (ASSP) Database at Victoria University.⁵⁴ Using a careful approach to public sources, accessed primarily through the Australasian Legal Information Institute and ProQuest, information on over 200 individuals was initially entered. To ensure that the final version of the dataset only included those individuals *on whom sufficient credible information about their alleged activities could be found*, the list was assessed and, where necessary, culled. This resulted in a final sample of 129 individuals who could be credibly considered to have provided transnational support to Islamic State from within Australia between 2013 and 2020.⁵⁵

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was whether the transnational supporter had plotted a terrorist attack inside Australia. Individuals listed as having plotted a terrorist attack had mostly been convicted of criminal offences for preparing and planning terrorist acts or died in the process of carrying out an attack. If an individual's terrorist plotting took place outside of Australia, such as someone travelling to Syria who then sought to remotely instigate attacks in Australia, they were listed as not having plotted a terrorist attack in their country of residence, as were individuals in Australia who plotted attacks to occur overseas. Individuals who met the necessary criteria were coded as 1 and those who did not were coded as 0.

Independent Variables

The independent variables were chosen to reflect the observable implications of each of the three hypotheses. For H1, it was proposed earlier that variation in the priority an armed movement publicly places on transnational terrorism may influence the outcome. For this study, that variation was captured in an ordinal variable of low/medium/high. The period from the beginning of 2013 to 21 September 2014, can be considered the *low priority* period for Islamic State's public prioritisation of transnational terrorism. Some Islamic State supporters carried out attacks in Europe during this time (such as Mehdi Nemmouche's attack on a Holocaust Museum in Belgium in May 2014) but Islamic State's official statements did not claim credit.⁵⁶ During this time, speeches by Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or spokesperson Abu Mohammad al-Adnani did not explicitly call on supporters to attack at home, nor did Islamic State's official publications. Instead, the overwhelming emphasis was on calling

for these supporters to travel to Islamic State's core theatre of conflict in Syria and Iraq to help build, and fight for, the newly proclaimed "Caliphate".

The second time period was from 22 September 2014 to 20 May 2016, when the publicly stated preferences of Islamic State's organisational leadership treated attacks inside the supporters' host states as a *medium priority*. As Islamic State's territorial expansion was impeded by the US-led coalition's military support for Iraqi and Kurdish forces, transnational terrorism became a greater strategic priority for the movement. This became clear with al-Adnani's 22 September 2014 speech "Indeed, Your Lord is Ever Watchful", which emphasised the value of Islamic State's supporters carry out attacks in their home countries.⁵⁷ During this period, Islamic State's official publications like *Dabiq* magazine still called for travel to Syria and Iraq but also increasingly celebrated those carrying out violence inside their host states.

The third time period was from 21 May 2016 until the end of 2020. It was during this period that the publicly stated preferences of Islamic State's organisational leadership treated attacks inside supporters' host states as a *high priority*. The shift was marked by al-Adnani's 21 May 2016 speech "That they live by proof", which unambiguously announced that local attacks were now more important than travelling, declaring that "the smallest act you do in their lands is more beloved to us than the biggest act done here; it is more effective for us and more harmful to them."⁵⁸ Consistent with this declaration, the new publication *Rumiyah* magazine focused more on direct instructions for terrorist attacks.⁵⁹ Simultaneously, Islamic State lowered its threshold for claiming credit for attacks and downplayed the importance of travelling.⁶⁰ Cases who began their support for Islamic State during the *low priority* period for transnational terrorism were coded as 0, those who began their support during the *medium priority* period were coded as 1, and those who began their support during the *high priority* period were coded as 2.

For H2, two variables were crafted to capture the transnational supporter's connections to the armed movement or its supporters. As it was proposed that the *lack* of connections would be associated with a higher likelihood of terrorist plotting, these variables should be understood as potential protective factors. The first variable was *membership of local network*, referring to whether the individual interacted with one or more other Islamic State supporters within Australia. Cases that were members of a local network were coded as 1, and those who were not were coded as 0. The second variable created for H2 was *communication with members or supporters of armed movement abroad*. This could take various forms, including the individuals being directly in contact with members of the movement in its core theatre of conflict (such as by having Telegram conversations with an Islamic State figure based in Syria or Iraq), or indirect communication (such as when a member of the individual's local network, but not the individual themselves, engaged in such communication) or cases that involved communication with an Islamic State supporter outside of Australia but not in Syria or Iraq. Cases that engaged in any such communication with Islamic State members or supporters abroad were coded as 1 and those that had not were coded as 0. The variables had to have manifested before the outcome of interest. If an individual began plotting a terrorist attack and *then* established communication with an Islamic State member in Syria, they were coded as 0 for that variable rather than 1.

For H3, it was proposed that domestic security measures would influence whether the individual would plot an act of terrorism at home. Two variables were created to capture this. The first was *travel restrictions*, given the evidence of terrorist plots carried out by frustrated travellers. The variable refers to whether the individuals were subjected to a formal travel restriction (such as having their passport cancelled by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) or faced no apparent restriction. Cases were coded as 1 if they were subjected to such a restriction and 0 if they were not. For a small number of cases, court documents revealed that the individual had not overtly been stopped from travelling but had expressed concerns (to a co-conspirator or an undercover officer) that they believed authorities were on to them and that there was no point trying. These cases of perceived travel restrictions were similarly coded as 1, as the result (an individual expressing interest in travelling but failing to do so) was the same.

The second variable created for H3 was *interaction with law enforcement*, which refers to whether they had been arrested by police before, been questioned or had their house searched, or had any other sort of direct interaction with law enforcement, provided that this interaction was related to the individual's support for the armed movement. Cases were coded as 1 if they experienced an interaction with law enforcement related to their support for Islamic State and 0 if they did not. Cases where the interaction was not known to the supporter (such as engagement by undercover officers) were also coded as 0. The variables again had to have manifested before the outcome of interest. For example, almost all the attack plotters in the dataset were eventually arrested, prosecuted and convicted for their activities, but they were only marked as 1 for law enforcement interactions if the authorities had interacted with them over their support for Islamic State *before* they began plotting.

Control Variables

A small number of control variables were chosen, drawn from the micro-level factors traditionally examined in quantitative research on individual involvement in terrorism. Gender and age were the most important to include, as the literature shows a broad consensus that young men are more likely to engage in terrorism.⁶¹ For gender, cases were coded as 1 for being *male* or 0 for not being male. For age, two variables were created. The first was whether they were a *juvenile*, coded as 1 if they were under 18 and 0 if they were older. The second was whether they were *young*, based on the World Health Organization definition of youth, coded as 1 if they were under 25 and 0 if they were older. Marital and parental status were also included, due to the possibility they could serve as protective factors, reducing the likelihood of an individual engaging in terrorism.⁶² For marital status, cases were coded as 1 for being *married* at the time they supported Islamic State and 0 for not being married at the time. Cases were similarly coded as 1 for being a *parent* at the time they provided support to Islamic State or 0 for not being a parent. The coding was based on the time their support for Islamic State began. If the individual was married before they began supporting Islamic State they were coded as 1, but if they only became married after supporting the movement (such as getting married in Islamic State territory in Syria) they were coded as 0.

Statistical Procedures

The dependent variable and all the independent variables were categorical, making chi-square tests the most suitable approach for the bivariate analysis. All but one of the chi-square tests were run with the Yates continuity correction, which provides a more stringent test as is appropriate when both the independent and dependent variables are dichotomous. The Yates continuity correction was not used on the public priority that Islamic State placed on transnational terrorism at the time the individuals provided transnational support, as this variable was not dichotomous (as an ordinal variable with three ascending categories of low/medium/high).

A significance threshold was applied of $p > 0.05$. However, p values have become contested in the social and other sciences. While some journals have gone so far as to ban p values, some statisticians contend that the problem is not so much p values themselves but excessive reliance on necessarily arbitrary significance thresholds that can lead to incorrect inferences that a variable does not matter if it falls just short of a threshold and that it must matter if it just reaches the threshold.⁶³ Other statisticians contend that p values have a legitimate role and that excluding p values in favour of any other statistical measure would cause new problems.⁶⁴ The field of terrorism studies has not formed any consensus position on this debate. For this article, the author follows the recommendations of the American Statistical Association that “data analysis should not end with the calculation of a p -value when other approaches are appropriate and feasible.”⁶⁵

Therefore, in addition to p values, effect sizes are also provided, and the analysis places weight on both the significance tests and effect sizes before making inferences. For the dichotomous independent variables, the Phi coefficient is used. A Phi coefficient higher than 0.1 but lower than 0.3 is treated as a small effect size, one higher than 0.3 but lower than 0.5 is treated as a medium effect size, and one higher than 0.5 is treated as a large effect size.⁶⁶ For the ordinal variable (the armed movement’s public prioritisation of transnational terrorism), the Cramer’s V coefficient is used. A Cramer’s V coefficient higher than 0.7 but smaller than 0.21 is treated as a small effect size, one higher than 0.21 but lower than 0.35 is treated as a medium effect size, and one higher than 0.35 is treated as a large effect size.⁶⁷

For the multivariate analysis, a binary logistic regression was conducted on all but two of the independent variables and all the control variables. The independent variable *communication with members or supporters of armed movement abroad* was removed because too much data (35% of cases) was missing, as logistic regressions require the removal of cases with missing data which would have made the sample size far smaller (or require the use of imputation techniques that could risk distorting the results). The independent variable *interactions with law enforcement* was similarly removed as 16% of the cases were missing this data. All other variables were retained for the logistic regression, which required turning the ordinal variable, armed movement’s prioritisation of transnational support, into two dichotomous variables with the low priority period as the reference. This resulted in eight independent variables for the multivariate analysis: *medium priority attack period*, *high priority attack period*, *member of local network*, *travel restrictions*, *male*, *juvenile*, *youth*, *married* and *parent*.⁶⁸

Results

Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate results show that three of the five variables derived from the three hypotheses, along with one of the control variables, were associated with the outcome of Islamic State's transnational supporters within Australia plotting terrorist attacks at home. These four variables all showed $p > 0.05$ and small-to-large effect sizes (Table 1).

The strategic priority Islamic state publicly placed on transnational terrorism at a given time was far more important than any other variable. This was the only variable to show a large effect size, with a Cramer's v of 0.397, suggesting the strong importance of Islamic State's strategic logic in differentiating those sample members who plotted terrorist attacks within Australia from those who supported the movement in other ways.

The next most important variables were the two proposed to assess the importance of security measures, with each showing a medium effect size. Travel restrictions were most important, showing a Phi coefficient of 0.349. Interactions with law enforcement, related to the individual's support for the armed movement, showed a slightly smaller effect size with a Phi coefficient of 0.334. This suggests that security measures are important factors differentiating those Australian Islamic State supporters who plotted

Table 1. Chi-square tests of potential factors differentiating an armed movement's transnational supporters who plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence ($N = 129$).

| Independent variable (IV) | Did not plot terrorist attack | | | Plotted terrorist attack | | | P value (significance) | Phi (effect size) | Missing data |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| | IV not present | IV present | | IV not present | IV present | | | | |
| Being male | 17 | 63 | | 3 | 46 | | 0.04 (significant) | 0.203 (small) | 0% |
| Being a juvenile (under 18) | 71 | 8 | | 40 | 9 | | 0.286 | 0.118 | 1% |
| Being young (under 25) | 28 | 48 | | 12 | 36 | | 0.239 | 0.169 | 4% |
| Being married | 44 | 32 | | 33 | 16 | | 0.383 | -0.95 | 3% |
| Being a parent | 54 | 55 | | 37 | 12 | | 0.733 | -0.49 | 3% |
| Communicating with armed movement | 17 | 21 | | 26 | 20 | | 0.392 | -0.117 | 35% |
| Being part of a local network | 11 | 67 | | 7 | 42 | | 1 | -0.03 | 2% |
| Subjected to travel restrictions | 60 | 19 | | 18 | 26 | | <0.001 (significant) | 0.349 (medium) | 5% |
| Subjected to law enforcement | 53 | 12 | | 22 | 22 | | 0.001 (significant) | 0.334 (medium) | 16% |
| Public priority armed movement placed on transnational terrorism | <i>Low</i> | <i>Medium</i> | <i>High</i> | <i>Low</i> | <i>Medium</i> | <i>High</i> | <i>P value (significance)</i> | <i>Cramer's V (effect size)</i> | <i>Missing data</i> |
| | 46 | 25 | 9 | 9 | 23 | 16 | <0.001 (significant) | 0.397 (large) | 1% |

Note: For all the dichotomous variables, the p value and Phi coefficient were calculated using the chi-square test of independence with the Yates continuity correction. For the final variable, "public priority armed movement placed on transnational terrorism," the p value and Cramer's V coefficient were calculated using the chi-square test of independence.

terrorist attacks within Australia from those who did not, but not nearly as important as factors relating to strategic logic.

However, the variables of whether the transnational supporter was part of a local network or communicated with members of the armed movement were not found to be associated with whether the supporter plotted a terrorist attack at home. These were proposed as potential protective factors (through the argument that individuals *without* network connections or communications with the armed movement would be more likely to plot attacks, due to the difficulty of supporting the movement in other ways). The results for communication with members or supporters of the armed movement do show a small effect size, with a Phi coefficient of -0.117 , and the negative value suggests that any effect is in the direction proposed. However, it was noted earlier that inferences would only be made on the basis of effect sizes *and* significance tests, and the significance test falls extremely short with a p value of 0.392. The results for membership of a local network therefore fail to demonstrate the variable having any importance at all.

Of the control variables, gender was somewhat associated with whether the armed movement's transnational supporters plotted terrorist attacks at home. The Phi coefficient of 0.203 revealed a small effect size and the variable passed a standard significance threshold given the p value of 0.04. The bivariate results do not demonstrate any other relationship between the control variables and the outcome of interest, with the most tentative possible exceptions. The two variables relating to age (being under 18 or under 25) both showed a small effect size but did not come close to passing any significance threshold. The results for parental and marital status do show negative values for the Phi coefficients, at least suggesting that any relationship between these variables and the outcome of interest, if there is one, flows in the proposed direction as it was posited that they are protective factors, reducing the likelihood of terrorist plotting. However, they all fail to show even a small effect size or pass any significance threshold.

What the results most clearly show is that the variables of the armed movement's publicly stated prioritisation of transnational terrorism, travel restrictions, and law enforcement interactions, were more important for this sample than the micro-level factors. With the exception of gender, the micro-level factors produced no promising results, despite such factors being well-established in the quantitative literature on individual involvement in terrorism.

Multivariate Analysis

The multivariate analysis was conducted as a binary logistic regression, excluding the variables *communication with members or supporters of armed movement abroad* and *interactions with law enforcement* for reasons discussed earlier. The effect sizes are shown through the Exp(B) odds ratio, which provides a raw score measure of the effect size rather than the standardised measures used in the bivariate analysis. This allows for clearer findings as to how much difference the variables made rather than references to a large, medium or small effect (Table 2).

The results again show that the strategic priority Islamic State placed on transnational terrorism during different time periods was overwhelmingly the most important

Table 2. Binary logistic regression of potential factors differentiating an armed movement's transnational supporters who plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence ($N=115$).

| Independent variables (IV) | B | S.E. | Wald | df | P value (significance) | Exp(B) (odds ratio) | 95% C.I. Lower | 95% C.I. Upper |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Supporting armed movement when transnational terrorism was a low priority [reference] | | | 13.345 | 2 | 0.001 | | | |
| Supporting armed movement when transnational terrorism was a medium priority | 1.142 | 0.559 | 4.117 | 1 | 0.041 (significant) | 3.132 | 1.048 | 9.361 |
| Supporting armed movement when transnational terrorism was a high priority | 2.42 | 0.665 | 13.248 | 1 | <.001 (significant) | 11.246 | 3.055 | 41.394 |
| Being part of a local network | 0.262 | 0.659 | 0.158 | 1 | 0.691 | 1.299 | 0.357 | 4.725 |
| Travel restrictions | 1.545 | 0.493 | 9.809 | 1 | 0.002 (significant) | 4.686 | 1.782 | 12.318 |
| Being male | 1.778 | 0.901 | 3.893 | 1 | 0.048 (significant) | 5.919 | 1.012 | 34.619 |
| Being juvenile (under 18) | 1.152 | 0.715 | 2.594 | 1 | 0.107 | 3.165 | 0.779 | 12.865 |
| Being young (under 25) | 0.863 | 0.658 | 1.721 | 1 | 0.19 | 2.37 | 0.653 | 8.602 |
| Being married | 0.149 | 0.734 | 0.041 | 1 | 0.839 | 1.16 | 0.275 | 4.889 |
| Being a parent | 0.258 | 0.834 | 0.096 | 1 | 0.757 | 1.295 | 0.252 | 6.642 |
| Constant | -4.920 | 1.341 | 13.458 | 1 | <0.001 | <0.007 | | |

variable. The odds ratio suggests that, all else equal, those Australians who began supporting Islamic State during the period when it treated transnational terrorism as a medium priority (from 21 September 2014 to 20 May 2016) were around three times more likely to plot terrorist attacks than those Australians who began supporting Islamic State earlier. The odds ratio further suggests that those Australians who began supporting Islamic State during the period when it treated transnational terrorism as a high priority (after 21 May 2016) were 11 times more likely to plot a terrorist attack than those active when Islamic State treated transnational terrorism as a low priority (prior to 21 September 2014). However, the sheer size of the 95% confidence intervals must be noted, suggesting the likelihood of the sample members who began supporting Islamic State during the high priority period turning to local attacks could be as low as three times more likely than those who began support during the low priority period or as implausibly high as 41 times more likely. The wide range of the confidence intervals likely reflects the limits of the sample size. Nonetheless, the results firmly show that the extent to which Islamic State prioritised transnational terrorism during the time the individual sought to support the movement was the most important factor.

Travel restrictions were the next most important factor. The odds ratio suggests that, all else equal, those subjected to travel restrictions were around four times more likely to plot terrorist attacks in Australia than those who were not, although the confidence intervals range from nearly two to slightly more than 12. Gender was the next most important factor, with the odds ratio suggesting that, all else equal, male sample members were nearly six times more likely to plot terrorist attacks, but again with wide confidence intervals. The results allow few inferences to be made about the role of age, marital status or parental status. Given the broader literature showing that age and marital status can influence individual involvement in terrorism, this is somewhat surprising.⁶⁹ Finally, the results again do not show membership of a local network to have any importance in whether an armed movement's transnational supporter plots a terrorist attack at home.

Discussion

The results above provide support for the first and third hypotheses but not the second. The findings are highly consistent with H1, that *individuals who provide transnational support to an armed movement at a time when it prioritises transnational terrorism more highly will be more likely to plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence*. As Islamic State's public statements increasingly emphasised transnational terrorism rather than traveling to join the "Caliphate" in Syria and Iraq, their Australian supporters became increasingly likely to plot terrorist attacks within Australia rather than support Islamic State through other means. This closely matches Schuurman and Carthy's finding that the most important factor differentiating whether radicalisation leads to terrorist plots was the strategic logic of the extremist movement that the individual aligned with.⁷⁰

However, the findings here enable greater granularity. While Schuurman and Carthy's key factor was "alignment with extremist groups or movements that promote a 'strategic logic'... that unreservedly favors violence as a means of achieving goals",⁷¹ this study allows for a distinction between whether the movement is favouring violence in a specific conflict zone or promoting terrorism transnationally. Furthermore, these results add a temporal element, showing that the extent to which an armed movement emphasises transnational terrorism at the time the individual begins actively supporting the movement makes a dramatic difference. This finding is not unintuitive, as the field of terrorism studies has long examined the strategic logic of terrorism, yet strategic logic at the movement level has rarely been incorporated into studies of the factors behind terrorist outcomes at the individual level.

The findings are also consistent with H3, that *transnational supporters subjected to travel restrictions and law enforcement interactions due to their support for the armed movement are more likely to plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence*. After the armed movement's public prioritisation of transnational terrorism in a given period, travel restrictions stood out as the next most important factor differentiating those sample members who plotted terrorist attacks at home. This is highly consistent with the literature on terrorist plots by "frustrated travellers".⁷² The bivariate analysis also suggested that law enforcement interactions were an important factor, although this was not incorporated into the multivariate analysis. These findings on the importance

of security measures are also consistent with the field's emphasis on understanding terrorism and counter-terrorism as a reciprocal relationship.⁷³

However, the findings do not support H2, that *transnational supporters who lack close connections to the armed movement or other supporters are more likely to plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence*. Neither the lack of membership of a local network of other Islamic State supporters, nor the lack of contact with Islamic State members abroad (namely in Syria and Iraq), meaningfully differentiated sample members who plotted attacks in Australia from those who did not. This was at odds with Jensen et al.'s findings on American Islamic State supporters, which found that the absence of such connections made terrorist plots more likely, and also at odds with Schuurman and Carthy's finding that the lack of membership of an extremist group made terrorist plotting more likely.⁷⁴

However, that these findings were not replicated in this sample does not undermine the other studies, as there were substantial differences in the approaches undertaken. First, Jensen et al.'s study only differentiated between plotting and travelling, while this study differentiated between plotting and all other transnational support activities, including travelling but also funding, facilitating travel, technical support and advocacy. Second, this study used relatively simple binary criteria for measuring network connections (member of local network or not, direct or indirect communication or not) while Jensen et al. used elaborate social network analysis methods. Third, the different findings may reflect differences between the US and Australian contexts. While Jensen et al. noted that lone supporters of Islamic State were particularly vulnerable to FBI sting operations, Australian counter-terrorism authorities engaged in such operations less frequently or aggressively. Similarly, while large networks of likeminded extremists might be highly valuable for facilitating travel in the US context, they may be less important in the Australian context where authorities routinely cancelled passports of suspected Islamic State supporters.⁷⁵ Members of large networks may have been more likely to have had their passports cancelled, while people with fewer connections to other Islamic State supporters may have been more likely to slip under the radar. Fourth, the findings may reflect the specific way that mobilising structures were theorised for the development of H2 rather than undermining the importance of mobilising structures more broadly.

The lack of support for H2 in this study should therefore not be taken as undermining the value of further research into the role of mobilising structures on individual outcomes. Instead, it points to the value of further research that addresses ways that the national context can influence how these factors play out. While there were differences in the security approaches that Australia and the United States took towards Islamic State supporters, with Australia relying more on passport cancellations and the United States relying more on sting operations, there are also clear similarities across the two contexts. For example, both countries are physically distant from Syria and Iraq, and were not promising territory for Islamic State to establish more formally organised mobilising structures with command-and-control relationships, which may have been possible in countries closer to the conflict zone, such as Turkey and Lebanon. Future research could identify what role different mobilising structures, in different national contexts, have on individual involvement in terrorism.

Another important finding was the lack of support for the control variables other than gender. The control variables were derived from the common micro-level factors

that are relatively well-established in the field. Only gender clearly appeared to be important, and even then, the results suggest it was much less important than factors relating to strategic logic and security measures. This demonstrates the importance of the more dynamic and contextual factors, despite the relatively rarity with which they have been incorporated into quantitative research on individual involvement in terrorism.

This is not to endorse strawman portrayals of terrorism studies as a field obsessed with finding the causes of terrorism in individual attributes and unconcerned with political context. Rather, there is a discrepancy *within* the field. Plenty of terrorism studies literature addresses strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures, which this paper drew on to develop the hypotheses and propose specific variables. It is rare to find analyses of terrorist plots by al-Qaeda or Islamic State supporters that do not mention the post-9/11 political atmosphere, security responses, conflicts in the Middle East, strategies adopted by leaders of these movements, or the type of connections that plotters have had (or lacked) with the movements. Quantitative studies of terrorist plots often explicitly include such factors, yet quantitative studies of terrorist *plotters* (and comparisons with non-plotters) often do not.⁷⁶ It is somewhat surprising that such factors are often missing in quantitative studies of individual involvement in terrorism despite being widely examined in terrorism studies more broadly.

This may be a result of disciplinary divides. Terrorism studies is a famously interdisciplinary field, with political science as the dominant discipline, followed closely by psychology, then by other disciplines such as criminology, sociology, economics and law.⁷⁷ This interdisciplinary nature is a great strength but can contribute to a siloing effect.⁷⁸ Much of the quantitative literature on individual involvement in terrorism tends to be produced by psychologists and criminologists. In contrast, the literature that treats terrorism as part of dynamic multi-level processes, as one tactic among many used in contentious political mobilisations, tends to be produced by political scientists, sociologists and historians, whose disciplines do not prioritise the identification of individual risk and protective factors. This siloing effect likely contributes to a situation where factors widely held by some parts of the literature to be of central importance in understanding mobilisation to terrorism are relatively under-examined within the quantitative research concerned with advancing granular understandings of what differentiates the small number of people who engage in acts of terrorism from the much larger number of people in similar circumstances who do not.

The approach taken in this study highlights a way ahead. For example, future studies of individual involvement in terrorism in many other contexts can complement traditional micro-level variables with variables such as which armed movement the individual supports and the movement's strategic logic, in the manner undertaken by Schuurman and Carthy's study, while also incorporating variables that address the extent to which a movement prioritises transnational terrorism at particular times as undertaken for this paper.⁷⁹ Similarly, future studies could more frequently incorporate variables that account for security measures, such as travel restrictions or overt law enforcement interactions as undertaken in this study, or covert law enforcement interactions as undertaken in Jensen et al.'s study.⁸⁰ However, these approaches may not be suitable for all such studies. The theoretical approach adopted in this article was concerned with a narrow subset of terrorism, that which occurs as part of the mobilisation of transnational support by armed movements, further bounded by the scope

conditions restricting the focus to armed movements that mobilised physical travel and ideologically legitimised transnational terrorism. The study did not address purely domestic mobilisations, although these broad sets of factors could prove important in such situations even if manifesting in different ways.

The decision to focus on this specific subset of terrorism necessitated some cost in generalisability, but in doing so allowed for the effective observation of the relevant variables and the identification of a suitable control group. Moreover, the focus on terrorism in the context of transnational mobilisation is valuable not only for addressing core concerns of terrorism studies but also questions raised in comparable fields like civil war studies. There has been a small surge in research on the relationship between transnational terrorism and civil war, often by identifying factors behind an armed movement's decisions to expand their warfare beyond national borders.⁸¹ This paper's findings similarly contribute to research on the relationship between transnational terrorism and civil war, but from the opposite direction, by shedding light on the decision-making of an armed movement's transnational supporters as to whether to plot terrorist attacks.

The findings also have significant policy implications, as the practice of counter-terrorism is to some extent informed by the social scientific literature on individual involvement in terrorism. This is evident in various structural professional judgement (SPJ) tools used for threat assessment in counter-terrorism.⁸² These tools often draw from the social scientific literature that tends to focus on micro-level factors. Yet understanding the specifics of why some individuals turn to terrorism, when similarly situated individuals do not, also requires knowledge of the broader factors discussed here. As Monica Lloyd posits, a core challenge for the development and validation of counter-terrorism threat assessment tools is that "although the push factors reside within the individual, the pull factors are located within the social and political context and its narratives."⁸³ This is not to suggest that such tools must directly incorporate factors relating to strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures, as they may be better suited the professional judgement than the structure side of SPJ. However, a focus on such dynamic and contextual factors in the training of tool users can help ensure that their professional judgement is informed by knowledge of how important these broader factors can be.

Conclusion

This paper proposed that the priority an armed movement's leadership publicly places on transnational terrorism at the time someone supports the movement, the mobilising structures that connect (or fail to connect) the supporter to the movement, and the security measures the supporter is subjected to, differentiate those transnational supporters who plot terrorist attacks in their country of residence from those who do not. Using an original dataset of 129 people who provided transnational support to Islamic State from within Australia between 2013 and 2020, this paper found support for the first and third hypotheses but not the second. The findings showed the strategic priority Islamic State publicly placed on transnational terrorism at a given time was the most important factor, followed by whether the supporter was subjected to travel restrictions and law enforcement interactions, and only then followed by micro-level factors such as gender.

The theoretical reasoning and broader literature behind the hypotheses, along with the resulting findings, show that progress on the specificity puzzle in terrorism studies can be advanced by incorporating contextual and dynamic factors related to strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures into quantitative studies where the outcome of interest is whether or not an individual engages in an act of terrorism. Quantitative studies of individual involvement in terrorism have not tended to explicitly include such factors, but this is beginning to change, with results that show the promise they hold for advancing progress on the specificity puzzle. This paper's findings further support such efforts, with the caveat that the results do not support the hypothesis developed to address to role of mobilising structures, but this does not rule out further inquiry given that other studies have identified the importance of mobilising structures in other ways. This study was restricted to a specific armed movement (Islamic State) in a specific context (Australia). The wider generalisability of the findings has not been established, although several are consistent with studies of other cases in comparable contexts. The inconsistencies are themselves worthy of further examination, particularly given the differences with what Jensen et al. found for Islamic State supporters in the United States.⁸⁴

None of this forecloses the need for alternative ways to differentiate the small number of people who engage in terrorism from the larger number of people, affected by the same traditionally examined factors, who do not. Other approaches, particularly the identification of mechanisms and pathways through which various factors lead to individual terrorist outcomes, remain highly important. However, the findings show the value of treating the plotting of terrorist attacks as one tactic among many that an individual can adopt to participate in a larger political mobilisation, particularly the mobilisation of transnational support for armed movements, and how this can be applied to help explain individual outcomes. Broadening quantitative studies on individual involvement in terrorism to incorporate dynamic and contextual factors related to strategic logic, mobilising structures and security measures does offer distinct analytical payoffs for addressing the specificity puzzle.

Notes

1. Erica Chenoweth and Pauline L. Moore, *The Politics of Terror* (Oxford University Press, 2018).
2. James Khalil and Lorne L. Dawson, "Understanding Involvement in Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Theoretical Integration through the ABC Model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0, no. 0 (March 28, 2023): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2023.2190413>.
3. Bart Schuurman and Sarah L. Carthy, "Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence: What Sets Extremists Who Use Terrorist Violence Apart from Those Who Do Not?," *Criminology & Public Policy* n/a, no. n/a, accessed June 29, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12626>.
4. Kurt Braddock, *A Brief Primer on Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Methods in the Study of Terrorism* (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2019).
5. Michael Wolfowicz, et al., "Cognitive and Behavioral Radicalization: A Systematic Review of the Putative Risk and Protective Factors," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 17, no. 3 (2021): e1174, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1174>.
6. Lorne Dawson, "Clarifying the Explanatory Context for Developing Theories of Radicalization: Five Basic Considerations," *Journal for Deradicalization*, no. 18 (March 23, 2019): 149.

7. Kiran Sarma, "Risk Assessment and the Prevention of Radicalization from Nonviolence Into Terrorism," *American Psychologist* 72 (April 1, 2017): 282–93, <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000121>.
8. Matteo Vergani, et al., "The Three Ps of Radicalization: Push, Pull and Personal. A Systematic Scoping Review of the Scientific Evidence about Radicalization Into Violent Extremism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43, no. 10 (October 2, 2020): 868–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1505686>.
9. Dawson, "Clarifying the Explanatory Context for Developing Theories of Radicalization," 164–66.
10. Dawson, 159–64.
11. Michael A. Jensen, Anita Atwell Seate, and Patrick A. James, "Radicalization to Violence: A Pathway Approach to Studying Extremism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 5 (July 3, 2020): 1067–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1442330>; Emily Corner and Helen Taylor, *Grievance-Fuelled Violence: Modelling the Process of Grievance Development*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.52922/rr78917>.
12. Gary LaFree and Anina Schwarzenbach, "Micro and Macro-Level Risk Factors for Extremism and Terrorism: Toward a Criminology of Extremist Violence," *Monatsschrift Für Kriminologie Und Strafrechtsreform* 104, no. 3 (July 1, 2021): 195, <https://doi.org/10.1515/mks-2021-0127>.
13. Wolfowicz, et al., "Cognitive and Behavioral Radicalization."
14. Schuurman and Carthy, "Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence," 5,14.
15. Michael Jensen and Gary LaFree, *Multi Level Approach to the Study of Violent Extremism* (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 2022), 8, <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/multi-level-approach-study-violent-extremism>.
16. Sarah Marsden, Leena Malkki, and Joel Busher, "Introduction," in *The Routledge Handbook on Radicalisation and Countering Radicalisation* (Routledge, 2023), 3.
17. Chenoweth and Moore, *The Politics of Terror*.
18. Wolfowicz, et al., "Cognitive and Behavioral Radicalization."
19. John Horgan, *Terrorist Minds: The Psychology of Violent Extremism from Al-Qaeda to the Far Right* (Columbia University Press, 2023); Khalil and Dawson, "Understanding Involvement in Terrorism and Violent Extremism"; Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (Oxford University Press, 2011); Chenoweth and Moore, *The Politics of Terror*.
20. Jeffrey Treistman, "Social Exclusion and Political Violence: Multilevel Analysis of the Justification of Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 7 (July 2, 2024): 701–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.2007244>; Thomas Hegghammer, "Revisiting the Poverty-Terrorism Link in European Jihadism" (Society for Terrorism Research annual conference, Leiden, 2016), <https://hegghammer.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/hegghammer-poverty.pdf>.
21. Chenoweth and Moore, *The Politics of Terror*, 31.
22. McCauley and Moskalenko, *Friction*; Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979*, Cambridge Middle East Studies 33 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Martha Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes, and Consequences* (Routledge, 2011).
23. Levi J. West, "Terrorism and Strategic Effect: A Conceptual Framework," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no. 4 (2023): 1–18.
24. Schuurman and Carthy, "Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence," 20.
25. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed., Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 123–38, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813245>.
26. Michael A. Jensen, et al., "Choosing Where to Fight: Do Social Networks Distinguish American ISIS Foreign Fighters from ISIS-Inspired Terrorists?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 3–29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027231164925>.
27. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 4–5.
28. Schuurman and Carthy, "Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence," 21.
29. For the most recent example, see: "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2023," TE-SAT (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, June 14, 2023), 4,

- <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2023-te-sat>.
30. Petter Nesser, "Introducing the Jihadi Plots in Europe Dataset (JPED)," *Journal of Peace Research*, February 21, 2023, 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221123360>.
 31. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (Columbia University Press, 2017), 65–82; Kent Roach, "The Air India Report and the Regulation of Charities and Terrorism Financing," *University of Toronto Law Journal* 61, no. 1 (January 2011): 45–57, <https://doi.org/10.3138/utlj.61.1.045>; Mate Nikola Tokić, *Croatian Radical Separatism and Diaspora Terrorism During the Cold War* (Purdue University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvs1g9nj>.
 32. Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented "Terrorism,"* 2013, 21–48.
 33. Joel Busher, Donald Holbrook, and Graham Macklin, "The Internal Brakes on Violent Escalation: A Typology," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 11, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 8–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2018.1551918>.
 34. Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, ed. Walter Reich, Woodrow Wilson Center Series (Cambridge [England]: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1990), 7–24; West, "Terrorism and Strategic Effect"; Chenoweth and Moore, *The Politics of Terror*, 41–68; Lawrence Freedman, "Terrorism as a Strategy," *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 314–39.
 35. Michael J Soules, "Thinking Outside of the Box: Transnational Terrorism in Civil Wars," *International Studies Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (June 1, 2023): sqad017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/squad017>; Victor Asal, Christopher Linebarger, and J. Michael Greig, "Counter-Insurgency Strategies and Transnational Attacks by Rebel Groups," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 0, no. 0 (June 30, 2021): 1–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1929051>.
 36. Schuurman and Carthy, "Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence," 20.
 37. Pete Lentini, *Neojihadism: Towards a New Understanding of Terrorism and Extremism?* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), 90.
 38. Petter Nesser, *Islamist Terrorism in Europe: A History* (Hurst, 2015), 244.
 39. For example, the Palestine Liberation Organisation had formal offices in many countries across the world. This included an office inside the United States until it was shut down by the Trump Administration in 2018. Karen DeYoung and Loveday Morris, "Trump Administration Orders Closure of PLO Office in Washington," *Washington Post*, accessed April 12, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-administration-orders-closure-of-plo-office-in-washington/2018/09/10/7410fe6c-b50c-11e8-a2c5-3187f427e253_story.html.
 40. Warren Richey, "On the Trail of US Funds for IRA," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 14, 1985, <https://www.csmonitor.com/1985/0114/anor1.html>.
 41. Jensen and LaFree, *Multi Level Approach to the Study of Violent Extremism*, 3.
 42. Stephen Tankel, *Storming the World Stage: The Story of Lashkar-e-Taiba* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
 43. Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 244–54.
 44. Lee Jarvis and Timothy Legrand, *The Proscription of Terrorist Organisations: Modern Blacklisting in Global Perspective*, 2019.
 45. Donatella della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 32–69.
 46. Jensen, et al., "Choosing Where to Fight," 5–6.
 47. Robin Simcox, "When Terrorists Stay Home: The Evolving Threat to Europe from Frustrated Travelers," *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel* 12, no. 6 (July 18, 2019): 46–55.
 48. Timothy Holman, "Why States Fail to Counter Foreign Fighter Mobilizations: The Role of Intelligence Services," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 6 (2016): 148–50.
 49. Jack Schwartz, "The Rebel Foreign Fighter Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, June 27, 2023, 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433231168183>.

50. Alynna J. Lyon and Emek M. Uçarer, "Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict: Kurdish Separatism in Germany and the PKK," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 6 (January 2001): 938, <https://doi.org/10.1080/713766482>.
51. Sarah Wayland, "Ethnonationalist Networks and Transnational Opportunities: The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora," *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 03 (July 2004): 423, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210504006138>.
52. Soules, "Thinking Outside of the Box," 1.
53. Levi J. West, "#jihad: Understanding Social Media as a Weapon," *Security Challenges* 12, no. 2 (2016): 9–26.
54. The ASSP Database is maintained by a team at Victoria University that includes the author. It contains a wide range of data on cases of violent extremism and terrorism in Australia, encompassing personal characteristics, circumstances and processes of involvement, drawn from public sources. Of the 129 cases of Australian-based Islamic State supporters examined for the quantitative analysis in this article, information on 119 of them was originally gathered as part of the author's doctoral dissertation at Monash University. The extra ten cases were added for this article, to keep up to date with information that had become public since completion of the PhD, and some of the data for these ten cases was drawn from the ASSP database. This means that a small amount of the data (less than 2%) on the 129 cases in this article's dataset was not gathered directly by the author but by the author's colleagues at Victoria University.
55. The overwhelming majority of the 129 individuals in the dataset were convicted of terrorism offences or credibly reported to have been killed in Syria or Iraq. However, inclusion in this article's dataset did not require a judgement on whether the individuals were guilty of criminal offences. Instead, the required judgement was whether the information on their alleged activities was sufficiently credible that the case's inclusion in the dataset could be expected to help answer the research question of what explains whether someone who supports an armed movement in a foreign war turns to plotting a terrorist attack at home. A deidentified version of the dataset is included in the [supplemental material](#).
56. "Jihadist Guilty of Jewish Museum Murders," *BBC News*, March 7, 2019, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47490332>.
57. Cerwyn Moore, "Indeed, Your Lord Is Ever Watchful: September 2014 Sheikh Abu Mohamed Al-Adnani Ash-Shami, Spokesman for the Islamic State," in *Al-Qaeda 2.0* (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190856441.003.0011>.
58. Haroro J. Ingram, Craig Whiteside, and Charlie Winter, *The ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 256.
59. Haroro J. Ingram, "Islamic State's English-Language Magazines, 2014-2017: Trends & Implications for CT-CVE Strategic Communications," ICCT Research paper (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague, March 12, 2018), 22, <https://icct.nl/publication/islamic-states-english-language-magazines-2014-2017-trends-implications-for-ct-cve-strategic-communications/>.
60. Europol, "Caliphate Soldiers and Lone Actors: What to Make of IS Claims for Attacks in the West 2016-2018" (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague, May 17, 2019), 14, <https://icct.nl/publication/caliphate-soldiers-and-lone-actors-what-to-make-of-is-claims-for-attacks-in-the-west-2016-2018/>; Ingram, "Islamic State's English-Language Magazines, 2014-2017."
61. Wolfowicz, et al., "Cognitive and Behavioral Radicalization"; LaFree and Schwarzenbach, "Micro and Macro-Level Risk Factors for Extremism and Terrorism"
62. The Wolfowicz, et al. review found marital status to be a protective factor. Wolfowicz, et al., "Cognitive and Behavioral Radicalization," 71.
63. Valentin Amrhein, Fränzi Korner-Nievergelt, and Tobias Roth, "The Earth Is Flat (p > 0.05): Significance Thresholds and the Crisis of Unreplicable Research," *PeerJ* 5 (2017): e3544, <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.3544>.

64. Daniël Lakens, “The Practical Alternative to the p Value Is the Correctly Used p Value,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 16, no. 3 (May 1, 2021): 639–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620958012>.
65. Ronald L. Wasserstein and Nicole A. Lazar, “The ASA Statement on P-Values: Context, Process, and Purpose,” *The American Statistician* 70, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 132, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.2016.1154108>.
66. Julie Pallant, *SPSS Survival Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis Using IBM SPSS* (Routledge, 2020), 228.
67. The criteria for interpreting an effect size from a Cramer’s V coefficient differs depending on the number of categories. For this variable, the author used the criteria that applies when there are two degrees of freedom (as is the case when one variable has three categories and the other has two). Pallant, 228–29.
68. The tests were conducted through SPSS Statistics and the full results are included in the [supplemental material](#).
69. Wolfowicz, et al., “Cognitive and Behavioral Radicalization,” 3.
70. Schuurman and Carthy, “Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence,” 20.
71. Schuurman and Carthy, 20.
72. Simcox, “When Terrorists Stay Home.”
73. Richard English, *Illusions of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism* (British Academy, 2015).
74. Jensen, et al., “Choosing Where to Fight”; Schuurman and Carthy, “Understanding (Non) Involvement in Terrorist Violence.”
75. Australian Associated Press, “Australian Passport Cancellations Double in Wake of Syria Conflict – Asia,” *The Guardian*, October 20, 2014, sec. Australia news, <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/oct/21/australian-passport-cancellations-double-in-wake-of-syria-conflict-asia>.
76. Nesser, “Introducing the Jihadi Plots in Europe Dataset (JPED).”
77. Brian J. Phillips, “How Did 9/11 Affect Terrorism Research? Examining Articles and Authors, 1970–2019,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 2 (February 17, 2023): 409–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1935889>.
78. John F. Morrison, “Talking Stagnation: Thematic Analysis of Terrorism Experts’ Perception of the Health of Terrorism Research,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 0, no. 0 (August 25, 2020): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1804879>.
79. Schuurman and Carthy, “Understanding (Non)Involvement in Terrorist Violence.”
80. Jensen, et al., “Choosing Where to Fight.”
81. Asal, Linebarger, and Greig, “Counter-Insurgency Strategies and Transnational Attacks by Rebel Groups”; Soules, “Thinking Outside of the Box.” This body of research overlaps with work on the role of jihadist ideology in contemporary civil wars: Stathis N. Kalyvas, “Jihadi Rebels in Civil War,” *Daedalus* 147, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 36–47, https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00472; Martha Crenshaw, “Transnational Jihadism & Civil Wars,” *Daedalus* 146, no. 4 (September 21, 2017): 59–70, https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00459; Barbara F. Walter, “The New New Civil Wars,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2017): 469–86, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-060415-093921>; Barbara F. Walter, “The Extremist’s Advantage in Civil Wars,” *International Security* 42, no. 2 (November 1, 2017): 7–39, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00292.
82. See: J. Reid Meloy, et al., “Threat Assessment and Threat Management,” in *International Handbook of Threat Assessment*, ed. J. Reid Meloy, et al. (Oxford University Press, 2021), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/med-psych/9780190940164.003.0001>; Monica Lloyd, “Making Sense of Terrorist Violence and Building Psychological Expertise,” in *International Handbook of Threat Assessment*, ed. J. Reid Meloy, et al. (Oxford University Press, 2021), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/med-psych/9780190940164.003.0034>.
83. Lloyd, “Making Sense of Terrorist Violence and Building Psychological Expertise,” 627.
84. Jensen, et al., “Choosing Where to Fight.”

Acknowledgements

The author is deeply grateful to Muhammad Iqbal, Peter Lentini, David Malet, Debra Smith, Ramon Spaaij, Christopher Winter, Steven Zech and Katrina Zorzi for their valuable support for this article or their role in supervising the author's doctoral dissertation. The dissertation, which this article draws from, was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship. The author would also like to thank the editors of *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Andrew Zammit  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6891-033X>