

Are we more cannibalistic under autocracies?

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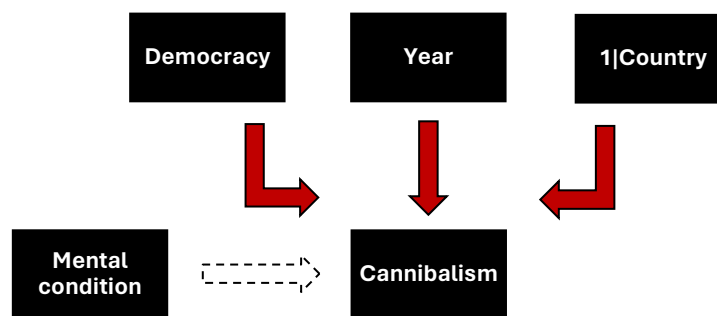
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Date: April 2nd, 2024

1. Introduction

While manually cleaning a dataset about people who have perpetrated cannibalism from the last century until 2019, I noticed that the cases of cannibalism in Russian-speaking countries all took place under the USSR. Although this could be explained by the longevity and area of the state, I wondered if a regime's authoritarianism was likely to foster cannibalism.

Does a country's regime have an influence on cannibalism?



We anticipate that if this is the case, we should observe:

- **Prediction:** a positive influence of autocracy on cannibalism.

2. Data

Three datasets are used in this analysis. The first one, the Anckar-Fredriksson dataset (from Anckar, C., & Fredriksson, C. (2019). Classifying political regimes 1800–2016: a typology and a new dataset. *European Political Science*), makes yearly observations covering the timespan 1800-2016 about all countries that have been independent since the Second World War, such as their classification as democracies or autocracies (see Figure 1. A). The second and the third datasets are about offenders and victims implicated in cases of cannibalism based on newspapers, books and Internet sources (from Oostland & Brecht (2020), *Kin-avoidance in Cannibalistic Homicide*, Frontiers in Psychology), and offer data such as the cannibal's country (see Figure 1. B) or the year of the murder of the victim (see Figure 1. C).

3. Methods

To test the prediction, we performed a mixed effects logistic regression comparing cannibalism depending on whether the regime is democratic or autocratic and the year of the

murder, that are fixed effects, and the country of the cannibal, which appears to be a random effect.

4. Results (with a mixed effects logistic regression, using R)

It seems that cannibalism is slightly more likely to happen in democracies than in autocracies ($\beta = 0.003668$). However, this is not significant ($p = 0.737$).

5. Conclusion

Our results are not significant enough to conclude on the relationship between autocracy and cannibalism.

It should be noted that this study does not focus on individual factors. Other factors could be taken into account such as the mental condition of the offender.

