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European migration and terrorism: humanitarian crisis, political rhetoric, or pragmatic policy?

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ABSTRACT

The security debate concerning the recent wave of migrants into Europe has been contentious. This article examines the impact of recent migration flows into Europe and assesses the veracity of political rhetoric that migrants from Muslim states were reputedly responsible for the uptick in terrorist attacks. After conducting a series of quantitative tests that control for a variety of factors, we find little evidence that the increase in the number of migrants corresponded to an increase in terrorism during the European crisis. Our findings, therefore, contain important implications in terms of migration policy and counterterrorism tactics. **KEYWORDS**

Migration; immigration; radicalisation; terrorism; political violence

Introduction

On 13 November 2015, three suicide bombers detonated their explosives near France's national soccer stadium in Paris. The series of blasts marked the beginning of a large, coordinated attack on the city, which also entailed mass shootings at several locations including a cafe and theatre. The attackers killed 130 individuals with several hundred more injured and was the deadliest attack on French soil since World War II.

Sadly, the deadly assault on Paris was not an isolated incident and several other attacks occurred throughout Europe. A few short months later in March 2016, three suicide bombers attacked Belgium's airport and metro station, resulting in 32 casualties and several hundred injuries. In December, a young man killed 12 and injured 56 others as he drove a large truck through Berlin's crowded Christmas market. The attack was eerily similar to an earlier vehicle-borne attack in Nice, France, in July 2016 and appears to have served as a model for an identical attack in June 2017 when a van struck pedestrians on the London Bridge.

These incidents are just a small sample of a larger number of terrorist attacks that gripped Europe during the migration crisis that lasted between 2014 and 2019.¹ Islamic terrorist organisations orchestrated the majority of these attacks or inspired radicalised adherents to rise up and conduct unilateral attacks of their own. Many European policy-makers believed that the attacks were the result of general instability in the Middle East, including social unrest stemming from the 2010 Arab Spring, and regional conflicts such as the Yemeni Crisis, Syrian Civil War and the ongoing Iraqi insurgency. There is

mounting empirical evidence to support such claims. Indeed, Europol reported that between 2011 and 2015, there was over a 400 per cent increase in the number of individuals arrested for jihadist terrorism.² As a result, politicians voiced their concern that forced migration and displacement of individuals fleeing Middle East conflicts corresponded to a spike in Islamic terrorism in Europe. Meanwhile, a wave of rightwing political parties experienced a surge in popular support for their anti-immigrant and ultranationalist platforms.

Although broad empirical trends fuelled politicians' xenophobic rhetoric, researchers have yet to conduct a more rigorous statistical analysis to verify whether any correlation existed between migration and terrorism during the height of the European crisis. Such research is a critical first step in formulating sensible policy solutions. This article therefore represents an initial attempt to assess the relationship between European migration and political violence and to evaluate counterterrorism responses during the European migration crisis. As will be demonstrated below, our findings suggest that the increase in migration did not correspond to an increase in the number of terrorist incidents in Europe.

This article will proceed as follows: First, we review the existing literature on migration with particular attention to studies concerning the relationship between refugees and political violence. We also address the conspicuous tension between theoretical models of radicalisation and the political rhetoric emanating from many European leaders during the height of the crisis. The next section introduces our contribution by providing an empirical analysis of how the wave of migration into Europe affected incidents of terrorism during the crisis. We then conclude by discussing our findings and their impact on existing counterterrorism policies.

Theories of migration & radicalisation

This section discusses the two broad classifications of migrants – voluntary and involuntary. The former consists of individuals in pursuit of economic opportunities or familial ties, while the latter is driven by various factors such as instability and political violence.³ As will be demonstrated below, both manifestations of migration were relevant to the European crisis, but involuntary migration has been particularly central to the debate concerning national security and immigration policy. We also highlight research on radicalisation that suggests first-generation immigrants are less prone to political violence than subsequent generations. The section concludes by reviewing recent political rhetoric that brought renewed scrutiny upon newly arriving refugees during the height of the European crisis.

Voluntary migration

Traditionally, voluntary migration has been studied within the field of international political economy (IPE), with most analysts examining how the global economy shapes patterns and processes of migration. Even as far back as the late 19th century, scholars noted that migration is correlated with economic development.⁴ More recent studies have explored the utilisation of migration as a policy instrument to advance economic development.⁵ Indeed, states play a central role in managing economic migration. In

their review of political-economic approaches to migration, Gary Freeman and Alan Kessler note that there are 'numerous instances of states adopting economically-oriented immigration policies'.⁶

Economic theory also asserts that individual migration is due to employment opportunities and wage differentials between states. 'When given the opportunity', explains Baochun Peng, 'skilled workers from developing countries sometimes choose to migrate to developed countries, where they are offered a higher income and a better standard of living'.⁷ Other common avenues of inquiry examine the effect of migration on wages within a host country. The assumption is that immigration reduces domestic wages; however, scholars counter that the effect is contingent upon socio-economic class. 'The overwhelming majority of empirical studies', observe Noel Gaston and Douglas Nelson, 'conclude that there is essentially no statistically significant effect of immigration on labour market outcomes, with the possible exception of the least skilled domestic workers'.⁸ But even within the limited context of unskilled labour, recent studies have found that migrants have only a negligible adverse effect on domestic wages.⁹

It has also been argued that industrialised societies generally benefit from immigrants by offsetting low birth rates, provide a source of unskilled labour and boost entrepreneurial innovation. 'For many industrial countries, migration is advantageous', observes Myron Weiner, 'providing more young people to offset low national birth rates, manpower for service sector jobs that local people do not want, skilled manpower for labourshort occupations, and new investments by energetic, entrepreneurial newcomers'.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Giovanni Peri has found that immigration has no negative effect on domestic employment rates and, in fact, has a positive effect on productivity.¹¹ This had led many experts to conclude that 'immigration flows are highly correlated with economic growth'.¹²

Understanding the economic implications of migration is relevant to the European crisis. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the migration flows during the crisis were not simply a byproduct of regional wars but also fuelled in part by economic processes or uneven development. Attributing cause strictly to Middle Eastern conflicts 'does not account for increasing numbers of migrants from countries not affected by war, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Eritrea, and other African countries'.¹³ Moreover, not all Middle Eastern migrants were refugees fleeing conflicts. Between 2010 and 2016 'an estimated 2.5 million Muslims came to Europe for reasons other than seeking asylum, such as for employment or to go to school'.¹⁴

Involuntary migration

Despite the economic drivers of migration, it was the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East that had been the focus of global concern. To be sure, European policymakers and scholars have long been attuned to the linkage between migration and national security. Even as far back as the 1970s, European policymakers had sought to establish intergovernmental committees to address international terrorism. A great deal of scholarly debate also proliferated after the end of the Cold War. The massive flow of individuals leaving the German Democratic Republic after the fall of the inner German border and the explosive refugee crisis triggered by the Balkan wars underscored the importance of human migration to European national security. But the post-9/11 attacks in Madrid and London served as a significant catalyst for the 'securitization' of migration as immigration policy was now regarded as a key instrument of counterterrorism. Indeed, Gallya Lahav acknowledges that although European policy-makers had viewed immigration as a vital component of national security since the end of the Cold War and formation of the European Union, she finds that it was the Madrid and London bombings, which really 'gave further prominence to the linkages between immigration, crime, and security that had previously been only implicit in European societies'.¹⁵

Most observers agree that the European refugee crisis had been precipitated by conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and North Africa. The tumultuous era of the Arab Spring also triggered the movement of large numbers of individuals throughout the region. The combined effect of these factors had fostered conditions unparalleled in history. Indeed, Christopher Deliso has argued that the wave of migration during the crisis was unprecedented in terms of its sheer volume.¹⁶

The European crisis thus reinvigorated the debate concerning the implications of involuntary migration in terms of political violence. In other words, conceptualising migration as an explanatory variable of terrorism. Until recently, however, there had been very few studies that conducted an explicit large-N empirical analysis of the correlation between migration and terrorism. Indeed, Yilmaz Simsek had observed a 'scarcity of migration literature directly related to terrorism'.¹⁷ Myron Weiner previously contended that 'little systematic comparative attention has been given to the ways in which international population movements create conflicts within and between states, that is, to population flows as an independent rather than as a dependent variable'.¹⁸ Axel Dreher et al. thus argued that the 'absence of a causal investigation about whether and to what extent migration induces terror is an important gap in the literature'.¹⁹

To be fair, there have been some attempts to address this salient lacuna; however, most lack any empirical rigour. Alex Schmid, for example, argues that 'fears about "refugee terrorists" are largely unfounded' but only provide a few select pieces of anecdotal evidence.²⁰ Meanwhile, Huseyin Cinoglu and Nurullah Altun advance the claim that alienation of immigrants in a receiving European country might 'increase the likelihood of their involvement in terrorist activities' but provide no empirical support.²¹

Noting this absence of any robust statistical study within the existing literature, Vincenzo Bove and Tobias Böhmelt offer what they claim to be the 'first rigorous quantitative evidence' that 'immigrants are indeed a vehicle for terrorism to travel from one European country to another'.²² However, after controlling for a number of other unit-level factors, they also find that immigration, per se, is actually associated with lower levels of political violence. While their study is an important contribution to the public debate, their analysis only extends to the year 2000. As a result, it does not encapsulate the post-9/11 environment nor the recent turmoil in the Middle East that precipitated Europe's migration crisis and spike in political violence. More recently, Cory Eybergen and Martin Andresen undertake a commendable effort to evaluate global migration and political violence between 2008 and 2016 and find zero evidence that would 'support the conclusion that refugee populations are to blame for the scale of terrorism in host countries'.²³ Unfortunately, their study considers broad aggregate trends and does not specifically examine refugees nor asylum seekers entering Europe during the crisis. Axel Dreher et al. also 'find scarce evidence that terror is systematically imported from countries with large Muslim populations, or countries rich in terror'.²⁴ Similarly, in

their broad review of existing statistical studies, Marc Helbling and Daniel Meierrieks conclude that there is 'little evidence from large-N studies in favor of the hypothesis that immigration *unconditionally* promotes terrorism in receiving countries'.²⁵

Nevertheless, some scholars reach the opposite conclusion that refugees are, in fact, positively correlated with rates of domestic and international terrorism. For example, Seung-Whan Choi and Idean Salehyan examined 154 countries between 1970 and 2007 and found evidence that 'countries with high numbers of refugees are more likely to experience both domestic and international terrorism'.²⁶ Daniel Milton et al. similarly found that refugee flows correlate with incidents of transnational terrorism in a host country largely due to dismal living conditions within refugee camps and discriminatory treatment by a host country. They argue that 'these two factors can lead to transnational terrorism as some smaller subset of the refugee population responds against the host state'.²⁷

Meanwhile, although perhaps not directly related to terrorism per se, other researchers have noted the relationship between refugees and militarised conflict.²⁸ As Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher point out, 'refugees are not only a consequence of insecurity and conflict but may also contribute to insecurity and conflict'.²⁹ Karen Jacobsen concurs, observing that 'when refugees or IDPs arrive in host communities, whether across borders or in the same country, they often bring new problems that lead to conflict and further displacement'.³⁰ In perhaps one of the more well-known studies, Idean Salehvan and Kristian Gleditsch find 'that countries that experience an influx of refugees from neighboring states are significantly more likely to experience civil wars themselves'.³¹ More recently, Seraina Rüegger focuses on ethnic identities and found that the inflow of refugees may trigger instability in a host country and lead to intrastate conflict. 'If refugees arrive in countries with pre-existing exclusion of a refugee group's co-ethnics,' argues Rüegger, 'there is a higher risk of exacerbated domestic tensions'.³² For her part, Sarah Lischer acknowledges that some refugee communities are more likely to spread violence than others. She seeks to explain this variation in violence by developing an insightful typology based on the particular catalyst of refugee flows and arguing that some refugee communities are more likely to engage in violence than others.³³

Immigration and radicalisation

However, much of the theoretical literature on the migration-security linkage has emphasised the impact of the radicalisation of subsequent generations of immigrants.³⁴ According to Michael King and Donald Taylor, radicalisation is a phenomenon distinct from transnational terrorism in that the perpetrators of violence 'are born and raised in the very country they wish to attack'.³⁵ In other words, first-generation immigrants are less likely to be radicalised and participate in political violence than second- or even third-generation decedents.³⁶

But the precise manner in which radicalisation drives individuals to violence is unclear and often consists of a variety of hypothesised mechanisms. For example, Marc Sageman has proposed four factors that may account for the radicalisation of individuals: a sense of moral outrage, a specific interpretation of the world, resonance with personal experiences and mobilisation through networks. 'These factors', conclude Sageman, 'influence some young Muslims to become angry; network mobilization allows a very small number of them to become terrorists'.³⁷

Fathali Moghaddam has proposed a more linear trajectory of radicalisation that encompasses distinct stages or 'steps' in what he describes as a narrowing staircase towards political violence. Beginning with relative deprivation, Moghaddam hypothesises that a series of additional societal and psychological factors further propel individuals along the path of radicalisation culminating with recruitment into a terrorist organisation and committing acts of violence. 'As individuals climb the staircase', explains Moghaddam, 'they see fewer and fewer choices, until the only possible outcome is the destruction of others, or oneself, or both'.³⁸ Although not a formal model per se, he insists that his staircase framework can still 'serve a constructive role in helping to better explain the roots of terrorism' and inform counterterrorism policymaking.³⁹

Other scholars have explicitly incorporated religion into their conceptualisation of radicalisation. Gilles Kepel, for example, asserts that Salafism among disenfranchised or marginalised youths can have a pernicious effect. He argues that contemporary jihadists have set their 'focus on combat on European soil' and seek to 'find recruits among the millions of second-generation immigrants from the Muslim world who have put down roots in Europe'.⁴⁰ Oliver Roy, however, has vehemently rejected the reputed correlation between Salafist doctrine and political violence. Instead, he counters that terrorism may be more accurately attributed to nihilistic youths and that the notion of Islamic extremism is not different from previous generations of terrorism such as the left-wing groups of the mid-twentieth century.⁴¹ According to Roy, Islamism simply 'offers frustrated youth a justification for their frustration'.⁴²

Despite the diversity among the various models of radicalisation, Michael King and Donald Taylor have found a number of commonalities that indicate a degree of consensus in the radicalisation literature. In particular, they point out that most models are based on social-psychological processes that incorporate either relative deprivation or identity as explanatory factors. 'When operating in the right order and combination', observe King and Taylor, it can 'lead someone to endorse and engage in terrorism'.⁴³ Michael Jensen et al. also acknowledge that the various models of radicalisation each contain their own unique explanatory advantages and drawbacks, but take the added step of assessing whether certain factors are either necessary or sufficient conditions for political violence. Using qualitative comparative analysis, their results indicate that a 'sense of community victimization and a shift in individuals' cognitive frames are present in most pathways and act as near necessary conditions for violent extremism.'⁴⁴

Politics, policy, and empirical evidence?

Although most theories of radicalisation hypothesise that second or even thirdgeneration migrants are more likely to be susceptible to political violence, the highprofile terrorist attacks during the European migration crisis brought renewed scrutiny upon newly arriving refugees. Many European leaders espoused rather acerbic political rhetoric and instituted public policies that specifically targeted migrants whom they believed to be responsible for the uptick in violence. Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, even declared Muslim refugees to be a 'Trojan horse of terrorism'.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, many right-wing political parties expressed unapologetically anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic sentiments. For example, Alternative for Germany (AfD) asserted that Islam is incompatible with German values and sought to achieve 'negative immigration'.⁴⁶ They also endeavoured to block the construction of new mosques in Germany, which they believed to be 'part of a long-term land grab' by Muslims.⁴⁷ Similarly, Geert Wilders of the Party for Freedom (PVV) vowed to 'de-Islamise' the Netherlands and was found guilty of inciting discrimination.⁴⁸ Austria's Sebastian Kurz also demonstrated a penchant for cracking down on political Islam through the implementation of a number of controversial policies including the forced closure of several mosques and expelling imams.⁴⁹

There is little indication, however, that such rhetoric and policies were premised on empirical evidence or robust studies. Moreover, it does not appear that political leaders attempted to differentiate between the different categories of migration or the subsidiary impact of counterterrorism policies on subsequent generations of immigrants. To be fair, however, as noted above, only recently have scholars attempted to undertake large-N empirical analyses on the intersection between immigration and terrorism. Even fewer quantitative studies explicitly investigate the impact of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe during the crisis. 'The current European literature', acknowledges Nazli Avdan, 'does not rigorously examine the connection between terrorism and asylum recognition'.⁵⁰

This article is therefore an attempt to move beyond broad generalisations and introduce a greater degree of analytical rigour to our understanding of the relationship between migration and terrorism. In particular, we seek to verify whether the political rhetoric and public policies during the height of the European migration crisis are supported by empirical evidence. In doing so, this article seeks to engage in the contemporary debate concerning the migration-security nexus. In the following section, we introduce our contribution by conducting quantitative analysis on the security impact of refugees and asylum seekers arriving into Europe.

Data analysis

The focus of our study is terrorist attacks in Europe during the height of the migration crisis. Our unit of analysis is the country-year of all twenty-seven members of the European Union and the United Kingdom. The years of our analysis range from 2000 to 2020. Our primary outcome variables are the number of terrorist incidents and the percentage of fatalities. These data are maintained by two sources that we use in our models, namely the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, and the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) dataset.⁵¹ The ITERATE data differ from GTD by focusing exclusively on international or transnational terrorism. It not only constitutes an additional empirical test but also yields slightly different insight on the relationship between migration and terrorism.⁵² In order for an incident to constitute an act of terrorism, the GTD stipulates three criteria: the act must be intentional, must entail some violence or the immediate threat of violence, and the perpetrators must be sub-national actors. The included incidents may have been either successful or unsuccessful, and the perpetrators may have employed a variety of methods or weaponry.⁵³ For its part, ITERATE defines international or transnational terrorism as 'the use, or threat of use, of anxiety-inducing, extra-normal violence for political purposes by any individual or group, whether acting for or in opposition to established governmental authority, when such action is intended to influence the attitudes and behavior of a target group wider than the immediate victims and when, through the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its location, the nature of its institutional or human victims, or the mechanics of its resolution, its ramifications transcend national boundaries'.⁵⁴

Our primary independent variable is the number of refugees and asylum seekers obtained from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A refugee is an individual recognised under international law who has travelled outside their country of origin in fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion or some other political affiliation. An asylum seeker is an individual who is seeking protection under international law but their claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. As Amnesty International explains, 'not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker'.⁵⁵

We further unpack the independent variable into those refugees and asylum seekers who originate from predominately Muslim countries. In order to avoid arbitrary measures, disputed definitions, or imposing Western standards, we rely on membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as the basis for identifying Muslim states.⁵⁶ As a result, OIC members are self-identified Muslim states that have a policy agenda that is explicitly consistent with Islamic notions of governance. Moreover, we contend that this is an important methodological choice given that incidents of global terrorism are highest in Muslim majority states.⁵⁷

As noted above, many political figures argued that the increase in refugee and asylum seekers was the primary catalyst for the increasing number of attacks in European countries. Indeed, upon a cursory glance there is some evidence to suggest a correlation between these two trends. In Figures 1 and 2, we plot the number of refugees and the number of asylum seekers entering Europe over time, along with the number of attacks taking place in Europe using both the GTD and ITERATE datasets. The years of analysis range from 2000 to 2020, allowing us to capture any effect originating from the Arab Spring as well as notable contemporary conflicts including the Syrian and Yemeni civil wars.

To offer more descriptive context, in Figure 3, we look at the number of terrorist attacks and the number of fatalities from these attacks across all European Union member states and the United Kingdom. Again, we use both GTD and ITERATE datasets. We highlight country panels in red (as opposed to blue) to showcase countries that have experienced higher rates of attacks or lethality. Upon a visual inspection, it appears that most attacks and lethality are concentrated in only a few countries and events across both datasets.

To relate the flow of refugees from OIC countries into Europe we focus on (1) the number of terror attacks and (2) the percentage of these attacks that resulted in fatalities as our two dependent variables. For each outcome, we reference both the GTD and ITERATE datasets, resulting in four different dependent variables.

We apply these four types of dependent variables to three different regression models. First, for the number of terrorist attacks from both the GTD and ITERATE datasets, we use a negative binomial mode with European country random effects. Negative binomial models are appropriate in cases where the dependent variable is a form of counting data (e.g. number of attacks per year) that is also over-dispersed.⁵⁸ By using European



Figure 1. Refugees & Terrorism.

countries as our random effect, we can also account for any unique characteristics related to specific European countries. In addition, since our grouped observations vary over year, a random-effects model is ideal as it accounts for changes within European countries over time. Second, for the percentage of fatalities from both the GTD and ITERATE datasets, we use a European-nation random-effects model with the same justification as we previously outlined. Third, and finally, we run a fixed-effects model for all four forms of our dependent variable: number of terrorist attacks and the percentage of fatalities by country from both the GTD and ITERATE datasets.⁵⁹ This often allows for more efficient estimators and ensures that the patterns and variance that we are interested are within European countries.⁶⁰

Our focal explanatory variables are (1) the number of refugee seekers from OIC countries and (2) the number of asylum seekers from OIC counties. However, as this measures the number of refugee and asylum seekers in the same year of the attack, we calculate both measures as the sum of all refugee or asylum seekers over the past five years. We test several time lags, from 2 years to 10 years, and our overall findings remain



Figure 2. Asylum Seekers & Terrorism.

the same. As such, our regression analyses begin in the year 2005 as our refugee and asylum seeker data begin in 2000. In addition, both explanatory variables are meancentred and reported in terms of standard deviations within our clustering group, European countries.

With both sets of models, we include a series of control variables that may also offer alternative explanations for these attacks. First, we include an ordinal variable for time, setting the year 2000 to 0 and increasing by one-year increments to 2020. We also include the rate of male youth unemployment in a given European country by year since studies have hypothesised that economic disparities and relative deprivation are what drive political violence, especially among disaffected and unemployed youth.⁶¹ These data are curated by the World Bank and contain yearly unemployment rates per country. Here, the World Bank defines the male youth unemployment rate as the 'share of the labor force ages 15–24 without work but available for and seeking employment'.⁶²

We also include a national measure to identify the number of ethnic groups and their access to political power. This helps to evaluate the degree of homogeneity within a country as past research suggests that ethnic fragmentation may cause social integration to be more difficult for new arrivals into Western countries.⁶³ Data on the number of



Figure 3. Number of Attacks by Country (GTD). (b) Number of Attacks by Country (ITERATE). (c) Number of Fatalities by Country (GTD). (d) Number of Fatalities by Country (ITERATE).



Figure 3. (Continued).



Figure 3. (Continued).



Figure 3. (Continued).

politically relevant ethnic groups are obtained from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset.⁶⁴ Additionally, we include an alternative measure of the level of socio-political exclusion within a country as provided by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset.⁶⁵ According to V-Dem, social exclusion is broadly defined as the denial of services or the ability to participate in government institutions based on group identity. High levels of social exclusion imply limited political power, denial of civil liberties, inability to access public services and discrimination from public employment or business opportunities. The variable is continuous from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater levels of socio-political exclusion. We also control for how public goods are distributed within a society given that previous research has theorised that the inequitable allocation of scarce resources is a viable measure of horizontal inequalities and helps predict levels of domestic violence. We again reference the V-Dem dataset and incorporate the public goods variable that measures the extent to which national spending is particularistic or clientelistic. The variable is ordinal and ranges from high particularistic spending (0) to more equitable-based spending (4).⁶⁶

Finally, a series of additional covariates are included in order to control for the efficacy of each country's policing and counterterrorism efforts.⁶⁷ It is quite feasible that the rate of terrorism is actually attenuated by the effectiveness of the various security agencies that operate in each country. We therefore include the number of police officers and the total number of arrests for each country-year as reported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, although a nation's military is not typically utilised for domestic operations, a robust military presence could serve as a potential deterrent for would-be terrorists. As a result, we also include the number of military personnel in each country as well as total military expenditures as a percentage of GDP. Data are measured by the International Institute for Strategic Studies and obtained from the World Bank. Finally, it should be stressed that the GTD dataset includes acts of terrorism that were attempted but were ultimately unsuccessful.⁶⁹

All control variables mirror the setup as our two explanatory variables in that they are also the cumulative sum of values over the past five years (except for the 'year' variable). In addition, all control variables are mean-centred and reported in terms of their standard deviations within each European country as our models are clustered by country.

In Table 1, we provide summary statistics for our independent and control variables. These data are for all twenty-seven member states of the European Union and the United Kingdom observed from the years 2000 to 2020, inclusive.

In Figure 4, we correlate all of our independent and control variables together. The figure assumes the form of a 'heatmap', where the variables as rows and columns compare how strong the magnitude and statistical significance of each relationship is pairwise using the colour and size of the circles in each cell. The bigger the circle, the larger the magnitude of the relationship (as indicated by the side legend) and the colour refers to whether the relationship is correlated (blue) or anticorrelated (red). Relationships are marked with an 'X' if no statistical relationship is found. While the number of military personnel and the number of police are correlated, most of the independent variables are either weakly correlated or their relationship is not statistically significant. Of the independent variables that are highly correlated with one another – social exclusion, the number of ethnic groups, and public goods – we only consider social

	Ν	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Year (Year 2000 set to 0)	588	10	6.06	0	20
Refugee	573	32953.52	96647.39	0	997812
Asylum Seeker	573	10000.16	35476.95	0	458919
Number of Attacks (GTD)	588	5.78	16.43	0	135
Number of Attacks (ITERATE)	588	0.49	1.42	0	14
Youth Unemployment	560	19.7	9.6	4.23	56.23
Military Personnel	532	85915.91	106422.93	1400	503100
Military Expenditures	560	1.45	0.56	0.29	3.47
Number of Police	467	55339.68	75422.96	0	329012
Number of Arrests	428	309282.89	491593.37	3022	2384268
Ethnic Groups	588	3	1.87	1	7
Public Goods	588	3.3	0.54	2	4
Exclusion	586	0.08	0.06	0.01	0.25
Percent of Fatalities (GTD)	588	3.4	12.53	0	100
Percent of Fatalities (ITERATE)	588	2.89	13.81	0	100

Table 1.

exclusion in the main models we present here. We do interchange public goods and the number of ethnic groups for social exclusion to test the robustness of our findings; however, our conclusion remains unchanged by each substitution.⁷⁰

In the following tables, we regress the number of attacks by European countries on the various control and explanatory variables as outlined above. Our tables test our four



Figure 4. Correlation Matrix of Independent Variables Used across all Models. Note: Significance tested at the two-tailed p = 0.05, where an 'X' indicates the correlation is not statistically significant.

Table 2.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	-0.23 ***	-0.26	-0.29	-8.19 **	-7.61 **	-8.70 ***	-0.12	-0.82	-0.83	-7.16	-7.13	-6.66
	(00.0)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(2.67)	(2.55)	(2.57)	(3.91)	(0.44)	(0.45)	(4.91)	(5.05)	(4.99)
Asylum Seeker		0.11 (0.10)			-0.54 ** (0.19)			-0.11 (0.26)			-0.01 (0.27)	
Refugee			0.18 (0.11)			-0.87 ** (0.28)			-0.19 (0.37)			-0.21 (0.37)
Year				0.78 **	0.71 **	0.82 **	-0.07			0.64	0.63	0.59
				(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.39)			(0.49)	(0.50)	(0:50)
Youth Unemployment				0.22	0.37	0.58				0.53	0.53	0.55
				(0.75)	(0.74)	(0.76)				(0.77)	(0.78)	(0.77)
Exclusion				-4.71 **	-3.88 *	-4.43 **				-4.34 **	-4.33 *	-4.33 **
				(1.67)	(1.62)	(1.63)				(1.68)	(1.71)	(1.68)
Number of Police							-1.34 **	-1.26 **	-1.23 **	-1.31 **	-1.30 *	-1.09
							(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.62)	(0.62)
Number of Arrests							-0.39	-0.41	-0.37	-0.49	-0.49	-0.43
							(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.37)
Military Personnel							1.37	1.15	1.22	1.99	1.99	2.02
							(1.42)	(1.30)	(1.29)	(1.49)	(1.50)	(1.50)
Military Expenditures							1.62	1.40	1.34	0.39	0.41	0.55
							(1.99)	(1.38)	(1.39)	(2.11)	(2.16)	(2.13)
AIC	1561.13	1561.78	1560.25	1549.07	1543.32	1541.39	1540.06	1539.92	1539.83	1537.40	1539.40	1539.09
BIC	1573.44	1578.20	1576.67	1573.70	1572.05	1570.13	1572.90	1572.76	1572.67	1578.45	1584.55	1584.24
Log Likelihood	-777.56	-776.89	-776.13	-768.54	-764.66	-763.70	-762.03	-761.96	-761.92	-758.70	-758.70	-758.54
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448
Num. groups: Country	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Var: Country (Intercept)	4.73	4.75	4.72	4.74	4.70	4.91	4.75	4.73	4.78	4.70	4.70	4.74

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Table 3.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	3.35 **	3.54 **	3.51 **	-18.47	-19.05	-19.82	-5.92	2.94 *	2.80 *	-31.12	-29.34	-32.49
	(1.14)	(1.15)	(1.15)	(16.64)	(16.66)	(16.76)	(21.84)	(1.30)	(1.31)	(28.61)	(29.62)	(29.06)
Asylum Seeker		-0.68			-1.26			-0.80			-0.39	
		(0.57)			(1.21)			(1.60)			(1.66)	
Refugee			-0.54			-1.00			0.48			0.57
			(0.57)			(1.40)			(2.05)			(2.12)
Year				2.18	2.22	2.30	0.88			3.39	3.21	3.52
				(1.65)	(1.65)	(1.66)	(2.18)			(2.86)	(2.96)	(2.90)
Exclusion				-6.74	-5.88	-6.43				-8.09	-7.89	-7.99
				(0.91)	(9.94)	(9.92)				(10.55)	(10.60)	(10.57)
Youth Unemployment				-7.01	-6.75	-6.94				-7.65	-7.58	-7.62
				(4.73)	(4.74)	(4.73)				(4.92)	(4.94)	(4.93)
Number of Police							-3.41	-1.76	-3.18	-2.39	-1.87	-3.19
							(2.90)	(2.76)	(3.17)	(2.96)	(3.70)	(4.18)
Number of Arrests							-0.51	-0.20	-0.18	-1.13	-1.08	-1.20
							(2.54)	(2.40)	(2.40)	(2.57)	(2.58)	(2.59)
Military Personnel							0.69	1.19	2.40	5.52	5.20	5.58
							(7.64)	(7.03)	(6.89)	(8.14)	(8.26)	(8.16)
Military Expenditures							-1.92	1.74	0.92	-6.85	-5.99	-7.47
							(10.49)	(7.62)	(7.50)	(10.94)	(11.54)	(11.18)
AIC	3468.38	3468.27	3468.77	3461.99	3460.68	3460.97	3458.88	3459.41	3459.11	3448.13	3447.22	3446.72
BIC	3480.70	3484.69	3485.18	3486.61	3489.41	3489.71	3491.72	3492.25	3491.95	3489.18	3492.37	3491.87
Log Likelihood	-1731.19	-1730.13	-1730.38	-1724.99	-1723.34	-1723.49	-1721.44	-1721.71	-1721.56	-1714.06	-1712.61	-1712.36
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448
Num. groups: Country	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Var: Country (Intercept)	28.70	28.44	28.82	28.27	27.84	28.52	28.22	28.22	28.25	27.72	27.66	27.49
Var: Residual	121.49	121.43	121.48	121.41	121.48	121.50	122.36	122.33	122.39	122.13	122.42	122.45

Table 4.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	0.56 **	0.56 **	0.56 **	-2.10	-2.23 *	-2.56 *	0.70	0.34	0.33	-1.50	-1.04	-1.42
	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(1.07)	(1.06)	(1.06)	(1.36)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(1.77)	(1.83)	(1.80)
Asylum Seeker		-0.00			-0.29 ***			-0.10			-0.10	
		(0.04)			(0.08)			(0.10)			(0.10)	
Refugee			0.01			-0.33 ***			-0.02			-0.04
			(0.04)			(60.0)			(0.13)			(0.13)
Year				0.26 *	0.27 **	0.30 **	-0.04			0.18	0.14	0.18
				(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.13)			(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Exclusion				-1.79 **	-1.58 *	-1.68 **				-1.55 *	-1.50 *	-1.56 *
				(0.63)	(0.62)	(0.62)				(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.65)
Youth Unemployment				0.23	0.29	0.25				0.24	0.26	0.24
				(0:30)	(0:30)	(0.30)				(0.30)	(0:30)	(0:30)
Number of Police							-0.64 ***	-0.56 **	-0.65 ***	-0.60 **	-0.46 *	-0.54 *
							(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.23)	(0.26)
Number of Arrests							-0.06	-0.08	-0.07	-0.10	-0.09	-0.10
							(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Military Personnel							0.65	0.47	0.58	0.86	0.77	0.85
							(0.47)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.50)
Military Expenditures							0.61	0.58	0.49	0.31	0.54	0.35
							(0.65)	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.67)	(0.71)	(0.69)
R ²	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.70	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.72
Adj. R ²	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.69	0.68	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448

Table 5.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	0.83	0.99	0.97	-19.04	-19.55	-20.71	-4.74	0.40	0.35	-27.48	-26.35	-27.16
	(2.76)	(2.76)	(2.76)	(16.96)	(16.97)	(17.08)	(22.06)	(2.85)	(2.85)	(28.92)	(29.93)	(29.36)
Asylum Seeker		-0.63			-1.07			-0.57			-0.25	
		(0.57)			(1.21)			(1.61)			(1.67)	
Refugee			-0.57			-1.18			-0.09			-0.14
			(0.57)			(1.40)			(2.07)			(2.14)
Year				1.99	2.03	2.14	0.51			2.77	2.66	2.74
				(1.67)	(1.67)	(1.68)	(2.19)			(2.88)	(2.98)	(2.92)
Exclusion				-5.78	-5.03	-5.40				-6.81	-6.68	-6.84
				(66.6)	(10.03)	(10.00)				(10.64)	(10.69)	(10.66)
Youth Unemployment				-6.84	-6.62	-6.76				-7.40	-7.35	-7.41
				(4.77)	(4.78)	(4.77)				(4.97)	(4.98)	(4.97)
Number of Police							-2.96	-1.88	-2.40	-2.03	-1.69	-1.83
							(2.91)	(2.77)	(3.20)	(2.97)	(3.72)	(4.21)
Number of Arrests							-0.38	-0.21	-0.18	-0.94	-0.91	-0.93
							(2.55)	(2.41)	(2.41)	(2.59)	(2.60)	(2.60)
Military Personnel							0.91	1.07	1.68	5.33	5.12	5.31
							(7.67)	(7.05)	(6.92)	(8.17)	(8.29)	(8.18)
Military Expenditures							-0.45	1.77	1.29	-4.94	-4.40	-4.80
							(10.54)	(7.65)	(7.54)	(10.99)	(11.59)	(11.23)
R ²	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24
Adj. R ²	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448

Table 6.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	-2.04 ***	-2.16 ***	-2.17 ***	-12.95 ***	-12.95 ***	-13.26 ***	-6.82	-2.42 ***	-2.37 ***	-18.46 **	-19.12 **	-17.71 *
	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.39)	(3.73)	(3.73)	(3.75)	(5.85)	(00.0)	(0.42)	(7.14)	(7.31)	(7.18)
Asylum Seeker		0.29 * (0.11)			-0.01 (0.24)			0.06 ***			0.16 (0.38)	
Refugee			0.29 *		()	-0.26			-0.27		(2010)	-0.31
1			(0.12)			(0:30)			(0.45)			(0.45)
Year				1.05 **	1.05 **	1.08 **	0.44			1.59 *	1.66 *	1.52 *
				(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.58)			(0.71)	(0.73)	(0.71)
Exclusion				-4.02	-3.99	-3.89				-5.26 *	-5.40 *	-5.24 *
				(2.53)	(2.55)	(2.54)				(2.65)	(2.70)	(2.65)
Youth Unemployment				-1.93	-1.93	-1.92				-2.53 *	-2.50 *	-2.57 *
				(1.05)	(1.05)	(1.05)				(1.12)	(1.13)	(1.12)
Number of Police							-0.52	-0.27 ***	0.09	0.10	-0.15	0.49
							(0.64)	(00.0)	(0.65)	(0.62)	(0.86)	(0.83)
Number of Arrests							-0.68	-0.64 ***	-0.57	-0.73	-0.74	-0.64
							(0.49)	(00.0)	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.48)
Military Personnel							0.33	1.02 ***	0.79	3.42	3.56	3.42
							(1.86)	(00.0)	(1.69)	(1.99)	(2.03)	(2.00)
Military Expenditures							-1.28	0.45 ***	0.49	-4.21	-4.48	-3.96
							(3.01)	(00.0)	(1.90)	(3.13)	(3.19)	(3.16)
AIC	614.47	610.08	610.69	600.47	602.46	601.75	612.84	613.40	613.06	601.96	603.79	603.48
BIC	626.79	626.50	627.11	625.09	631.20	630.49	645.68	646.24	645.89	643.01	648.94	648.63
Log Likelihood	-304.24	-301.04	-301.35	-294.23	-294.23	-293.88	-298.42	-298.70	-298.53	-290.98	-290.90	-290.74
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448
Num. groups: Country	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Var: Country (Intercept)	2.66	2.70	2.67	2.66	2.66	2.66	2.67	2.69	2.70	2.64	2.65	2.65

Table 7.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	2.90 **	2.87 **	2.85 **	-17.27	-17.53	-18.02	-11.36	2.76 *	2.76 *	-41.41	-36.27	-37.91
	(1.01)	(1.03)	(1.03)	(19.34)	(19.37)	(19.49)	(25.32)	(1.26)	(1.28)	(33.17)	(34.35)	(33.67)
Asylum Seeker		0.10			-0.55			-1.56			-1.13	
		(0.67)			(1.41)			(1.85)			(1.92)	
Refugee			0.16			-0.54			-1.53			-1.44
			(0.66)			(1.63)			(2.37)			(2.45)
Year				2.00	2.02	2.07	1.39			4.41	3.91	4.08
				(1.92)	(1.93)	(1.94)	(2.53)			(3.32)	(3.43)	(3.36)
Exclusion				-11.12	-10.75	-10.96				-15.98	-15.38	-16.25
				(11.53)	(11.58)	(11.55)				(12.23)	(12.28)	(12.24)
Youth Unemployment				-0.94	-0.83	-0.90				-2.37	-2.15	-2.46
				(5.50)	(5.52)	(5.51)				(5.70)	(5.72)	(5.71)
Number of Police							-1.14	1.80	1.86	-0.22	1.29	1.80
							(3.36)	(3.20)	(3.67)	(3.44)	(4.30)	(4.85)
Number of Arrests							-6.16 *	-5.67 *	-5.56 *	-6.81 *	-6.68 *	-6.62 *
							(2.95)	(2.78)	(2.78)	(2.99)	(3.00)	(3.01)
Military Personnel							-0.81	-0.36	0.51	3.40	2.47	3.24
							(8.87)	(8.15)	(2.99)	(9.47)	(9.61)	(9.47)
Military Expenditures							-0.14	5.95	4.95	-5.11	-2.63	-3.53
							(12.17)	(8.84)	(8.70)	(12.70)	(13.40)	(12.97)
AIC	3592.07	3593.03	3593.00	3587.10	3586.42	3586.18	3578.76	3578.98	3578.78	3568.63	3567.14	3566.66
BIC	3604.39	3609.44	3609.42	3611.73	3615.16	3614.91	3611.60	3611.81	3611.62	3609.68	3612.29	3611.82
Log Likelihood	-1793.04	-1792.51	-1792.50	-1787.55	-1786.21	-1786.09	-1781.38	-1781.49	-1781.39	-1774.32	-1772.57	-1772.33
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448
Num. groups: Country	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
Var: Country (Intercept)	18.17	18.18	18.11	18.04	17.85	18.15	18.06	18.06	18.90	17.82	17.72	18.44
Var: Residual	165.64	166.01	166.02	166.36	166.76	166.67	165.82	165.66	165.47	165.92	166.22	165.95

Table 8.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	0.16	0.14	0.14	-1.73 **	-1.72 **	-1.80 **	0.01	0.11	0.12	-2.10 *	-2.32 *	-1.80
	(0.0)	(60.0)	(60.0)	(0.57)	(0.57)	(0.57)	(0.74)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(96.0)	(1.00)	(0.98)
Asylum Seeker		0.06 **			0.03			0.02			0.05	
		(0.02)			(0.04)			(0.05)			(0.06)	
Refugee			0.05 *			-0.05			-0.11			-0.13
			(0.02)			(0.05)			(0.07)			(0.07)
Year				0.19 ***	0.18 **	0.19 ***	0.01			0.22 *	0.24 *	0.19 *
				(0.06)	(90.0)	(0.06)	(0.07)			(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Exclusion				-0.74 *	-0.76 *	-0.72 *				-0.91 *	-0.94 **	-0.93 **
				(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.33)				(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.35)
Youth Unemployment				-0.33 *	-0.33 *	-0.32 *				-0.39 *	-0.40 *	-0.40 *
				(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.16)				(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Number of Police							-0.03	-0.04	0.11	0.05	-0.02	0.23
							(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.14)
Number of Arrests							-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.11	-0.12	-0.10
							(60:0)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(60.0)	(0.0)	(60.0)
Military Personnel							-0.03	0.01	-0.09	0.31	0.35	0.29
							(0.26)	(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.27)
Military Expenditures							0.15	0.16	0.21	-0.23	-0.34	-0.09
							(0.36)	(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.37)
R ²	0.30	0.32	0.31	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	0.33	0.34	0.34	0.35
Adj. R ²	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.29	0.29	0.29
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448

Table 9.												
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
(Intercept)	0.12	0.11	0.11	-1.42	-1.42	-1.54	-0.64	-0.55	-0.20	-2.13	-2.08	-1.74
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(1.27)	(1.27)	(1.28)	(1.64)	(1.70)	(1.70)	(2.16)	(2.23)	(2.19)
Asylum Seeker		0.05			-0.00			-0.03			-0.01	
		(0.04)			(0.09)			(0.12)			(0.12)	
Refugee			0.04			-0.09			-0.16			-0.17
1			(0.04)			(0.10)			(0.16)			(0.16)
Year				0.15	0.15	0.16	0.07	0.06	0.03	0.22	0.21	0.18
				(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Exclusion				-0.68	-0.68	-0.65				-0.73	-0.73	-0.77
				(0.75)	(0.75)	(0.75)				(0.79)	(0.80)	(0.79)
Youth Unemployment				-0.18	-0.18	-0.18				-0.18	-0.18	-0.20
				(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)				(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.37)
Number of Police							-0.15	-0.11	0.08	-0.10	-0.08	0.14
							(0.22)	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.22)	(0.28)	(0.31)
Number of Arrests							-0.34	-0.33	-0.31	-0.37	-0.37	-0.35
							(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Military Personnel							-0.41	-0.42	-0.44	-0.19	-0.20	-0.21
							(0.57)	(0.58)	(0.57)	(0.61)	(0.62)	(0.61)
Military Expenditures							0.55	0.61	0.74	0.30	0.33	0.48
							(0.78)	(0.82)	(0.80)	(0.82)	(0.86)	(0.84)
R ²	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21
Adj. R ²	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15
Num. obs.	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448	448

dependent variables from the GTD and the ITERATE datasets using the three regression model setups: negative binomial model with European country random-effects for the number of attacks using both GTD (Table 2) and ITERATE data (Table 6), a European country random-effects model for the per cent of fatalities using both GTD (Table 3) and ITERATE data (Table 7) and the European country fixed-effects regression for both the natural log of the number of attacks (Table 4 for GTD and Table 8 for ITERATE) and the percentage of fatalities (Table 5 for GTD and Table 9 for ITERATE).

Each table is set up in the same identical manner. In Model 1, we establish the variance associated with countries and the variance over time. In Model 2, we introduce the number of asylum seekers from OIC countries (i.e. the total sum of all asylum seekers over the preceding five years). In Model 3, we introduce the number of refugees from OIC countries set up similar to the number of asylum seekers (i.e. the total sum of all refugees over the preceding five years). Model 4 introduces our first set of control variables that gauge social fracturing and years (set at 0 for the year 2000). These variables include the year, the rate of youth unemployment, and social exclusion. In Model 5, we now include asylum seekers and the aforementioned social fracturing control variables, and in Model 6 we instead include refugees along with the aforementioned control variables. Starting with Model 7, we now introduce the second set of control variables related to police and military personnel, as well as arrests and military expenditures (along with year). Model 8 includes the police and military variables introduced in Model 7, but now includes the number of asylum seekers. Model 9 instead includes the number of refugees. Model 10 combines the two sets of control variables on social fracturing and military and police, as well as year. Models 11 and 12 are our final and focal models as they include all explanatory and control variables. Model 11 reintroduces asylum seekers and all of the aforementioned control variables, while Model 12 reintroduces the number of refugees.

We find consistent evidence that neither the number of asylum seekers nor the number of refugees are statistically significant, *ceteris paribus*. Specifically, across all final models in Tables 2 through 9 that are built to include all control variables and using both the ITERATE data and GTD, the number of refugees are not statistically significant nor are the number of asylum seekers on terrorist attacks or their lethality across the European Union and the United Kingdom. In other words, even after we apply four types of dependent variables to three different regression models, our findings are consistent.

Policy implications & conclusion

This article sought to evaluate the hypothesised relationship between involuntary migration and European terrorism. Our subsequent analysis, however, failed to provide any support for the proposition that Muslim migrants corresponded to the rate of contemporary European terrorism. The results of our study refute and invalidate the xenophobic rhetoric promulgated by many European leaders during the migration crisis. The increase in political violence cannot be attributed to the wave of newly arriving migrants who sought refuge from the turmoil gripping the Middle East. This result is consistent with most theories of radicalisation, which hold that second- or even third-generation migrants are more susceptible to political violence – not first-generation refugees.⁷¹ The presumption that terrorists are either Muslim or originate from Arab countries has been largely repudiated by other scholars and practitioners as well. As cited above, Dreher et al. find little empirical evidence to support the claim that immigrants from Muslimmajority countries are associated with terrorism.⁷² Andrew Forrester et al. similarly find no evidence that immigrants specifically from Muslim-majority countries or conflict-torn countries correlate with rates of terrorism in a host country.⁷³

Of course, it should be emphasised that our empirical results do not suggest that terrorists will never exploit migration routes in order to conduct a successful attack. Instead, we simply find that broad waves of involuntary migrants do not correspond to rates of terrorism or lethality of attack. Although terrorist groups have certainly acknowledged their desire to exploit migration flows in order to disguise operatives, it appears to be only a small component of their overall strategy. Nicoletta Ulivi, Director of the Santa Chiara Foundation, one of the largest migration centres in Italy, has subsequently argued that stemming the flow of migration as a counterterrorism measure is misguided and is indicative of a lack of understanding of how terrorists operate.⁷⁴ According to Europol, 'there is no concrete evidence that terrorist travellers systematically use the flow of refugees to enter Europe unnoticed'.⁷⁵ Indeed, Sam Mullins has pointed out that less than one per cent of all refugees are terrorists. He concludes that 'refugee terrorists are the exception to the rule' and account for only a 'small minority of jihadi terrorists operating in Western countries'.⁷⁶

Our finding that migration has no statistically significant relationship to the rates or lethality of terrorism has important implications in terms of national security policy-making, beginning with a re-evaluation of contemporary approaches to addressing the migration-security nexus. European public officials and political parties have used 'nationalist, and often anti-immigrant or anti-minority, rhetoric to target religious groups in their countries'.⁷⁷ To be sure, right-wing populist parties have traditionally been opposed to further European integration but have most recently adopted a vigorous anti-immigration platform that has helped to boost their levels of popular support. This broad agenda has also secured the backing of those groups who reside on the far-right of the political spectrum.

Yet right-wing policies that specifically target Muslim migrants are widely believed to be ineffective and, in fact, may actually contribute to the radicalisation of potential extremists. Recent research has found that perceived hostilities against a shared community may serve as a precursor to radicalisation. 'Focusing efforts on a particular community', argue Jensen et al., 'may contribute to the perception that the community is being collectively targeted. In such instances, practices meant to combat violent extremism may actually be counter-productive, increasing alienation rather than alleviating it'.⁷⁸ David Kilcullen seems to agree, hypothesis-ing that 'heavy-handed intervention in immigrant communities ... creates further opportunity for extremist penetration and manipulation'.⁷⁹

Indeed, Cinoglu and Altun suggest that national security policy that conceptualises migrants as terrorists only antagonises domestic hostilities: 'Creating an artificial link between the immigrants and terrorism creates anxiety and rage in the immigrant societies and increases the hostile feelings against the state. In these situations, hostility against foreigners (xenophobia) rises along with the possibility of clashes between societal groups'.⁸⁰ Other scholars also find that homeland security policies that segregate foreign populations only serve to engender alienation and resentment, thereby leading to

higher levels of political violence. 'Contrary to the expectations of politicians', argue Dreher et al., 'introducing strict laws that regulate the integration and rights of migrants does not seem to be effective in preventing terror attacks from foreign-born residents'.⁸¹ In other words, discriminatory migration policies are actually counterproductive to achieving higher levels of homeland security.⁸²

The perception of fear over the migration-security nexus has also led to an increase in the number of hate crimes throughout Europe. According to the German Institute for Human Rights, Germany witnessed a 77 per cent increase in the number of hate crimes between 2014 and 2015 and an astonishing 117 per cent increase in the number of 'crimes with a right-wing motive'.⁸³ Meanwhile, Amnesty International has found that race-based violence in Europe has reached its highest level since the end of World War II.⁸⁴ More recent scholarship has found that increases in European immigration have led to a rise in right-wing terrorism. In other words, domestic right-wing groups have turned to political violence as a reactionary means of expressing animosity towards immigrant communities.⁸⁵ 'Tempering anti-immigrant attitudes', suggests Richard McAlexander, 'may be a more effective strategy for policymakers'.⁸⁶

Finally, in terms of the broader research agenda on the migration-security nexus, we believe this study is an important contribution to the emerging body of research that conducts more rigorous statistical analyses concerning the relationship between European migration and terrorism. We stress, however, that there is much more important work that needs to be done in this regard and suggest additional avenues for future research. For example, scholars could conduct qualitative cross-European country comparative analyses on the rates of European terrorism or even an in-depth exploration of the impact of terrorists' media and lethality of attacks. Meanwhile, future quantitative research would benefit from data that codes the ideology of individual perpetrators.⁸⁷ We acknowledge that such research tasks are extremely difficult and time-consuming, but nevertheless confident, they will yield invaluable insight into the effect of involuntary migration on terrorism.

Ultimately, the migration-security nexus is an extremely complex matter and constitutes a serious challenge to contemporary policymakers. But we believe that it also represents a propitious opportunity for the European community to simultaneously harness the beneficial economic effects of immigration while bolstering national security. 'If states have the capacity to design and implement effective policies that "harness the power of migration", argues Adamson, then 'international migration flows can enhance, rather than detract from or compromise state power'.⁸⁸ It is our hope that this study represents a positive first step towards a more balanced approach to migration and counterterrorism policymaking.

Notes

- 1. According to the European Commission, the migration crisis had officially ended in 2019.
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- 24. Axel Dreher et al., 'The effect of migration on terror: Made at home or imported from abroad?,' *Canadian Journal of Economics* 53, no. 4 (2020): 1739.
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- 42. Olivier Roy, The Failure of Political Islam (Harvard University Press, 1994): 56.
- 43. King and Taylor, 'The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists' (2011): 609.
- 44. Michael Jensen, Anita Seate, and Patrick James, 'Radicalization to Violence: A Pathway Approach to Studying Extremism,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 5 (2020): 1068.
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- 69. The GTD codebook cites several examples, such as a bomb being planted but failing to detonate.
- 70. As noted above, all models and full robustness checks are available via replication files.
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- 82. For a more recent study, also see Axel Dreher et al., 'The effect of migration on terror: Made at home or imported from abroad?,' *Canadian Journal of Economics* 53, no. 4 (2020): 1703-1744; and Nilay Saiya, 'Religion, state, and terrorism: A global analysis,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31, no. 2 (2019): 204-223. Meanwhile, Helbling and Meierrieks (2020) conclude that an unfortunate cycle may emerge in which right-wing attacks on vulnerable migrants engenders resentment, radicalisation, and subsequent violence by migrants.
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