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# FREQUENCY OF SUFFERING: WHAT TYPE OF POLITICAL REGIME IS MORE PRONE TO TERRORISM

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#### **Abstract**

Despite the political importance of the topic there is no common view what terrorism is. Nevertheless researchers ask why some countries are more terrorized than the others? Some argue that democracy is less prone to terrorism because it provides a huge variety of peaceful ways to implement one's political interest while the others insist that dictatorships suffer from terrorist attacks less frequently thanks to the opportunity to violate citizens' rights. The study shows that both points of view can be proved and refuted depending on the way we measure the political regime. Regression model based on the "Freedom House" data confirms that democracies suffer from terrorism less often, while the model based on the "Polity IV" data refutes it. To clarify these controversial results we compare the counterterrorist strategies of France and Russia. The comparison shows that democracy is able to reduce domestic terrorism, but it still suffers from international one. At the same time an authoritarian regime suffers generally from domestic attacks and it is also unable to eliminate the threat of international terrorism.

**Keywords:** terrorism; domestic terrorism; international terrorism; frequency of terrorist attacks; political regime; democracy; authoritarianism.

### Introduction

In 2016 the "war on terror" claimed by the United States celebrated its 15 anniversary. Nevertheless we still have no evidences of the victory of international antiterrorist forces. Moreover, migrant crisis caused by the war, tremendous terroristic attacks in Europe, spreading of religious extremism, all these factors reveal the defeat of the international coalition.

"War on terrorism" is going on not just in the battlefield, but also by "the fight for hearts and minds". The low efficiency of such propagandist campaigns has shown that solving security problems demands the eradication of key reasons of radicalization such as poverty, social inequality etc. This attitude to solving security problems was formulated by Johan Galtung (Galtung, 1969). He proposed that a "negative peace" considered as the absence of war should be differentiated from a "positive peace", which means that an individual doesn't suffer from "structural violence" (hunger, socio-economic inequality, discrimination etc). This idea has produced the concept of "security—development nexus".

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Opponents of the nexus criticize this approach for the uncertainty of key concepts and political engagement. They note that linking of security and development forms an impression that transformations in these spheres happen in parallel, and as a consequence that political interventions in one sphere will impact directly on another one (Tschirgi et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, this idea has become the key point of the US counter terroristic strategy: the democracy is considered to be the guarantee of security. That's why the question about the connection between the type of the political regime and the efficiency of countering the terrorist threat is relevant nowadays.

## The nature of terrorism

The term "terrorism" has no widely-recognized definition either in scientific or in political discussion. a huge political weight of the term provides a lot of troubles in defining what terrorism is. Disagreement on this topic is explained by the intention of some sovereign states to use terrorist groups as a tool of their foreign policy implementation (Resolution 49/60, 1995).

On the other hand, political scientists have no common view on the topic because of the changes of the terrorism nature. It is pretty obvious that the attempt to kill the emperor Alexander II is not the same that the London subway bombing, but both cases are terrorist attacks. In order to separate such incidents some scholars distinguish "old" (or "traditional") and "new" terrorism (Laqueur, 1999; Lesser et al., 1999; Aubrey, 2004).

Old terrorism is described as the rational one (Guelke, 1998). It had an evident purpose (gaining independence for the region or changing the ruler, for example) and urge for wide public support as it was an electoral competition (Guelke, 1998; Simon & Benjamin, 2000). Instead of it the new terrorism is aimed on the mass intimidation and has no ultimate goal (Hoffman, 1995; Morgan, 2004).

But this point of view is quite questionable. For example, the "new terrorists" proclaim their aims such as the destruction of Zionist state or the overthrow of the global Western dictatorship (Pelletier, 2016; Vernikke, 2015; Fedorchenko, 2015), just these aims are not considered to be the ultimate goals because of their unattainability (Morgan, 2004). At the same time "traditional terrorism" was also using the techniques of mass destruction such as bombing so the old terrorists' actions were also fear-causing.

Considering that it is possible to find out some key features of the terrorism independently from the transformation of its nature or the disagreement of the different states approaches. Basically terrorism is described as "the use of force or the threat of the use of force" from a non-state actor (Alexander, 1979; Enders & Sandler, 1999; Li, 2005; Hoffman, 2006; Abdurahmanov, 2009; Dikaev, 2006; Ustinov, 2002). It should be politically motivated and aimed to the opponent's intimidation (Hoffman, 2006; Lesser, et al., 1999; Aubrey, 2004; Abdurahmanov, 2009; Dikaev, 2006; Ustinov, 2002).

In regard to the connection between the political regime type and the opportunity to fight terrorism there are two explanatory approaches. The first one is based upon the

non-ruling actors' interests. It argues that democracy is less prone to terrorism because it gives a huge variety of non-violent ways to imlement one's interest. When anyone has the right to gain power legally, the violent way becomes senseless (Stepanov, 2000). In this way democracy is supposed to suffer from terrorist attacks less often than authoritarian regimes thanks to the freedom of political competition.

The second approach evaluates regimes' ability to detect and prevent terrorist attacks. It is based on the idea that different mechanisms of control over the population used by authoritarian regimes let them detect some terrorist activity before the attack would be committed. Democratic regimes have no opportunity to do that as far as they are bounded by the necessity to respect political rights and civil liberties of their citizens. Thus the indifference of dictatorships to civil liberties protection makes them less prone to terrorism than the democratic regimes (Wilkinson, 2006).

# **Data description**

These hypotheses were tested by the series of negative binomial regressions. The choice of this method is caused by the sort of the data we use. The dependent variable in every model is the number of terrorist attacks in a country per year. So the dependent variable presents the frequency of the event and it varies excessively. The negative binomial model allows to avoid statistical mistakes caused by such nature of the data (Long & Freese, 2001).

The data source for the dependent variable is the "Global Terrorism Database". The GTD is compiled by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the Maryland University (USA). It is the most comprehensive database on terrorist incidents, as it is based on a wide range of open sources: articles in the media, electronic news archives, and to a lesser extent on legal documents. The use of the "Global Terrorism Database" enables to avoid the problem of incomplete and biased official state reports on the level of terrorism in the country. The database covers all cases of domestic and international terrorism for the period from 1970 to 2015.

The GTD defines a terrorist attack as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation" (Global Terrorism Database..., 2016). That means to be included in the data the incident must be violent, intentional and non-governmental.

Considering the internal heterogeneity of terrorism we have tested the general number of terrorist attacks as well as the frequency of the incidents of domestic terrorism and the incidents of the international one.

In order to separate domestic and international attacks we compare the country where the incident occurred and the victim's nationality. In case of coincidence, the attack is considered to be domestic, and in the case the nationality of the victim does not coincide with the country of the attack the incident is marked an international one (Eubank & Weinberg, 2001). Taking into account that an act of terrorism is considered international if it is committed in the territory of a foreign state, by a citizen of a foreign

state or against foreign citizens (objects) (Li, 2005), a more consistent operationalization would also include the nationality of the terrorist, but these data are not contained in the database used. Thus, the operationalization through the nationality of the victim will make it possible to include in international terrorist attacks such cases as attacks on embassies and diplomats, tourists or foreign companies, as well as attacks on citizens of different states (hijacking of aircraft, attacks on large infrastructure and business facilities etc.). But some part of the international terrorist attacks may be lost, for example, attacks committed by Arab citizens (primarily Palestinians) against Jews in Israel. Thus, the attack on the night club "Stage" in Tel Aviv is not included into international terrorist attacks, despite the fact that the attack was committed by a Palestinian terrorist organization "Islamic Jihad" with the support of the Lebanese terrorist organization "Hezbollah", since all the victims were Israelis (Lenta.ru, 2005).

An independent variable is the type of the political regime classified according to the ratings of "Polity IV" and "Freedom House". These ratings were chosen thanks to their ability to reflect those sides of a political regime which are supposed to be meaningful for the level of terrorist activity. The "Freedom House" index evaluates the criterion of realization of political rights and civil liberties which is important for the terrorism detection approach. In its turn, the "Polity IV" index considers the formal institutional parameters of the regime, such as access to political participation and competitiveness of the political field, i.e. it allows to check the hypothesis about democracy success.

Two key parameters that determine the functioning of society were chosen to be control variables. First of all, that is a population indicator (logarithm), which is expected to have a positive impact on the frequency of terrorist attacks, as far as a large population assumes a higher frequency of any human-induced events.

The second control variable is the level of GDP in USA dollars as far as the adepts of "security-development nexus" ague that economy matters for security (Bartenev, 2015). The GDP, on the one hand, enables us to take into account the country's commonwealth, on the other hand, it doesn't demand for a deep search (the data exist for a huge period of time and for almost every country).

Both control indicators are taken from the World Bank data.

Geographical factors and the percentage of Muslim population are not used as control variables despite of their popularity in terrorism researches (Piazza, 2006; Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011), as they will show a positive impact on the whole sample due to key outliers-Afghanistan (1156 terrorist attacks in 2013, 1599—in 2014, 1722—in 2015), Iraq (1163 terrorist attacks in 2010, 1238—in 2011, 1267—in 2012, 2505—in 2013, 3376—in 2014, 2418-in 2015) and Pakistan (1431 terrorist attacks in 2012, 1958—in 2013, 1834—in 2014). A significant excess of the average number of terrorist attacks demonstrated by these cases will distort the result for the entire model.

The research covers the period of 1972–2015 because of the available data.

## **Regression model**

Regression model using «Polity IV» rating as an independent variable shows that a higher level of democracy contributes to a greater number of terrorist attacks, thus it refutes the theoretical idea that democracies are less prone to terrorism thanks to the institutionalization of contesting mechanisms, open access to political participation and the presence of real political competition. On the contrary, dictatorships that don't provide free political competition suffer from the terrorist attacks less often. Such results are fair irrespective of the sort of terrorism we are talking about—domestic or international one.

Dependence of the number of terrorist attacks on the type of political regime according to "Freedom House" rating Dependence of the number of terrorist attacks on the type of political regime according to "Polity IV" rating

	Dependent variable:		Dependent variable:
	count	_	count
factor(Status)1	-0.375*** (0.085)	factor(polity)1	0.681*** (0.097)
factor(Status)2	-0.954*** (0.097)	factor(polity)2	0.527*** (0.093)
log(population)	0.587*** (0.032)	log(population)	0.635*** (0.030)
log(GDP)	0.014 (0.024)	log(GDP)	-0.085*** (0.023)
Constant	-6.052*** (0.377)	Constant	-5.490*** (0.378)
Observations Log Likelihood theta Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,353 -10,164.020 0.459*** (0.011) 20,338.030	Observations Log Likelihood theta Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,317 -9,928.088 0.461**** (0.012) 19,866.180
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	Note: *	p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Pic.1. Dependence of the number of terrorist attacks on the type of political regime.

In this case autocracies are expected to be less prone to terrorism thanks to the indifference to human rights protection that means they overwatch every suspicious element. But the model using "Freedom House" rating shows that authoritarian regimes are more likely to suffer from both domestic and international terrorist attacks than the democratic one.

This discordance in regression results may be explained by the difference of ratings. It is reasonable to presuppose that the countries whose regimes are difficult to evaluate (i.e. they have different status in different ratings) are more prone to terrorism. Probably, these countries are the outliers of the dependent variable, so labeling them as democracies or autocracies influences the general result of the regression.

As it was said earlier, the key outliers are three countries of the Middle East region: Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. It is quite demonstrative that the tremendous rise of the frequency of terrorist attacks in these countries begins in 2012, the year after Arab spring. In its essence the Arab spring was the demonstration of mass disagreement with rulers' actions and more widely with current political regimes. In some countries of the region it brought the revolutionary changes (Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen), in other countries it led to the civil wars (Libya and Syria), in the rest it took the form of the mass protest actions which could provide the steps towards democratization or could not. So the estimation of political regimes of these countries by different ratings may vary significantly.

The most prominent example is the case of the Iraq Republic. From the moment of the rating's appearance and to the present day, "Freedom House" defines the Iraqi political regime as authoritarian. At the same time, "Polity IV" reports that in 2010 the process of democratization was started in the Iraq Republic and in 2014 the rating evaluated Iraq as a democratic political regime. So the whole amount of terrorist attacks Iraq has suffered since 2014 was subscribed to democracies by "Polity IV" and to autocracies by "Freedom House".

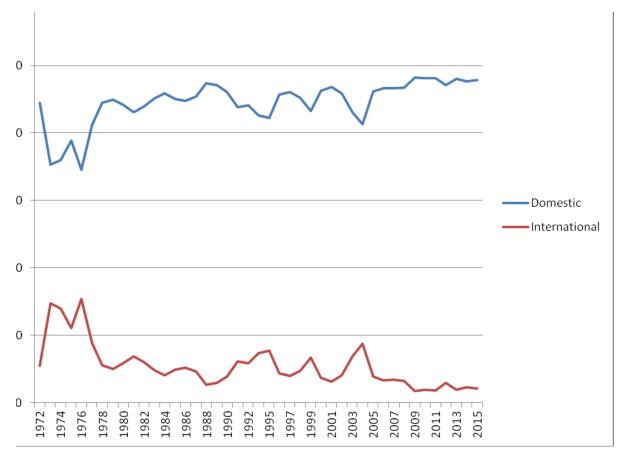
The cases of Afghanistan and Pakistan provide us with the same data, but the estimation gap is not so overwhelming: different ratings don't put them on the opposite poles of the regime's specter but on the neighboring categories. For example, "Polity IV" gives over 1000 Pakistani incidents which took place in 2015 to democracies, while "Freedom House" refers them to anocracies.

Thus, the countries whose type of the political regime is problematic to define indeed suffer from the enormous number of terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, the rise of the number of terrorist attacks after 2011 is a general trend, i.e. the regime changes caused by the huge wave of the Arab spring do not contribute directly to the world-wide terrorism intensification. The only way the Arab spring would be able to do that is providing the ground for international terrorism.

The typology of terrorism on the basis of the national-territorial factor was first proposed by G. Deniker. He identified three types of terrorism: domestic (the perpetrator and the victim are citizens of the state in which the attack is committed), transnational (the perpetrator and the victim are citizens of the same state, but the attack takes place on the territory of a foreign state) and international (the perpetrator and the victim are citizens of different states and the attack does not take place in the territory of the home-state of perpetrator) (Deniker, 1982).

In modern studies, the border between transnational and international terrorism is often blurred. An act of terrorism is considered to be international if it is committed in the territory of a foreign state, by a citizen of a foreign state or against foreign

citizens (objects) (Li, 2005). Thus, international terrorism presupposes that any two elements of the act have different national affiliation.



Pic.2. Global tendency of the frequency of domestic and international terrorist attacks

Looking at the ratio of domestic and international terrorist attacks we can see the share of the international ones is rather small and it doesn't demonstrate a strict tendency to rise. Thus, the Middle East region can be suffering from the rise of domestic terrorism caused by the Arab spring, i.e. by the regime instability, but why does the whole world suffer from domestic terrorism so much?

# Case study

To clarify all these discrepancies we compare the cases of a typical modern democracy and modern authoritarianism—France and Russia—in their counterterrorist activity. To do that we use the legal acts of the Russian Federation and the Republic of France, which are necessary to evaluate the counter-terrorism strategies of different types of regimes. They make it possible to identify the approaches of different regimes to the problem of the spread of terrorism and counter-terrorism, demonstrating a set of counter-terrorism measures and ways to implement them. This type of source reflects only the formal side of the counter-terrorism activity, therefore it is required to use the additional data gained from media and expert assessments.

There are a number of similar incentives for the emergence of domestic terrorism in France and Russia. Both countries have separatist regions, which may serve as

an incentive for promotion of "traditional" terrorism, often linked to national liberation movements (Abadie, 2006; Blomberg and Hess, 2008; Drakos and Gofas, 2006; Piazza J.A., 2006; 2008; Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011). In addition, the population of the countries is multi-confessional, which may also be the cause of internal conflicts that provoke terrorism (Abadie, 2006; Blomberg and Hess, 2008; Piazza, 2006; 2008; Gassebner, 2011). A significant but not dominant share of believers is represented by Muslims: 5–6% in Russia, 8% in France (Kazancev, 2016).

In the context of international terrorism, these states are leaders among European countries in the number of citizens recruited by the ISIS (Kazancev, 2016). Despite the growing threat of being a victim of an international terrorist attack which is held in revenge, both countries have retained military contingents fighting terrorists in Syria and Iraq as part of the international coalition. Nevertheless no stable Russian authoritarianism or French consolidated democracy guarantees protection from terrorism. During the period of 1992–2015 (after the emergence of Russia as an independent state), the Russian Federation experienced 1958 terrorist attacks in total numbers (14 terrorist attacks per million people). France in the same period of time suffered from 1094 terrorist attacks (16 terrorist attacks per million people).

Meanwhile the French government conducts the fight with terrorism with the use of democratic mechanisms. The set of counter-terrorism measures adopted in 2016 are widely discussed and are being implemented under the strict civilian control (De Montety, 2016). An important point of the French counter-terrorist strategy is an accent on the information war with radicalization through the propaganda of moderate Islam and upholding the values of a secular state. The strategy also establishes the ways to control budget expenditures on the counterterrorism from the civil society (Plan d'action..., 2016).

Unlike the French counter-terrorism strategy, the Russian document does not pay attention to the deep-rooted association of terrorism with Islam and does not include measures to combat such prejudice. Likewise, the Russian counter-terrorism strategy does not reflect any attempts to suppress the financing of Islamic terrorism through religious institutions (Концепция противодействия терроризму..., 2009). This approach is largely caused by the need to balance between the interests of national security and the interests of regional elites. The share of international terrorist attacks in the total number of terrorist attacks in Russia is about 2% (Global Terrorism Database..., 2016), i.e. most of the attacks are organized and implemented by internal actors against internal targets.

The comparison of these cases shows that the logic of the functioning of a democratic and authoritarian regimes in the fight against the terrorist threat varies considerably precisely because of the regime characteristics. The democratic regime implements it through the collaboration of the state and society, where the people control the effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures. The authoritarian regime's counter-terrorism strategy includes only restrictive measures, which are conducted without civil control.

As a result, the Russian case demonstrates the failure of authoritarian regimes in countering domestic terrorism. Such incidents constitute an absolute majority in the total number of terrorist attacks suffered by the Russian Federation, and their share is

not decreasing. In France, on the contrary, in the overall structure of terrorist attacks, the share of domestic terrorism is decreasing, and terrorist attacks that bring mass victims are of international nature (Global Terrorism Database..., 2016). Thus, the French democratic regime is ineffective in countering international terrorism, as well as the authoritarian Russian regime, but consolidated democracy allows to reduce the activity of domestic terrorism, while authoritarian regimes are unable to achieve this goal.

## **Conclusions**

Thereby there is no robust confirmation of the higher effectiveness of some type of political regime in fighting terrorist threat. Statistical analysis shows the great impact of the way we measure the political regime type on the results of the research irrespective of the sort of terrorism. As far as using "Polity IV" measurement proves that authoritarian regimes suffer from terrorist attacks of any type less often than democratic regimes the regression model with "Freedom House" data shows that authoritarian regimes suffer from terrorist attacks of any type more often than democratic regimes.

That could be caused by assigning of questionable regimes which means they have the highest level of terrorist activity. That is fair enough for outliers—the countries with the biggest number of terrorist attacks have different status in "Polity IV" and "Freedom House" ratings. But even without them the regression results stay the same: using "Polity IV" measurement proves that authoritarian regimes suffer from terrorist attacks of any type less often than democratic regimes while the regression model with "Freedom House" data shows that authoritarian regimes suffer from terrorism more often than democratic regimes.

Moreover, typical for outliers raising of the number of the incidents of terrorism since 2012 takes place not only in the Middle East countries. Despite the case of Iraq shows conventional logic (the number of terrorist attacks raises since the moment of the USA intervention and becomes extremely big with the Arab Spring coming) it can't serve a universal explanation while the tendency of raising of the terrorist attacks frequency is global. The greatest part of all terrorist attacks in the world are the incidents of domestic terrorism, i.e. the symbolic weight of international terrorism is much higher than its real threat.

On the other hand, the comparative analysis of counter-terrorist strategies of the democratic and authoritarian regimes provides the evidence that democracy enables to reduce the frequency of the domestic terrorist attacks and authoritarian regimes are unable to do that. At the same time, both types of the regimes suffer from international terrorism with almost equal frequency.

Taking into account all these discrepancies it seems to be meaningful to divide more precisely the types of political regimes. Probably, if we differentiate between various types of authoritarianism it would allow to smash the categories of "anocracies" or "partly free" countries and redistribute terrorist incidents. Moreover, such characteristics of authoritarian regimes as patron-client links and police autonomy may be also significant for counter-terrorism, but they are not reflected in popular ratings.

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# ЧАСТОТА СТРАДАНИЙ: ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ РАЖИМЫ КАКОГО ТИПА ЧАЩЕ ПОДВЕРГАЮТСЯ ТЕРРАКТАМ?

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#### Аннотация

Несмотря на политическую значимость проблемы, не существует единого мнения на счет того, что есть терроризм. Тем не менее, исследователи задаются вопросом о том, почему одни страны страдают от терактов чаще других? Одни исследователи полагают, что демократия менее подвержена террористическим атакам, поскольку предоставляет широкий спектр возможностей мирной реализации политических интересов, тогда как другие утверждают, что автократии реже страдают от терактов благодаря возможности нарушать права и свободы своих граждан. Проведенное исследование показало, что каждую из этих точек зрения можно подтвердить и опровергнуть в зависимости от того, каким образом измерить политический режим. Регрессионная модель, использующая данные рейтинга "Freedom House" подтверждает, что демократии реже страдают от терактов, тогда как модель, использующая рейтинг "Polity IV", опровергает это. Чтобы прояснить противоречие результатов регрессии, мы сравнили контртеррористические стратегии Франции и России. Сравнительный анализ продемонстрировал, что демократия способна содействовать снижению уровня внутреннего терроризма, но все же страдает от международных терактов. В то же время авторитарный режим чаще всего страдает от внутреннего терроризма и также не способен сократить угрозу международных терактов.

**Ключевые слова:** терроризм; внутренний терроризм; международный терроризм; частота террористических атак; политический режим; демократия; авторитаризм.