

TARGET ATTRACTIVENESS, FEAR, AND THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

This presentation describes the critical "demand side" of terrorism: fear. It describes research done at American University aimed at understanding the associations between fear and risk, fear and target attractiveness, fear and media, and fear and politics.

METHODS AND DATA

The research uses data from surveys and from insurance companies, reflecting risks of terrorism. The Opportunity Theory of criminology provides the basic framework for analysis.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

People are still quite fearful of terrorism. Federal resources are allocated by risk, but as well by the politics of fear. Those who watch more television news report higher levels of fear and perceived risk. The strength of the relationship differs by media type, with stronger effects for television news than from newspapers. Fear levels are not consistently related to support for interventions that reduce civil liberties.