



INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGICAL TERRORISM: MODELLING THE INTERACTION BETWEEN ATTACKS, ARRESTS, AND CONVICTIONS IN EUROPE (2017–2022)

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In recent decades, major events in the Middle East, starting with the long and bloody campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Arab Spring and continuing with the civil wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen, have produced changes in the contemporary European security environment. The article examines the relations between terrorist attacks, arrests and convictions in Europe, in the period 2017-2022, with an emphasis on the ideological dimension of the phenomenon. The study extends previous research on information architectures by integrating linear regression models, predictive distributions, and visualizations. The results point to a decreasing trend in judicial activity, a moderate correlation between arrests and convictions, and a high variability in nationalist and far-right attacks. Information systems are proving to be essential strategic tools in the formulation of public policies, providing predictive capacity and support in ideological differentiation of interventions. The paper makes recommendations for recalibration of judicial interventions and optimization of decisions through analytical integration in adaptive information infrastructures.

Keywords: terrorism; regression; information systems; security; intelligence services;

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, major events in the Middle East, starting with the long and bloody campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Arab Spring and continuing with the civil wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen, have produced changes in the contemporary European security environment. Of course, we cannot fail to mention here the events in Iraq, Egypt etc. Thus, multiple waves of migration have emerged, and the European space has been confronted with a change in demographic reality. We cannot ignore the fact that since 2004, multiple attacks by terrorist groups have affected European peace and security, which has led to a rethinking and adaptation of European security policies.

Terrorism is not a phenomenon that has emerged in recent decades, but manifestations with specific goals (ideological, political, religious etc.) have been manifesting since ancient times. Of course, this became current with the events of 11 September 2001, when the world was “shaken” by powerful attacks from the USA. In addition, the European space in the years that followed has been strongly affected by multiple such manifestations. What we can observe is the emergence and diversity of as many terrorist groups as possible that use techniques, tactics and procedures that are as technologically advanced as possible and adapted to contemporary reality. These groups have, for the most part, considerable and diversified resources that are widely used in the face of the responses of the authorities with responsibilities in the field of identifying, preventing and combating terrorism.

As an overview, according to a Europol report, in the period 2010-2022, a number of 136 terrorist attacks were recorded in the European Union, and the reality did not stop there, which forces us to a broad analysis of the terrorist phenomenon and to identify possible causes/effects/measures. The quantitative analysis of terrorism has evolved significantly in the last two decades, especially through the application of statistical methods such as linear regression, multiple regression or weighted geographical models. Recent studies show

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that regression is an essential tool to identify structural relationships between variables such as the frequency of attacks, socio-economic factors or the efficiency of state institutions. Thus, Enders (2007) provides a general empirical framework for studying terrorism based on international data link, and Yildirim and Öcal (2013) apply weighted geographical regression to analyse the regional distribution of attacks in Turkey.

In a similar vein, Testas (2004) demonstrates through cross-sectional analysis that education and political instability directly influence the probability of attacks in the Muslim world. Other contributions, such as those of Strang and Sun (2017), explore regression in big data contexts and Hadoop infrastructures to detect latent patterns in global databases on terrorism link. In addition, Korotayev et al. (2021) offer a reinterpretation of the relationship between GDP, education and terrorism, applying multiple regression models. Information systems have become essential components in the process of understanding, monitoring and combating contemporary terrorism. It is observed that for transnational networks and complex social dynamics, the simple collection of raw data is no longer sufficient. The existence of information architectures capable of integrating, processing and correlating large volumes of data from diverse sources is necessary: official reports, judicial databases, open sources or real-time streams from monitoring networks. These systems allow for the construction of a coherent overall picture of threats and offer decision-makers the possibility to detect hidden patterns, to assess the degree of risk associated with certain events and to intervene effectively.

The importance of these systems lies not only in their processing capacity, but also in the interoperability functionality, which ensures the exchange of information between government structures, police, intelligence services and international bodies. By automating the filtering and classification processes, as well as by integrating strategic visualization algorithms (dashboards, risk maps, alert scores), information systems facilitate a data-driven decision-making approach. Thus, the analysis of terrorism becomes not only descriptive, but also predictive, anticipatory and oriented towards prevention, instead of post-event reactions. In particular, integrating the ideological dimension into these analyses – by classifying attacks according

to their motivations – allows the identification of structural imbalances between real threats and institutional response capacity, which is essential for the formulation of coherent public policies in the field of security.

The objective of the paper is to analyse the relationships between the frequency of terrorist attacks, the number of arrests and judicial outcomes (convictions), depending on the ideology of the attack, using statistical regression models and predictive visualizations to highlight relevant patterns and institutional efficiency.

METHODOLOGY

Against the background of these international approaches, the present paper is a methodological and analytical continuation of the research carried out in the article “*Multilevel architecture of information systems for monitoring radicalization trends in digital environments*” (Dragomir, 2025). The previous paper highlights the ideological dynamics of European terrorism in the period 2017-2022, using advanced visual and descriptive methods. The current study extends that research by integrating linear regression models, correlation calculations and predictive visualizations, aiming to quantify the relationships between attacks, arrests and convictions, depending on ideological orientation.

The **original contributions** of this study are:

- Application of **multivariable regressions** to quantify the ideological influence on the intensity of attacks and the efficiency of the criminal response;
- Introduction of the **convictions/arrests** ratio as an indicator of institutional efficiency;
- Comparative visualizations of ideological distributions through histograms, scatter plots and linear estimates;
- Development of a **predictive framework integrable in IT decision-making systems**.

This approach contributes to the understanding and anticipation of ideological patterns in the contemporary European space and substantiates the use of information systems in the analysis of national and international security.



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Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative, explanatory and comparative design, focused on the analysis of the relationships between terrorist attacks, judicial actions (arrests and convictions) and the ideology associated with each event. The aim of the research is to highlight the structural patterns that link the intensity of the terrorist phenomenon to institutional efficiency, using statistical tools and predictive visualizations. The research covers the period 2017-2022 and tracks the interannual variations of ideological attacks, correlated with official judicial data.

The study is based on a longitudinal non-experimental design, in which the units of analysis are calendar years and the variables are collected retrospectively, according to the ideological classification of the attacks. A multivariate analysis strategy is applied in order to isolate the influences of the most relevant independent variables (e.g., the ideology of the attack) on the dependent ones (e.g., the number of arrests or convictions).

Data Collection and Processing

The dataset used in this study was derived from official sources and was processed in tabular format for quantitative analysis. The key variables included are: Nr_attacks (number of terrorist attacks per year), Arrests (arrests made as a result of terrorist investigations), Convictions_acquittals (total convictions and acquittals), and the distribution of attacks according to the attributed ideology: jihadist, far-right, far-left, nationalist or unspecified.

The data were coded and normalized to allow the application of regression models. The exploratory phase involved the analysis of annual distributions and the evolution of attacks according to ideology, using preliminary graphical representations.

Methods

To carry out this research, the raw data have been structured and coded in a CSV-type table format, in which each line corresponds to a calendar year, and the columns represent the variables analysed: the number of attacks (Nr_attacks), arrests (Arrests), convictions and acquittals (Convictions and Acquittals), respectively the ideology associated with each event (far left, far right, nationalist or unspecified).



The pre-processing steps have involved, first of all, the normalization of numerical values in order to facilitate comparability and coherent graphic representation. A systematic check of the consistency of ideological categories has also been carried out to eliminate possible classification errors or omissions. The process includes the identification of missing values, which are treated either by linear completion (for incomplete series) or by justified exclusion where credible interpolation is impossible.

The analysis has included, on the one hand, the application of simple and multiple linear regression models, and on the other hand, the estimation of theoretical distributions for the key variables. Regression has been used to assess the predictive relationships between variables, in particular between convictions and arrests, and between the intensity of attacks and time. The evaluation of the models has been carried out through coefficients of determination (R^2), significance tests and interpretation of the slope of the regression line.

Regarding the distribution analysis, for each type of ideological attack, as well as for the aggregate variables (such as the total number of attacks and convictions), a theoretical exponential distribution has been estimated using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method. The parameters of interest, λ (rate) and location, have been automatically determined for each generated histogram. The resulting theoretical curves have then been superimposed over the empirical distributions to allow for a rigorous visual and comparative assessment of how the observed frequencies align with the assumed theoretical model.

Methodological Limitations

Although the presented analysis provides a solid statistical perspective on the relationships between terrorist attacks, institutional response and the ideological dimension, the research is subject to inherent limitations that must be acknowledged in the overall assessment of the conclusions.

First, the small size of the temporal sample (2017-2022) limits the possibility of formulating long-term inferences and affects the robustness of the regression model in the face of long-term cyclical

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or structural variations. Also, the aggregation of data at the annual level may lead to the omission of short-term, seasonal or contextual dynamics, which could significantly influence the relationships between variables.

Another limitation refers to the declarative and often incomplete nature of the data on the ideology of the attackers, which are taken from official sources, but not always judicially or investigatively validated. The category “unspecified” illustrates this ambiguity and indicates a vulnerability in the classification process, which may affect the comparative interpretation between ideological groups.

From a technical point of view, the models used are predominantly linear and univariable, which reduces the ability to capture complex interactions between variables or to control for confounding factors (e.g., geopolitical context, legislative reforms, international events). Although these models offer good analytical readability, they cannot fully capture causality or the latent mechanisms that can generate or amplify terrorist phenomena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis of data on terrorist attacks, institutional response and ideological distributions has highlighted a series of relevant statistical relationships, which can contribute to understanding the complexity of the terrorist phenomenon in Europe during the period 2017-2022. The interpretation of these relationships has been achieved by directly correlating the main variables, as well as by estimating the distribution shapes and the predictive potential of each ideological category.

The results are presented in parallel with the graphical visualizations obtained, allowing a comparative analysis between the observed phenomena and the associated institutional responses. This section therefore aims to integrate the statistical dimension with the strategic perspective, highlighting not only quantitative trends, but also their implications for security policies and decision-making information systems. To ensure the validity of the conclusions, the obtained results have been interpreted in the context of the applied regression models and the estimated probability distributions, taking into account the consistency of the values, the statistical significance of the coefficients

and the degree of adequacy between the theoretical curves and the empirical data. Visual analysis has been used in addition to quantitative methods to highlight subtle patterns, ideological variations and possible institutional imbalances. In the following, the main relationships observed between the variables of interest are discussed, followed by a stratified interpretation of the distributions according to the ideology of the attacks.

Institutional Correlations and Temporal Trends

The analysis of the relationship between convictions and the passage of time (figure 1) indicates a clear decreasing trend, highlighted by the Pearson coefficient $r = -0.82$. It suggests that, in the period 2017-2022, judicial activity in matters of terrorism (acquittals and convictions) experienced a substantial decrease. This reduction either reflects an actual decline in the judicially treatable terrorist phenomenon or it is a sign of systemic delays in processing cases. In other words, as time passes, the number of judicial decisions (convictions and acquittals) in terrorism cases tends to decrease. From the point of view of the confidence ellipse, it is evident that the values are relatively compact around the regression line in the early years, but the dispersion increases for values extrapolated outside the 2022 interval, suggesting uncertainty regarding future developments. This decrease could be interpreted as a result of either **the decrease in the number of attacks or of a potential institutional slowdown in processing cases.**

In contrast, the relationship between arrests and court decisions (figure 2) is moderately positive ($r = +0.45$), indicating a consistent association between the number of arrests and court outcomes. It shows that the system reacts proportionately in the post-investigative phase, but does not clarify whether this response is sufficient in relation to the ideological dynamics of the attacks.

However, the confidence ellipse is much narrower, indicating lower variability and a higher degree of predictability in this relationship, compared to the previous figure. It is important to note that the relationship is not perfectly linear – some points seem to slightly fall out of the band, signalling those other factors (e.g., ideology of the attack, nature of the evidence, national policies) that may influence this relationship.



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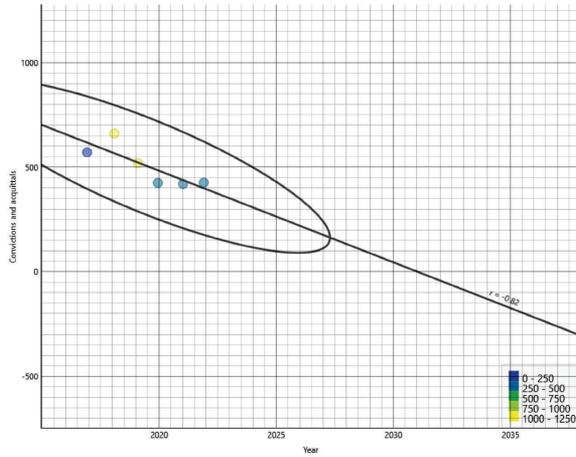


Figure 1: Analysis of the relationship between convictions and the passage of time (authors' design)

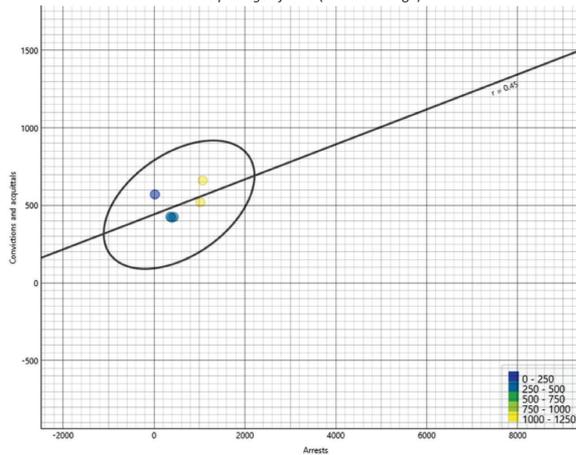


Figure 2: Correlation between the number of arrests and the total number of convictions and acquittals (authors' design)

Global Distributions and Frequency Patterns

The distribution of the total number of attacks (figure 3) follows an exponential curve with $\lambda = 74.50$, indicating a concentration of frequencies in the area of moderate attacks (100–250), but with a significant potential for extreme occurrences. By comparison, the distribution of convictions (figure 4) is more balanced, confirming a relative stability of the legal system, regardless of fluctuations on the ground. Thus, there is a possible gap between the evolution of the phenomenon and the speed of adaptation of the institutional framework.

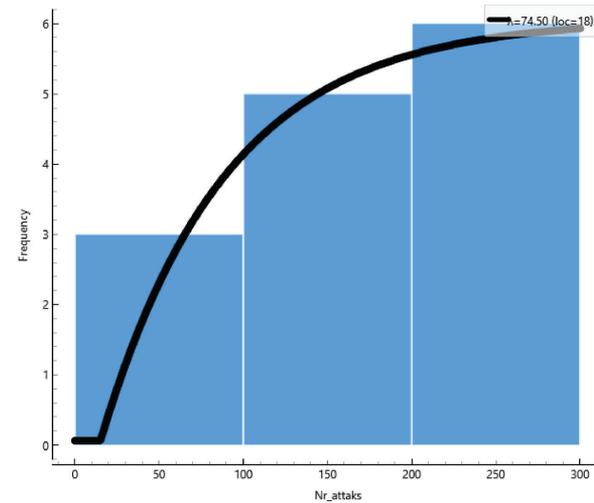


Figure 3: Distribution of attacks (authors' design)

This histogram illustrates the frequency distribution of terrorist attacks during the analysed period. The horizontal axis represents the number of attacks, and the vertical axis – the frequency with which they occur in defined intervals. Superimposed on the histogram is a fitted exponential distribution model, with parameters $\lambda = 74.50$ and $loc = 18$, which indicates a positively asymmetric distribution curve (long right tail).





Interpretation of this model suggests that most of the values are concentrated in the lower part of the distribution, between 100 and 250 attacks, with an increasing frequency towards the upper intervals. The shape of the curve highlights the fact that extremely numerous attacks are rare, but possible, while the average number of attacks (approx. 200) is the most frequently observed.

This distribution supports the idea that the terrorist phenomenon, although generally stable in intensity, has the potential for episodic “spikes”, which justifies the need for predictive tools and automatic alerts within information systems.

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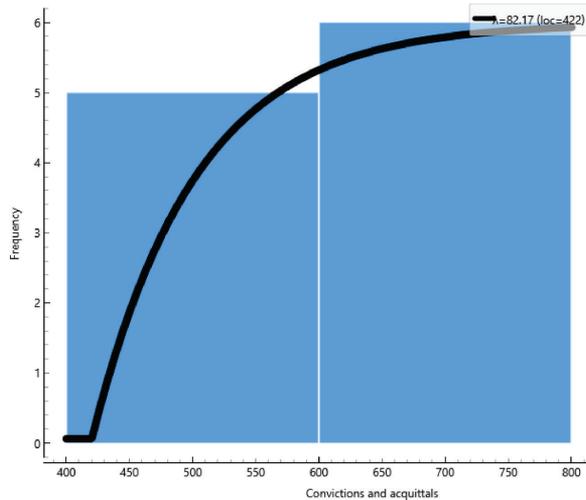


Figure 4: The distribution of the total number of judicial decisions (authors’ design)

Similar to the previous histogram, this representation reflects the distribution of the total number of judicial decisions (convictions + acquittals) in terrorism cases. The fitted distribution model is also exponential, with parameters $\lambda = 82.17$ and $loc = 422$, indicating high dispersion and a higher frequency in the upper part of the distribution (600–750).



It suggests that, despite the long-term decrease highlighted in the temporal analysis (figure 2), the volume of judicial decisions remains significant in the medium and high ranges. Compared to attacks, the distribution of convictions is slightly more balanced, which may signal a greater degree of consistency in the action of the criminal justice system, once cases reach the trial phase.

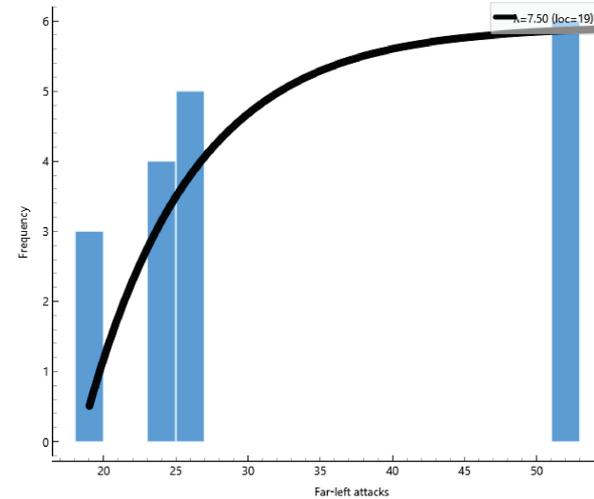


Figure 5: Distribution of left-wing attacks (authors’ design)

Compared to attacks, the distribution of convictions is slightly more balanced, which may signal a greater degree of consistency in the action of the criminal justice system, once cases reach the trial phase.

The distribution of left-wing attacks is relatively narrow, concentrated in the range 19–28, with a peak at around 26. The lambda parameter of the fitted distribution is $\lambda = 7.50$ ($loc = 19$), indicating a rapid increase in frequency for small values and a steep deceleration after the median range.

This shape suggests that left-wing attacks have been relatively constant and numerically modest, with a low probability of occurrence of high-intensity episodes. The phenomenon is therefore predictable and statistically limited.

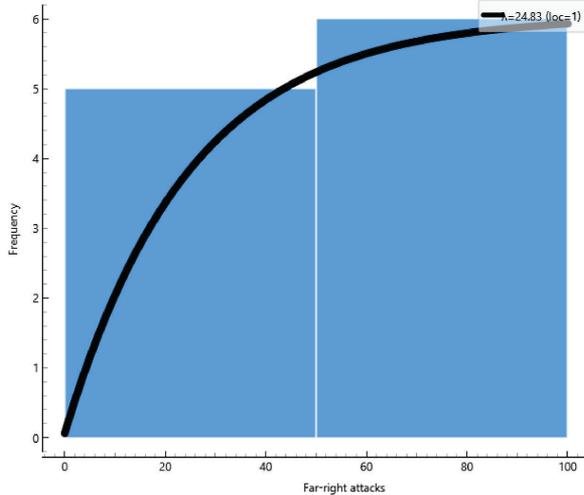


Figure 6: Distribution of far-right attacks (authors' design)

Compared to the far-left, far-right attacks show higher variability and an increased potential for episodic escalation.

The distribution of far-right attacks is significantly broader, covering a range from 1 to 100, with an approximately uniform distribution between the two frequency classes. The indicated parameters are $\lambda = 24.83$ ($loc = 1$), which shows a flatter curve with a long tail, indicating the possibility of occasional peaks.

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The distribution of nationalist attacks is much broader and asymmetric, with a spread between 18 and 200. With $\lambda = 42$ ($loc = 18$), the curve highlights a distribution significantly shifted to the right (long right tail), suggesting a consistent volume of attacks, but also the occurrence of much more intense episodes compared to other ideologies.

It is, statistically speaking, the most unstable category, with an increased probability for extreme values.

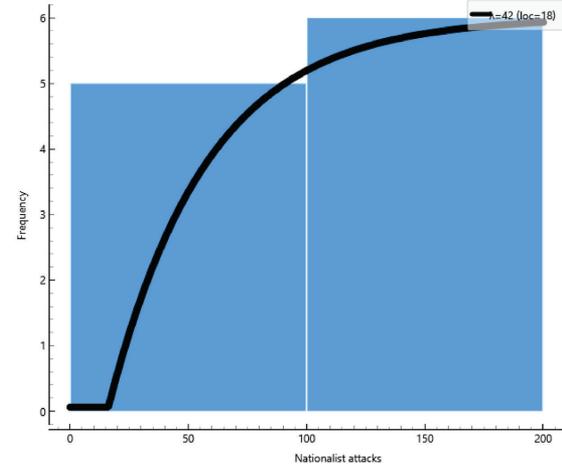


Figure 7: Distribution of nationalist attacks (authors' design)

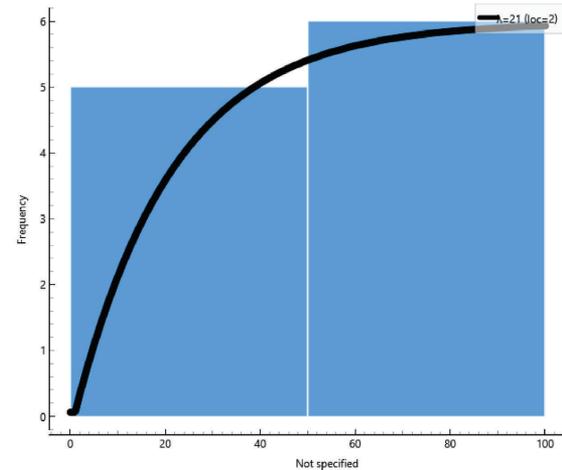


Figure 8: Distribution of attacks for which no ideology has been identified (authors' design)



This histogram covers the range 2–100, having an almost symmetric distribution with parameters $\lambda = 21$, $\text{loc} = 2$. It indicates a moderate and constant frequency of attacks for which no clear ideology has been identified.

The unspecified distribution raises questions about the quality of ideological classification in the databases and may mask significant substructures.

Numerical analysis of the coefficients obtained from the application of the regression models reveals significant differences between the main variables and the way in which they are correlated. The relationship between the number of convictions and time (years) is an inverse and strongly negative one, indicating a constant decrease in judicial decisions over the analysed period. This trend can be interpreted either as a reflection of a general decline in the terrorist threat, or as a possible slowdown in judicial processes or the initiation of criminal proceedings. Regarding the correlation between convictions and arrests, a moderate positive association is observed, suggesting a partial coherence between the operational activity of the authorities and the procedural outcome. This relationship, although not very close, validates the hypothesis of an institutional link between the intensity of detention actions and the capacity to impose criminal sanctions.

The analysis of ideological distributions shows that far-right and nationalist attacks present increased variability and a wide dispersion, in contrast to far-left attacks, which are stable and poorly represented numerically. The category “unspecified” maintains a balanced distribution, but raises questions about the accuracy of the initial classifications and the limits of ideological labelling systems.

SECURITY POLICIES AND THE ROLE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

The research results support the need to reformulate public security policies in a data-driven and objective risk assessment framework, in which information systems are no longer just recording and reporting tools, but become strategic decision-making cores. They can support

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the decision-making process at all levels – from anticipation and prevention, to intervention and institutional response – by integrating robust predictive models, historical correlations and automated ideological classifications.

1. Transforming information systems into active analytical platforms.

It is recommended to evolve from simple operational databases to integrated infrastructures, capable of processing large volumes of information in real time, recognizing emerging ideological patterns and anticipating risk scenarios. These platforms should combine machine learning modules with interactive strategic visualizations for decision-makers.

2. Supporting intervention policies through advanced ideological classification.

To reduce the incidence of attacks labelled as “unspecified” – which limits the accuracy of analyses and prevents the efficient targeting of resources – it is essential to use information systems to automatically identify ideological signals, using algorithms validated on historical data.

3. Recalibrating judicial interventions based on statistical distributions.

The increased volatility of far-right and nationalist attacks, highlighted by wide and unpredictable distributions, requires differentiated intervention protocols, adapted by typology and supported by risk scores generated from real data. Information systems must become the source of these decisions, not a simple passive repository of information.

4. Monitoring public policies through algorithmic feedback.

Policies must be evaluated in real time by integrating new data into existing models, with automatic or semi-automatic adjustments of strategies depending on the changes detected. Thus, information systems become tools of adaptive governance, in which the effectiveness of the intervention is continuously measured and optimized.

5. Promoting interoperability and common standards of analysis.

Data exchange between institutions must be standardized not only at the technical level, but also analytically – through common



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conventions on classification, the meaning of indicators and visual reporting of risk. Only in this way can information systems function as nodes of inter-institutional coordination, capable of reflecting the complexity of the contemporary terrorist phenomenon.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research has highlighted, through a quantitative approach supported by statistical methods and predictive visualizations, how the dynamics of terrorist attacks correlate with the institutional response and the ideological profile of the actors involved. By integrating data from the period 2017-2022 and applying regression models, it has been demonstrated that the relationships between attacks, arrests and convictions are not uniform, but are significantly mediated by the associated ideology and the institutional capacity to react.

One of the most important findings is the existence of a decreasing trend in the volume of judicial decisions over time, negatively correlated with the annual evolution, suggesting a possible diminution of sanctioning activity or a delay in the completion of trials. In contrast, the positive correlation between arrests and convictions indicates a moderate institutional functionality, but not yet fully aligned with the ideological reality of the attacks. The significant differences in the distribution of attack types, in particular the increased volatility of nationalist and far-right attacks, underline the need for a differentiated analytical framework, allowing for the development of policies tailored to each type of radicalization. Moreover, the persistent presence of ideologically “unspecified” attacks signals limits in the classification capacity, which affects the accuracy of predictions and the effectiveness of interventions. Overall, the results support the idea that information systems applied to terrorism analysis must include advanced ideological classification functionalities, integration of predictive statistical models and visualization of dynamic relationships between attacks, interventions and sanctions.

This approach not only improves the response capacity of security institutions, but also substantiates, in a rational and transparent way, the prioritization of resources and the development

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of evidence-based anti-terrorist strategies. As we have mentioned, these models can be used not only as recording and reporting tools, but can also be integrated, together with other national and European institutions, to identify the frequency, the probability of a terrorist event (including the degree of intensity), and possibly the area of occurrence so that preventive measures can be adopted in advance. National and especially European policies have been adapted in the last two decades to these real threats that have “shaken” the safe and stable community climate, but by using these models at regional and European level, numerous situations that could result in significant human and material losses can be avoided.

Of course, the models in this material are applied on open-source databases, which limits the evidence of the results obtained, but applied institutionally in compliance with the classification rules, they become much more relevant and useful. Moreover, other variables characteristic of the situations created can be added. In this way, they become prediction tools and the basis for adopting measures and policies in line with the current levels of terrorist threats.

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