Public Abstract

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Contrary to conventional wisdom, the structural determinants of transnational and domestic terrorism are not necessarily synonymous. A domestic terrorism event population was derived by applying definitional criteria to the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database. Economic, political, systemic, and social structural determinants were tested with a negative binomial regression on 194 states between 1970 and 2010. Results suggested an inverse U relationship between wealth and the incidence of terrorism. Interestingly, short term economic growth had the opposite effect. It depressed terrorism. Political regimes were categorized into three different types - autocracies, anocracies, or democracies. Autocracies were the least susceptible to terrorism. Anocracy was the regime type most conducive to terrorism. Democratic regimes occupied the middle space. They suffered more terrorism than dictatorships but less than anocratic regimes. Cold War bipolarity systemically encouraged terrorism compared to the unipolarity of the post-Cold War era, suggesting superpower rivalry manifested in more terrorist violence. Social tension effects varied depending on type. Linguistic fractionalization increased the incidence of violence. Paradoxically, ethnic fractionalization impeded terrorism. Religious fractionalization had little impact on terrorism. Among control variables, population and a history of terrorism were directly related to terrorism. Mountain terrain and urbanization were not significantly related to it.