

Class 7: Politically Violent Activity

Foreign fighters and political violence in authoritarian contexts

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

Agenda for the day

- Opening notes
- Foreign fighters
- Poll: foreign fighters
- Who becomes a foreign fighter, how are returnees addressed
- Political violence in an authoritarian contexts
- Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Opening notes

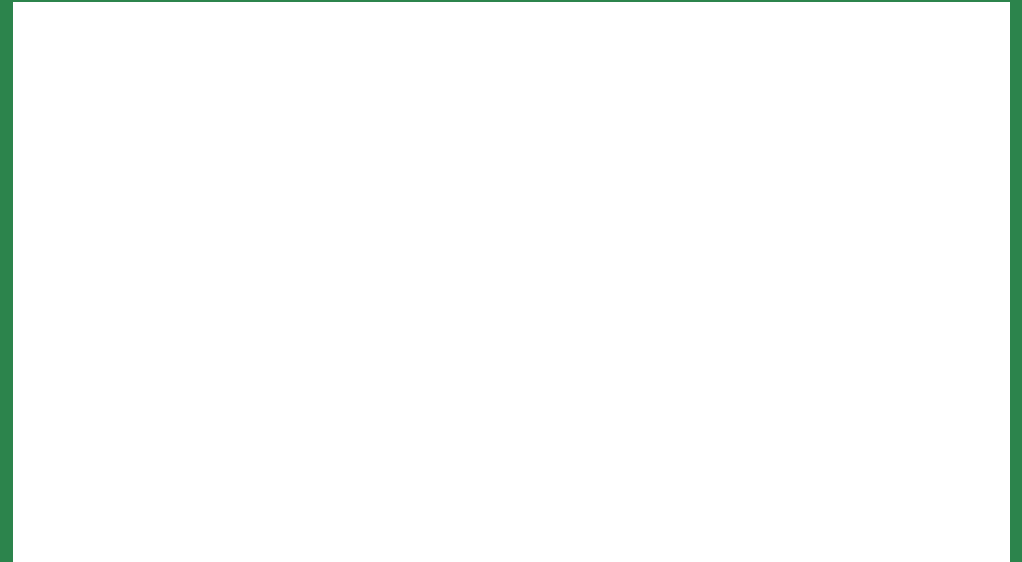


Presentations line-up

Date	Presenters	Method
4 Dec:	Shahadaan, Kristine, Daichi	ethnography
11 Dec:	Bérénice, Zorka, Victoria, Katharina	TBD
18 Dec:	Shoam, Aidan, Tara, Sebastian	QCA

Foreign fighters

- definition
- examples



- **foreign fighters** - individuals who travel to a conflict zone from another territory (prima facie evidence of radicalism → *engagement* in political violence; a 'security failure' by authority of origin state?)
- examples historically? from cases you know of?

Foreign fighters examples



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FF is a widespread part and enduring element of political violence across the world

Poll: foreign fighters

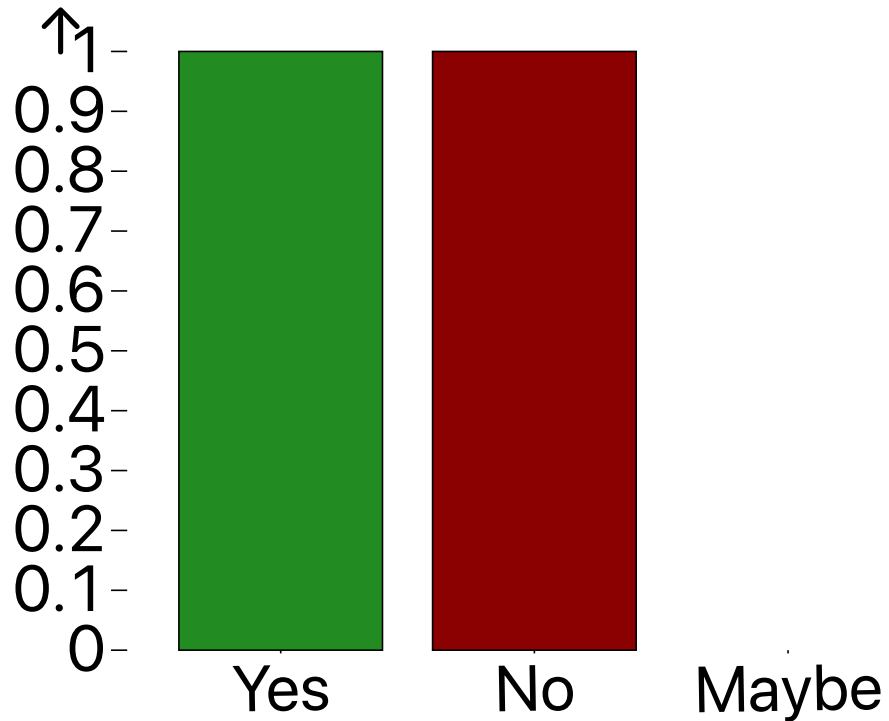


Take the survey at
<https://forms.gle/JJ7ufLwrLJYKAbvg8>

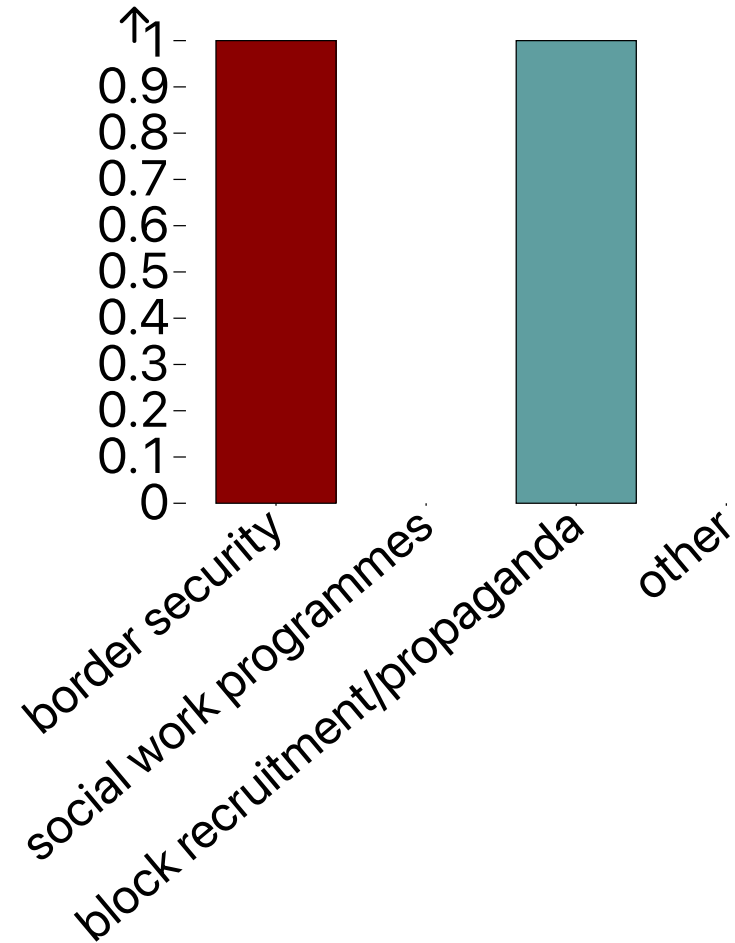
- should states have laws banning travel to conflict zones?
- most effective for addressing foreign fighters phenomenon?
- top policy priority for dealing with returning fighters?
- are returning foreign fighters a significant threat?
- should states be able to revoke fighters' citizenship?

Poll results (Respondents: 2)

laws banning travel to conflict zones?



most effective for addressing foreign fighters phenomenon?



Who becomes a foreign fighter, how are returnees addressed

- Morris (2023) - Who Becomes a Foreign Fighter? Characteristics of the Islamic State's Soldiers
 - context, casing, data, locales of fighter mobilisation
 - results and findings
- dealing with returning foreign fighters

Morris (2023) - Context

MENA (Middle East, North Africa) countries have sent the largest numbers of foreign fighters to Syria

- Why is this the case? What are the relevant contextual factors?

MENA (Middle East, North Africa) countries have sent the largest numbers of foreign fighters to Syria

- Why is this the case? What are the relevant contextual factors?
 - religious ideology (*jihad*)
 - religious internationalism (history of MENA alliance, e.g., in wars and campaigns against Israel)
 - contexts of deprivation? travelling to fight as a ‘way out’

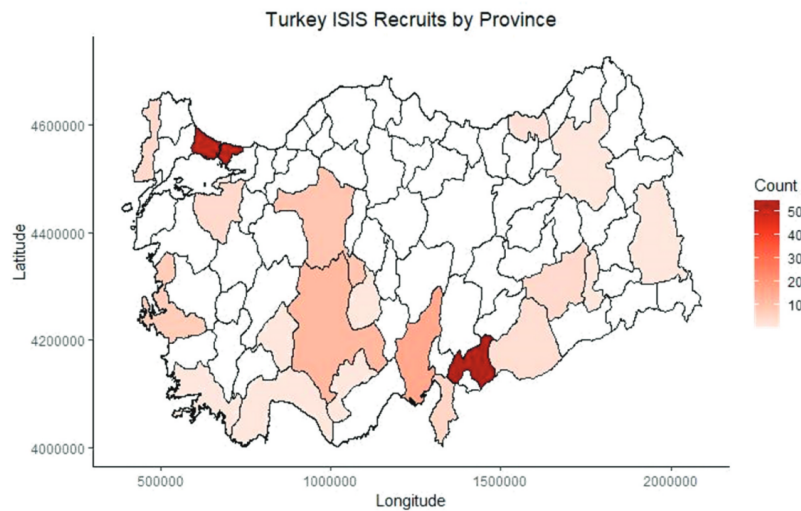
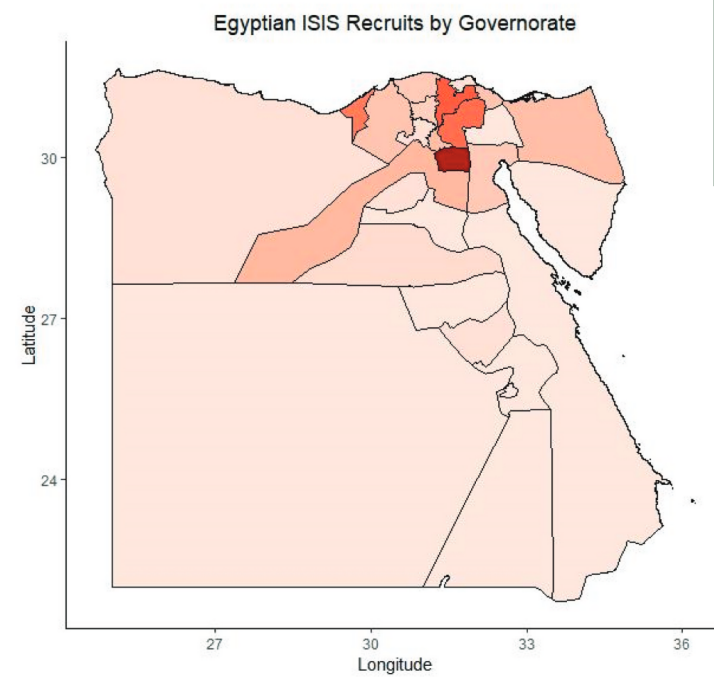
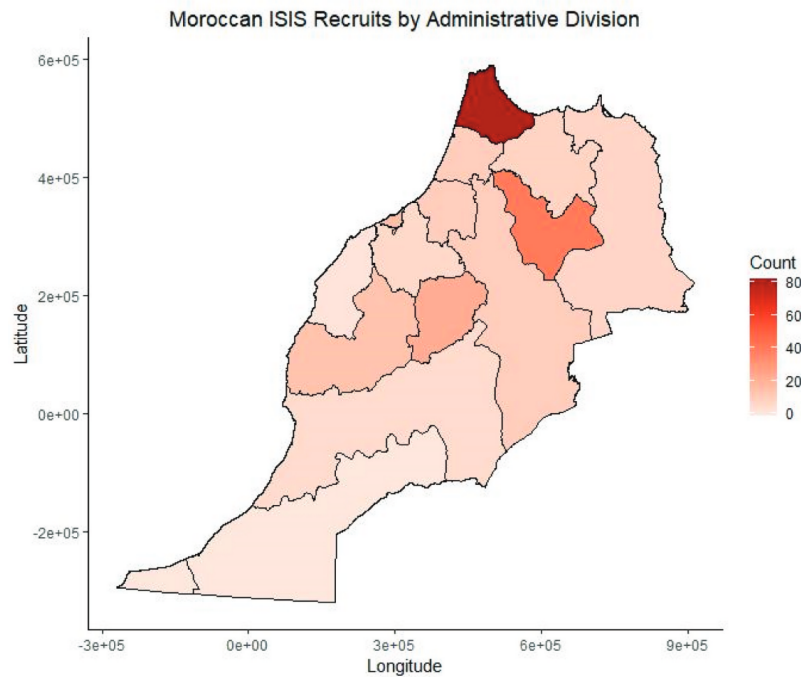
Morris (2023) - Casing

- Three countries analysed: **Morocco, Egypt, and Turkey**
 - Morocco represents foreign fighters from the Maghreb (Northwest Africa). (*representative country context*)
 - Egyptian foreign fighters are more alike to ISIS recruits from the Levant than North Africa. (*representative country context*)
 - Turkey,
 - Turkey's historical, political, and socioeconomic traits make it as a (*least likely mobilisation context*)
 - Turkish foreign fighters may be more like Islamic State members from the Middle East and Central Asia than the other two countries. (*representative country context*)
- NB: Two *casing logics* at work here: (1) thinking in terms of population of foreign fighters and clusters therein and (2) thinking in terms of country cases in comparison with other country cases

Morris (2023) - data

- data from leaked IS personnel records
- **explanatory variables**
 - **occupation:** unemployed, unskilled, student, skilled
 - **education:** none, primary, secondary, university
 - **marital status:** single, married
 - **children:** yes, no
 - **age**
- any major factors that seem **omitted**?

Morris (2023) - locales of fighter mobilisation



Major centres: Tangier, Tetouan, and surrounding region, and Fes; Cairo, Alexandria, and lower Nile area; Istanbul and Antep

any visualisation problems?

Morris (2023) - regression results (*how to interpret*)

Table 4. Logistic regression estimates.

	Dependent variable: Join ISIS		
	Morocco	Egypt	Turkey
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Occupation:			
Unskilled	1.313*** (0.342)	0.783* (0.406)	1.338*** (0.367)
Student	-1.030** (0.498)	0.320 (0.404)	-1.042* (0.533)
Skilled	1.677*** (0.339)	0.448 (0.348)	0.741** (0.360)
Education:			
Secondary	1.129*** (0.173)	2.313*** (0.734)	0.664*** (0.206)
University	1.816*** (0.221)	4.788*** (0.717)	0.759** (0.340)
Marital Status	0.380 (0.255)	0.336 (0.329)	-1.490*** (0.448)
Children	-0.368 (0.265)	0.025 (0.320)	1.048** (0.456)
Age	-0.044*** (0.011)	-0.062*** (0.016)	-0.058*** (0.018)
Constant	-8.708*** (0.469)	-11.905*** (0.874)	-6.746*** (0.620)
Observations	408,923	2,001,688	995,268
Log Likelihood	-1,548.401	-1,249.689	-1,131.087

* $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

This table reports logistic models estimating *Join ISIS* using *Occupation*, *Education*, *Marital Status*, *Children*, and *Age* for Moroccan, Egyptian, and Turkish men.

Reading a regression table

Remember: regression is a tool for understanding a phenomenon as a linear function (generally) $\rightarrow (y = mx + b)$

Morris (2023) - regression results (*how to interpret*)

a university education is the strongest correlate of joining a terrorist organization.

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Morris (2023) - regression results

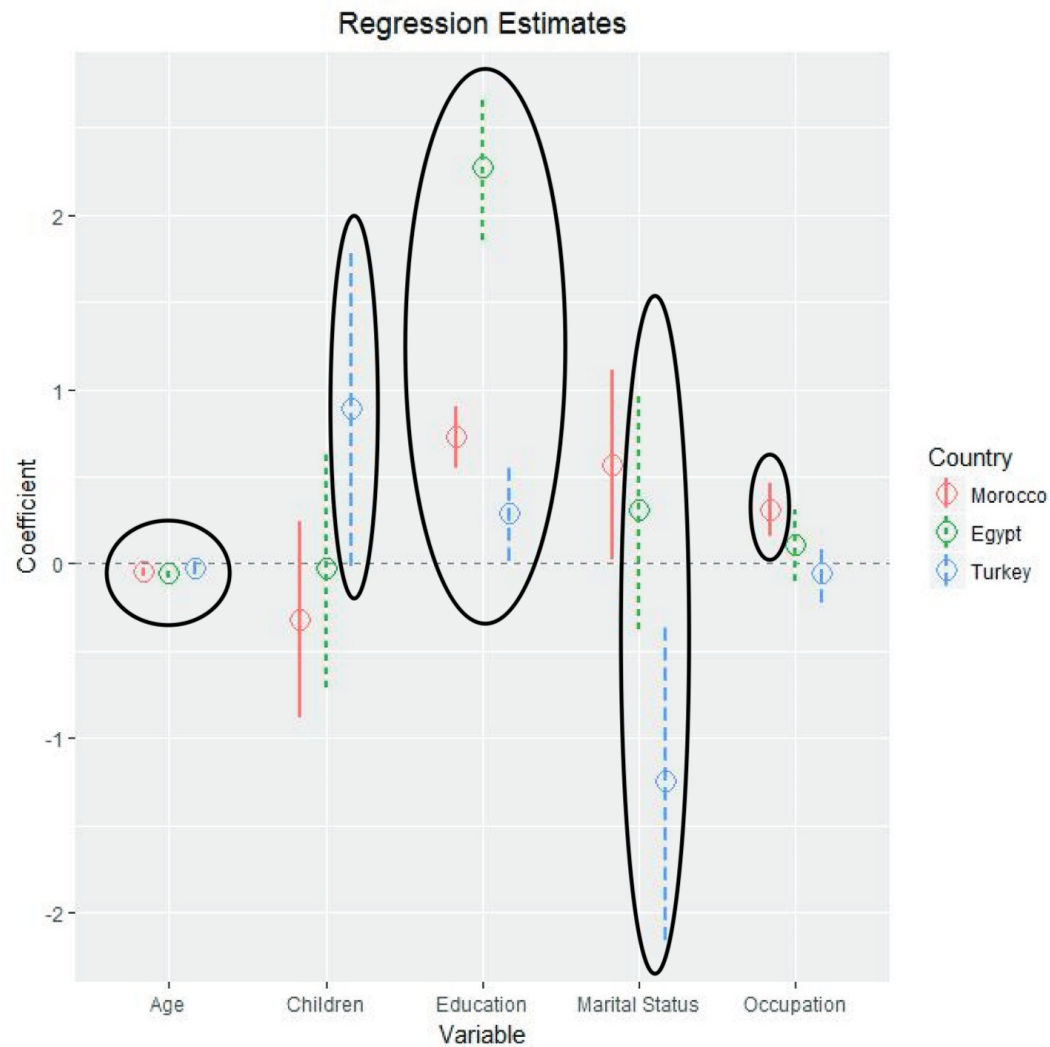


Figure 1. Logistic regression estimates by country. *Education* and *Age* are statistically significant for all countries. *Occupation* is significant for Morocco. *Marital Status* is statistically significant for Morocco and Turkey. *Children* is statistically significant in Turkey.

Findings

Despite the difference in space and time, ISIS foreign fighters have a similar profile to members of Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and even violent political activists in Bengal. The men in all these samples are predominately **male**, **well-educated**, **urban**, **unmarried**, and **young**.

a university education is the strongest correlate of joining a terrorist organization.

- any of characteristics stand out for... theoretical reasons compared to other cases you know?
- IS attracted both unskilled and skilled workers = offered to improve the livelihood of its members

Dealing with returning foreign fighters (1)

Spain example

Dealing with returning foreign fighters (2)

Economist (a bit sensationalist and some graphic imagery)

Dealing with returning foreign fighters (3)

David Malet

Poll results - returning foreign fighters

Political violence in an authoritarian contexts

- questions
- Enstad (2018) - Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Putin's Russia
 - data overview



Political violence in an authoritarian context

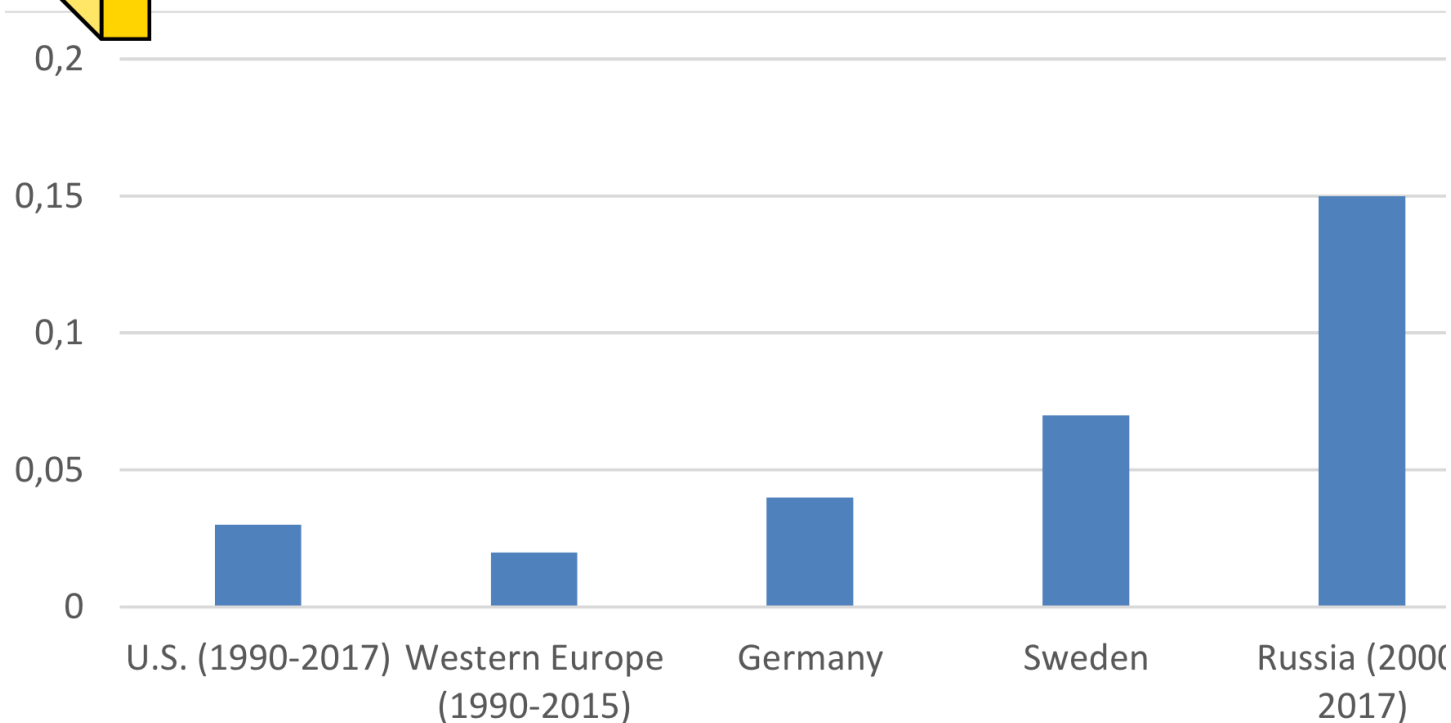
What are the special conditions of political violence in within an authoritarian regime?

- more extreme possibilities of repression
- against the state or against others?
- combatted by, tolerated by, or supported by the state?

Enstad (2018) - an empirical puzzle?

Putin's Russia has seen much more right-wing violence than any other comparable country in the past 25 years.

Figure 1: Deadly Events per Million Inhabitants per Year



Enstad (2018) - aim and data

- **descriptive research aim:** comparison of countries and regions, patterns and trends

The RTV-RUSSIA dataset currently consists of 495 events, including 406 deadly events causing 459 deaths over a period of eighteen years (2000-2017). RTV-RUSSIA has been patterned on the RTV dataset (RightWing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe) compiled by Jacob Ravndal,[4] and features the same set of variables (date, location, event type, perpetrator type, perpetrator's organizational affiliation, victim, weapon(s) used, number of casualties, as well as a description of the event).

Enstad (2018) - data overview

Perpetrator type	Type of violence					Sum
	Premeditated attacks	Spontaneous attacks	Plots	Preparation for armed struggle	Unknown	
Organized groups	48	3	2	0	1	54
Affiliated members	10	1	2	0	1	14
Autonomous cells	34	0	7	0	0	41
Gangs	121	12	0	0	2	135
Unorganized	74	15	1	0	1	91
Lone actors	16	8	2	1	1	28
Shadow groups	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unknown	104	7	2	1	16	130
Total	408	46	16	2	23	495

Enstad (2018) - region comparison

Figure 3. Russia: targeting (deadly events)

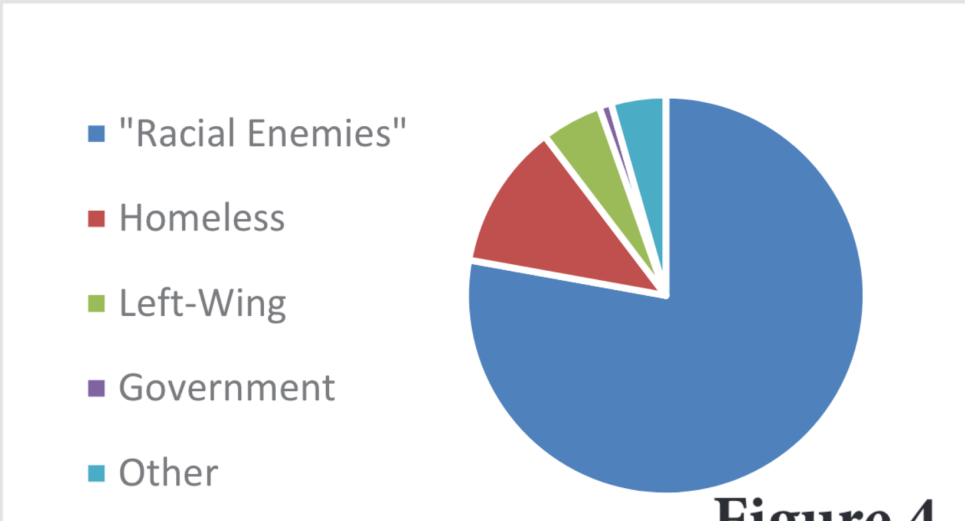
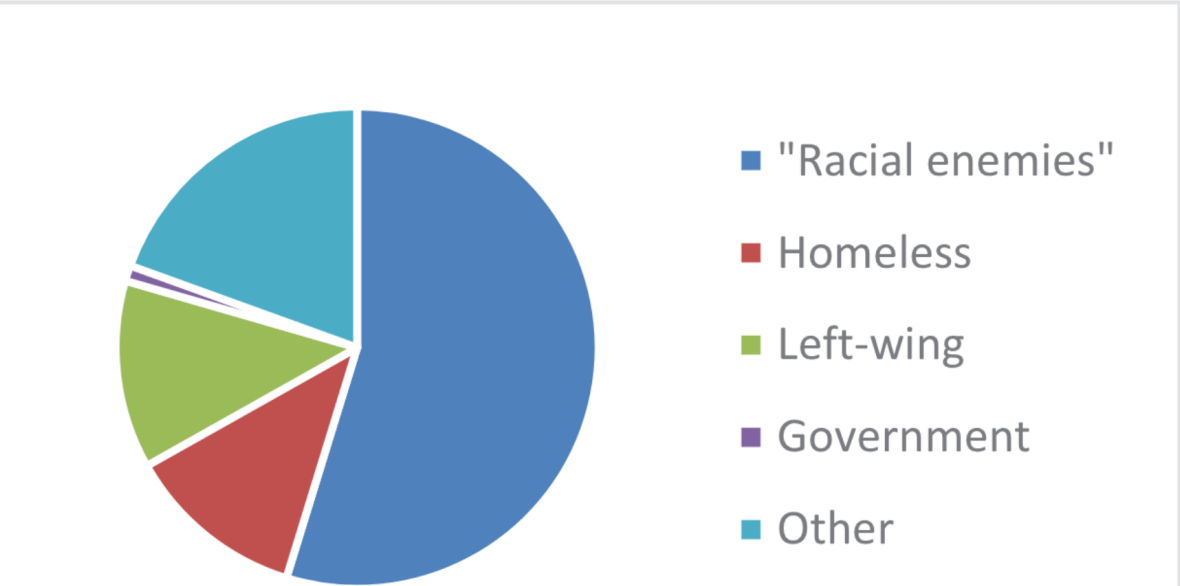
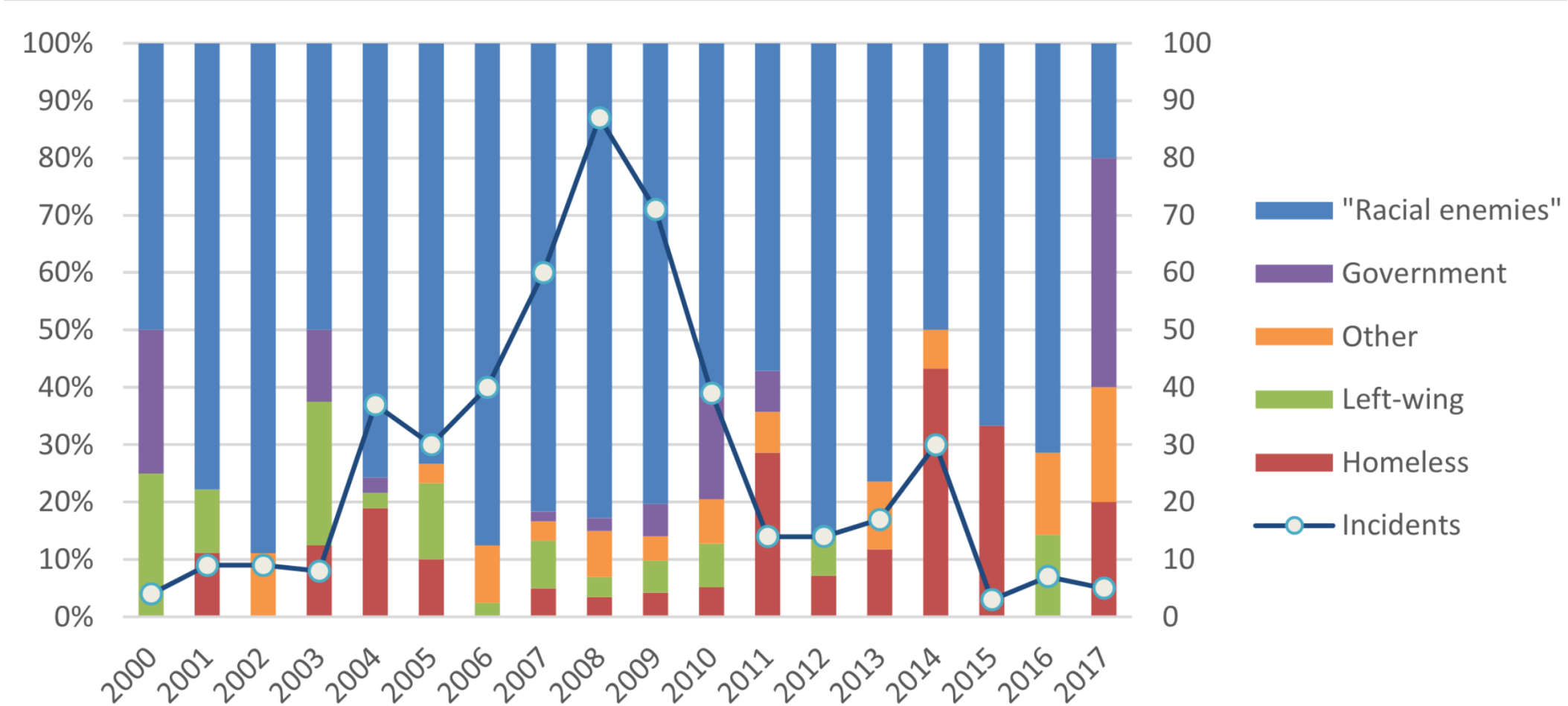


Figure 4. Western Europe: targeting (deadly events)



Enstad (2018) - longitudinal comparison

Figure 8. Targeting, 2000-2017 (all Events)



Enstad (2018) - findings

1. **Russian activists have operated much more violently** compared to their counterparts in the United States and Western Europe.
2. **Russian activists have operated more purposefully**, with premeditated attacks vastly outnumbering spontaneous ones.
3. gangs and unorganized groups have been the most common perpetrators; the overall **share of lone actors has been much lower than in the West**

Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Anonymous feedback here:

<https://forms.gle/NfF1pCfYMbkAT3WP6>

Alternatively, please send me an email: m.zeller@lmu.de

References

- Enstad, Johannes Due. 2018. “Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Putin’s Russia.” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12 (6): 89–103.
- Morris, Andrea Michelle. 2023. “Who Becomes a Foreign Fighter? Characteristics of the Islamic State’s Soldiers.” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, January, 1–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2022.2144730>.