Understanding Trends in Global Terrorism

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Contents

1 Abstract

2 Introduction

Terrorism is vast and complicated, being caused and provoked by numerous reasons. This exploratory study aims to understand broad trends in global and country specific reigens. Utilising the 'Global Terrorism Database' from 'kaggle' consisting of 'More than 150,000 terrorist attacks worldwide' from 1970 to 2015 we aim to understand trends in countries with high rates of terrorism, methods of attacks, understanding rates of success in terror attacks and by utilising a count of both total and terrorism specific articles produced by The New York Times newspaper we aim to answer if the recent influx of news articles due to the new accessibility of news has an effect on terrorism trends in America.

3 Background

4 Method

4.1 Data

The database used in this investigation comes from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (START, 2016) with 156,749 listings of successful and failed terrorist attacks around the world between 1970 and 2015. With additionally 137 variables including date, country, latitude/longitude, number of perpetrators, number of deaths as a result of the attack, number of injuries, method of attack (bombing, armed assault, etc.) as well as many others. Due to the extensive nature of the database, this investigation aims to understand trends in a select number of these variables. These variables include attack types, deaths, number of attacks, number of successful attacks, and country of attack. In order to understand country specific and global trends in terrorism, the data will be explored not only as a whole, but as a series of subsets of the GTD grouped by country as well as a series of country clusters.

4.2 Analysis

The methods used to analyse the GTD involved for the most part an analysis of a number of time series'. In order to understand trends of not only single countries, but groups of countries as well as terrorism on a global scale, the groups and countries used were determined in the following way. The country clusters investigated were made up of three groups, typically Western and first world countries (United States, Canada, Australia, France, Finland, Russia, etc.), the six countries with the overall highest number of deaths due to terrorist activity between 1970 and 2015 (which is determined by data from the GTD), and a more in depth look solely at trends in the United States.

All three groups are investigated with regard to deaths due to terrorist activity, number of attacks, type of attack and rate of success for a given attack.

However the United States is not only subject to investigation into these variables, but using data from the *New York Times*, investigated with regard to possible relationships between the media's coverage of terrorism and rates of attacks and methods of attacks.

5 Results

The results produced as outlined by the *Methods* section are below grouped by the variable investigated. These sections include investigation into:

- The relationship between *New York Times* terrorism coverage and United States related terrorism activity.

- Trends in method of attack in numerous geographical region

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5.1 Terrorism coverage in the United States news data

5.2 Method of Attack

5.3 Terrorism trends over time

5.4 Rates of success in terrorist attacks

6 Discussion

6.1 Terrorism coverage in United States news data

The aim in this section is to Explore the relationship between Terrorist attacks, deaths and media coverage of attacks in the United States. In **section**, Figure **newyourk times articles mentioning terrorism by month**, the proportion of terrorism articles to total articles each month has a a positive linear regression, showing that through the 45 from 1970 to 2015, more articles about terrorism is being written each month. From 1970 to September 2001 this linear regression is followed closely without much deviation but in in September, 2001 there is a large spike, where the ratio peaked *VALUE*, this was the month of *911*, where there was a fatality count of *2997* people. Soon after this month the ratio slowly decreased until it settled onto the linear regression line, following it again with little deviation.

6.2 Terrorism coverage in the United States news data

6.3 Methods of Attack

6.4 Terrorism trends over time

6.5 Rates of success in terrorist attacks

As shown in the results section *.*, the rates of success of terrorist attacks do not vary greatly between regions.

7 Conclusion

References

[1] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terror-
    ism (START). (2016). *Global Terrorism Database*[Data file]. Retrieved from
    https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd