On the Streets and in the Shadows: Violent Protests, Terrorism, and State Repression in the West Bank

Abstract:

How do different forms of violent dissent affect patterns of state repression? The relationship between violent dissent and state repression is complicated by the fact that dissidents often employ two distinct forms of violence within single conflict episodes: activities requiring a relatively large degree of mobilization such as violent demonstrations and violent activities requiring little mobilization such as terrorist attacks. I argue that states significantly increase repression in response to violent protests, but do not do so in response to terrorist attacks. This is because the government can obtain private information about terrorists that allows it to target selectively. I use a newly collected daily dataset of contentious interactions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (2010-2015) to test my argument. The results of an Error Correction Model analysis provide support for my argument and highlight the utility of highly disaggregated data for the analysis of conflict dynamics.

Word Count: 10,932

In July 2014, following the kidnapping and immolation of a Palestinian teen by three radical Israeli Jews, large and violent protests broke out in East Jerusalem. Hundreds of young Palestinians streamed onto the streets and targeted public infrastructure and security forces with stones, fireworks, and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli reaction was swift. Israeli security forces launched massive security sweeps across East Jerusalem arresting over 600 Palestinians including at least 150 minors.

Two years later, on July 21st, 2017, a 19 year old Palestinian named Omar Al-Abed from the central West Bank village of Kobar armed himself with a knife, walked to the neighboring Jewish settlement of Halamish, jumped the perimeter security fence, walked up to a home with its lights on and knocked on the front door. When it was opened he pushed his way into the house and began stabbing. Three people were killed before a neighbor heard the screams, ran to the house, and shot Omar through an open window with his personal sidearm. Again, the Israeli reaction was swift, but rather than conduct massive security sweeps as it did in July 2014, the military imposed a closure on the village of Kobar, raided the homes of members of Omar's social network, and arrested numerous members of his family. Five members of Omar's immediate family would be tried, convicted, and imprisoned following accusations that they had prior information about the attack that they failed to report to Israeli authorities.

One of the most enduring findings in the study of state repression is that states use repression in response to violent dissent.[1] The relationship between violent dissent and state repression is complicated, however, by the fact that dissidents often employ two distinct forms of violence within conflict episodes: activities requiring a relatively large degree of popular mobilization such as violent protests and violent activities requiring little popular mobilization such as terrorist attacks.

How do these different forms of violent dissent affect the state's repressive response? As indicated by the two examples above, I argue that states tend to increase their overall level of repression in response to violent protests, but do not do so in response to terrorist attacks. This is because the state must use indiscriminant repression in response to violent protests when it cannot obtain the private information needed to target violent protesters selectively. In contrast, the state can employ targeted repression in response to terrorist attacks because the state can focus its repressive activities on the perpetrator(s) of the attack and their immediate social network(s). Doing so allows governments to deter future participation in violent activities while avoiding a backlash from the civilian population. Further, by increasing contentious interactions between security forces, dissidents, and civilians caught in the middle, violent protests increase the probability that more severe forms of repression such as killings will occur.

Violent dissent and state repression:

Despite the often conflicting findings in the state repression literature, one finding has been remarkably consistent: When confronted with protest behavior, government authorities have been shown consistently to apply some form of state repression. This finding has proven so robust that it has been called the "Law of Coercive Responsiveness" (Davenport 2005). This does not mean, however, that the level and type of repression is likely to be the same everywhere. Various contextual factors such as the level of democracy (Carey 2010, Conrad and Moore 2010, Regan and Henderson 2002, Fein 1995, Davenport and Armstrong 2004, Henderson 1991, Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999, Rasler 1986), state capacity (Cingranelli and Filippov 2010), government involvement in domestic and foreign wars (Poe and Tate 1994, Poe,

Tate, and Keith 1999), the degree of executive insecurity (Young 2009, Ritter 2014),

demographic characteristics (Poe and Tate 1994, Henderson 1993, Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999),

and economic indicators (Henderson 1991) have been shown to affect the likelihood that the

government will respond to dissent with repression.

Moving beyond contextual factors, a number of scholars have also argued that repressive

responses to dissent vary significantly depending on the attributes of the groups and conflict

behavior encountered (Davenport 1995, 684).[2] For example, Gartner and Regan (1996) posit that

states use more violence against groups that have greater demands, echoing Tilly's (1978)

argument that "accepted groups" with large objectives are more heavily repressed. Relatedly,

others have found that counter-cultural groups (Wisler and Giugni 1999) and ethnic minorities

(White 1999, Rørbæk and Knudsen 2015) are more likely to be repressed. Overall patterns of

dissent have also been shown to affect the severity of repression. According to Davenport

(1995), when governments are faced with a higher number of dissent activities, when different

forms of protest are employed, and when the activities lie outside the norms of interaction in that

country, state repression is likely to increase. Despite the finding that democracies repress less

than non-democracies, scholars have shown that both democratic and non-democratic states are

more likely to use repression when facing violent dissent (Davenport 1995, 687, Regan and

Henderson 2002, Carey 2010). The reason is that "when faced with less threatening opposition

tactics, it would be too costly to kill systematically large parts of the population, both in terms of

organizing and funding the necessary killing machine, but also with respect to the international

condemnation and shaming that these actions would trigger" (Carey 2010).

Distinguishing between violent and non-violent dissent is insufficient, however, because

states can face various forms of violent dissent simultaneously (Carey 2010, Davenport 1995)

and there is no reason to assume that the government responds identically to different forms of violent dissent. Despite this, very little work has examined how different forms of violent dissent affect patterns of state repression. And no one, as far as I am aware, has quantitatively examined the way in which different violent tactics uniquely affect patterns of state repression within a single conflict episode. In the next section I build on the notion that different forms of violent dissent have unique impacts on state repression. I do so while moving away from a singular focus on the level of threat perceived by the government. I argue instead that the types of tactics dissidents use affect the government's ability to obtain private information about dissidents and, in turn, affect the government's ability to target selectively.

Violent protests, terrorism, and selective versus indiscriminate repression:

Della Porta (1995, 1996) argues that repression may be distinguished by the degree to which it is diffuse or selective. This categorization of repression maps closely onto the distinction between "selective" and "indiscriminate" government violence in the civil war literature (see Kalyvas 2006).[3] Selective repression refers to government repression that targets those directly involved in dissident activities or their immediate social networks. Indiscriminate repression refers to government violence targeting members of a specific population regardless of their personal involvement in dissident activities.

Scholars have generally argued that indiscriminate repression is costly and is therefore only likely to occur when the government lacks an alternative. The primary reason is that indiscriminate repression risks alienating the civilian population and causing a backlash against the government (Kalyvas 2006, Kocher, Pepinsky, and Kalyvas 2011, Mason and Krane 1989,

Lyall and Wilson 2009, Dell and Querubin 2017, Rasler 1996, Blankenship 2016, Earl 2011, 268, Dugan and Chenoweth 2012, Lindemann and Wimmer 2018). Backlash effects may also occur where the population perceives inaction to be more threatening than action, as when the government perpetrates severe indiscriminate repression, because high levels of indiscriminate repression may lead to the calculation among the civilian population that inaction is at least as risky as taking action against the regime (Goldstone and Tilly 2001). In fact, dissident groups often use violence in order to elicit state repression for this very reason (Laitin 1995, Fearon and Laitin 2000, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Kydd and Walter); they hope that their attacks on the state will provoke harsh, indiscriminate retaliation that will increase anger against the state and thus support for their cause. Davenport and Inman (2012) make this point explicitly when they explain that "…given the consistent body of evidence in the counterinsurgency and civil war literature that indiscriminate government repression is ineffective and counter-productive, it is counterintuitive that political authorities would continue to pursue such strategies" (Davenport and Inman 2012, 629).[4] They continue by lamenting that "there has thus far been little rigorous attention paid to resolving the question of why governments respond to behavioral threats with some form of repression despite lack of evidence that repressive behavior is effective at quelling dissent."

The central question, then, is why do states use indiscriminate targeting in some circumstances and selective targeting of dissidents in others? To answer this question, I build on the work of civil war scholars who have contended that the government's decision to perpetrate indiscriminate violence is largely due to the government's inability to obtain private information needed to selectively target insurgents and rebels (Kalyvas 2006, Blankenship 2016).[5] Given the potential costs associated with the use of indiscriminate repression, where states have the

necessary information and freedom of action to target selectively in a given territory, they will do so.[6] I assume here, then, that the motivation for states to repress dissidents is produced by violent dissent, but I contend that the strategy the government employs to demobilize dissidents depends on the level of popular participation associated with a form of violent dissent. Those tactics that involve a large number of participants are expected to increase government repression more than those that involve a small number of participants. This is because dissident tactics that involve a large number of participants, such as violent protests, make collecting private information about participants relatively difficult for the government. As a consequence, the government is forced to respond with indiscriminate repression. The government is able to target selectively in response to violent dissident tactics that require a small number of participants, such as terrorist attacks, because it is relatively simple for the government to obtain private information about the perpetrators.

Violent protests and state repression:

Fundamentally, the power of protest lies in its ability to bring large numbers of people to the streets. A broader base of resistance raises the costs to the government and protests strengthen dissident movements by enhancing resilience and increasing tactical innovation which, in turn, increases the likelihood of success (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 10). It is therefore in the government's interest to demobilize dissenting populations and minimize the growth of protests before they escalate and spread. The government must be careful however. While severe forms of state repression may produce a backlash from the international community, limited repression can produce a domestic backlash. Information-oriented scholars

have argued, for example, that repression changes people's beliefs about the probability of victory (Aytaç, Schiumerini, and Stokes 2017). These scholars have pointed out that limited repression often signals government weakness, it can increase the perceived probability of success among dissidents and potential dissidents, and it can decrease the perceived risk associated with participation in protest activities. Gamson (1975), for example, argues that elites risk public ridicule if they perpetrate moderate repression that fails to quell protests and that this ridicule is likely to produce a subsequent backlash against authorities. Others have highlighted the emotional response triggered by limited state repression that increases the willingness of potential protesters to incur the risks associated with participation in protests (Aytaç, Schiumerini, and Stokes 2017, Dugan and Chenoweth 2012, 600). These mechanisms, of course, are not mutually exclusive and may work in tandem to produce backlash effects.

Where protests turn violent, all governments with the capability to do so are likely to respond with hard forms of repression (Davenport 1995, 687, 2007). Even where police forces adopt a "softer" approach to protest policing, as is often the case in democratic countries, violent protests often trigger "spirals of violence" between protesters and security forces (Della Porta 1995, 68-69). Given the risk of backlash, the government has incentive to limit its repression to those actively participating in protests. When it comes to violent protest, however, the state will often have difficulty obtaining private information about participants given the sheer number of people involved. While it may selectively target those perceived as responsible for organizing protests where and when it is able to do so, the government is unlikely to have enough private information to rely on selective targeting alone. In responding to violent protests, then, the state must cast its net widely. Failing to do so may complicate the government's ability to deter future participation in violent protests and may actually produce a backlash against the government.

This implies that when faced with violent protests the government becomes far more likely to turn to indiscriminate targeting of communities deemed to be supportive of the protests and those communities from which participants have been recruited. I therefore postulate that while the intensity of state repression - in terms of both number of events and severity of event types – may differ across political and economic contexts,

H1: Violent protests increase the level of state repression.

Terrorist attacks and state repression:

Where the state is strong, rebellion is difficult. As a consequence, dissidents often turn to "clandestine political violence" in pursuit of their agenda (Sánchez-Cuenca and De la Calle 2009). Clandestine political violence refers to "the perpetration of killings by small, underground groups (or even single individuals) oriented to (more or less clearly stated) political aims" (Della Porta 2013). Unlike military "armed resistance," clandestine political violence is not meant to achieve military tactical objectives. Instead this form of violence has a "strong and prevalent communicative, symbolic aspect" (Della Porta 2013, 10) wherein the "victim" of violence is not the "target" of violence (Bergesen 2007). It is to this form of violence that I refer when I use the term "terrorism." In order to be effective, clandestine political violence requires a low level of civilian participation. Including too many members of the public in the networks activities could endanger those participating and increases the chances that the state will succeed in gaining intelligence needed to prevent attacks and dismantle the network. This tactical consideration underlies the significant increase in the use of "leaderless resistance" among violent movements

around the globe. For example, recent research has indicated that leaderless resistance has become the dominant strategy within both the global jihadi and American white nationalists movements (Sageman 2011, 144, Dobratz and Waldner 2012).

By adopting this diffuse organizational strategy, dissidents make counter-terrorism efforts more difficult while at the same time reducing their own capabilities. Knowing that they are incapable of challenging the government directly, clandestine violent networks perpetrate attacks with the intent of eliciting a harsh and indiscriminate government response. They do so with the hope that indiscriminate government repression will trigger a backlash against the government (Laitin 1995, Fearon and Laitin 2000, Fearon and Laitin 2003, Kydd and Walter). Given that terrorist attacks are perpetrated with the intention of receiving public attention, terrorist networks or individual perpetrators usually take credit for their activities. In fact, that is generally the main objective of terrorism. As Jenkins (1975, 15) famously put it, "terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening and not a lot of people dead."

There are instances, to be sure, when the leadership of terrorist organizations refuse credit for terrorist attacks carried out by their lower level operatives (Kearns, Conlon, and Young 2014). This is particularly likely when operatives perpetrate attacks on civilians without prior coordination with their organization's leadership and when the leadership views such attacks as counterproductive (Abrahms and Conrad 2017). Even when the leadership fails to take credit for an attack, however, the government is likely to determine the culprit. While the leadership of terrorist organizations may deny responsibility for an attack, operatives and supporters rarely do. They perpetrate attacks because they believe in the efficacy of the strategy, even if the leadership disagrees. They therefore have no incentive to conceal information about who is responsible for the attack. Even when organizations deny responsibility, then, governments are likely to hold

them accountable.[7] It should also be noted here that since "lone-wolf" attacks by individuals who are involved in or identify with the dissident movement and attacks by small networks or "cliques" have become increasingly common in the current era (Spaaij 2011, Perliger and Pedahzur 2011, Spaaij and Hamm , Perry, Hasisi, and Perry), responsibility claims by organizational leadership are not applicable in many cases.

Given that governments can usually ascertain those responsible for a terrorist attack, the government can usually focus its repressive activities on the perpetrator(s) of the attack and their immediate social network(s). If a particular organization is deemed to be responsible, the organizations leadership may also be targeted. This does not mean that the government will not carry out some level of repression against the civilian population, but that repression is likely to be highly focused around those responsible for the attack. In Chechnya, for example, the government has harassed, injured, and killed militants' family members as a way to increase the cost of participation in rebellion (Lyall 2010). In Israel, the government has demolished the family homes of Palestinians who carry out attacks against Jewish civilians and Israeli security forces (Benmelech, Berrebi, and Klor 2014).[8] One could go further and argue that where dissent and repression are ongoing, terrorist attacks may actually decrease the overall level of repression by concentrating repressive activities against the perpetrator's immediate social network(s). I do not formally make this latter argument here, but I do hypothesize that

H2a: Terrorist attacks do not increase the level of state repression.

Carey's (2010) finding that "guerilla" attacks significantly increase the likelihood that

governments will employ lethal forms of state repression suggests an alternative explanation.

Namely, it could suggest that while lethal attacks against civilians may not increase the overall

level of repression, lethal attacks targeting security forces may have a positive effect on the level

of state repression because direct targeting of security forces is likely to be perceived as

threatening by the government. The theoretical argument presented here, however, would

suggest that whether lethal attacks against security forces increase the level of repression should

depend on the number of perpetrators involved. Because the number of participants is the central

factor here, it should not matter whether attackers target civilians or security forces. Lethal

violence perpetrated by large rebel groups, to be sure, would be expected to significantly

increase the level of repression as the state spirals into civil war, but lethal attacks perpetrated by

lone-wolves and clandestine violent networks should not significantly increase the level of state

repression. Said formally, I expect that

H2b: Lethal attacks against security forces do not increase the level of state repression.

Relative effects of violent protests and terrorist attacks on state repression:

The hypotheses presented thus far express expectations about the effect of violent tactics

on the level of repression. It is also possible that the type of violent tactic can affect the severity

of government repression. The level of violence reflects the number of repressive actions – such

as number of arrests or military raids – while severity reflects the costs imposed on dissidents

and/or the larger civilian population. The level of severity of repressive activities is determined

here by its level of violation of physical integrity rights. Actions on the very low end of the spectrum such as spying and even some restrictions on first amendment rights can be conceptualized as "soft" forms of repression. Repressive actions such as arrests, military raids, and killings fall into the "hard" repression category, with killings falling on the far end of the spectrum.

According to the theoretical model presented here, greater participation in violent events complicates the ability of the government to use selective targeting strategies. When facing large participation events such as violent protests, governments usually must confront dissidents (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003). This increases the number of confrontations between civilians and security forces. An increase in these often tense confrontations increase the likelihood that killings will occur. This is consistent with literature showing that the "situational threats posed by protesters to those agents who actually perform repression" helps to explain the behavior of those agents (Earl and Soule 2006). When security forces are targeted during violent protests, they are likely to feel threatened, increasing the probability that they will feel the need to use lethal force. These killings may occur in a variety of settings including in the midst of violent protests, but also during arrest or search raids triggered by the protests and at checkpoints set up by the military in an attempt to prevent large gatherings. Fundamentally, my argument is that by increasing the number of contentious confrontations between security forces and the civilian population, large-participation tactics such as violent protests make severe forms of repression such as killings more likely.

H3: Violent protests increase the number of government killings more than do lethal attacks.

A possible alternative argument is that the level of state repression is determined by the severity of dissident violence rather than the level of popular participation. This would fit the common presumption of proportionality where "authorities respond to behavioral challenges with a tactic that is largely comparable to the one with which they have been confronted" (Davenport 2007). This logic builds on the same reasoning underlying the argument that non-violent dissent is more likely to elicit repression than violent dissent; because states are likely to view dissident violence as threatening and transgressive, they are more likely to use hard forms of repression when responding to it. It stands to reason, then, that more severe forms of violence could be perceived as more threatening and transgressive than less severe forms of violence. Terrorist or guerrilla attacks, in which perpetrators aim to kill civilians or security personnel are more severe than violence generally perpetrated by protesters such as destruction of property and the throwing of stones, bottles, or on occasion Molotov cocktails. If the level of repression is determined by the severity of violence, I would expect that

H4: Both lethal attacks and violent protests increase the overall level state repression, but lethal attacks increase the level of state repression more than violent protests.

Research Design:

I now turn to a discussion of my case, variables, data, and error correction models (ECMs) before presenting the results of my regression analysis.

Dissent and Repression in the West Bank:

In order to test my hypotheses, I analyze unique data on contentious interactions in the West Bank from 2010 through 2015. Testing my theory using a longitudinal analysis of a single case is appropriate because I am interested in the relative effects of different forms of violent protest on state repression. Cross-national data, while valuable for certain research questions such as the structural factors that contribute to the occurrence, onset, duration, or overall severity of repression, are too aggregate to capture micro-level outcomes of state-dissident interactions (Lyall 2009, 332, Sambanis 2004, Hoover and Kowalewski 1992). It is precisely by examining a single case with a consistent set of actors, that I am able to control for many contextual factors that are generally used to explain the intensity of repression.

The specific case of the West Bank is appropriate because the territory has been marked by persistent but tactically varied violent dissent and state repression for some time.[9] The current regime in the West Bank dates back to June 1967 when, following the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, Israel found itself in control of the West Bank and the large Palestinian population living there. Since the first Palestinian *intifada* (1987-1993), Palestinians have engaged in both violent protests and clandestine political violence against the Israeli government and against the Jewish population in Israel-Palestine. The level and severity of dissent and government repression have varied over time, reaching their peak during the second Palestinian *intifada* (2000-2005). Since that time violence has increased and decreased in response to both endogenous and exogenous factors. While large scale violence in the West Bank has occurred, most notably during the second intifada when over 1,000 Israelis and over 3,000 Palestinians were killed, most often violent conflict between the government and Palestinians occurs at relatively low levels of

intensity.[10] While organizations such as Hamas, Fatah, and Islamic Jihad have carried out largescale terrorist attacks and guerilla style campaigns, this is the exception rather than the rule. Most often, dissident violence takes the form of violent protests or relatively small scale terrorist attacks. Many of these attacks are perpetrated by individuals or small cells operating autonomously. On some occasions these individuals or cells are affiliated with a formal terrorist organization such as Hamas or Islamic Jihad, but even these cells often perpetrate lethal attacks on their own initiative. In an attempt to manage and deter violent dissent, Israel has long relied on a variety of targeted and indiscriminate repressive tactics such as permanent and temporary military checkpoints, curfews, arrests, riot dispersal measures, military raids, the demolition of terrorists' family homes, and targeted assassinations.

While scholars of contentious politics and civil war have convincingly contended that the dynamics of conflict in the case of Israel in general and the case of the West Bank in particular are generalizable to other cases, extant studies have primarily focused on the effect of repression on patterns of Palestinian dissent (Khawaja 1993, Dugan and Chenoweth 2012, Benmelech, Berrebi, and Klor 2014, Pearlman 2011). No quantitative analysis, of which I am aware, has directly examined the effect of violent Palestinian dissent on patterns of government repression.[11]

Data and variables:

As a preliminary test of my theoretical model, I analyze original daily data on repression and dissent in the West Bank from 2010 through 2015. In my model, I include three measures of state repression.[12] First, *raids* records the number of Israeli military raids into populated Palestinian areas of the West Bank. Data for this measure comes from daily reports produced by

the Negotiation Affairs Department (NAD) which operates under the auspices of the Palestinian

Authority (PA). [13] The reports provide information about the time and location of each raid and

additional information such as whether any arrests were made and whether there was any

violence perpetrated by Palestinians against security forces conducting the raid. Raids that were

conducted in a specific city, town, or village were considered unique raids as long as they did not

occur within a two hour period in the same location. If security forces entered a city, town, or

village, left and then returned in less than two hours, this was considered a single raid. If

however, security forces raided a location, left and then returned in more than two hours, these

were considered two separate raids. If security forces raided a number of cities, towns, or

villages simultaneously, each was considered a unique event. Similarly, if security forces raided

a number of locations in succession, each location was considered a unique event. The dataset

records 31,715 raids.

Second, *arrests* is a count variable which captures the number of Palestinians arrested by

Israeli security forces. The data comes from the NAD daily reports. The reports provide

information about the location and time of arrests and whether those individuals arrested were

released on the day of the arrest. If an individual was released the same day he or she was

detained, the event is considered a "temporary detention" and is therefore excluded from the

measure. These types of detentions are considered distinct from arrests because they may occur,

for example, when security forces hold civilians for a short time as they check their identity

papers and determine whether they are wanted by the intelligence agencies. Only arrests in

which the individual was not released on the day of the arrest are included. A total of 23,548

arrest are recorded in the dataset.

Third, *government killings* records incidents in which at least one Palestinian is killed by Israeli security forces. The data on Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces comes from the NAD daily reports. The reports include information about the victim including whether he or she was under the age of 18, the location of the incident, and the circumstances of their death – including how the individual was killed, whether they were involved in protest activities at the time of their death, and whether they were killed while perpetrating an attack against security forces or Israeli settlers.[14] A total of 263 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank from 2010 through 2015.

Figure 1 represents a weekly time series of Israeli arrests, raids, and killings in the West Bank. The spikes in repressive activities are particularly high during the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza in the summer of 2014 and the surge in lone-wolf and small cell attacks centering in Jerusalem in October 2015. Two additional patterns are noteworthy. From the start of the reporting period in 2010 until the 2012 war in Gaza, the number of military raids tended to significantly outnumber the number of arrests in the West Bank. Following the 2012 Gaza war, however, the average number of arrests increased significantly, while the weekly number of military raids slightly declined. At the same time, the overall number and frequency of Palestinian casualties increased significantly in the period following the 2012 Gaza war. A more formal test of the level of correlation between these variables indicates that arrest and killings are more closely correlated (rho = 0.60) than raids and arrest (rho = 0.38) and raids and killings (rho = 0.16).[15] The relatively low level of correlation between raids and arrests indicates that a single measure of state repression is insufficient for testing the effects of dissent on repression. By providing two separate measures of state repression with a relatively low level of correlation, I am better able to assess the robustness of my findings. Overall, the data for the six year period

(2010 - 2015) exhibits considerable week to week variation on all three measures of state repression, further highlighting the need to conceptualize repression as dynamic rather than static.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Figure 1. Israeli military raids, arrests, and killings of Palestinians in the West Bank (2010-2015)
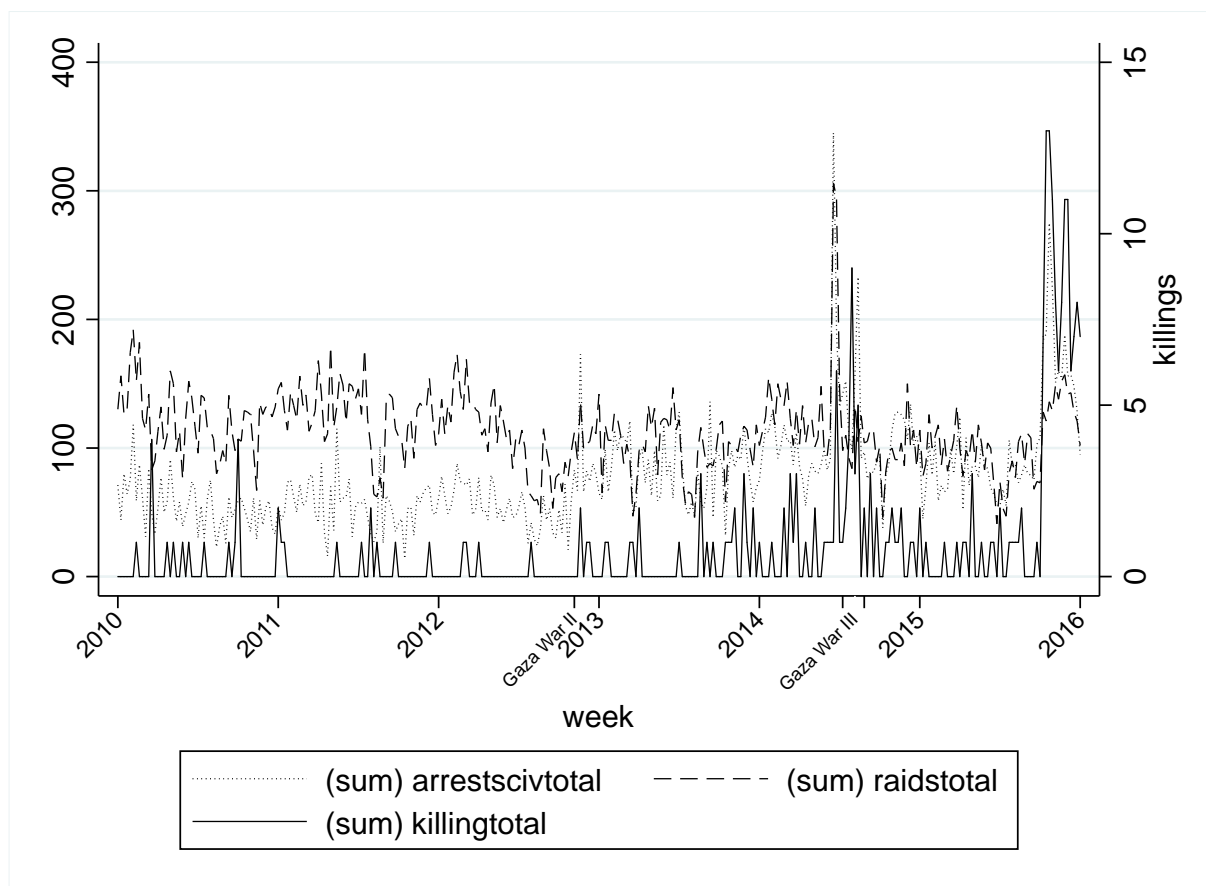
As a measure of violent protests, I create a continuous variable called *violent protests* that captures every event in which "low-level violence" (Balcells, Daniels, and Escribà-Folch 2016) is recorded between security forces and a group of Palestinian civilians. Most often these events are characterized by young Palestinians throwing stones, Molotov cocktails, or fireworks in the

direction of security forces and security forces responding with crowd control measures such as tear gas and rubber bullets or with live fire. Sometimes these altercations occur as part of a larger demonstration such as a march and at other times takes the form of small groups of youths perpetrating low levels of violence across a more geographically diffuse space. There are a total of 9,777 violent protests recorded in the dataset. The data for the variable comes from the NAD daily reports.

In order to capture terrorist attacks, I create a variables called *settlers killed*. This is a variable that records every incident in which a minimum of one Israeli settler is killed by Palestinian attackers in the West Bank. Events are only included when a Jewish civilian is killed in the West Bank. This means that if the individual is a Jewish settler, but was on active duty in the military at the time of his death, the event is not included. If the individual was Jewish and visiting, volunteering, or staying in the West Bank with Israeli settlers, the event was included. A description of the event, its location, and the number of settlers fatalities are recorded in the dataset. Information for this variable comes from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) website. The MFA maintains a publically available list of all Jewish fatalities at the hands of Palestinians in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The list includes the name of the victim(s) and a description of the event. Descriptions of locations were cross checked with google maps to determine the administrative region in which they occurred. A total of 43 settlers were killed in the temporal scope of the dataset.

To test the effects of lethal attacks on security forces, I create measure called *soldiers killed* that records every incident in which a minimum of one Israeli soldier was killed by Palestinian attackers in the West Bank. Any soldier killed in the West Bank, whether or not they

were a resident of the West Bank, was included. The information about Israeli soldiers killed in the West Bank came from the MFA website.

The argument presented here builds on research that has shown that repression is more likely in response to violent as opposed to peaceful dissent (Davenport 1995). There is no reason to think, however, that dissidents will not use both violent and non-violent tactics at the same time (Chenoweth and Lawrence 2010, 174). While models based on threat perception would suggest that peaceful demonstrations would be less likely to elicit government repression than terrorist attacks, the argument presented here suggests the opposite may be true since peaceful protests involve a larger number of participants than do terrorist attacks. To test this proposition in the West Bank and to control for the effects of peaceful demonstrations, I create a variable called *Peaceful demonstrations.* The data on demonstrations comes from the NAD reports. The reports include information about Palestinian marches, sit-ins, and large gatherings in the West Bank. *Peaceful demonstrations* includes those demonstrations in which Palestinians do not perpetrate any violence against security forces. There are a total of 2,051 peaceful demonstrations in the dataset. Security forces used violence, usually in the form of crowd control measures or physical assaults, against protesters in 624 of these cases, but in none of the cases did Palestinians respond violently.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, research has indicated that government involvement in both domestic and international wars tends to increase the level of state repression. I therefore include two dichotomous variables that capture the 2012 (*Gaza war 2012*) and 2014 (*Gaza war 2014*) Israel-Gaza wars.

Error correction Models:

The quantitative analysis includes a series of single-equation error correction models (ECMs) to examine the causes of variation in the level and forms of state repression by Israeli security forces against Palestinian civilians over time. ECMs are time-series models that directly estimate the rate at which the dependent variable changes and then returns to equilibrium as a result of changes on the independent variable(s) (De Boef and Keele 2008).

Utilizing an ECM approach is appropriate for three reasons. First, as with cross-sectional regression models, an ECM allows for the estimation of the causal impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Second, the model is dynamic and accounts for past influences on future values. The model assumes an autoregressive component in the data generating process, which means that the values at time t-1 are related to the values at time t, which are then related to the values at time t+1. This assumption of dependence between the values of the variables and their lagged values allows for testing the effects of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable over time. Furthermore, an ECM enables one to estimate both the immediate and persisting effects of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable (De Boef and Keele 2008). The immediate or short term effect refers to the impact of X_t on Y_t at time t. The lasting or long term effect refers to the continuous impact of an independent variable over a subsequent number of time periods. In other words, the effect of X on Y persists into the future but decays over time. The ability to assess the contemporaneous and persisting influences of the independent variables on the dependent variable allows for a more nuanced analysis of the influence the type of violent dissent on the nature of the government's response. Finally, an ECM can be used with either stationary or non-stationary data. Even though analysts have traditionally used ECMs for estimating statistical relationships between two series which are

non-stationary and cointegrated, De Boef and Keele (2008) show that ECMs may be used with stationary data as well.

I estimate the following ECMs for Israeli state repression against Palestinians from January, 2010 through December, 2015. [16]

Δraids$= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1$raids$_{t-1} + \beta_0\Delta$violent protest$_t + \beta_1$violent protest$_{t-1} + \beta_2$settlers killed$_t + \beta_3$settlers killed$_{t-1} + \beta_4\Delta$soldiers killed$_t + \beta_5$soldiers killed$_{t-1} + \beta_6\Delta$peaceful protest$_t + \beta_6\Delta$peaceful protest$_{t-1} + \beta_7$Gaza war 2012 $+ \beta_8$Gaza war 2014 $+ \varepsilon_t$

Δarrests$= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1$arrests$_{t-1} + \beta_0\Delta$violent protest$_t + \beta_1$violent protest$_{t-1} + \beta_2$settlers killed$_t + \beta_3$settlers killed$_{t-1} + \beta_4\Delta$soldiers killed$_t + \beta_5$soldiers killed$_{t-1} + \beta_6\Delta$peaceful protest$_t + \beta_6\Delta$peaceful protest$_{t-1} + \beta_7$Gaza war 2012 $+ \beta_8$Gaza war 2014 $+ \varepsilon_t$

Δkillings$= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1$killings$_{t-1} + \beta_0\Delta$violent protest$_t + \beta_1$violent protest$_{t-1} + \beta_2$settlers killed$_t + \beta_3$settlers killed$_{t-1} + \beta_4\Delta$soldiers killed$_t + \beta_5$soldiers killed$_{t-1} + \beta_6\Delta$peaceful protest$_t + \beta_6\Delta$peaceful protest$_{t-1} + \beta_7$Gaza war 2012 $+ \beta_8$Gaza war 2014 $+ \varepsilon_t$

The rate at which the system returns to equilibrium after a change in the independent variables is represented by the ECM adjustment coefficient, α_1. The coefficients β_0, β_2, β_4, and β_6, refer to the immediate effects of any change in the respective variables at time t on the dependent variable. The coefficients β_1, β_3, and β_5, refer to the immediate effects of the respective variables

at time t-1 on the dependent variable at time t. β_7 and β_8 refer to the effect of the dichotomous controls on the frequency of the respective dependent variable. The total effects of violent protests, attacks on civilians, attacks on security forces, and peaceful protests are represented by the long run multiplier for each, which are calculated by dividing the coefficients of every lagged independent variable by the ECM adjustment coefficient (De Boef and Keele, 2008).

Findings:

Table 1 represents the effects of variation in the independent variables on variation in the number of repressive actions perpetrated in a given week. Model 1 measures the effects of the independent variables on the number of IDF military raids in Palestinian populated areas. Model 2 measures the effects of the independent variables on the number of IDF arrest of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. Model 3 measures the effects of the independent variables on the number of Palestinian civilians killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Table 1. Effects of violent protests, lethal attacks, and peaceful demonstrations on the level of Israeli government repression (2010-2015)

	Model 1 (raids)	Model 2 (arrests)	Model 3 (killings)
Government raids$_{t-1}$	-0.440***		
	(0.048)		
Government arrests$_{t-1}$		-0.784***	
		(0.055)	
Government killings$_{t-1}$			-0.563***
			(0.048)
Δ Violent protests	0.227**	0.498***	0.022***
	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.003)
Violent protests$_{t-1}$	0.0671	0.705***	0.029***
	(0.051)	(0.070)	(0.003)
Δ Settlers killed	-4.710	-4.424	-0.055
	(6.145)	(6.064)	(0.261)
Settlers killed$_{t-1}$	-5.543	-5.569	0.216
	(8.255)	(8.149)	(0.351)
Δ Soldiers killed	1.209	0.204	-0.171
	(4.430)	(4.334)	(0.189)
Soldiers killed$_{t-1}$	-0.0888	-5.107	-0.457†
	(5.887)	(5.759)	(0.251)
Δ Peaceful demonstrations	0.176	0.690*	0.008
	(0.288)	(0.281)	(0.012)
Peaceful demonstrations$_{t-1}$	0.0446	0.285	0.001
	(0.260)	(0.254)	(0.011)
Gaza War II	-7.088	9.786	-0.044
	(22.320)	(21.784)	(0.949)
Gaza War III	-13.15	-27.82**	-1.714***
	(10.683)	(10.531)	(0.465)
Constant	48.09***	38.22***	-0.392**
	(5.890)	(3.889)	(0.119)
Observations	312	312	312
Adjusted R^2	0.22	0.43	0.38

Note: Unit of analysis is conflict week. Standard errors in parentheses.
$^{\dagger} p < 0.1,$ $^{*} p < 0.05,$ $^{**} p < 0.01,$ $^{***} p < 0.001$
Δ indicates that the variable is differenced.

According to Hypothesis 1, violent protests increase the overall level of state repression. Violent protests are therefore expected to correlate with government arrests and government raids. The results of models 1 and 2 indicate that an increase in one standard deviation of *violent*

protests (approximately 38 events) increases the number of raids by approximately 9 and the number of arrests by approximately 20 in the same week. The lagged measure of *violent protests* is positive in both models, but fails to reach significance in model 1. This indicates that the effects of *violent protests* on *arrests* persist into future weeks, while the effect of *violent protests* on *military raids* is isolated to week t. The frequency of arrests is actually likely to increase further from time t to time t+1, decreasing at a rate of approximately 79 percent a week after that. These results provide support for Hypothesis 1; the Israeli government increases their level of repression in response to violent protests.

According to Hypothesis 2a, lethal attacks against civilians should not significantly increase the overall level of state repression. The results of model 1 and model 2 both indicate that *settlers killed* does not have a significant effect on *raids* or *arrests*. Further, the coefficient for *settlers killed* is negative in models 1 and 2 and the differenced measure is negative in model 3. While the level of significance is below the conventional threshold in all three models, this provides additional support for the assertion that the frequency of Israeli repressive activities do not tend to increase in response to targeted attacks against civilians. The finding that the Israeli security forces do increase their level of repression when responding to violent protests, but do not increase their level of repression in response to lethal attacks, provides support for hypothesis 2a.

According to Hypothesis 2b, an increase in the level of lethal attacks against security forces should not increase the overall level of state repression. The results of model 1 and model 2 both indicate that lethal attacks against security forces do not significantly affect the level of military raids or arrests, providing support for hypothesis 2b. This finding is somewhat surprising from the perspective of threat based arguments because lethal attacks against security

forces should be viewed as particularly threatening by the government. If the level of government repression is determined primarily by the level of threat it faces from dissidents, lethal attacks against security forces should significantly increase state repression. That lethal attacks against security forces do not do so, further highlights the need to move beyond a narrow focus on threat perception to explain the dynamics of state repression.

Hypothesis 3 states that violent protests increase the number of government killings more than do lethal attacks. Model 3 indicates that an increase in one standard deviation of violent protests (approximately 38 events) increases government killings by approximately one killing in a given week. While these effects do persist into the following week, the size of the coefficient (0.02) is quite small. Lethal attacks against both against Jewish civilians and Israeli soldiers, in contrast, have no significant effect on the level of government killings. These results lend support to the argument that the severity of repression is affected by the number of participants involved in a particular tactic of dissent rather than the lethality of the violence. These results also provide disconfirming evidence for hypothesis 4, which expects that lethal attacks should increase severe forms of repression such as killings more than violent protests.

Turning to the effects of non-violent protests, there is no significant relationship between peaceful demonstrations and raids or killings, but increases in the number of peaceful protests do significantly increase the frequency of arrests in the same week. One standard deviation increase in peaceful demonstrations (about 7 events) increases the number of arrests in the same week by just over 5 arrests. This finding challenges the view that violent dissent elicits harsher repression than non-violent dissent and provides additional support for the assertion that the number of participants in dissident activities has a significant effect on the state's response. It should be

noted, however, that consistent with extant literature, violent protests have a greater effect on state repression than non-violent demonstrations.

Finally, contrary to expectations *Gaza war 2012* and *Gaza war 2014* were not positive and significant. Instead, *Gaza war 2014* is actually negative and significant in models 2 and 3, while *Gaza war 2012* fails to reach conventional levels of significance in all models. This seems to indicate that the Israeli government reduced its level of repression in the West Bank as it diverted it resources and attention away from the West Bank and toward the fighting in Gaza, but this is an empirical question that requires additional consideration.

Overall, the results indicate that in the West Bank, the frequency and severity of repressive actions are significantly affected by the level of popular participation in violent dissident actions. More specifically, state repression is likely to increase in response to violent protests but not in response to clandestine political violence. The alternative expectation, that governments perpetrate more severe forms of repression in accordance with the severity of dissident violence, is not supported. While the overall frequency and severity of state repression is dependent on a number of structural factors and the level of threat perceived by the government, the relative frequency of repressive activities and their severity is also explained by the particular tactics dissidents employ. Violent protests tend to have a disproportionate effect on state repression because the government has difficulty obtaining enough private information about protestors which it requires to target them selectively. Therefore, even when the severity of violence at protests is relatively low and protests do not represent a significant threat to the regime, they tend to have a disproportionate effect on the level and severity of state repression.

Conclusion:

I have argued that governments are likely to react differently to different forms of violent dissent. More specifically, I have argued that one factor that determines the government's response to dissent is the level of participation in the particular violent tactic employed. Tactics that require a relatively high level of popular participation, such as violent protests, are likely to elicit indiscriminate repression, while tactics that require low levels of popular participation, such as terrorist attacks, elicit more selective repression. I contend that this is because it is more difficult for governments to obtain private information about a large number of protestors than it is to obtain private information about a small number of terrorists and their immediate social network(s). While this argument does not fundamentally challenge the notion that government repression is determined to a significant extent by the level of threat to the regime, it indicates that on its own, threat perception is insufficient for explaining the dynamics of state repression. In fact, a narrow focus on threat perception may lead to incorrect assumptions about the dynamics of state repression, such as that terrorist attacks elicit a harsher government response than do protests marked by relatively low levels of violence.

Overall, this study contributes theoretically to the scholarly understanding of state repression and the study's findings have important implications for practitioners interested in democratization and human rights. With the use of highly granular data capturing tens of thousands of contentious interactions in the West Bank, the time-series analysis of protest and repression in the West Bank (2010 2015) supports the proposition that different dissident tactics elicit different degrees of state repression. In addition, the findings refute the notion that government behavior simply mirrors the behavior of dissidents - that is, more severe forms of violence do not necessarily elicit more severe forms of state repression. In other words, threat

may matter, but so do factors that affect the government's ability to target selectively. This necessitates a reconsideration of the popular assumption that governments often "overreact" to protests marked by low-levels of violence. For example, that Israel has overreacted to the latest wave of violent protests on the Gaza border has become a popular refrain. Without making any statement about the legitimacy or appropriateness of the Israeli response, the theoretical argument presented in this paper suggests that this was not an overreaction. Instead, Israel adopted a strategy of indiscriminate repression because it was unable to obtain sufficient private information about violent protestors given the large number of participants in the demonstrations.

In addition to these theoretical contributions, the findings have implications for policy makers and promoters of popular movements around the world. Understanding the structural conditions within which governments are most likely to abuse civilians is important, but it is insufficient from a policy perspective because structural characteristics are very difficult to change, especially in the short term. Fortunately, the behavior of dissidents and governments is more easily altered. For this reason, it is important to understand how the tactical choices governments and dissidents make affect the other's behavior (Moore, Bakker, and Hill 2011). One important finding here is that violent protests are potentially far more destabilizing than terrorist attacks, despite terrorist attacks receiving far more attention in the media, in popular discourse, and in policy circles. Despite the popular (mis)conception that terrorism is particularly destabilizing, the results of this analysis indicate that this effect may be exaggerated, at least within low-level conflicts. This suggests that while continuing to support popular movements around the globe, policy makers and non-governmental organizations must take great pains to avoid the outbreak of violence during peaceful protest campaigns. While peaceful protest

campaigns are a preferable alternative to the use of violence, they come with a risk: failing to prevent small scale violence at protests can produce devastating backlash effects that have the potential to spiral out of control and drastically increase civilian suffering.

Notes:

[1] The conceptualization of repression I employ here focuses on what some have termed "hard repression" (e.g. Linden and Klandermans 2006). According to this conceptualization, repression refers to government actions that violate people's physical integrity rights such as arrests, military raids, assaults, and killings. In the interest of brevity, therefore, I use the term repression in the remainder of the paper to refer specifically to hard forms of repression.

[2] While most of the literature focuses on factors exogenous to the government such as contextual factors and dissident behavior, some scholars have highlighted endogenous factors such as the ideological orientation of the government (Della Porta 1995, Valentino 2014, 95, 2013).

[3] To differentiate state violence primarily aimed at organized armed groups from state violence focused on dissidents more broadly, I use the terms indiscriminate repression and selective repression as opposed to indiscriminate violence and selective violence when referring to the latter.

[4] This quandary is analogous to what Davenport dubs the ''punishment puzzle.''

[5] Other scholars have also highlighted the impact of state capacity (Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004, Mason and Krane 1989), indiscipline, and institutional culture (Shepherd 2009, Azam 2002) on the government's decision to abuse civilians. I do not dismiss these important factors, but contend that the government's ability to collect private information can better explain variation in the government's coercive activities over a relatively short period of time

because entrenched institutional cultures and the level of state capacity and indiscipline tend to be relatively static.

[6] An alternative explanation is that indiscriminate repression may be carried out because it is strategically expedient, at least in the short term (Lyall 2009, Valentino 2014, Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004, Balcells and Steele 2016, Steele 2017). However, to be succesful, tactical use of indiscriminate violence requires governments to carry out highly lethal campaigns against civilian populations. This is unlikely for two reasons. First, states may be sanctioned by foreign governments and international institutions, international actors may increase support for repressed minorities, and in extreme cases international actors may step in to defend victimized populations (Straus 2015, 48-53). This is particularly true when the violence/repression takes on an ethnic character (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 66). Second, appealing to international standards of appropriate conduct by highlighting the restrained nature of military operations and claiming to behave in accordance with international laws of war helps states position themselves as legitimate international actors worthy of material aid and/or diplomatic assistance (Carey 2010, Ron 1997). This assistance can take the form of direct military aid, economic benefits, international lobbying on behalf of the government, international pressure on opponents to make concessions, and the proposal of favorable settlements during peace negotiations (Stanton 2016, 32). Given the risks associated with severe forms of repression, governments are unlikely to find such policies expedient when they consider the medium and long term consequences and are only likely to engage in such behavior as a last resort.

[7] Analysts have also argued that terrorists groups may refrain from claiming attacks when the perpetrator is caught alive by security forces in order to protect the recruit and provide him

some degree of deniability. This explanation has been used to explain why ISIS has failed to

take credit for a number of high profile attacks in which the perpetrators clearly declared their

loyalty to the group or were directly connected to the organization (Callimachi November 1,

2017). In all of these cases, however, the government in question did not have any trouble

linking the attacker with ISIS.

[8] Consistent with research indicating that the state treats minorities more harshly than others

(White 1999, Rørbæk and Knudsen 2015, Maney 2016), the Israeli government does not

demolish the homes of Jews who attack Arab civilians.

[9] It should be noted that that while I focus on dissident – state interactions in this study, I

acknowledge that this does not capture all political violence in the West Bank. Most notably,

Jewish settlers have also engaged in violence against the Palestinian population and on rare

occasions against the state. Settlers, however, are outside of the scope of the current analysis

because they are not dissidents in the sense that they are not challenging the regime. Whether

the overall patterns of repression against the Jewish population follow the same patterns as

repression targeting Palestinians is an empirical question which should be addressed in future

work.

[10] Though Israel did participate in limited ethnic cleansing campaigns in its early history (Pappe

2007, Morris 2004), Israel relies on less severe forms of repression today (Ron 2003).

[11] Bhavnani, Miodownik, and Choi (2010) do study Israeli repression quantitatively, but they

focus on the relationship between territorial control and the use of selective versus

indiscriminate violence. It should also be noted that scholars have examined Israeli state

repression qualitatively (e.g. Ron 1997, 2000, 2003).

[12] Scholars who have moved beyond a dichotomous approach to repression often study differences between different levels of force (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003). For instance, Wisler and Giugni (1999) compare the use of three levels of force: police presence, "legalistic policing," and the use of rubber bullets, while White (1999) examines the internment of social movement activists and the number of weapons seized. I build on that approach in my own analysis.

[13] The PLO Negotiations Affairs Department (NAD) was established in 1994 in Gaza in order to follow up on the implementation of the Interim Agreement signed between Israel and the PLO. The Daily Situation Reports are produced by the Palestinian Monitoring Group (PMG), an inter-agency group of Palestinian civilian ministries and security agencies, under the auspices of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Daily reports are available via the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO website: http://www.nad-plo.org/index.php

[14] If a Palestinians was killed as a result of a car accident, the casualty were not included in the measure.

[15] Data obtained using "correlate" command using STATA 15 software.

[16] It should also be noted here that some of the choices of variables have been influenced by the authors experience as a combat soldier in the Israeli military between 2006 and 2009. The majority of the operational portion of the author's military service was spent in both Jewish and Palestinian sections of the West Bank.

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