

Indiscriminate Violence and Insurgency

In this exercise, we analyze the relationship between indiscriminate violence and insurgent attacks using data about Russian artillery fire in Chechnya from 2000 to 2005.

This exercise is based on: Lyall, J. 2009. “Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks?: Evidence from Chechnya.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331–62.

Some believe that indiscriminate violence increases insurgent attacks by creating more cooperative relationships between citizens and insurgents. Others believe that indiscriminate violence can be effective in suppressing insurgents’ activities. The names and descriptions of variables in the data file `chechen.csv` are

Name	Description
<code>village</code>	Name of Chechnya village
<code>groznyy</code>	Variable indicating whether a village is in Groznyy (equal to 1) or not (equal to 0)
<code>fire</code>	Whether Russians struck a village with artillery fire (equal to 1) or not (equal to 0)
<code>deaths</code>	Estimated number of individuals killed during Russian artillery fire
<code>preattack</code>	The number of insurgent attacks before Russian artillery fire
<code>postattack</code>	The number of insurgent attacks after Russian artillery fire

Question 1

How many villages were and were not attacked by Russians? Give the overall breakdown.

Question 2

Did Russian artillery result in a greater number of deaths in Groznyy compared to the villages outside of Groznyy? Conduct the comparison in terms of the mean and median.

Question 3

Compare the average number of insurgent attacks after Russian fire for villages hit by artillery fire and those that were not hit. Also, compare the quartiles. Would you conclude that indiscriminate violence reduces insurgent attacks? Why or why not?

Question 4

What is the difference in the average number of insurgent attacks before Russian artillery fire between the villages that were hit by artillery fire and those that were not? What does this tell you about the validity of comparison behind the identification strategy used for the previous question?

Question 5

Create a new variable called `diffattack` by calculating the difference in the number of insurgent attacks before and after the Russian artillery fire. Among the villages shelled by Russians, did the number of insurgent attacks increase after the artillery fire? Give a substantive interpretation of the result.

Question 6

Compute the mean difference in the `diffattack` variable between villages shelled and villages not shelled. Does this analysis support the claim that indiscriminate violence reduces insurgency attacks? Is the validity of this analysis improved over the analyses you conducted in the previous questions? Why or why not? Specifically, explain what additional factor this analysis addresses when compared to the analyses conducted in the previous questions.