

Terrorism: A Study in Scarlet

Definitions of Terrorism—Part B (Adjusted)
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Thus far, you have searched JSTOR (and/or its ilk) for five (5) quantitative articles that focus on terrorism and copied the definition of terrorism the author used. Hopefully you have seen that this field is filled, rife, and replete with various definitions of terrorism.

In order to allow findings from different studies to build on each other, the studies must be (effectively) commensurate. To be absolutely commensurate, the definitions for terrorism must be the same. To be *effectively* commensurate, the different definitions must describe the same events. Thus far you have discovered that your five research papers are not absolutely commensurate. The second part will allow you to determine if they are essentially commensurate.

The Assignment

Your first step is to choose one of the definitions you uncovered in your brief perusal of the quantitative literature on terrorism—hopefully the best of the lot. Next, on the course website, download the csv file that contains descriptions (and dates) of every death in the Irish Troubles (from 1969 until 2002). Now, comb through the deaths for your three years and determine which ones are terrorism according to the definition you chose. In the column headed “Terrorism,” mark the numeral ‘1’ if the event is a terrorist event according to your definition and ‘0’ if it does not.

Sound simple? Hopefully, it will be. If you run into troubles with determining the terroristic nature of the event, you may wish to make it ‘-99’ to indicate that you do not know how to code it.

By the due date (January 28), you need to email me the csv file containing your data. Name this file *yourusername.csv* (ojf38491.csv for me). Bring to class a document that provides the following information: total number of deaths due to terrorists for each of your *three* years and the total number of deaths due to terrorism for your three years together. Which are your three years? It depends on the last digit of your username. If your username is ojf38491, you will do the years 1971, 1981, and 1991. If your username is bbj29439, you will do years 1979, 1989, and 1999.