

RTV Error Profile

Right-wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe, 1990-2022

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RTV Error Profile 2023

Most datasets come with certain inherent biases resulting in potential measurement errors. Below are the most important biases inherent in the 2023-version of RTV dataset that users should be aware of to avoid measurement errors. See the [RTV Methodology](#) for more details.

Unit of analysis	Sufficient coverage for estimating trends?		For more information
	1990-2014	2015-2022	
Non-fatal events	No	Yes	See 1
Fatal events	Yes	Yes	See 1
Terrorist events	No	Yes (with caution)	See 2
Plots and preparation for armed struggle	No	Yes (with caution)	See 3, 8, 9

Trends and terrorism

1. Our current coverage of non-fatal events, including attack plots and arms discoveries, between 1990 and 2014 is limited and skewed towards certain periods and places. Consequently, these data should not be used to estimate trends or perform correlational analysis. By contrast, all fatal events for the entire 1990-2022 period and non-fatal events between 2015-2022 are eligible for correlational analysis.
2. The RTV dataset currently does not distinguish terrorist from non-terrorist events. Events from 2015 that may qualify as terrorism can be identified by for example filtering out premeditated attacks using explosives, firearms, vehicles and potentially also firebombs, Molotov cocktails, and knives, depending on one's definition of terrorism. We encourage users to manually review events to ensure they are in line with their chosen definition of terrorism. Non-fatal events prior to 2015 are not covered systematically.
3. Most events reported in the media as terrorist plots are included, likely resulting in an overreporting of attack plots from 2015 to 2022. At the same time, there is an underreporting of plots between 1990 and 2014 due to limitations in sources, methods and media coverage. Frequencies of plot discoveries are also influenced by government's attention towards this threat. Similar biases concern discoveries of major arms repositories, coded as "preparation for armed struggle" in the RTV dataset. Consequently, users should be wary of these biases when including "plots" and "preparation for armed struggle" in their analyses.

Target groups

4. The coverage of attacks against LGBT+ people, Jews, and homeless may be incomplete because it is difficult in some cases to determine whether an attack was indeed motivated far-right beliefs or by some other ideological, religious, or personal motive with hostility toward the same target groups. Thus far, we have only included cases in which a far-right motive could be established or reasonably deduced, given the circumstances. See the "[RTV Research Note on Excluded Cases](#)" for more information.

5. Attacks committed by incels, school shooters and other perpetrators commonly associated with the far right are only included if the target selection was indeed determined by, and resonates with, explicit far-right beliefs.

Perpetrators

6. Whether an attack was committed by (members of) an organized or unorganized entity is sometimes difficult to determine. Such cases have been coded as “coordinated entities”, defined as “constellations of two or more people with a suspected far-right affiliation who are acting in a coordinated manner, but where information about their organizational affiliation is missing”. When analyzing the extent of organized violence, users should run the analysis with and without this perpetrator type (coordinated entities). For now, the perpetrator type “coordinated entities” represents perpetrators that we highly suspect are organized or affiliated with a far-right organization, movement, or group, but where we lack sufficient confirmatory information to code them as such.
7. Attacks perpetrated by minors below the average age of criminal responsibility in Western Europe, which is 14 years, are excluded from the dataset.

Attack plots

8. From 2023 on, we are including more information about attack plots in the publicly available version of the RTV dataset. In this regard, we want to emphasize that these types of events should be considered as fundamentally different from completed attacks. One reason for this is that many detected plots would likely never materialize into actual completed attacks, even with no government interference. Therefore, attack plots and completed attacks should as a general rule be analysed as separate events. For the same reason, one should also be careful about using attack plots as a basis for threat assessments.