



Date last modified: August 1, 2018

**Terrorism Research Center in Fulbright College**  
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

# **The American Terrorism Study**

## Public Codebook & Guide

The purpose of this codebook is to provide a general guide to the structure and types of data contained in the American Terrorism Study.

Please note that the database is not limited to these variables. Refer to the TRC website at [trc.uark.edu](http://trc.uark.edu) for contact information.

# **Table of Contents**

## **I: ATS OVERVIEW**

**History of the American Terrorism Study**  
**Inclusion Criteria**  
**Database Structure & Variables**

## **II: CODEBOOK**

### **General Coding**

Case Study Variables  
Group Variables  
Person Variables

### **Legal Coding**

Court Case Variables  
Indictee Variables  
Counts Variables

### **Geospatial Coding**

Antecedent Variables  
Incident Variables  
Perpetrator Variables

### **History of the American Terrorism Study**

Since 1988, the American Terrorism Study (ATS) has collected, coded, and analyzed terrorism and terrorism-related court cases in the United States. These cases include indictments resulting from FBI terrorism investigations and many were supplied directly to ATS from the FBI. Over the past decade, ATS has expanded to include geospatial coding of terrorism incidents in addition to legal data.

Today, the study is housed in the Terrorism Research Center in Fulbright College at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Graduate and undergraduate students from the department of Sociology and Criminology program assist the core staff of the RC in coding and collecting data:

Dr. Brent L. Smith, *Director*

Katie Ratcliff, *Assistant Director*

Dr. Christopher Shields, *Internship Coordinator*

### **Inclusion Criteria**

Court cases included in the American Terrorism Study must be the result of an FBI terrorism investigation and come from a specific list of case from the FBI, or meet the FBI's definition of terrorism and involve a perpetrator federally indicted in the United States. To identify new cases, the ATS utilizes the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys website. Press releases from each federal district court related to federal indictments are examined for inclusion in ATS, and documents from those that meet our inclusion criteria are downloaded from the online Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system. These court records are supplemented with media articles found through search portals such as Lexis Nexus. All media and court records are stored on a secure ATS server.

### **Database Structure & Variables**

The ATS is a relational database based in Oracle SQL Developer. Court cases are organized under case studies and coded for legal and geospatial variables, with cases involving the same groups, persons, or plots grouped under the same case study. The relational nature of the ATS database allows unique analysis across variables, for example analysis of specific criminal charges against defendants plotting a bombing or explosion.

While this guide serves as an overview of general ATS coding structure and research areas, the ATS contains additional variables not enumerated in this codebook that facilitate deeper analysis. These variables include but are not limited to: informant usage in terrorism investigations (type of assistance given to perpetrators, incentives provided, method of initial contact, undercover law enforcement involvement); legal outcomes (pleas versus trials, count specific convictions and sentences, length of trial); legal strategy (defense method, prosecution method, types of motions filed, precedents referenced); presence of weapons, drugs, or ideological writings at the time of arrest; targets (intended and actual targets, target lists, target significance); geospatial and temporal patterns (time of day, exact address, and sequences of incidents and antecedent activities); incident success or failure (device failure, human intervention, plot cancellation); antecedent behaviors (criminality, number of persons involved/present, presence of weapons, law enforcement awareness, preparatory versus ancillary behaviors); incident characteristics (number of known preparatory behaviors, number of persons involved, weapons list, damages incurred); and group dynamics (perpetrator roles, links to ideology, group structure). For additional information, please contact us.

## II: CODEBOOK

### General Coding

#### CASESTUDY

Variable Name	Description
CASESTUDY_ID	CASESTUDY_ID is a unique ID automatically generated and assigned to the case study. Value is carried down to court cases and incidents created within the case study.
CASESTUDY	CASESTUDY is a unique name given to identify the case study. A case study consists of one or more court cases and associated incidents. Court cases and associated incidents are generally grouped if the incidents and court cases involve the same group, persons, or plots. Value is carried down to court cases and incidents within the case study.
CATEGORY	<p>CATEGORY refers to the category of terrorism that best fits the groups and perpetrators involved in the case study. If no groups are linked, then the category may be derived from the type of target and nature of attack.</p> <p><b>Environmental</b> includes environmental and animal rights extremists or individuals or groups that subscribe to aspects of the following ideals: 1) support for biodiversity and bio-centric equality (i.e. that humans are no greater than any other form of life and have no legitimate claim to dominate the earth), 2) the earth and/or animals are in imminent danger, 3) the government and/or parts of society such as corporations are responsible for this danger, 4) this danger will ultimately result in the destruction of the modern environment and/or whole species, 5) the political system is incapable and/or unwilling to fix the crisis by taking actions to preserve American wilderness, protect the environment, and support biological diversity, 6) there is a need to defend the environment and/or animals. Note that environmental rights extremists (primarily) are most focused on the environment while animal rights extremists (primarily) are most concerned with the rights of animals.</p> <p><b>Far-left</b> includes individuals or groups with a revolutionary socialist agenda and see themselves as protectors of the populace. They share a disdain for U.S. capitalism and its 'imperialism' and 'colonialism'. Leftists commonly have Marxist political focus and pro-communist/socialist beliefs.</p> <p><b>Far-right</b> includes individuals or groups that subscribe to aspects of the following ideals: 1) they are fiercely nationalistic (as opposed to universal and international in orientation), anti-global, suspicious of centralized federal authority; 2) reverent of individual liberty (especially the right to own guns, be free of taxes); 3) believe in conspiracy theories that involve a grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty and a belief that one's personal and/or national "way of life" is under attack and is either already lost or that the threat is imminent (sometimes such beliefs are amorphous and vague, but for some the threat is from a specific ethnic, racial, or religious group); 4) and a belief in the need to be prepared for an attack either by participating in or supporting the need for paramilitary preparations and training or survivalism. Note that the mainstream conservative movement and the mainstream Christian right are not included.</p> <p><b>Islamic Extremist</b> includes individuals or groups that subscribe to aspects of the following ideals: 1) only acceptance of the Islamic faith promotes human dignity as well as affirms God's authority; 2) rejection of the traditional Muslim respect for "People of the Book," i.e., Christians and Jews; 3) "Jihad" (defined as to struggle in the path of God in the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his early companions) is a defining belief in Islam. This belief includes the "lesser Jihad" that endorses violence against a corrupt other; 4) the Islamic faith and or one's people are oppressed and under attack in both "local and nominally Muslim" Middle-Eastern/North African/Asian governments that are corrupt and authoritarian, as well as in non-Islamic nations (e.g., Israel/Palestine, Russia/Chechnya, India/Kashmir, etc), that occupy indigenous Islamic populations (an argument for political and military mobilization); 5) the West in general and the U.S. in particular supports the corruption, oppression and</p>

	<p>humiliation of Islam, and exploits the region’s resources; the culture of the West in general and the U.S. in particular (e.g., gay-rights, feminism, sexual permissiveness, alcohol abuse, racism, etc) has a corrosive effect on social and religious values; 6) the people of the West in general and the US in particular are responsible for the actions of their governments and culture (NOTE: this is an important element that distinguishes jihadists from other Muslims critical of Western states because it could justify the killing of innocents); 7) it is a religious obligation is to promote a violent Islamic revolution to combat this assault on Islam, oppression, corruption and the values of the West by targeting non-believers (both Muslims and non-Muslims); 8) Jihad will remain an individual obligation until all lands that were once Muslim (e.g., Andalusia- Southern Spain, Palestine, Philippines, etc) are returned and Islam again reigns supreme in those countries; Islamic law- Sharia- provides the ideal blueprint for a modern Muslim society and should be implemented in all “Muslim” countries by force. Note that Global jihadists are most concerned with combating the West in general and the United States in particular, while local jihadists are focused on a specific conflict such as Somalia; Russia/Chechnya; India/Kashmir; Israel/Palestine; China/Uighur; Philippines/Moro, etc.</p> <p><b>Nationalist/Separatist</b> includes groups and members of those groups fighting to establish a new political order or state based on ethnic dominance or homogeneity.</p> <p><b>Single-issue</b> includes individuals or groups who do not subscribe to a particular ideology such as rightist or leftist, but their actions are the product of a single issue they fervently oppose.</p>
SUBCATEGORY	<p>SUBCATEGORY is the subcategory of terrorism (if applicable) in the case study. These include options such as Anarchist, Anti-abortion, and Anti-government. New options are added as necessary to accommodate new case studies.</p> <p>We also use this variable to differentiate between types of supporters in each ideological CATEGORY. For example, SUBCATEGORY can be used to differentiate supporters of AQAM, ISIS, and nationalist/separatist causes within the Islamic Extremist CATEGORY.</p>
PRIMARY GROUP	<p>PRIMARY_GROUP is the name of the primary terrorist group associated with the case study.</p>

## PERSONS

Variable Name	Description
PERSON_ID	PERSON_ID is a unique ID automatically generated and assigned to the person when created in the database. Value is carried down to indictee records and perpetrator records created involving this person.
NAME	NAME codes the name of the person as it appears in court documents or, when court documents are not available, media sources.
ALIASES	ALIASES codes additional names the person is known by as it appears in court documents or, when court documents are not available, media sources.
GENDER	GENDER codes the gender of the person.
RACE	<p>RACE codes the race of the person .</p> <p><b>White</b> includes persons having origin in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.</p> <p><b>Black or African American</b> includes persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.</p> <p><b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b> includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.</p> <p><b>Asian</b> includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast</p>

	<p>Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Phillipine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.</p> <p><b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b> includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.</p> <p><b>Some other race</b> includes any persons not included in the previous categories – this does not include persons for whom a race cannot be determined because their personal characteristics are unknown.</p>
B_COUNTRY	B_COUNTRY codes the country where the person was born, if known.
CITIZEN_RAD	CITIZEN_RAD codes the person's country or countries of citizenship at the earliest time of known radicalization.
CITIZEN_TYPE_RAD	CITIZEN_TYPE_RAD codes the person's American citizenship status at their earliest known time of radicalization.
B_YEAR	B_YEAR codes the year of the person's birth, if known. The number may be estimated based on reported age. (YYYY)
B_DATE	B_DATE codes the person's date of birth, if known. (DD-MMM-YY)
DECEASED	DECEASED codes whether or not the person is alive or dead when added to the database. This value is updated when possible.
D_DATE	D_DATE codes the person's date of death, if applicable. (DD-MMM-YY)
FED_INDICTED	FED_INDICTED codes whether the person has been federally indicted on terrorism related charges.
FED_CONVICTED	<p>FED_CONVICTED codes whether the person has been convicted in a terrorism-related federal court case.</p> <p><b>Other</b> includes individuals who died prior to the trial or in an attack, or are fugitives.</p>

#### GROUPS

Variable Name	Description
ORG_NAME	ORG_NAME codes the name of the group.
DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION codes a brief description of the origin, ideology, and activities of the group.

## Legal Coding

### COURT CASES

Variable Name	Description
COURTCASE	COURTCASE codes the unique court case number assigned by the court, e.g. "01-CR-428 (CA)"
CASE_NAME	CASE_NAME codes the parties involved in the case as indicated by the court, e.g. "USA v. Jones, et al"
NUM_INDICTEES	Codes the number of persons indicted in the court case.
DIVISION	DIVISION codes the division the court case occurs in.
CIRCUIT	CIRCUIT codes which circuit the court case occurs in.
CITY	CITY codes what U.S. city the court case occurs in.
DISTRICT	DISTRICT codes which federal court district the court case occurs in, e.g. "TX-W" for the Western District of Texas.
STATE	STATE codes the state the court case occurs in, e.g. "TX"
INDICTMENT_DATE	INDICTMENT_DATE codes the date of the indictment in the court case (DD-MMM-YYYY)
COUNTS	COUNTS codes the number of unique counts enumerated in the indictment in the court case
OUTCOME	OUTCOME codes whether or not a conviction was obtained against any defendant on any charge in the court case.

### INDICTEES

Variable Name	Description
CITIZEN_INDICTEE	CITIZEN_INDICTEE codes the country or countries of citizenship of the person at the time of their indictment in the court case.
CITIZEN_TYPE_INDICTEE	CITIZEN_TYPE_INDICTEE codes the U.S. citizenship status of the person at the time of their indictment in the court case.
INDIC_DATE	INDIC_DATE codes the date charges were first filed against the defendant in the court case. (DD-MMM-YYYY)
JDGMT_DATE	JDGMT_DATE codes the date an outcome against the defendant was decided. (DD-MMM-YYYY)
ARR_DATE	ARR_DATE codes the date of arrest or custody of the defendant on the charges in the court case. (DD-MMM-YYYY)
BAIL	BAIL codes whether or not the defendant received bail.
CASE_RES	CASE_RES codes the overall case result for the indictee – conviction, acquittal, etc.
SENT_MON	SENT_MON codes the person's total sentence in months on charges in the court case.

### COUNTS

Variable Name	Description
USC_NUM	USC_NUM codes the section of the United States Code associated with the criminal count, e.g. "18 USC 371"
USC_CHAP	USC_CHAP codes the chapter of the United States Code associated with the criminal count, e.g. "Terrorism"
CT_RESULT	CT_RESULT codes the result of the count against the indictee (dismissal, guilty plea, etc.)
CT_SENT	CT_SENT codes the type of sentence, if applicable, received on that count for the indictee (time, time and a fine, only probation, etc.)

## Geospatial Coding

### ANTECEDENTS

Variable Name	Description
ANT_DESCRIPTION	Codes a brief description of the content of the antecedent behavior, including the date and location, e.g. "01-MAY-97 Acquisition of fertilizer for bomb. Cleveland, OH"
ANT_SUBTYPE	<p>ANT_SUBTYPE codes the type of attempted action/goal of the antecedent behavior.</p> <p><b>Acquisition of Expertise</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators attempted to obtain or conduct training in security concepts, military weapons/tactics, or other capabilities</p> <p><b>Breach/Attempted Intrusion</b> includes precursor activities where unauthorized unauthorized personnel attempting to enter or actually entering a restricted area, secured protected site, or nonpublic area. Impersonation of authorized personnel (e.g., police/security officers, janitor, or other personnel).</p> <p><b>Eliciting Information</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators questioned individuals at a level beyond mere curiosity about particular facets of a facility's or building's purpose, operations, security procedures, etc., that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person prior to the incident.</p> <p><b>Expressed/Implied Threat</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators communicated a spoken or written threat to damage or compromise a person/facility/infrastructure prior to the incident.</p> <p><b>Cyber Activity</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators compromised, or attempted to compromise or disrupt an organization's information technology infrastructure prior to the incident.</p> <p><b>Materials Acquisition/Storage</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators discussed, acquired, and/or stored or attempted to acquire and/or store unusual quantities of materials such as cell phones, pagers, fuel, chemicals, toxic materials, and timers, such that a reasonable person would suspect possible criminal activity prior to the incident.</p> <p><b>Misrepresentation</b> includes precursor activities such as presenting false information or misusing insignia, documents, and/or identification to misrepresent one's affiliation as a means of concealing possible illegal activity.</p> <p><b>Other</b> includes precursor activities that do not fit into one of the other categories.</p> <p><b>Photography</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators took pictures or video of facilities, buildings, or infrastructure in a manner that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person prior to the incident. Examples include taking pictures or video of infrequently used access points, personnel performing security functions (patrols, badge/vehicle checking), security-related equipment (perimeter fencing, security cameras), etc.</p> <p><b>Recruitment</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators attempt to recruit other perpetrators prior to an incident.</p> <p><b>Sabotage/Tampering/Vandalism</b> includes precursor activities where the perpetrators attempted or actually damaged, manipulated, or defaced part of a facility/infrastructure or protected site prior to the incident.</p> <p><b>Surveillance/Reconnaissance</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators demonstrated unusual interest in facilities, buildings, or infrastructure beyond mere casual or professional (e.g. engineers) interest such that a reasonable person would consider the activity suspicious prior to the incident. Examples include observation through binoculars, taking notes, attempting to measure distances, etc.</p>

	<p><b>Testing or Probing of Security</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators deliberately interacted with, or challenged, installations, personnel, or systems that reveal physical, personnel, or cyber security capabilities.</p> <p><b>Theft/Loss/Diversio</b>n includes precursor activities such as stealing or diverting something associated with a facility/infrastructure or secured protected site (e.g., badges, uniforms, identification, emergency vehicles, technology, or documents {classified or unclassified}), which are proprietary to the facility/infrastructure or secured protected site.</p> <p><b>Weapons Acquisition/Storage</b> includes precursor activities where perpetrators acquired and/or stored or attempted to acquire and/or store weapons or explosives.</p>
ANT_SPECIFIC	ANT_SPECIFIC codes the specific action being taken to accomplish the behavior/how of the antecedent behavior, e.g. "Meeting"
ANT_SPECIFIC_SUB	ANT_SPECIFIC_SUB codes the content of the action/what of the antecedent behavior, e.g. "Target selection"
ANT_DATE	ANT_DATE codes the date of the antecedent activity.
CITY	CITY codes the city in which the antecedent activity occurred.
STATE	STATE codes the state in which the antecedent activity occurred.
COUNTRY	COUNTRY codes the country in which the antecedent activity occurred.
	Note: Only antecedent activities occurring in the United States receive a latitude/longitude geostamp.
CRIME_TYPE	CRIME_TYPE codes the type of crime the antecedent constitutes from a list of Part I federal offenses, if applicable.

## INCIDENTS

Variable Name	Description
INC_DESCRIPTION	INC_DESCRIPTION codes a brief description of the attack, including date and location.  e.g. 01-FEB-04 Attempted vandalism of Fur Brothers Mink Farm. Aurora, CO
INC_SUMMARY	INC_SUMMARY contains a brief description of the incident including details about the perpetrators, planning process, attack type, and outcome.
INC_TYPE	<p>INC_TYPE codes the type of incident and captures the general method of attack.</p> <p><b>Assassination</b> is an act whose primary objective is to kill one or more specific, prominent individuals. Usually carried out on persons of some note, such as high- ranking military officers, government officials, celebrities, etc. Not to include attacks on non-specific members of a targeted group. The killing of a police officer would be an armed assault unless there is reason to believe the attackers singled out a particularly prominent officer for assassination.</p> <p><b>Armed Assault</b> is an attack whose primary objective is to cause physical harm or death directly to human beings by use of a firearm, incendiary, or sharp instrument (knife, etc.). Not to include attacks involving the use of fists, rocks, sticks, or other handheld (less-than-lethal) weapons. Also includes attacks involving certain classes of explosive devices in addition to firearms, incendiaries, or sharp instruments. The explosive device subcategories that are included in this classification are grenades, projectiles, and unknown or other explosive devices that are thrown.</p> <p><b>Bombing/Explosion</b> is an attack where the primary effects are caused by an energetically unstable material undergoing rapid decomposition and releasing a pressure wave that causes physical damage to the surrounding environment. Can include either high or low explosives (including a dirty bomb) but does not include a nuclear explosive device that releases energy from fission and/or fusion, or an incendiary device where decomposition takes place at a much slower rate. If an attack involves certain classes of explosive devices along with firearms, incendiaries, or sharp objects, then the attack</p>

	<p>is coded as an armed assault only. The explosive device subcategories that are included in this classification are grenades, projectiles, and unknown or other explosive devices that are thrown in which the bombers are also using firearms or incendiary devices</p> <p><b>Hijacking</b> An act whose primary objective is to take control of a vehicle such as an aircraft, boat, bus, etc. for the purpose of diverting it to an unprogrammed destination, force the release of prisoners, or some other political objective. Obtaining payment of a ransom should not be the sole purpose of a Hijacking, but can be one element of the incident so long as additional objectives have also been stated. Hijackings are distinct from Hostage Taking because the target is a vehicle, regardless of whether there are people/passengers in the vehicle.</p> <p><b>Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)</b> is an act whose primary objective is to take control of hostages for the purpose of achieving a political objective through concessions or through disruption of normal operations. Such attacks are distinguished from kidnapping since the incident occurs and usually plays out at the target location with little or no intention to hold the hostages for an extended period in a separate clandestine location.</p> <p><b>Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)</b> is an act whose primary objective is to take control of hostages for the purpose of achieving a political objective through concessions or through disruption of normal operations. Kidnappings are distinguished from Barricade Incidents (above) in that they involve moving and holding the hostages in another location.</p> <p><b>Facility/Infrastructure Attack</b> is an act, excluding the use of an explosive, whose primary objective is to cause damage to a non-human target, such as a building, monument, train, pipeline, etc. Such attacks include arson and various forms of sabotage (e.g., sabotaging a train track is a facility/infrastructure attack, even if passengers are killed). Facility/infrastructure attacks can include acts which aim to harm an installation, yet also cause harm to people incidentally (e.g. an arson attack primarily aimed at damaging a building, but causes injuries or fatalities).</p> <p><b>Unarmed Assault</b> is an attack whose primary objective is to cause physical harm or death directly to human beings by any means other than explosive, firearm, incendiary, or sharp instrument (knife, etc.). Attacks involving chemical, biological or radiological weapons are considered unarmed assaults.</p> <p><b>Cyberattack</b> is the politically motivated use of computers and information technology to cause severe disruption or widespread fear in society.</p>
INC_DATE	INC_DATE codes the date the attack occurred or was planned to occur.
INC_COMPLETED	INC_COMPLETED codes whether or not the terrorism incident occurred and at least one weapon was delivered to the intended target and caused an observable amount of damage.
DEATH	DEATH codes whether people (non-perpetrators) were killed during the incident or as a result of the incident.
INJURIES	INJURIES codes whether people (non-perpetrators) were injured during the incident.
WEAPON	WEAPON codes the primary, most destructive type of weapon used or planned to be used during the incident.
TARGET	TARGET codes whether or not the target involved humans, structures, or both.
TARGET_TYPE	TARGET_TYPE codes the type of target of the incident, i.e. Government, Educational, Military, etc.
CITY	CITY codes the city in which the incident took place or was planned to take place.
STATE	STATE codes the state in which the incident took place or was planned to take place.
COUNTRY	COUNTRY codes the country in which the incident took place or was planned to take place.
LONE_ACTOR_TYPE	<p>LONE_ACTOR_TYPE characterizes the type of actor or actors who engaged in planning/preparing for and carrying out the incident.</p> <p><b>Loner</b> is coded for incidents involving a perpetrator who had no help planning/preparing for or committing the incident and was not affiliated with a terrorist movement/group.</p> <p><b>Loner Affiliated</b> is coded for incidents involving a perpetrator who had no help planning/preparing for or committing the incident, but was affiliated with a terrorist movement/group.</p>

	<p><b>Lone Conspirator</b> is coded for incidents involving a perpetrator who had no help committing the incident, but did have help planning/preparing for the incident.</p> <p><b>Group</b> is coded for incidents involving a perpetrator who had help planning/preparing for and committing the incident.</p>
PLAN_CYCLE	PLAN_CYCLE codes the approximate length in days of the planning cycle prior to the incident, calculated as the days between the first coded preparatory date and the actual/planned date of the incident.

#### PERPETRATORS

Variable Name	Description
PERP_TYPE	PERP_TYPE codes whether or not the perpetrator was indicted as a result of their participation in the incident or planning for the incident.
CITIZEN_PERP	CITIZEN_PERP codes the person's country or countries of citizenship at the time of their participation in the incident.
CITIZEN_TYPE_PERP	CITIZEN_TYPE_PERP codes the person's U.S. citizenship status at the time of their participation in the incident.