

Terrorism in the US

Questions:

(Regarding data from 1970-1997):

- Where is terrorism most concentrated in the U.S?
- When has terrorism occurred most frequently?
- What kind of attacks occur most often?
- How many deaths are usually involved in terrorist attacks?
- What are frequent motivations of terrorism during certain time periods?

Visualization features:

- Can visually see on map where terrorists attacks occur using zoom in and drag features
- Interactive time slider allows users to isolate terrorist attacks per year
 - Moving time slider allows users to view change in distribution of terrorist attacks over time
 - When presentation is first initialized, slider default setting is 'All', which shows all attacks at once, allow user to get an overview
- Types of attacks are color coded
 - Large clusters of the same color indicate a certain type of attack occurring frequently in a certain area
- Number of deaths per attack are encoded in radius size
- Clicking on an attack circle will reveal the city, the type of the target(s), and a summary of the attack (if provided), which may include identifying information about the perpetrators and victims, motivations, and other details.

Answers:

- Terrorism is heavily concentrated in urban centers. However the number of deaths from the attack is not heavily influenced by geographic location.
- Terrorism occurred most frequently in the early 1970's, due to frequent protest bombings and nearly a dozen radical underground groups. Terrorism declined heavily in the 90's, possibly due to the Clinton era's tightening of crime control.
- Bombings/Explosions occurred most often. It was surprising that Armed Assault was not the most common attack, but perhaps armed assault attacks are more constrained to personal reasons and robberies rather than to terrorism or violence for political means. Our surprise may also be influenced by the recent influx of school shootings and our distance from the protest bombings that dominated the early 70's.
- The vast majority of attacks actually involve 0 deaths. Less than 1% involve more than 3.
- We were surprised to find that in the 1980's, the vast majority of attacks were motivated by racism, which is evidence for the continuing persistence of this ideology.