

RTV Error Profile

Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe, 1990-2023

Supplementary material



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RTV Error Profile

Most datasets come with certain inherent biases resulting in potential measurement error. Below are the most important biases inherent in the current version of the RTV dataset that users should be aware of to avoid measurement error. The RTV Error Profile should be read in conjunction with the [RTV Codebook](#) and [RTV Methodology](#). The table below summarises our recommended practices.

Unit of analysis	Sufficient coverage for estimating trends?		For more info
	1990-2009	2010 onward	
Fatal attacks	Yes	Yes	See 1
Non-fatal attacks	No	Yes	See 1
Terrorist attacks	No	Yes	See 2
Attack plots	No	Yes (with caution)	See 3
Arms discoveries	No	Yes (with caution)	See 4

Fatal versus non-fatal attacks

1. All fatal attacks since 1990 and all non-fatal attacks since 2010 are eligible for trend- and correlational analysis. By contrast, our coverage of non-fatal attacks, attack plots, and arms discoveries from the 1990-2009 period is limited due to source limitations and different data collection methods. Consequently, these data should not be used to estimate trends or perform correlational analysis.

Terrorist attacks

2. The RTV dataset does not distinguish terrorist from non-terrorist attacks, but does distinguish between premeditated and spontaneous attacks. Thus, terrorist attacks may be identified by filtering out premeditated attacks using specific weapons such as explosives and firearms, and potentially also other weapons such as firebombs, Molotov cocktails, vehicles, and knives, depending

on one’s definition of terrorism. We encourage users to manually review the short descriptions of each event to ensure they are in line with their chosen definition of terrorism.

Attack plots

3. There is an underreporting of attack plots between 1990 and 2009 due to limitations in sources, methods and media coverage. Frequencies of disrupted attack plots are also influenced by governments’ varying attention towards this threat over time. Furthermore, most events reported in the media as terrorist plots are included in the RTV dataset, likely resulting in an overreporting of attack plots from 2010 onward. One reason for this is that many detected plots would likely never materialise 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, and trends in detected attack plots should be analysed with caution.

Arms discoveries

4. There is an underreporting of major arms discoveries between 1990 and 2009 due to limitations in sources, methods and media coverage. Frequencies of arms discoveries, coded as “preparation for armed struggle” in the RTV dataset, are also influenced by governments’ attention towards this threat. Whether an illegal arms repository is detected or not by the government depends on a range of factors, and we cannot assume that most such repositories are, in fact, detected. Therefore, trends in arms discoveries should be viewed more as a reflection of government attention to this threat rather than a direct measure of the threat itself.

Target groups

5. The coverage of attacks targeting LGBTQI+ people, Jews, and homeless persons 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.

Perpetrators

6. Whether an attack was committed by (members of) an organised or unorganised entity is sometimes difficult to determine. When analysing the extent of organised violence, users should run the analysis with and without the perpetrator type “coordinated entities”. This perpetrator type represents perpetrators that we highly suspect are organised or affiliated with a far-right organisation, movement, or group, but where we lack sufficient confirmatory information to code them as such.
7. 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.
8. Attacks perpetrated by minors below the average age of criminal responsibility in Western Europe, which is 14 years, are excluded from the dataset.