

Chapter 11. Selectorate Theory, Democracy, and Terrorism: Null Results

Abstract

Chapter 11 again turns to Morrow et al.'s (2008) selectorate theory and empirical model in order to examine a controversial issue: do democracies suffer a higher or lower level of terrorist attacks than nondemocracies? Following Morrow et al.'s theoretical arguments, both the size of the winning coalition (W) and the institutional constraints on the chief executive are hypothesized to reduce the number of terrorist attacks. For hypothesis testing, a new dataset is created for 158 countries during the period from 1970 to 2000. The basic results show that W is negatively associated with terrorism, while executive constraints are positively related. However, when regional differences, country, and year fixed-effects are accounted for, the dampening effect of W disappears while the counterintuitive effect of executive constraints remains the same. Therefore, this chapter concludes that democratic countries with these two institutional features are generally less successful in their efforts to deter terrorist activity.