



The Effectiveness of Counterterrorism in Spain: An Analysis of State Tactics to Deter ETA Violence



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What is ETA?

ETA, or Euzkadi ta Askatasuna, is a terrorist organization located in the Basque Country of Northern Spain. Founded in the late 1950s, ETA was created as a result of the extreme cultural and civil oppression of the Franco dictatorship. Financially, ETA supports itself through various criminal activities such as robberies, kidnappings, extortion, and even through donations from sympathizers. ETA's primary goal is independence of the Basque Country from Spain.

Project Objectives

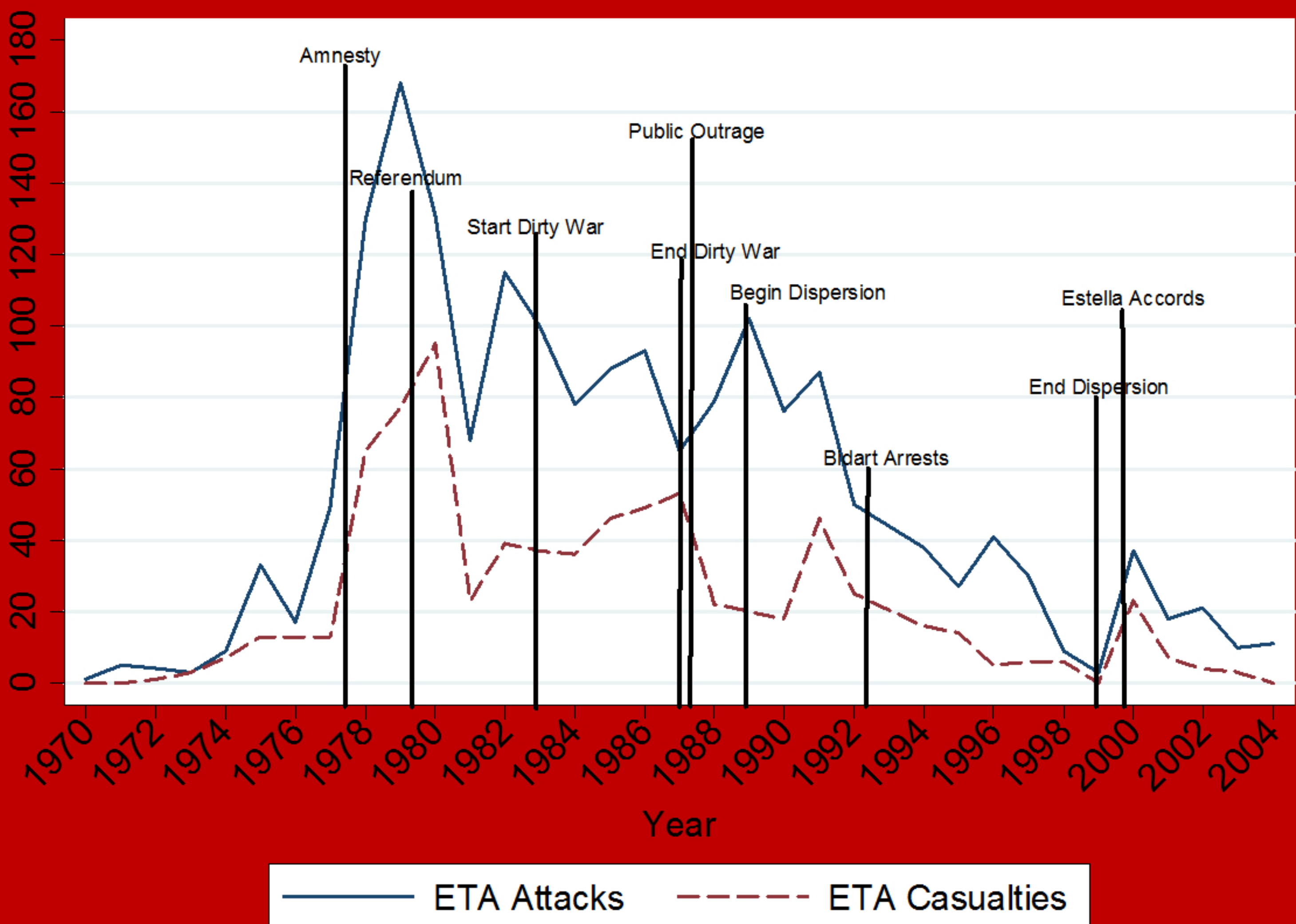
1) Measure the relative effectiveness of different counterterrorist strategies to reduce ETA violence

2) Study the impact of democratization and decentralization on the number and severity of ETA attacks

This study was performed using the **Cox Proportional Hazards Model**, which is given by:

$$h(t|X) = h(t)\exp(X_1\beta_1 + \dots + X_p\beta_p)$$

wherein **h** represents the hazard (probability of survival divided by the probability of failure) at time **t** with **p** covariates.



Policies/Events	Coefficient Estimate	Standard Error
Amnesty	-.3564604 [■]	.1997106
Referendum of Autonomy	-.0972701	.1683342
Dirty War	.1783124	.1197917
Public Outrage	-.2680293	.1853565
Dispersion	-.1229291	.1710557
Bidart Arrests	-.4900149*	.2485897
Estella Accords	-.037839	.3040625
Controls		
Military Personnel	.0038112	.0012999
Arrests	.0010471	.0007906
Restrict Political Rights	.9763483***	.2804612
Restrict Civil Liberties	-.3721072***	.0987015
Non-ETA casualties, injuries	-.0081804 [■]	.004353
Non-ETA Attacks, previous month	.0030915	.0108289
ETA Failures, previous month	.0687748***	.0165977
Attack Density	-.0047529**	.0018174

■p ≤ .10 *p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01 ***p ≤ .001

Results

The analysis demonstrates that only two Spanish tactics have been significantly effective at reducing ETA violence: the arrest of 20 leaders in Bidart, France, and providing amnesty to prisoners indicted under the Franco regime. The judicial change to disperse prisoners throughout the country, the Estella Accords to denounce terrorism, and the general violence during the Dirty War proved to be insignificant. Public outrage and the Referendum of Autonomy also failed to provoke a significant response, as did the number of non-ETA attacks. Interestingly, restricting civil liberties was shown to decrease the risk of violence, whereas limiting political rights increased violence. Increased military personnel slightly increased the risk of violence, and the number of non-ETA casualties and injuries produced a slight decrease in violence.

Controls

Controls	Theorized Effect
Military Personnel	More troops – less attacks
Arrests Related to Basque Movement	More arrests – more attacks
Level of Political Rights	More rights – less attacks
Level of Civil Liberties	More liberties – less attacks
Sum of non-ETA terrorist attack casualties, injuries	Higher number – more attacks
Sum of non-ETA terrorist attacks	Higher number – more attacks
Sum of ETA Failed Attacks (previous month)	More failures – less attacks
Attack Density	Higher density – more attacks

Conclusions

The Spanish government was able to successfully decrease ETA violence only through the appeasement of Franco prisoners and by careful intelligence gathering to arrest the group's leadership. Severe violence and repression aimed at the entire group, such as arrests of citizens associated with the Basque movement, prisoner dispersion, and the Dirty War, were shown to have little if any effect on the terrorist organization. One of the more interesting results of this analysis is the inverse relation witnessed between the levels of civil liberties and political rights. Restricting political rights had a positive effect on the likelihood of ETA violence, whereas restricting civil liberties produced an opposite, moderating effect.

Future research could attempt to develop the relation between political and civil rights and terrorist activity. More precisely, individual political developments could be analyzed with respect to attack statistics.

References

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Terrorist attack information : Global Terrorism Database; military personnel: Correlates of War Database; arrests: Noticias de Navarra (news report); political/civil rights: Freedom House, Freedom in the World.