


Socio-Economic Determinants of Terrorism in Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

Tunisia has always been affected by terrorism, but since the late 2010s there has been a sharp increase in terrorism perpetrated. The object of this research is to analyze the socio-economic determinants of terrorism using terrorist attacks as a dependent variable and indicators that affect the level of growth in Tunisia such as explanatory variables. The aim of this work is to develop recommendations on how to respond to the state in response to terrorist shocks. The following policy implications were deduced. First, we must increase the level of growth of the country by stabilizing the policy and by controlling governance to show the effectiveness of the results of this study which aims at reducing terrorism and improving the country's economic conditions. Second, in view of the results found in this research, terrorism can stabilize the long-term labor market through investment by putting in place realistic economic policies that are time-bound to encourage the State to create vacancies for the unemployed.

KEYWORDS

ARDL, Political Stability, Poverty, Terrorism, Wage

INTRODUCTION

Tunisia has experienced several situations of economic instability following the increase in the number of terrorist attacks, and in turn undergoes a decrease in the growth rate and an increase in the level of unemployment. People find obstacles in settling into a position due to the high level of unemployment. Even when jobs are created, individuals are subject to low wages.

Some argue that the quality of the position fuels terrorism by creating frustration among individuals. Aggressive behavior can often occur when an individual is prevented from achieving his or her goals. It is also plausible that some unemployed people are motivated to join a terrorist organization because they do not have the financial stability to support themselves and their families.

However, terrorists see themselves as fighters for reasons of political conflict. And those who fight against this phenomenon consider themselves terrorists (Europol, 2008, Sick 1990, Silke 2008,

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William 2000). Hence, this phenomenon can be seen as the use of violence by national groups in order to achieve a political objective (Enders & Sandler 2002).

After the revolution, Tunisia recorded several attacks. Thus, we are interested in the determinants of terrorism. This study attempts to analyze the socio-economic determinants of terrorism, especially as regards the labor market and growth in Tunisia, taking into account other indicators that affect employment indirectly through terrorist attacks. The purpose of this paper is to show the long- and short-term relationship between terrorism and socio-economic variables in Tunisia.

This issue invites us to highlight several questions:

- How can we define terrorism and what are its main characteristics?
- What are the main determinants of terrorism?
- How can political stability affect terrorism in Tunisia?

To address this issue, this study first examines the evolution of terrorism in its global dimension. The second part gives an overview of the macroeconomic framework of terrorism in Tunisia and a review of the literature that recalls the main determinants of terrorism as they emerge from economic theory and some studies conducted in this framework. Finally, the third part is devoted to the econometric estimation of the determinants of terrorism in Tunisia in order to identify the main factors that determine its evolution.

The examinations of these issues are quite imperative, as they will help determine the direct and indirect impact of policies on the stability of the country, therefore, to put in place measures to enhance economic growth. This will help Tunisia know if they are capable of solving recurrent problems and fostering growth, or if it is better to focus on international aid.

Recently, after the Arab Spring, an unprecedented wave of political violence and terrorist events occurred in several countries in the MENA region such as Tunisia. Tunisia is strongly affected by such dynamics; hence, the terrorist's actions intimidate law and public order and human rights by destroying essential infrastructure and economic prospects (Lanouar & Goaid, 2019).

This paper attempts to analyze the determinants of terrorism in Tunisia. The aim of our study is to analyze the short- and long-term effects of various social and economic variables on terrorism. More specifically, we seek to fill the gap in the literature concerning the relationship between the Terrorism Index, which measures the number of annual attacks and social and economic variables in Tunisia. To our knowledge, our study is the first to integrate all these economic and social variables to identify the determinants of terrorism in developing countries.

We used the ARDL model because it is useful to predict and disentangle long-term relationships from short-term dynamics. And we chose Tunisia as a sample because only a few studies have worked on this research theme. Finally, the implementation of the ARDL approach and its interpretation is quite simple (Rahman & Kashem 2017), and the ARDL framework requires a single-form equation (Bayer & Hanck 2013), while other procedures require a system of equations. The ARDL model is more reliable for small samples like our case compared to the cointegration methodology of Johansen and Juselius (Haug, 2002). Halicioglu (2007) also indicates two other advantages of the method, in particular: Simultaneous estimation of long-term and short-term effects and the possibility of testing hypotheses on the estimated long-term coefficients. This is not done in the Engle-Granger method. We find that macroeconomic instability is one of the determinants of terrorism identified by the literature. This is why the study of the link between terrorism in Tunisia and macroeconomic instability is now of increased importance. The main variables presented and used as approximations of macroeconomic stability in the literature are the inflation rate and the unemployment rate. Therefore, in this study, we decided to use inflation, presidential rotation rate, demand, and offer of employment as indicators of Tunisia's economic stability, taking into account poverty and wages as control variables.

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