Needs or Symbols? The Logic of United Nations Counterterrorism Treaty Ratification

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Why do states commit to UN counterterrorism treaties? This article posits that state accession to UN counterterrorism treaties is likely informed by the nature of the terrorist threats a state faces, and consequently, the pressures that such threats generate from domestic and international audiences on the state to address (or appear to address) them. As such, we hypothesize that states ratify UN CT treaties for either *material, needs-based reasons*—to gain external assistance for counterterror capacity building—or for *symbolic reasons*—to visibly signal their commitment to fight terrorism in order maintain legitimacy, and mitigate reputational costs to both domestic and international audiences. To test these hypotheses, we use a newly compiled dataset of state accessions to the 19 UN counterterrorism treaties from 1970–2016, testing both our needs-based versus symbolic hypotheses, as well as more "traditional" explanations for state treaty accession. Across the universe of 19 UN counterterrorism treaties, our study implies that states may be more likely to ratify treaties as mechanisms to signal intent to address terror threats rather than to build threat-specific counterterrorism capacity. This research thus broadens both academic and policy-related understandings of state counterterror treaty ratification.

A partir de un análisis de publicaciones en árabe en Twitter correspondientes al período 2014–2015, surge una conclusión contraria a la intuición: Quienes participan en Twitter y tienen una actitud negativa con respecto al Estado Islámico de Irak y el Levante (EIIL) también tienen más probabilidades de ostentar una opinión negativa con respecto a los Estados Unidos (EE.UU.). Esta sorprendente correlación se debe a las interpretaciones de dos grupos de usuarios. Uno de dichos grupos tiene una visión negativa de los EE.UU. y del EIIL, ya que los considera poderes intervencionistas independientes en la región. El otro grupo de usuarios establece una vinculación negativa entre los EE.UU. y el EIIL, y suele afirmar que existe una conspiración secreta entre los dos. La intensa negatividad con respecto a los Estados Unidos en el Oriente Medio parece propiciar opiniones que, de una u otra manera, hacen que los ciudadanos establezcan una vinculación conspirativa entre los EE.UU. y el EIIL.

Une conclusion contre-intuitive ressort d'une analyse des publications Twitter en arabe de 2014–2015 : les participants à Twitter qui ont une opinion négative de l'État islamique en Irak et au Levant sont également plus susceptibles d'avoir une opinion négative des États-Unis. Cette corrélation surprenante est due aux interprétations de deux ensembles d'utilisateurs. Un ensemble d'utilisateurs voit négativement les États-Unis et l'État islamique en Irak et au Levant puisqu'il les considère comme des puissances interventionnistes indépendantes dans la région. L'autre ensemble d'utilisateurs les associe négativement en affirmant souvent qu'il existe une conspiration secrète entre eux deux. L'intense négativité à l'égard des États-Unis au Moyen-Orient semble propice à des points de vue qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, amènent les citoyens à établir un lien conspirationniste entre les États-Unis et l'État islamique en Irak et au Levant.

Introduction

The perpetration of terrorism—deliberate violence or threat of violence toward civilians by non-state actors to advance a political agenda—has been in existence in its modern form since the late nineteenth century. However, multilateral cooperation to combat terrorism is a relatively recent phenomenon. One of the first steps in the establishment of a global counterterrorism agenda came in 1963, when the United Nations adopted the first of its multilateral counterterror treaties: the "Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed Onboard Aircraft." This treaty, also known as the "Tokyo Convention," created "a uniform approach to acts on board aircraft which are offences against penal law, or which may jeopardize the safety of aircraft and persons or property on board, or good order and discipline." Put simply, the treaty set global standards for permissible and non-permissible behavior on commercial aircraft, including addressing, although tangentially, the question of airline hijacking. Although the UN's 1963 Tokyo Convention did not deal exclusively with the question of terrorism, the treaty was nevertheless the UN and international community's first step toward creating an international legislative agenda to collectively address what would eventually become more pressing concerns about transnational terrorism.

Following the 1963 Tokyo Convention, over the next half century, the UN and its member states have come to create an additional 18 treaties on various topics related to the combating of terrorism.[1] These treaties include, among others: the 1979 International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, which criminalizes hostage-taking; the 1991 Convention on the Making of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection, signaling states' intentions to control and

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[1] The full list of the UN's counterterrorism treaties and short summaries can be found in the online appendix.

stop the spread unmarked and difficult-to-detect plastic explosives; the 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, creating jurisdiction over and banning the use of explosives in terrorist acts; the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which compels signatories to work toward suppressing the terrorist financing in either licit or illicit activities. Collectively, these treaties coalesce to form the nineteen counterterrorism treaties that have come to serve as both the UN and the global community's overarching legislative agenda to combat terrorism.

Yet, since the emergence of the UN's counterterrorism treaties in 1963 and with the continuing addition of other treaties since, a puzzling development has come to light: in general, the logics that inform UN member states' decisions regarding whether and when to ratify a given UN counterterrorism treaty have been given virtually no systematic attention by scholars. To that end, the motivating question of this article is the following: What rationales inform states' decisions on whether and when to sign on to UN counterterrorism agreements?

To the extent that a clearly delineated set of state UN counterterrorism treaty ratification practices have yet to be articulated by scholars, logic would suggest that a useful starting point for the derivation of hypotheses on this front might be found in pre-existing literature on why states ratify international treaties more broadly. These more "traditional" explanations, for instance, have been used to explain why states sign on to international treaties in a variety of other issue domains like economic cooperation, collective security, or human rights, and include rationales such as the power of norms, the influence of political institutions, or the costs of compliance.

However, we suggest in this piece that, given the dearth of study on the nature of counterterrorism treaty ratification, these "traditional" explanations are likely insufficient in our case, due to the unique nature of counterterrorism treaties themselves. We argue that the need for a new conceptualization of why states may sign on to counterterror treaties rests on the substantively different nature of the issue area of counterterrorism as compared to other issue areas in which states have signed on to collective treaties. Indeed, whereas many of the international treaties previously studied primarily tend to *limit* state power (for instance, in setting rules for international trade regimes; delineating demands for collective security cooperation; or articulating limits of state legality in using violence against citizens), counterterrorism treaties generally *broaden* a state's rights, allowing it to undertake new measures to protect itself and citizens from political violence. In other words, precisely because the character of counterterrorism treaties is qualitatively different than other issue areas, we suggest that additional rationales for multilateral treaty accession bear investigation.

To that end, this article hypothesizes that instead of the more "traditional" theories explaining state treaty accession, the nature of a state's decision of whether and when to sign on to one of the 19 UN counterterrorism treaties is likely informed by its own domestic terror landscape, and the associated pressures that it faces from both domestic constituencies as well as the international community, to address domestic terrorism. Regardless of whether states actually change their behavior after the ratification of a treaty (which is outside the scope of this study), the act of ratification can signal to various audiences that the government is at least willing to address issues of terrorism. This article argues that there are two main rationales why states with domestic terror concerns may choose to signal their commitment to fighting terrorism through ratification of international counterterror treaties: *material, need-based* motivations (in the form of a state's desire to access international funding to increase domestic counterterror capacity through foreign aid or capacity building and technical assistance) or *symbolic* motivations (in the form of a state's desire to signal to domestic and international audiences that it is serious about dealing with a domestic terrorism threat to maintain legitimacy and avoid reputational costs). Thus, under this broader new approach considering a state's domestic terror landscape and related domestic and international audience costs in its proclivity to sign on to multinational treaties, this piece asks: is UN counterterror treaty ratification driven more by *materially, need-based factors* (to increase actual counterterrorism capabilities) or by *symbolic factors* (to simply signal government commitment to fighting terrorism to pacify multiple audiences)?

To assess whether states ratify international counterterrorism agreements primarily due to *material, needs-based* or *symbolic* motivations, we analyze a newly created dataset on state accession to the 19 UN counterterrorism treaties. Using duration analysis models, we exploit the immense variation regarding number, content, and temporal span in the ratification outcomes of 19 international counterterrorism treaties from 1970–2016. Our analysis indicates that a higher frequency of domestic terrorist attacks and pre-existing international support for a treaty appear to be the primary factors which influence states' decisions to ratify UN counterterror treaties. In contrast, we do not find strong support for the effect of intensity of terrorist attacks on treaty ratification, nor do we find that states are more likely to ratify those treaties where the issue of the treaty overlaps with the nature of terrorist attacks experienced domestically. Taken together, our results suggest that states' main motivation to ratify UN counterterrorism treaties may simply be to signal their attentiveness to the issue of domestic terrorism to both international and domestic audiences rather than for capacity building purposes.

This article proceeds as follows: First, we explore existing literature on treaty ratification, investigating more "traditional" explanations for state treaty accession, and then delineate why the uniqueness of counterterrorism treaties merits new conceptualizations of such rationales. In the second section, we introduce our theory and main hypotheses to capture states' needs-based and symbolic motivations to ratify treaties. In the third section, we test our hypotheses and finally discuss the implications of our study for both academics and policymakers alike, outlining new avenues for future research.

Traditional and New Theories of International Treaty Ratification

"Traditional" Theories of International Treaty Ratification

To state it bluntly, there is no shortage of scholarship on states and international treaties: the body of research on international treaties and nonbinding international agreements is vast. To that end, scholars have explored the design and content of such treaties, members' compliance with treaties, treaties' effectiveness at addressing specific problems, and most germane to this project, logics determining their ratification.

With regard to logics of treaty ratification, much of the focus on the factors that impact state decisions to sign or ratify agreements have tended to relate to treaties addressing issues in the economic or security realms (Lipson 1984;

Jervis 1985; Brzoska 2008) or protection of human rights (Cole 2005; Neumayer 2005; Goodliffe and Hawkins 2006; Hathaway 2007; Neumayer 2007; Hafner-Burton, Tsutsui, and Meyer 2008; Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008; Powell and Staton 2009; Hill 2010). A smaller subset of literature has focused on other types of international treaties, such as environmentally focused agreements (Roberts, Parks, and Vasquez 2004).

Regardless of the *issue area* of the treaty itself, three broad classes of arguments regarding the *rationales* for state treaty ratification have emerged in this literature. These are what we refer to as "traditional" theories of international treaty ratification. The first broad set of arguments suggests that state treaty ratification is likely due to the political benefits of ratification. For example, these might come in the form of increased international goodwill, ensuring future political stability (Simmons 2000; Goodliffe and Hawkins 2006; Hafner-Burton, Tsutsui, and Meyer 2008; Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008). Relatedly, a country's pre-existing memberships in international institutions, or security and military alliances, can impact state cooperation in treaties (Chayes and Chayes 1995). Broadly, these explanations rest on the assumption that states will behave in ways which serve their countries' best interest (Krasner 2004; Mearsheimer 1994/95).

The second set of arguments related to state rationales for treaty ratification claims that states are likely to ratify when the costs of doing so are low (Cole 2005; Goodliffe and Hawkins 2006; Hathaway 2007). Compliance with international treaties entails costs associated with new legislation, and implementing new measures in line with the goals of the treaty (e.g., Chayes and Chayes 1995). Countries may simply lack the capacity to implement such measures, which can dissuade them from ratifying a treaty. A third, broad set of "traditional" rationales explaining state decisions to ratify international treaties looks at the internal characteristics of countries, including the type of its institutions. Within this body of scholarship, it is generally argued that democratic countries are more likely to support international institutions and rules because of their emphasis on the rule of law (Sikkink 1993; Slaughter 1995; Guzman 2002; Murphy 2004).

The Limits of Traditional Theories of International Treaty Ratification on Counterterrorism Treaty Accession

While these more traditional theories regarding why states ratify international treaties have served to advance scholars' knowledge in many ways, for the purposes of this inquiry, they have left two key issues left unaddressed.

First, the above discussions of treaty ratification have generally focused on two types of actors: the international community and domestic policy elites, which our study acknowledges as important actors in the treaty creation and ratification process. However, research has made clear that domestic public audiences also play important roles in how politicians perceive and respond to international political developments (Putnam 1988; Gaubatz 1996; Chapman and Reiter 2004; Chatagnier 2012). To that end, we seek to incorporate national constituencies more fully into our hypotheses of UN treaty ratification, along with investigating more fully the role of the international community in counterterrorism treaty ratification.

Second, as noted above, most scholarly knowledge regarding how states act when it comes to international treaties has been made in the context of a certain type of treaty: one that is trying to eliminate or *restrict* a state's undesirable behavior (for example, in violations of human rights, proliferation of

arms, and production of air pollution). In such restrictive treaties, treaty accession decisions may be attenuated due to inherent behavior limitations placed on signatories, the lack of clarity or assurances of compliance of other states, and other *post hoc* costs of compliance. In contrast, states' rationales for signing on to treaties may look different when treaties are designed to *enhance* a state's latitude for behavior, permitting state agents *increased* rights to fight against security threats. Of course, this is not to say that ratification of CT treaties does not place any obligations on signatories. However, given that governments often come under fire at home and abroad for using repressive practices, and violating human rights in their efforts to mitigate domestic threats (for example, Pakistan, Myanmar, and the Philippines), the signing of a CT treaty may actually serve to legitimize aggressive actions undertaken by governments. Additionally, because UN CT treaties generally lack any formal enforcement mechanism, states may view it as a largely costless mechanism to justify their actions and expand antiterrorism legislation, rather than limit them. In other words, while most past discussions of costs and benefits of treaty ratification have been defined around limiting states' undesirable behaviors, a critical question remains to be answered: do past findings on treaty ratification with regard to *restrictive* international treaties serve to explain why states ratify other types of *permissive* international treaties, like those in the counterterrorism realm?

To highlight the qualitative difference in counterterrorism treaties as opposed to other types of treaties, we emphasize here that in the case of treaties designed to deal with terrorism, the focus is less on limiting undesirable behavior and more on encouraging practices that help reduce the space in which terrorist groups can operate, whether in terms of physical territory, financial activity, or operational capability (Quénivet 2006). In a way, counterterrorism treaties can be viewed as "self-enforcing agreements" because signatories are expected to take actions, which are in their own self-interest. This suggests that not only will states be more likely to ratify counterterrorism treaties, they will also be more likely to comply with them in the aftermath even without enforcement mechanisms (Hafner-Burton, Tsutsui, and Meyer 2008).[2] Due to the unique nature of counterterrorism treaties, we suggest that new modes of thinking about state ratification merit consideration.

Before articulating hypotheses related to these new modes of thinking related to counterterrorism treaty accession, we note forthrightly that there have been a limited number of previous studies that have examined multilateral counterterrorism cooperation more generally. In their study of the determinants of compliance with terrorism-related international legal frameworks, Stiles and Thayne (2006) examine how states' levels of democratization, foreign policy orientations, and vulnerability to external pressures explain their degree of compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1373–which encourages intelligence sharing on terror threats and urges domestic legal reforms to allow states to sign on to UN counterterror treaties.[3,4] Interestingly, their results indicate that states' capacity or level of democracy does not appear linked to their degree of compliance. Instead, they find evidence that past

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[2] States may however differ in their actual capacity to implement measures.

[3] UN SCR 1373 was passed unanimously in September 2001, and required States to undertake a number of measures for the purpose of preventing and suppressing terrorist financing.

[4] To measure states' degree of compliance, the authors construct a score based on countries' submission of country reports, creation of domestic counterterrorism laws, and ratification of a certain number of conventions against terrorism.

experience with terrorism and past record of endorsement of anti-terrorism treaties (pre-9/11) helps explain states' compliance in the post 9/11 era. While this study provides interesting findings, it focuses primarily on explaining variation in states' *compliance* and *implementation*, rather than variation in treaty *ratification* as such. Relatedly, in a qualitative comparative examination of African states' (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda) compliance with the UN counterterrorism regime, Whitaker (2010) finds that compliance is highest where domestic institutions are the least democratic, and where leaders' perception of a terrorist threat is high. Intuitively, again, we view the *ratification* of a treaty as a qualitatively different phenomenon than *compliance* with a treaty, because, as we outline below, the incentives to ratify a treaty can be very different from a state's ability and incentives to comply with a treaty once it has been ratified.

While studies on UN counterterrorism agreements assess the extent to which countries *comply* with treaties to which they have already signed, they fall short of examining when and why countries *commit to such treaties at all.* Moreover, these studies have largely focused on compliance and implementation in the post-9/11 era, when UNSR 1373 in 2001 obligated all UN member states to ratify counterterrorism treaties, and the Counter-Terrorism Committee, created in 2004, began to monitor states' implementation. Our study, in contrast, examines when and why states decide to ratify a treaty at all, regardless of their level of compliance, both *before* and *after* 9/11, and across the entire spectrum of UN counterterror treaties.

In short, this study seeks to extend the literature on states' decisions to sign international treaties in various important ways. First, and most centrally, we seek to include audiences (both domestic and international) far more seriously than have other studies. Namely, as we explain below, we suggest that both domestic and international constituencies—both of whose security can be threatened by domestic terrorism—can exert indirect pressure on governments to address terrorism.

Indeed, the logic here is straightforward: both domestic and international audiences can pressure governments to do more—to include signing counterterror treaties—when terrorism is present domestically. For instance, one may look to Nigeria, where both domestic and international audiences have heavily critiqued the Nigerian government's often inadequate efforts to address Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), and have urged the Nigerian government to do more. Most glaringly, in the aftermath of the April 2014 Chibok kidnappings and subsequent inability of the government to rescue them, sundry Nigerian civil society groups demanded greater government accountability to address the group (then just Boko Haram), with activists decrying that the Nigerian Army and broader security apparatus had "failed Nigerians" (Mugabi 2015). Nearly four years later, Nigerian civil society groups again lambasted the government for "incompetence and carelessness" when ISWAP abducted another 110 girls from Dapchi, Nigeria, in February 2018, noting that citizens were "infuriated … (by) the blunders that led to this latest abduction" (Agence France Presse 2018). More contemporarily, prominent religious figures in Nigeria have called on the Nigerian government to re-evaluate the operating procedures of the regional counterterrorism force, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), in light of its years-long inadequacies in addressing the group (Elumoye et al. 2020).

Conversely, internationally, U.S. Congressmembers have for years lamented Nigeria's inability to adequately address the Boko Haram/ISWAP dilemma, both for concern around U.S. international security interests (Rep. Christopher H. Smith 2012) as well as broader human rights concerns (Rep. Karen Bass 2014). International human rights groups like Amnesty International have also derided Nigeria's inaction in response to the Chibok kidnappings as constituting, "a gross dereliction of Nigeria's responsibility to protect civilians" (Amnesty International 2014). More generally, critiques of Nigeria's failed counterterror efforts have often percolated widely in international media outlets—one journalist described Nigeria's approach to Boko Haram as an example of "how not to fight Islamist extremism" (Yorke 2015)—and in academic publications, with the labeling of Nigeria's seeming inability or indifference to the Boko Haram fight emblematic of the country's "illusory hegemony" within West Africa (Warner 2017). With such visible critiques coming from within and without, we suggest joining UN counterterror treaties may well be one option for governments in the position of Nigeria to appear to be doing something to address such critiques.

Second, this study is unique in that we focus on states' policymaking patterns in an area of international policymaking that has, to date, received little scrutiny in the academic literature, despite a proliferation of multilateral agreements: the international counterterrorism realm. Precisely because issues that exist in the counterterrorism space transcend national and international security and have domestic socioeconomic and human security implications— spanning discussions on security, economics, and human rights—counterterrorism agreements do not neatly fall into a single, intuitive category for academic investigation. Third, this study is unique in that it delineates how and why the study of states' logics of accession to counterterrorism treaties is qualitatively different than treaty accession in other domains, looking toward states' own terrorism landscapes as an explanatory variable. Fourth and finally, to the extent that other scholars have looked at states' behavior in the multilateral counterterrorism landscape, their efforts have focused on *post-9/11 compliance* which differs from our study, which looks at more than *fifty years' worth of commitment trends and accession timing* to counterterrorism treaties.

Explaining State Ratification of International Counterterrorism Treaties

Within this section, we delineate our theory on the linkages between domestic terrorism, domestic and international audience pressure, and logics of state ratification of international counterterrorism treaties. Below, we hypothesize that state action in ratifying international counterterrorism agreements is likely to be directly related to its own first-hand experience with terrorism, which in turn, influences the pressure that a state feels to (a) build its counterterrorism capacity and (b) satisfy its domestic constituency and the international community by ratifying international counterterrorism agreements. In other words, the presence of a terrorism threat can alter the preferences of a state by generating internal public pressure and international scrutiny. We argue that this pressure can then induce a government to ratify counterterrorism treaties for two distinct rationales: governments may ratify international counterterrorism for either material, needs-based reasons to build their capacity for tackling terrorism, or for symbolic reasons where they ratify treaties primarily to pacify their audiences.

Domestic Terrorism and Government Responses Through
International Treaty Ratification

Although non-state actors employ terrorist tactics to compel government change primarily through domestic constituency mechanisms, the reputational consequences for states experiencing terrorism transcend borders. For states harboring terrorist groups, a combination of pressure from its domestic constituents and the international community may drive states to use ratification of treaties as a mechanism to signal their commitment to fight terrorism either to acquire resources, or for symbolic purposes. As a starting point in understanding how and why a domestic terror threat may generate such pressure, we first note that although "terrorism" is a concept fraught with definitional challenges long discussed by scholars (Ganor 2002; Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2004; Hoffman 2006; Young and Findley 2011) what is broadly agreed upon is that one of the primary purposes of terrorist violence is to induce fear in a target audience in order to impact behavior of both citizens and governments. Indeed, as noted by one scholar, the fear generated by terrorism is seen as "a tool of change" (Garrison 2004). To wit: fear caused by terrorist violence has only been strengthened more contemporarily by a focus on terrorism in the media, giving terrorists a platform from which to spread their fear (Altheide 2006; Nellis and Savage 2012). Although the generation of fear in target publics may be enhanced by modern technologies, historical analysis of terrorism has shown that terrorist production of fear is by no means a product of modern times, but instead, has long been a feature of its existence (Rapoport 1984).

For terrorists, inducing fear into populations is precisely the mechanism through which they seek to effectuate social or political change. Creating fear among citizens has numerous effects. Terror groups may undertake violence to force citizens to stop supporting initiatives of the government, or to cease collaboration with governments, thus leading to government policy change (Kydd and Walter 2006). By inducing fear, terrorists hope to achieve an array of goals targeted toward a number of audiences (Lake 2002; Kydd and Walter 2006). By inducing fear in a population through violence against civilians, terrorists have the ability to use citizen dissatisfaction of the government to compel new government actions.

First, we discuss the role of domestic constituencies in informing governments' treaty accession tendencies. Most broadly, it bears recalling that domestic-level variables have been shown to inform states' international policymaking processes across a variety of issues, ranging from diplomatic negotiations to military interventions (Putnam 1988; Gaubatz 1996; Chapman and Reiter 2004; Chatagnier 2012). Yet, while various other international policymaking processes have been linked to domestic constituency pressures, treaty ratification has received less attention, especially in the limited number of studies on counterterrorism treaties. To the first point, the excellent work of Goodliffe and Hawkins (2006) on states' ratification of international human rights treaties, while taking domestic constituencies seriously, does not directly account for any domestic pressure that would *increase* the likelihood of treaty ratification; rather, to the extent that they address domestic audiences roles' in treaty ratification, their work tests *negative* pressures for ratification, or phenomena that increased the cost of ratification, making it slower or less likely. While we incorporate measures similar to those used by Goodliffe and Hawkins (2006) into our analysis, we add the important component of positive domestic pressure to ratify treaties.

In other cases, especially in the counterterrorism realm, studies that examined the effect of domestic factors in cooperation via treaties have largely focused on the role and nature of democratic *institutions* (not constituencies themselves) in *compliance* with international treaties, demonstrating largely mixed results. While states' past experience with terrorism and leaders' perception of terrorism in weak countries has been linked to counterterrorism law *compliance* in the post 9/11 era, extant studies do not explain whether such factors have generally played a role in compelling states to *ratify* counterterrorism treaties in the first place, regardless of subsequent compliance. Given that terrorist groups rely on generating fear to magnify the effects of their actions, terrorist acts within a state directly threaten the human security of a state's populations, or at least create a perceived threat among citizens. The threat or use of violence can create the perception that the government lacks the capacity to protect its civilian populations, which undermines the latter's legitimacy. A sustained sense of fear of terrorism among a government's constituents can then indirectly create pressure on the state to take some action to mitigate this threat against its legitimacy.

In addition to generating pressure from national constituents, domestic terrorism within states can also entail significant reputational costs in the international community if a state is perceived to be ineffective at curtailing terrorism. The spillover effects of a state's "terrorism problem" are likely to be most acutely felt by neighboring countries, which may experience cross-border movement or face increased border security costs. For example, militant groups conducting terrorism in the Philippines often transit, and transfer resources through Indonesia and Malaysia (Sheikh 2019). Similarly, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, which have conducted hundreds of terrorist attacks within Pakistan, maintain hideouts and training camps in Afghanistan. Overall, a country's inability to curtail militant groups within its borders may frame it as a passive or even active supporter of terrorism, casting it as an international pariah. For example, countries with lax anti-money laundering infrastructures may be seen as noncooperative in the global realm and complicit in terrorist financing (Masciandaro 2005).

The above logic with regard to international costs associated with domestic terrorism runs parallel to the arguments about how countries' inability to protect human rights, or control arms trade and terrorist financing may harm their reputations in the international realm. In such cases, states may ratify and comply with international treaties to protect their reputations. For example, as argued by Zartner and Ramos (2011), states often use compliance with human rights treaties as a mechanism through which to improve their international standing. Overall, the literature on international treaty compliance has increasingly turned to explore the extent to which states' concerns for reputational costs may compel them to comply with international law (Downs and Jones 2002; Guzman 2005). We extend this logic to our study; in sum, we argue that the presence of domestic terrorism may compel countries to rely on ratification of treaties as a mechanism to signal their commitment to fighting terrorist groups to circumvent any international reputational costs. In addition to protecting their reputations, this signaling of intent may also help states acquire external assistance to build targeted capacity to combat terrorism, especially where states genuinely lack the capacity to do so.

Overall, we argue that states will use counterterrorism treaty ratification to signal to both domestic and

international audiences their political will to counterterrorism and maintain their legitimacy. Whether states use treaty ratification as a signaling mechanism primarily to *protect* their legitimacy i.e., for *symbolic* reasons, or to acquire external resources for *capacity building* remains unclear. Below we delineate these two mechanisms by which the prevalence of terrorism in a country may compel such state actions as regards international counterterror treaty accession.

International CT Treaty Ratification Hypotheses Subset #1: Material, Needs-Based Logics

The first subset of hypotheses related to counterterror treaty accession that we delineate are *material, need-based rationales.* The logic is as follows: In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, a government has the opportunity and responsibility to respond. Where a government perceives a terrorist group to pose a substantial threat, it will generally seek to degrade terror groups directly, since, terrorist attacks against targets at home, rather than attacks abroad, are the most likely to make existing governments feel threatened, especially because most terrorist groups base themselves in states with weak capacity (Lai 2007). However, in the aftermath of a terror attack, not all governments have equal capacity in their ability to respond due to their own domestic, material constraints.

In instances where state governments lack existing resources to tackle threatening terror groups, they are likely to seek external assistance in the form of foreign aid and capacity building (training and technical capacity building) to mitigate the threat, which, we suggest, they might do through signing onto international counterterrorism treaties. The notion that international cooperation can be motivated by foreign aid or material benefits is not new; for example, research has shown that external assistance tends to induce member states to vote in with the United States' preferences at the UN Assembly (Dreher, Nunnenkamp, and Thiele, 2008). Similarly, by ratifying UN CT treaties, states can signal to bilateral and multilateral donors that they are serious about combating terrorism in general, which can attract counterterrorism assistance. For example, when Colombia ratified the UN convention against hostage taking in 2005, the United States responded by increasing assistance to help the Colombian government build its capacity to prevent and prosecute kidnappings (Pascoe, 2017). Other case studies in the context of Africa have also highlighted the role of aid dependence on inducing states' compliance to international counterterrorism laws (Whitaker 2010).

Indeed, recent work indicates that states that ratify treaties attract more foreign aid than those that do not. More generally, the nature of states' security agendas has had a major influence on Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocations, where the presence of terrorist groups within states has been a key determinant of aid flows (Aning 2010). Adding credence to this tendency to "look outward" in the aftermath of exposure to terrorism, that states could look toward international treaties to access counterterrorism resources is reasonable: most literature on foreign aid and terrorism draws a fairly strong link between the receipt of foreign aid and reductions in the prevalence of terrorism (Azam and Delacroix 2006; Azam and Thelen 2008) through both direct and indirect means. Taken together, we can expect that countries facing higher levels of terrorism will have stronger incentives to ratify counterterrorism treaties if for no other reason than to access security-

oriented aid flows which can help them offset the costs of tackling domestic threats.

More specifically, we expect that governments will feel the most compelled to seek external, material assistance to build counterterrorism capacity when they experience highly lethal terror attacks. The logic here is that when a state faces a particularly lethal attack, the weaknesses of its counterterror capabilities are put on stark display for its own citizens and the international community. While smaller, less lethal terror attacks may be viewed to be lamentable but unavoidable, large, highly deadly attacks signal that some facet of a state's counterterror architecture is not working as it should be. As an example, one need only look at the ways in which the September 11, 2001 attacks, which caused 2,996 deaths, led to a massive overhaul of the United States' domestic and international counterterrorism organization, capabilities, and doctrines

Following this logic, we expect that when terrorist attacks within a country are particularly lethal, the ratification of international counterterrorism treaties, especially to address the gaps in domestic counterterrorism capabilities, is more likely. Highly lethal attacks not only generate intense media scrutiny of failed government actions, but they also demonstrate the violent capacity and commitment of a terror group, raising the need for action by the government of the country in which the attacks are taking place. To add credence to this hypothesis that lethality, not number of attacks (that is quality, not quantity, of terrorism) (Conrad and Greene 2015) may compel government action, previous research has identified that the more intense terrorism is, the more media coverage it generates (Paletz, Fozzard, and Ayanian 1982; Delli, Michael, and Williams 1987; Weimann and Winn 1994; Nacos 2003; Chermak and Gruenewald 2006). If governments do not act, particularly in the face of a severe terrorist attack, they risk losing domestic support and international credibility, potentially allowing the terrorist organization to gain political relevance domestically. And history is a guide that when governments fail to act in the aftermath of deadly attacks, they can be punished electorally, as happened following to the incumbent government in Spain following the 2004 train bombings (Montalvo 2012). Taken collectively, we suggest that:

H1: *The higher the level of severity of terrorist attacks, the more likely a country is to ratify a UN counterterrorism treaty.*

Relatedly, after a government faces a terror attack, that government may do more than seek material, external counterterror assistance *generally,* but rather, seek to build counterterrorism capacities in the specific issue area in which the attack occurred. For example, a country that has suffered an airline hijacking in which hostages were taken would reasonably be expected to ratify international treaties that deal with those specific issues. Thus, we also hypothesize that:

H2: *States are more likely to ratify issue-specific UN counterterrorism treaties when they have experienced attacks pertaining to the substance of the treaty.*

International CT Treaty Ratification Hypotheses Subset #2: Symbolic Signaling

The second subset of hypotheses related to counterterror treaty accession that we delineate are *symbolic signaling rationales.* While in the aftermath of instances of domestic terrorism states may turn outward to seeking external assistance for counterterrorism capacity building as delineated above, we also suggest that states facing higher levels of

domestic terrorism may seek to ratify counterterrorism treaties in an effort to preserve the public's confidence and to prevent negative scrutiny from the international community. In other words, governments may ratify counterterrorism treaties as a *symbolic signal* directed at various audiences to protect their legitimacy, regardless of whether their ratification results in any change in their behavior to fight terrorism.

While intense terror attacks may impact the decision to sign on to international treaties to limit exposure to terrorist violence through the process of capacity building, the high number of terror attacks are another way that terrorists may seek to communicate their message, goals, or resolve to governments and citizens. Keeping in mind Kydd and Walter's (2006) recognition that terrorism is a costly form of signaling, it is important to note that while one highly lethal terrorist attack may send one very powerful signal, numerous, repeated terrorist attacks, even if they have low levels of lethality, also send signals to domestic and international audiences due to the publicity they generate. Sending more frequent, small signals, regardless of the intensity of an attack, may enhance the strength of the signal. More specifically, independent of how much destruction a specific attack causes, terrorists can choose specific targets and utilize particular attack methodologies as a way to communicate their resolve, which is an important step for terrorists to take in their campaigns of violence (Lake 2002; Kydd and Walter 2006). And indeed, previous research has shown that symbolic attacks impact the nature of a state's counterterrorism response (Perliger 2012; Perliger and Milton 2018). As such, we argue that symbolic terrorist attacks provide one avenue through which both domestic and international pressure might operate.

To sustain confidence in its legitimacy at home and abroad vis-à-vis militant groups, the government in the terrorist-targeted state must avoid appearing weak and incapable of responding. Public measures, such as agreement to be part of a multilateral counterterrorism treaty regime, provide an easy way for a government to appear to be doing something, regardless of whether or not that effort is ultimately effective (Bueno de Mesquita 2007). When terrorist attacks occur over and over again, regardless of intensity, the pressure on the government increases to show that it is not impotent. Indeed, research has shown that citizens who have been subjected to terrorism are more likely to fear future acts and to demand that a government take action to protect them (Lerner et al. 2003). However, one of the challenges that governments face in responding to terrorism is that oftentimes effective counterterrorism may not be seen by the public. Consequently, the government may look for a public, visible action that it can take to show its seriousness on terrorism (Bueno de Mesquita 2007). We argue that for states needing to demonstrate resolve or commitment in the face of a sustained, even low-intensity, terrorist activity, ratifying UN counterterrorism treaties is one way of doing this. Although it may be possible that citizens are inattentive to international treaty ratifications, such international events are frequently covered by local media channels (both by private and public entities) that have incentives to support the actions and promote the popularity of incumbent governments. Additionally, political elites within a country, including a government's political rivals are also likely to take notice of a ruling government's actions (or inaction) as it tackles domestic terrorism, or responds to attacks at home. As such, regardless of states' actual compliance with a treaty, signing on to UN CT treaties in the aftermath of a terror attack is a potentially cost-less and high-profile action.

As such, we expect that the more *frequently* attacks occur within a state, the more a government will feel the pressure to signal its response and commitment that it is indeed taking the threat seriously. While frequency of attacks is not a perfect measure, a greater number of attacks is likely to amplify the message being relayed by militant groups and consequently make a state's domestic audiences more aware of terrorism as a persistent problem. As such, *frequent* attacks rather than *highly lethal* attacks are more likely to compel governments to ratify a treaty to send a high visibility signal. Thus, we suggest:

H3: *The higher the frequency of terrorist attacks, the more likely a country is to ratify a treaty.*

Additionally, a country may also be motivated to use ratification of UN counterterrorism treaties to protect its reputation, especially internationally, by choosing to ratify treaties that are already internationally supported, and thus deemed to be the most "appropriate" to sign. In other words, if states are incentivized to ratify treaties to signal commitment, they may be more likely to ratify treaties that already have global support and as such, higher visibility. Moreover, the constituents of a country experiencing terrorism are more likely to be aware of globally supported treaties. Thus, we hypothesize:

H4: *The more global support there is for a treaty, the more likely a country is to ratify a treaty.*

In sum, our four hypotheses test whether states primarily ratify UN counterterrorism treaties for *access to CT capacity building resources* (in the material, need-based model) as opposed to *domestic and international audience assuagement* (in the symbolic model). Where states' motivations to ratify are primarily driven by a desire to build capacity, we expect to see countries ratify when they *are subject to intense terrorist* attacks and *where treaties have issue relevance*. On the other hand, we expect that the *more frequently a country experiences attacks*, and the greater the *level of global support for a treaty*, the more likely states are to ratify treaties to indicate their commitment to combat terrorism. We test these two contending though interrelated sets of hypotheses below.

Research Design

To test these two sets of hypotheses, we collected information on the ratification timing of the 19 UN international counterterrorism treaties ranging from 1970–2016.[5] As delineated previously, the UN's counterterror treaty regime began in 1963 and now encompasses a wide range of issue areas, include securing nuclear materials, hijacking, and other offenses committed onboard airplanes, hostage-taking, and preventing the financing of terrorist organizations, among others. Collectively, the UN's Counterterrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED) has identified these 19 treaties as comprising the complete set of the international community's legislative effort to combat terrorism. By examining states' accession patterns to these 19 international counterterrorism treaties, we test the validity of "traditional" explanations for treaty ratification posited above, in addition to our new, "domestic terrorism/national constituency"-related hypotheses.

The dependent variable in our data is a binary variable indicating whether or not a state ratified the given counterterrorism treaty under examination in a particular year. For each of the 19 treaties, we identified when it was open

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[5] Summary statistics are included in the online appendix to this article.

for signature and when each country ratified the treaty, if it did at all. For countries that did ratify a particular treaty, we coded the specific treaty as a "1" in that year and the country no longer appeared in the analysis for that treaty. If the country did not ratify the treaty, we coded the specific country-year observation as a "0."

There are four main independent variables, three of which we constructed using data from the Global Terrorism Database (START 2018). Because these data are not available prior to 1970, this limits the temporal domain of our study. The first main independent variable (IV1) relates to the severity of the terrorist campaign in a given country. Following Conrad and Greene (2015), we created an ordinal variable accounting for increasing intensity of terrorist violence. This variable ranges from 0 to 3, with 0 representing no terrorist violence and 3 representing a severe terrorist campaign. To make this determination for each country, we utilized GTD's information on the target type of terrorist violence for each country. The variable is equal to "1" if the attack is against infrastructure, "2" if an attack targeted the police, military, government personnel, other terrorists, or violent political parties, and "3" if the attack targeted civilians. Though we applied this coding to all terrorist attacks, because of the nature of our data, which is in the country-year format, we assigned a single value to each country based on the most severe attack that took place in a given year. The second independent variable (IV2) in our study is a count variable constructed to assess the total number of attacks that seem to be specifically related to the overall theme of the treaty under consideration.[6] For example, the 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purposes of Detection, as the title suggests, had as its purpose increasing the usage of taggants (tracking chemicals) in plastic explosives as a way to help further investigations of terrorist attacks. This variable then, tracks the number of attacks in a given country in a given year related to each of the 19 UN counterterrorism treaties under investigation.

The third independent variable (IV3) looks at the frequency of terror attacks in a country and is a simple count of the number of terrorist attacks that took place inside a country in a particular year. It ranges from 0 to 3,933, the latter number occurring in 2014 in Iraq in the midst of the campaign of violence perpetrated by Islamic State. The fourth main independent variable (IV4) tests our hypotheses that states with higher global support are more likely to ratify treaties. To capture the degree to which a certain international agreement has global support, we create a variable to account for the percentage of countries that have ratified a treaty in a given year, which ranges from 0 to 1.

According to our argument about the relationship between terrorist attacks and domestic pressure, countries that have experienced a severe terrorist campaign (IV1), and experienced attacks related to the issue addressed by a specific treaty (IV2) will be more likely to ratify international CT treaties to build their capacity to tackle terrorism. On the other hand, countries which experience attacks more frequently (IV3) will be more eager to ratify counterterrorism conventions for their symbolic significance, and ratify high-visibility treaties to signal their commitment to fighting terrorism in order to pacify domestic audiences and protect their reputations in the international realm (IV4).

We based the remainder of the independent variables in our analysis off of alternative, "traditional" explanations for treaty ratification that were presented in the literature noted above. In doing so, we sought to test whether these more well-worn theories for international treaty ratification were as explanatory as our new "domestic terrorism landscape/national and international constituency" hypotheses. To measure these traditional explanations, we included three measures (regime type, regime durability, and regime volatility) accounting for various aspects of a country's domestic political institutions, all of which we derived from the POLITY IV project (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2018). To capture regime type, we included a measure accounting for the level of democracy and autocracy in a country using the POLITY IV score, which ranges from −10 to 10, with autocratic countries scoring lower and democratic countries scoring higher. Regime durability captures the number of years since the last significant change in the regime's characteristics, denoted by a change of three points in a country's POLITY score, whereas regime volatility is the number of years the regime has persisted without a change in its polity score.

We also control for a country's population. Previous work has shown that larger populations can be difficult to police and often create additional societal complications that may make it hard to prevent terrorism. Additionally, densely populated countries may be less likely to have the necessary resources to divert away from their population into the implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of treaties. Thus, we anticipate there to be a negative relationship between population and the likelihood of treaty ratification.

We use a country's gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of its overall capacity and resources. In the literature on treaty ratification, scholars have used GDP to capture state power, arguing that states with more resources are better able to avoid the unanticipated costs of ratification. In our approach, we argue that more wealthy states are better able to bear the economic costs associated with ratifying a multilateral agreement and deploying the necessary resources for counterterrorism purposes, such as protecting against hijackings or incorporating new technology to track explosives. We expect GDP to be positively related to treaty ratification. Both the population and GDP variables come from the World Bank and were logged in the analysis.

Our final variable accounts for a potentially important temporal break during the time period of some of our analyses: the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Following these attacks, the United States increased efforts to encourage ratification of the UN's counterterrorism treaties and some countries may have ratified these treaties either as a show of solidarity or in an effort to avoid negative U.S. attention. Consequently, we anticipate that states will be more likely to ratify after 2001 than before. To account for this, we added a dummy variable that is equal to "1" of the year of the analysis is after 2001, "0" if it comes before.

The overarching goal of our analysis is to test which factors explain the timing of a country's commitment to international counterterrorism treaties. Consequently, we use a discrete-time duration model and allow for time-varying covariates (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998; Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). The approach has been used widely in studies of treaty ratification, but also in the terrorism studies literature to assess the factors impacting the demise of terrorist groups (Goodliffe and Hawkins 2006; Hathaway 2007; Price 2012; Phillips 2014).

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[6] The only treaty for which we were not able to include a variable measuring attacks related to the purpose of the treaty was in the case of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, introduced on December 9, 1999. We could not satisfactorily identify a specific type of terrorist attack that connected to this particular treaty.

Table 1. Summary of Statistical Significance and Direction of Coefficients for Each Variable

Variable	Number of Models in Which Variable is Statistically Significant	Models in Which Coefficient is Positive	Models in Which Coefficient is Negative
Terror Severity (IV1)	7	1	6
Relevant Attack (IV2)	2	2	0
Attack Freq. (IV3)	9	9	0
Global Support (IV4)	10	9	1
Regime Type	8	7	1
Regime Durability	6	6	0
Regime Volatility	6	6	0
Common Law	6	0	6
Population	10	0	10
GDP	13	13	0
Civil War	4	3	1
Post 2001	4	4	0

Results and Discussion

In this section, we present and discuss the results of the empirical analysis. We ran models for each of the four main terrorism variables (IV1, IV2, IV3, IV4), as well as a model that contained all four terrorism measures in the same model. The number of analyses conducted presents a unique challenge, as even showing one analysis per each of the 19 UN counterterrorism treaties would be impractical due to the amount of space required. Because of this challenge, we represent the results of our analyses in two ways. The first is by looking at the number of times each of the independent variables was statistically significant in a given model and, if so, in which direction. The second involved looking at the substantive impact of each of the independent variables and presenting the average effect.

To compile the first set of results, we ran statistical models for each of the 19 treaties in an effort to assess whether the variables we hypothesized were indeed statistically significant and, if so, if the direction of the effect was as we anticipated it would be. Table 1 contains the results for each of the variables across the 19 treaties.

Assessing "Domestic Terrorism/National Constituency" Logics: Hypotheses Subset #1: Material, Needs-Based Rationales

Overall, our results provide some interesting insights related to our new subsets of hypotheses related to the domestic terrorism/national constituency mechanisms at play in international counterterror treaty ratification. However, in general, our findings do not support our first subset of hypotheses related to the first type of international counterterror treaty ratification rationales related to *material, needs-based capacity building* (H1 and H2). Firstly, we find that while the severity of domestic terror campaigns (IV1) has a significant impact on treaty ratification in 7 out of 19 treaties, this effect is actually negative. As such, we do not find any support for our first hypothesis (H1), that higher intensity terrorist campaigns will make countries more likely to ratify a treaty. In fact, our findings indicate the opposite: the more severe a terrorist attack campaign, the less likely the targeted country is to ratify international counterterrorism agreements. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that, as noted above, international treaties may be thought of as low-cost, high visibility ways for governments to been seen to do something in the aftermath of terror attacks. However, when the nature of the terrorist violence faced by the state is intense and severe, media scrutiny of the government's response

is increased due to the intense public interest, as shown by the research cited above. In these cases, perhaps domestic pressure actually pushes the government to more immediate remedies to the terrorist threat such as military action and enhanced powers for law enforcement and intelligence agencies as opposed to international treaties. Of course, the pursuit of such objectives is not mutually exclusive, so further research will be needed to ascertain why attack severity manifests this negative relationship with treaty ratification.

Our second hypothesis (H2) states that countries motivated to build capacity via treaty ratification will be more likely to ratify treaties which address issues relevant to the type of attacks (IV2) countries has experienced at home. We do not find much support for our second hypothesis, as the "relevant attacks" variable is only significant in two of the 19 treaties, with a positive effect on treaty ratification. Taken collectively, to reiterate, our findings do not provide much support for our hypothesis that states with more intense terror campaigns or relevant attacks will be motivated to ratify treaties with the intention to gain external assistance to build targeted capacity.

Assessing "Domestic Terrorism/National Constituency" Logics: Hypotheses Subset #2: Symbolic Signaling

In contrast to the above, our data do lend more support to our second subset of hypotheses, related to the *symbolic rationales* of international counterterror treaty ratification (H3 and H4), which posited that states might be motivated to ratify treaties for symbolic purposes. Indeed, we find that the sheer number of terrorist attacks that a state faces in a given year (IV3) does indeed lead to a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of state treaty ratification in about half of the treaties in our analysis, or 9 of 19 cases. As such, we find support for H3, that the more frequently that a state experiences domestic terrorist attacks, the more likely it will be to ratify counterterrorism treaties to signal its commitment to various audiences. Similarly, we also find support for H4, which posits that if states are primarily ratifying treaties as a way to signal their commitment, then they will be more likely to ratify treaties with more global support due to their higher visibility. Of the 19 total treaties, 10 treaties showed that global support had a significant effect on treaty ratification, with 9 of those demonstrating a positive effect.

Taking these results together, we find more support for our argument that states are likely to ratify counterterror-

Table 2. Substantive Effects of Changes in Independent Variables

Variable	Number of Models in Which Variable Is Stats. Sig.	Simulated IV Change	Average % Change in Ratification Likelihood	Min % Change	Max % Change
Attack Severity (IV1)	7	$0 \rightarrow 3$	−20.5	−52.39.01	84.41
Specific Attack Type (IV2)	2	Various	36.16	31.66	40.66
Attack Frequency (IV3)	9	$0 \rightarrow 200$	43.16	9.01	158.23
Global Support (IV4)	10	*	*	*	*
Polity2	8	$2 \rightarrow 6$	15.49	10.03	22.27
Durable	6	$13 \rightarrow 29$	20.61	12.91	36.93
Volatility	6	$3.25 \rightarrow 5.88$	33.16	19.49	48.85
Population	6	$15.38 \rightarrow 16.53$	−31.38	−54.68	−17.53
GDP	10	$20.99 \rightarrow 24.57$	302.37	91.52	502.27
Civil War	13	$0 \rightarrow 1$	12.92	−47.97	73.81
Common Law	4	$0 \rightarrow 1$	−43.99	−57.89	−31.88
Post-2001	4	$0 \rightarrow 1$	321.81	145.7	622.92

ism treaties for *symbolic purposes* rather than *material capacity building*. While the overall number attacks and global support for a treaty have a positive effect on treaty ratification, the intensity of attacks and relevant attacks seem to have no bearing on ratification. Having said that, we did find three treaties where relevant terrorist attacks appeared to be important for the ratification of related treaties. In one case, the Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, the occurrence of hijackings in a country actually decreased the likelihood that the same country would ratify the treaty.

Assessing "Traditional" Theories of State Treaty Ratification

As noted, we also tested more traditional theories of international treaty ratification to see how well these explained state UN counterterrorism treaty ratification. In these cases, the results for the other variables in our models are largely consistent with the broader literature on treaty ratification. Democratic institutions and regime stability both exert a positive impact on the likelihood of international counterterror treaty ratification as well, although the stability of the regime only seemed to matter in about a third of the treaties. Volatile regimes were also more likely to ratify counterterrorism treaties, although this effect likewise only manifested itself in a smaller number of treaties. A country that based its law on common law principles was less likely to ratify, with explanation in the literature that these countries are concerned about the unintended consequences of ratification, knowing that their legal systems will not offer flexibility or a way to escape said consequences.

Population and GDP mattered greatly across more than half of the UN counterterrorism treaties, albeit in countervailing directions. The larger a country's population, the less likely it was to ratify the counterterrorism treaty. On the other hand, the wealthier a country was, the more likely it was to ratify. Interestingly, the presence of an ongoing civil war did not seem to matter much: in three models, it has a positive impact on the likelihood of ratification, but in one model, the relationship was negative. Finally, in a fair number of models in which the treaty was either available for ratification prior to 2001 or that opened afterward, there was a noticeable post-2001 bump. As we posited above, this is likely due to the post-September 11 focus on terrorism and the significant pressure from the United States for countries to tackle the problem.[7]

Substantive and Average Effects

While focusing on statistical significance and the direction of the impacts as was above is one way to test our theory, another approach is to examine the substantive impact of the factors we have identified here. To do this, we conducted a series of calculations to assess what the substantive impact of changes in our key independent variables was on the likelihood that a country adopted a particular UN counterterrorism treaty. For each of the models in which a particular variable was statistically significant, we examined how changing that variable by a fixed amount impacted the likelihood of treaty ratification, holding all other variables constant. The amount by which each variable was altered is shown in the second column, while the average change in likelihood across all models in which the variable was statistically significant is shown in the third column.

Focusing specifically on our hypotheses regarding the impact of terrorism threat variables (IV1, IV2, IV3, and IV4), we find that there are indeed substantive impacts, especially when it comes to the number of attacks a country experiences. On average, the likelihood of a country ratifying an international terrorism treaty increases by about 45 percent if it has a large increase in terrorist attacks (IV3). The opposite is true if the severity of a terrorism campaign increases, with a more severe terrorist campaign actually limiting the likelihood of ratification by almost 20 percent on average (IV1). There is a positive substantive impact on treaty ratifications when terrorist attacks against a country are specifically related to the actual purpose of the treaty, although this effect only appeared in two treaties (IV2).

Of note, the impact of global support (IV4) in table 2 is represented by an asterisk (*). This is because the substantive impact of global support, proxied by the percentage of other countries that had already ratified the treaty, was extremely large: so large, in fact, that it was difficult to fit into the table. In other words, in the treaties where broad global support existed and there seemed to be a norm in favor of ratification, the magnitude this variable exerted on the likelihood of any other country ratifying the treaty was so large that it would not fit in table 2. This fact alone speaks to the value that we found for the symbolic rationales leading to counterterror treaty ratification.

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[7] We conducted a number of robustness checks to assess whether our results held under various conditions, including excluding NATO countries, incorporat-

ing variables on U.S. foreign aid, and regional controls. Although some minor changes occurred throughout these checks, overall the results were largely consistent with what we presented here. These tests and the results are presented more fully in the online appendix.

The substantive effects for the control variables in our models reveal very large positive impacts for countries with a larger GDP and if the treaty itself remained unratified or was introduced after 2001 ("Post-2001"). This indicates that as a country becomes wealthier, it tends to see a sizable positive shift in the likelihood of signing on to counterterrorism treaties. The post-2001 bump in terms of the likelihood of treaty ratification is likewise interesting. There have been a number of books, studies, and commentaries written on how the world changed after September 11. Perhaps one of the (until now) unappreciated impacts has been that the post-2001 world contains greatly increased amounts of pressure to be seen as participating in international counterterrorism efforts.

Conclusion

This article began by recognizing that despite the proliferation of UN counterterrorism treaties that have emerged since 1963, little systematic analysis has been done to understand if and why states sign on to them. In order to address this gap, we hypothesized that a combination of the presence of domestic terrorism and its impact on national and international audiences may inform states' logics in signing international counterterrorism treaties. We presented two rationales. On one hand, states may ratify for *material, needs-based rationales* in order to gain external assistance to build capacity to combat terrorism (H1) especially in treaty-relevant domains (H2). On the other hand, states may ratify treaties as a *symbolic effort* where they experience a high frequency of terrorist attacks (H3) or in order to signal their commitment to fight terrorism to domestic and international audiences (H4).

Drawing on various measures of domestic terrorism, we subjected these two subsets of treaty ratification rationales along with other, more "traditional" explanations from the literature on treaty ratification, to an empirical analysis. By drawing on a newly constructed global dataset of states' ratification decisions to the 19 international UN counterterrorism agreements, our study's findings suggest that countries may be motivated to ratify UN counterterrorism treaties for *symbolic purposes* more so than for *material, needs-based* counterterror building capacity motives, even though they do seem to ratify for more "traditional" reasons as well. Given the analytical approach adopted in this study, it is difficult to parse out the extent to which the signaling effort is intended for domestic or international audiences, although we expect that states face some degree of pressure from both types of audiences.

Our study adds new understandings to a variety of academic domains. First, and most broadly, it is the first to explore UN counterterrorism treaty ratification acceptance and timing, which to our knowledge has not been analyzed by any other work. In doing so, it moves beyond existing literature in the counterterrorism space by looking at ratification and timing, and not just compliance. Second, in addition to taking into account the international pressures states face to ratify, our study takes seriously two under-examined phenomena in the literature: namely, the link between domestic terrorism and national and international audiences, the first of which has not yet been examined in discussions on treaty ratification, and the second of which has only been addressed infrequently. Third, our study also brings to light a new contention on the nature of state logics on treaty ratification, suggesting that, by the very nature of their content, counterterror treaties may be qualitatively different than other types of treaties, and ratification dictated by new logics. Fourth, our study adds to existing literatures by suggesting that, even in an issue domain that is materially focused (given impacts on physical destruction, economic delays, counterterror expenditures, and the like), it is instead symbolic motivations that seem to motivate states to sign counterterror treaties. Fifth, and finally, the sheer number of international counterterrorism agreements that we have investigated here provides a unique opportunity to test the durability of factors that influence international cooperation, in contrast to studies in other areas that typically examine one or two major treaties alone.

We believe that our study has important policy implications. Counterterrorism is a realm in which international cooperation is critical, as weaknesses in counterterrorism efforts in one state can negate or mitigate the effects of other states (Bensahel 2006; Enders and Sandler 2006, 104–106; Patrick 2011) due to transnational terrorist organization's mobility and their cross-national goals and recruitment. Because of this, they seek to exploit gaps in countries' policing and intelligence, which makes understanding the behavior of states with regard to becoming signatories to counterterrorism treaties even more important. This study, we believe, helps to that end.

Finally, we conclude by noting that this article serves as an important first step, not the final word, in examining a range of questions related to states' behavior vis-à-vis international counterterrorism treaties. Future efforts, including case study research, might benefit from looking at a narrower set of criteria, such as ratification behaviors related to specific counterterrorism treaties or the experience of strategically important countries when it comes to ratification of and participation in these agreements. Ultimately, the need for global counterterror cooperation has been a feature of the post-2001 world. To the degree that transnational terrorism will endure into the twenty-first century, so too will the need exist for a clearer understanding of states' decisions to commit to cooperation in this realm.

Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available at the *International Studies Quarterly* data archive.

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