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Political violence in Greece through the PVGR database: evidence from the far right and the far left

Lamprini Rori, Vasiliki Georgiadou, and Costas Roumanias

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Political violence in Greece through the PVGR database: evidence from the far right and the far left

Lamprini Rori[1], Vasiliki Georgiadou[2], and Costas Roumanias[3]

ABSTRACT

The paper presents a new database (PVGR) on political violence in Greece from 2008 to 2019. PVGR monitors violent episodes reported mainly in online and printed media, stemming both from the far right and the far left. It provides the first existing measure of political violence in Greece for a timespan of eleven years. The uniqueness of our database is two-fold: first, it covers both ideological kinds of extremism: right wing and left wind; second, it registers the whole stairway of low-intensity violent escalation, from physical attacks to terrorism. We gather data on all the internal-supply aspects of political violence: we identify its size, the actors involved and their ideological background, the targets. We further provide measures of frequency, intensity, escalation and geographical distribution, which permit us to configure political violence in crisis-ridden Greece. We find an important increase in political violence in the period under study. We contribute to the literature of political violence in several ways. First, we offer the first comprehensive database of political violence in Greece. Second, we typologize evidence in analytical categories and measures, thus contributing to the classification of the phenomenon beyond ideological doctrines. Third, we clarify similarities and differences between the two kinds of violence, which implies specific policy implications.

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1. Introduction

Political violence varies in its manifestations, rationalizations and moral justifications. Violent events fuel from both sides of the political spectrum. Despite divergences in the ideology, causes, uses and meanings of violence – the far left (FL) calling for the abolition of capitalism and market economy (March 2008), whereas the extremist right adopting a moral panic jargon on the "islamization" and "the white genocide" of the West (Ebner 2018) – the two camps share common grounds: violent actors from both ends of the political arena express hostility against parliamentarism, oppose liberal democracy and exhibit intolerance towards their political and ideological opponents. We depart from the ideological doctrines, value systems and policy orientations of the far right (FR) and the FL to focus on organizational factors that include violent practices, tactics and styles of activism associated with both the FR and the FL political subcultures.

This paper represents the first attempt to our knowledge to empirically approach both extremist camps from a supply-side angle, by creating a completely new dataset which introduces data on a series of measures, such as frequency, intensity, escalation and geographical distribution of violent activities. As far as populist radical and extremist parties and movements are concerned, supply-side factors can be further divided into external and internal factors (Mudde 2007): the first include institutional frameworks and conditions of the political space, whilst the latter refer to the ideology and the organizational characteristics of the political entities. Focusing particularly on violent events attributed to organizations and actors of the outermost pole of the political spectrum, we explore the internal supply-side dimension, its variation and dynamics in Greece.

Political violence has been present in Greece since the very beginning of the Third Republic (1974 – present). As is the case with Europe (Passmore 2015) and the USA (Forster 1966; Tan 2018), Greek political violence stems from both political edges. Left-wing terrorism launched in 1974, immediately after the fall of the military junta and the restauration of parliamentary democracy. A plethora of terrorist attacks occurred until 2002, when one of the most homicidal terrorist organizations and

enduring groups in Europe, the "Revolutionary Organization 17 November" (17N), was dismantled by the Hellenic Police (Karyotis 2007; Kassimeris 2013). Extreme left organizations of Marxist-Leninist background were not the only game in town. FR activists of the mid/late 1970s engaged in violent attacks against a "double set of enemies" (Ravndal & Bjørgo 2018, p. 6): the communists and the newly established liberal regime. Violence associated with a new wave of political protest underwent a rapid expansion in the 2000s and the 2010s. The murder of a 15-year-old student shot by a police officer in December 2008 was the catalyst for the escalation of protest that triggered a new phase of violent radicalization, marked by the resurgence of political violence (Karamichas 2009; Anagnostou & Skleparis 2015; Sotiropoulos 2018). New left-wing organizations inspired by individualist anarchism and post-modern nihilism, as well as right-wing extremist militias promoting neo-Nazi ideology, constitute the new mosaic of violent actors since the outbreak of the financial crisis (Ravndal & Bjørgo 2018, p. 6; Dinas et al. 2016; Xenakis 2012).

In this article, we systematically monitor violent events stemming from both the FR and the FL, spanning a period of twelve years from the beginning of 2008, the year during which the December riots erupted (Economides & Monastiriotis 2009), to the end of 2019, which marks the beginning of the post-crisis period (Rori 2020). Zooming on Kalyva's typology (2019), we explore the topography of violence perpetrated by non-state actors, targeting both state and non-state entities. Mass protest, rebellion, riots, political assassination, intercommunal violence, terrorism fall within this classification (ibid.), broadly coinciding with what other scholars mention as low-intensity or civil violence (della Porta 1995; Balcells et al. 2015; Lawrence 2010). Our data testify a significant sharpening of violence on both edges of the political spectrum by a plethora of actors. We observe a long run increasing trend, with short-term fluctuations which cut across the violence spectrum. To move beyond the crisis narrative, we strive for a more fine-grained analysis that configures the landscape of political violence by delving into its actors, targets and event types; portrays its spatial distribution across the country, whilst zooming in the biggest region and reflects on the frequency, intensity and escalation of the phenomenon.

The contribution of this paper is three-fold. First, we offer a comprehensive database of incidents of political violence reported in the media, covering Greece's traumatic decade of economic collapse, political turmoil and societal change. That is a unique resource of violent episodes stemming from both the FL and the FR, whilst covering the entire spectrum of politically motivated violence: from human attacks to attacks against property or structures and from terrorism to violent protest. Second, we typologize evidence and contribute to the classification of the phenomenon, by offering original measures on a series of parameters of political violence common for the FR and the FL, that map the landscape of political violence beyond ideological inclinations of its components. Third, we disentangle the phenomenon of political violence in all its internal supply-side aspects (type, size, identity of group involved, perpetrators and victims), clarifying similarities and differences between the two kinds of violence motivated by the FL and the FR.

2. Literature review

2.1 Datasets on political violence

Several data collections including systematic information on significant incidents of political violence have been created in the last decades. Datasets on political violence are based either on the use of official records and primary sources or on secondary data. Matching of the two data types is also practiced.

The academic study of political violence is suffering from a dearth of official and primary sources of data. Accessible, publicly available, official statistics on political violence remain limited, mostly due to data sensitivity. Research on the field relies heavily on multiple unclassified, open and secondary sources (Schuurman 2018; LaFree 2019). Since the 1980s, terrorism scholars have acknowledged the "almost total reliance on secondary and tertiary source material" (Horgan 2004) as one of the most persistent issues. Empirical research on radicalization and violent extremism is still based significantly on secondary sources, despite the increase in the use of first-hand data (Schmid 2011; Neumann & Kleinmann 2013, p. 361, 377). After 9/11, primary data have increased considerably and scholars adopt a wider variety of data-

gathering techniques and more sophisticated methodologies (Schuurman 2018). Primary and secondary data sources are both however imperfect (Acosta & Ramos 2017) and measuring political violence remains problematic.

Research on international terrorism relies on three main event datasets: the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RAND), reporting on domestic and transnational attacks – albeit not consistently for both – from 1968 to 2007; Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE), classifying data on transnational attacks for 1414 groups during the same period; and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), collecting more than 190,000 number of attacks that occurred since the 1970. They all provide key, different variables on several features like the number, country and diversity of attacks, the number of casualties, hostage taking, success or failure, etc. Data on political violence has moreover been systematized in sources accumulating information on both between states and within states conflict. The PRIO/Uppsala dataset on armed conflict codes all cases of war involvement in sab-Saharan African states from 1967 to 1997, provided that a threshold of 25 related deaths are reported within one year and that one of the combatants is a government (Craft & Smaldone 2002; Gleditsch et al. 2002). As the dataset has further been expanded covering violence occurring from 1950 to 2000, it has been used by studies which link population, context and armed conflict.

Datasets on political violence are often missing data and efforts have been made to recall them. Hou et at. (2020) created the Extended Data on Terrorist Groups (EDTG) by expanding the GTD dataset from 367 to 760 groups that operated from 1970 to 2016. The updated version improves information on groups and attacks, permitting better predictions on the longevity of organization, displaying the distribution domestically and transnationally, per ideological wave, and using the ideological feature as independent variable on many aspects. Acosta and Ramos (2017) applied the GTD coding scheme in order to identify the whole set of violent incidents in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the year 1993. Searching in several sources (RAND, GTD, US State Department Significant Incidents, etc.), the authors collected a number of violent incidents that is comparable to the GTD aggregate number for the same year. The inclusion of new data contributed to review existing assumptions regarding the start of suicide bombings in the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation and armed conflicts

in several conflict zones around the world (Acosta & Ramos 2017). Linking multiple sources, such as military records with media-based events (Weidmann 2015; Jackman & Boyd 1979; Brockett 1992), helps overcome two kinds of problems: the missing of official data and inaccuracies in media-based event data. Weidmann (2015) shows how inaccuracies in data collections on violence can be dealt with by this matching. The comparison of the two data collections reflects agreement to a large extent, whereas deficiencies in official data can be addressed by taking into account media-based events, the precision of which can be improved by using media reports up to a specific locational level (Weidmann 2015).

The rise of information and communication technologies have proliferated the ways of creating, collecting and improving data. By using media records and event analysis, a certain set of information that contributes to the identification of the perpetrators and the victims, as well as to the clarification of the context associated with one-sided conflicts can be extracted (Otto 2013). Machine learning techniques have been used to generate events from different media collections for the purpose of predicting armed conflicts (Mueller & Rauh 2017). Apart from media reports, event data sets are also based on information collected by civil society organizations. Benček and Strasheim (2016) constructed a georeferenced data collection (ARVIG) of 1,645 right-wing violent incidents and civil unrests in Germany from 2014 to 2015 by an online chronicle publicized by two NGOs (Amadeu Antonio Foundation and PRO ASYL). ARVIG includes incidents against refugees. The data set reveals a clear divide of violent incidents between East and West Germany and provides explanations on existing variation in anti-refugee violence distribution. Crowdsourcing data on the number and geospatial distribution of fatalities have been used in order to construct a dataset of the Syrian civil war violence from March 2011 to November 2012, with data stemming from decentralized reports of Syrians collected via a publicly available online platform. Geo-referenced event data on insurgent violence in Afghanistan drawing from global media and NGOs reports are also used by Weidmann (2016) to show that reporting on the levels of violence is affected by the mobile phones coverage and emphasize the need for extensive local - media and other - sources. Individual-level data about the kind, magnitude casualties and drivers of participation in violent acts are also collected via surveys (Bjarnegård et al. 2017).

2.2 Limitations of Media Databases of violent events

Lack of primary, cross-country consistent data on political violence has led to the use of secondary data, among which media data are the mostly used (Otto 2013). Event analysis has become a key method in conflict, international relations and protest/social movement studies (Hutter 2014; Oliver et al. 2003; Koopmans and Rucht 2002; Koopmans & Statham 1999; Kriesi et al. 1995). It is valuable for selecting data to study public events, such as protest, unrest or violent acts. The focus is either on the identification of specific types of events or on the interpretation of the discursive frames of events (Schrodt 1995; Koopmans & Statham 1999). Taking protest events as an example, protest event analysis and political discourse analysis are the two main methodological approaches crystallized in the repertoire of social protest research (Hutter 2014; Koopmans & Rucht 2002; Fillieule & Jiménez 2003; Koopmans & Statham 1999; van Dijk 1998). Integrating the two approaches into one, Koopmans and Statham (1999) proposed a third that links the factual and the discursive context of protest events. The so-called "political claims analysis is an attempt to find "the missing link between actors and contents" of events taking into consideration a variety of actions and actors making claims in the public sphere (Leifeld & Haunss 2010, p. 5). Integrating different sets of events, actors, discourses and claims enables researchers to speculate on opportunities, causes and circumstances that cause them. However, this kind of data are linked with specific deficiencies:

2.2.1. Biases

Selection bias is ingrained in media sources, as some information never reaches the press. Therefore, the reported number and kind of events most likely differs from their official number and actual categories (Weidmann 2016; Drakos & Gofas 2006, p. 715). Underreporting bias (ibid.) is not only a problem of veracity, but also an issue of a set of media biases among which selection, proximity, significance, intensity and description biases have been observed (Otto 2013). Media biases can be reduced by including alternative (local, thematic, etc.) press agencies in reports of violent events databases that tend to cover differently violent incidents (Weidmann 2016; Otto 2013). Despite steps taken to improve media reporting techniques, routinized (Oliver & Myers 1999), small-sized (Rucht & Neidhardt 1998; della Porta & Diani 2006), single

events that are not related to a wider context (Oliver & Maney 2000) are hard to garner media attention apart perhaps from the sub-national and the issue-oriented press. The quality of democracy and press freedom levels are also factors that affect media reporting: restrictions of press freedom are strongly linked to understatements of violent events, whereas high levels of democratic quality have a positive effect on the accuracy of press coverage (Drakos & Gofas 2006).

2.2.2. Coverage

Beyond disagreements over the classification and the appropriateness of data sources (Silke 2004, p. 61-62), using secondary sources or mixing different datasets aims "to compensate for deficiencies and gaps in the primary source" (Taylor & Hudson 1972, p. 422). In the study of domestic or cross-country violence, data very often stem from media sources that provide certain types of information on violent events (Azar et al. 1972, p. 373; Azar 1980). The usual practice was to rely on a limited number of media collections for generating event data (Jackman & Boyd 1979; Taylor & Hudson 1972). However, adding more data sources improves the representation and the accuracy of the sample and balances media biases (Jackman & Boyd 1979, p. 436; McCarthy et al 1996, p. 479; Koopmans & Statham 1999, p. 218; Oliver & Maney 2000, p. 463-464; Silke 2004, p. 62-63). A combination of multiple media sources, of different ideological orientation and coverage at the national and local level might be the appropriate remedy for a series of deficiencies in media data (McCarthy et al 1996).

2.2.3. Duplication

According to existing systems developed to code instances of protest, conflicts and violence (CAMEO, MERCI, etc.), techniques for capturing and removing duplicate events are needed to refine and finalize the datasets (Azar et al. 1972, p. 378-379; Beyerlein et al. 2016). The hazard of duplication exists in both human and automated coding (Bond et al. 2003, p. 737). Classification of events chronologically, usually per actors and targets, seems to be an appropriate mean for seizing duplications (Azar et al. 1972, p. 378-379). Each single event is given a distinct code in order to avoid duplication of the event mentions in the data.

3. Political violence in Greece

3.1 Origins of political violence

A confrontational and oppositional culture can be traced back and across the years since the foundation of the Greek state, which primed civil conflict and polarization (Psychogios 2013). Far from being merely symbolic, conflictual dispositions and polarization were constitutive aspects of public life, deeply ingrained in politics and society (Kalyvas 1997, p. 84). Local, national or other conflicts reinforced polarization, which reached its peak in the 1980s when a spiral of heated antagonisms and poisonous political rhetoric prevailed after the victory of socialists (PASOK) in 1981 (ibid., p.89). Polarization is, however, firmly rooted in past conflicts and springs from the ambiguous position of the country's institutions that "accept the rules of the game" while, at the same time, "adopt a polarizing strategy" (ibid., p. 101). Traces of this dualism and ambiguity can be found even before the foundation of a sovereign state in the 19th century.

During the late Ottoman empire and before the 1821 War of Independence, the armed mountain-folks - known as thieves and guerrillas - represented a system of controlled violence against the Ottoman authorities (Fukuyama 2014; Dakin 1973). Bands of mountain-folks and local militias, managed by the Christian local notables and military leaders (captains), controlled mountain regions guarding their privileges against the Ottomans (Kolliopoulos & Veremis 2010, p. 6). Instead of combating the thieves, the notables and the captains preferred to integrate them, as the system of controlled illegality was more profitable than zero-tolerance practices (Veremis and Koliopoulos 2006, p. 37). Their participation in the War of Independence led to the glorification and idealization of this type of actors and controlled forms of violence. Violence and forms of illegality have been portrayed in a romantic way as fights for freedom and democracy or resistance against occupiers. Rather than the establishment of central institutions and a modern state, particularistic values that prioritized fragmented social structures were thus consolidated (Dakin 1973, p. 78). Acceptance of certain forms of violence is, therefore, ingrained in the Greek society

(Veremis and Koliopoulos 2010), whilst the predominance of particularism leads to the weakness of legitimate political institutions to handle violence.

The interpretative approach of "cultural dualism" focuses on the relationship of culture and politics in transitional countries with a weak civil society and social actors unable to articulate demands towards social institutions (Diamandouros 1994). Explaining specific behaviors, reactions and outcomes that emerge in polity and society since the 19th century, Diamandouros discerns two rival political traditions in modern Greek history: the liberal and the traditional/precapitalist. The first coexists with a reformist culture and the latter with an underdog. The liberal/reformist context accommodates modernization and Europeanization, whereas the underdog underpins an ambivalent orientation towards westernization and Europeanization (Diamandouros 1994), showing aversion to reforms. Whereas the underdog culture was marginalized in the post-authoritarian transition to democracy, feelings of injustice and humiliation during the recent financial crisis, enhance its fortunes with negative emotions and grievances becoming much more prevalent (Diamandouros 1994). In a subsequent analysis of cultural dualism, underdog culture was linked with contentious behavior and conflicting practices that may justify or tolerate violence (Diamandouros 2013).

Constructed by the exaltation of violent action of Greek ancestors by the Right as "the fighting virtue of the Greeks" and the Left as the "ethos of resistance of the Greek people", the legacy of political violence is being cemented and perpetuated via school textbooks, violent party discourse, trade unions and the media (Psychogios, 2013). Availability for violence is stronger among those sharing sentiments of suffering and victimization. Antoniou et al. (2017) identified this kind of emotions in the self-image of people expressing anti-semitic attitudes, having strong in-group perceptions and negative opinions for the out-groups. Victimization breeds the ground for the rise of prejudices, negative stereotypes and discrimination practices, closely related to systems of dominance and exclusion.

In line with the "wave theory" of terrorism and political violence (Rapoport 2013, 2016; Kaplan 2016), scholars identify two generations of FL and FR terrorist organizations in post-1974 Greece. Andronikidou and Kovras (2012) argue that

transition to democracy shaped a political "culture of sympathy" towards acts of resistance to the state, institutionalized since the mid-1970s. Xenakis (2012) wrote that the FL "first generation" is composed by underground organizations fighting against the military regime and the repression of the Left from the state of the "national-minded" (ethnikofrones). In the period following the regime change, the state was "reluctant" to address some authoritarian practices used by repressive mechanisms (police) vis-à-vis citizens, making the credo of FL terrorism - that transition to democracy was a "superficial transformation" of the military regime - sound convincing to some audiences. Its anti-capitalist credo and extreme anti-systemic rhetoric fall on welcome ears among the radicalized youth and left-wing media, which gave publicity to terrorist acts (Nacos 1994). The second generation emerged after the arrest of 17N in 2001, considered to have been supported by the first. During its initial phase, the post-17N terrorist generation approved Islamic terrorism, justifying the train bombing attacks in Madrid (2004) and the London bombings of 2015 (Karagiannis 2018). It is alleged that the new generation of terrorists fostered close links with criminal entities and networks, domestic and international (Xenakis 2012, p. 451; Makarenko 2012; Anagnostou & Skleparis 2015: 37). Analysts that consider violence as "armed struggle" instead of terrorism, criticizing counter-terrorist policies adopted by EU-countries in the post-9/11 period, embrace that a new generation of urban guerillas emerged in the 21st century in Greece and elsewhere (Tsoukala 2019; Bigo & Tsoukala 2009; Tsoukala 2006). Despite ideological differences with the previous organizations, both currents of armed forces share a common political vision and the idea of overthrowing civil democracy through mass popular uprising (Tsoukala 2019, p. 49, 54).

On the other side of the spectrum, FR first generation terrorism remained as kind of residual of the military regime, was officially under-registered and for many years ignored in the legal sphere (Xenakis 2012). Between 1975 and 1979 dozens of extreme right-wing violent incidents had been reported by the media (Psarras 2013). FR paramilitary groups, tolerated by covert police networks and clandestine organs of the "deep state" (Gkotzaridis 2017; Petridis 2010) remained under the surface during the

transition to democracy. FR violence has escalated since the 2000s. The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn dominates the second generation of FR violent organizations.

Political violence is a deeply rooted phenomenon that escalates during circumstances of economic collapse. After the outbreak of the financial crisis, a chain of events (tough public spending cuts, midterm fiscal program, Memoranda of Understanding, etc.) triggered anti-austerity movements and mass protests many of which have resulted in tensions between protesters and the police, as well as in FR and FL violent actions (Simiti 2015; Aslanidis & Marantzidis 2016; Georgiadou et al. 2019). During the crisis political violence was motivated by grievances; FR mobilization thrives on cultural grievances and backlash (Lamprianou & Ellinas 2017; Dinas et al. 2016), whilst FL violence is reinforced by economic grievances, "neo-liberal" policies and feelings of being left-behind (Johnston & Seferiades 2012).

3.2 Existing databases

Political violence is prominent in Greece; yet, no effort has been done to provide relevant publicly available, systematic and reliable data. No dataset exists so far on the FL violence, and the limited published information relies on fragmented reports on xenophobic and racist violence. It stems either from aggregate data lately collected by state authorities, non-state entities or academic institutions. The Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) provides an annual report on the aggregate number of violent incidents and trends on specific features of racism since 2011. The RVRN recordings are though strictly based on interviews conducted with the victims and are not, so far, publicly available. Since 2016, racist attacks are also monitored by the Police and the Ministry for Justice, based either on police or on prosecutors' investigations. The XENO@GR, by Panteion University and Athena Research and Innovation Center, examines the evolution of xenophobia in Greece covering violent events reported in media sources from 1991 to 2016. It offers a list of 427 violent events reported in media sources from 1991 to 2016. The continuity of specific target groups (Jews, Albanians, Pakistani) confirms the existence of stereotypes and prejudices deeply rooted in the Greek society (Galariotis et al. 2017).

4. Introducing a new dataset: methodological and coding choices, external validity and empirical strategy

We focus on various forms of political violence concentrating upon actors and targets, organizations, groups and lone-actor attacks. Given the lack of systematic, official data on expressions of politically motivated violence, the Political Violence in Greece (PVGR) data stem mainly from media sources (newspapers, media platforms, broadcast news). To maximize coverage, we included an exhaustive grid of national and local media, online sources, as well as governmental, NGO, big data collections and institutional sources sites (94 in total) from 2008 to 2019 and uniquely identified each violent event to avoid duplication (details in the online Appendix).

In our database, the unit of analysis is the violent attack. Attack events were classified following a set of criteria that emerged from the idea of "contextual typology" of political violence (Kalyvas 2019), synthesizing the degree of violence and the organizational level of attacks. Regarding the degree of violence, the proposed taxonomy of events includes attacks against human and material targets. Among the first, we discern attacks escalating from verbal attacks such as threats, verbal abuse or blackmail, to violent confrontations between opposed groups or physical attacks and beating against individuals with or without the intention of harm, damage or killing; among the attacks against material targets, we distinguish incidents against private, public and religious targets, including damage, vandalism, arson or desecration of religious sites. On the level of organization, our coding schema contains a spectrum of attacks ranging from symbolic attacks, invasion or squats that require low or medium level of organizational capacity up to riots, pogroms, cyber or armed attacks, the execution of which depends on the organizational power of violent actors.

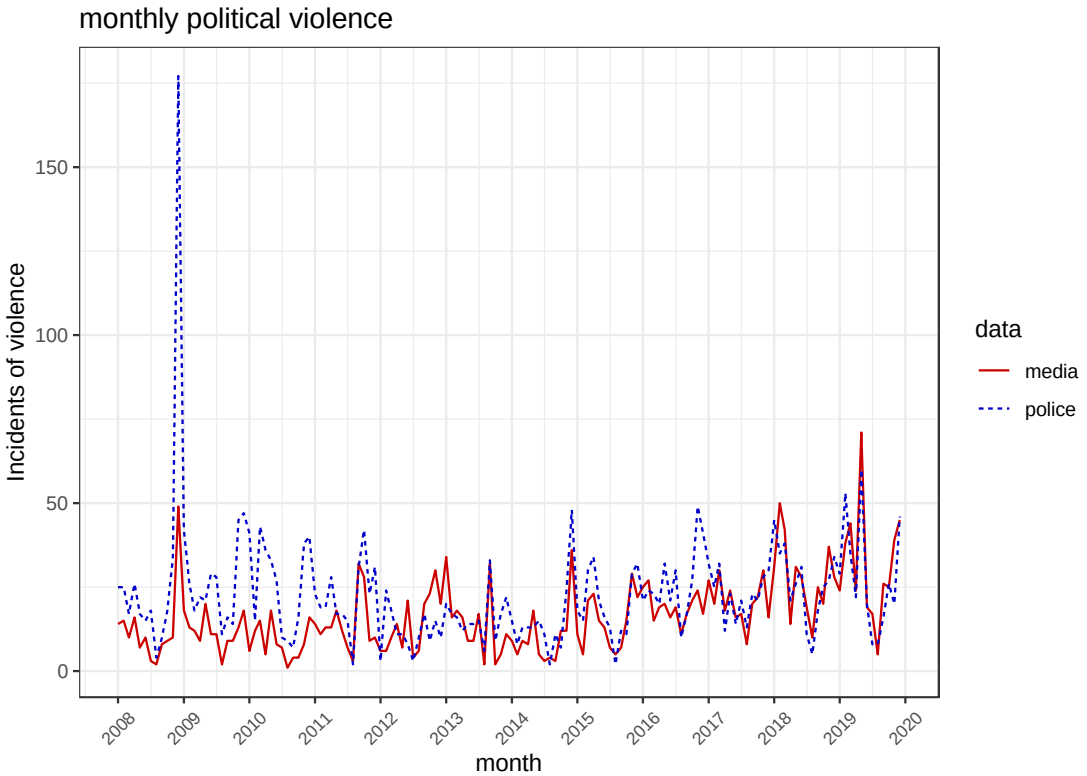
Following the aforementioned description, we conducted a detailed explorative analysis of our data sources in order to monitor the types, entities and elements of political violence. By applying a human coding technique, we created a comprehensive database, which we then classified by populating the above-mentioned criteria and taxonomies. Hence we developed an enriched database that comprises a total of 2,429 violent events from 2008 to 2019. In order to address the issues of double

counts and selection bias, all duplicates have been located and eliminated, whereas each violent episode has been checked over and verified in 94 online and printed media sources (See Appendix for the full list of media).

To provide external validity for our sample, we use aggregate monthly (combined FL and FR) incidents of political violence recorded by the police for the duration of our sample. Figure 1 plots the monthly incidents of political violence in the two databases (media and police). As is clear from visual inspection the two series exhibit a high degree of correlation. For the first four years of our sample, media seem to slightly underreport incidents of political violence compared to incidents registered by the police. After 2012, the number of incidents reported in the media seems to reflect quite accurately that recorded by the police.

Table 1 provides correlation coefficients between the two measures for the whole sample and for the subsamples beginning after 2010 and 2013. The left column reports the Pearson correlation coefficient. The right column controls for year fixed effects. The two measures exhibit high correlation which increases for more recent years. We believe that this reflects an improving trend in collection and reporting technology by the media as time goes by.

Figure 1: Monthly incidents of political violence reported in media and by police



Sources: Incidents of political violence as reported in the media (authors' calculations) and as recorded by the police.

Table 1: Correlation between total monthly incidents of violence in our dataset and monthly incidents of political violence recorded by the Greek police

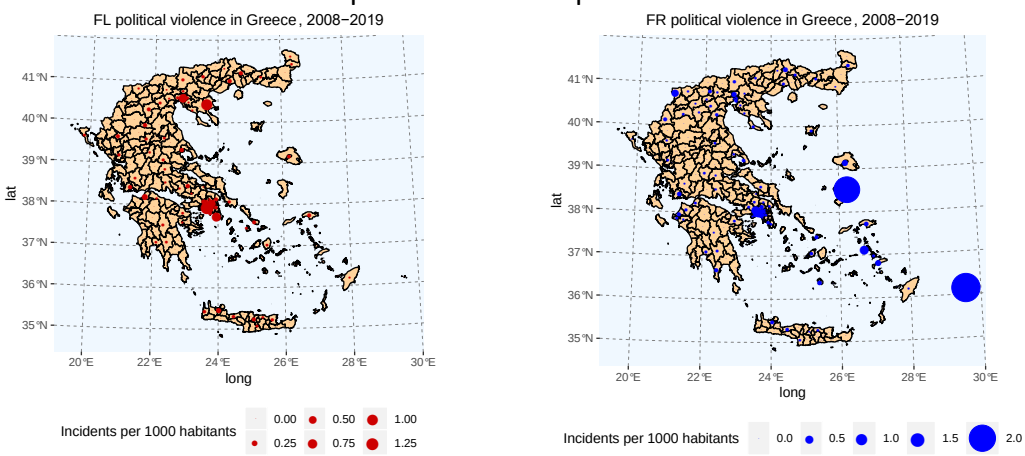
	Pearson correlation coefficient between monthly media and police incidents	
	Correlation	partial correlation (year fe)
whole sample	0.57	0.67
after 2010	0.74	0.72
after 2013	0.78	0.77

5. A description of FL and FR political violence in Greece

5.1 Spatial analysis

We first turn to the spatial allocation of political violence. Figure 2 plots the geographical distribution of incidents in our database at the municipality level per 1000 habitants. As is evident by mere inspection of the map of political violence in Greece, FL violence is mostly concentrated in large cities, suggesting that it is a predominantly urban phenomenon. FR violence on the other hand seems more evenly dispersed across the country, with high per capita incidence in both urban and rural areas. To compare the two sides with respect to urbanity of their occurrence, we calculated the correlation between per capita incidence of political violence throughout our sample and (log) population density at the municipality level. The FL exhibits a positive correlation between per capita incidents and population density of 0.29. With a p-value = 0, this clearly confirms that FL violence is a predominantly urban phenomenon. The correlation for the FR is only 0.03 (p-value = 0.58) which suggests that FR political violence is uncorrelated with population density and hence FR political violence cannot be classified as an urban or rural phenomenon. Urban connotations of FL violence follow its historical roots of guerrilla warfare.

Figure 2: Incidents of FL and FR political violence per 1000 habitants



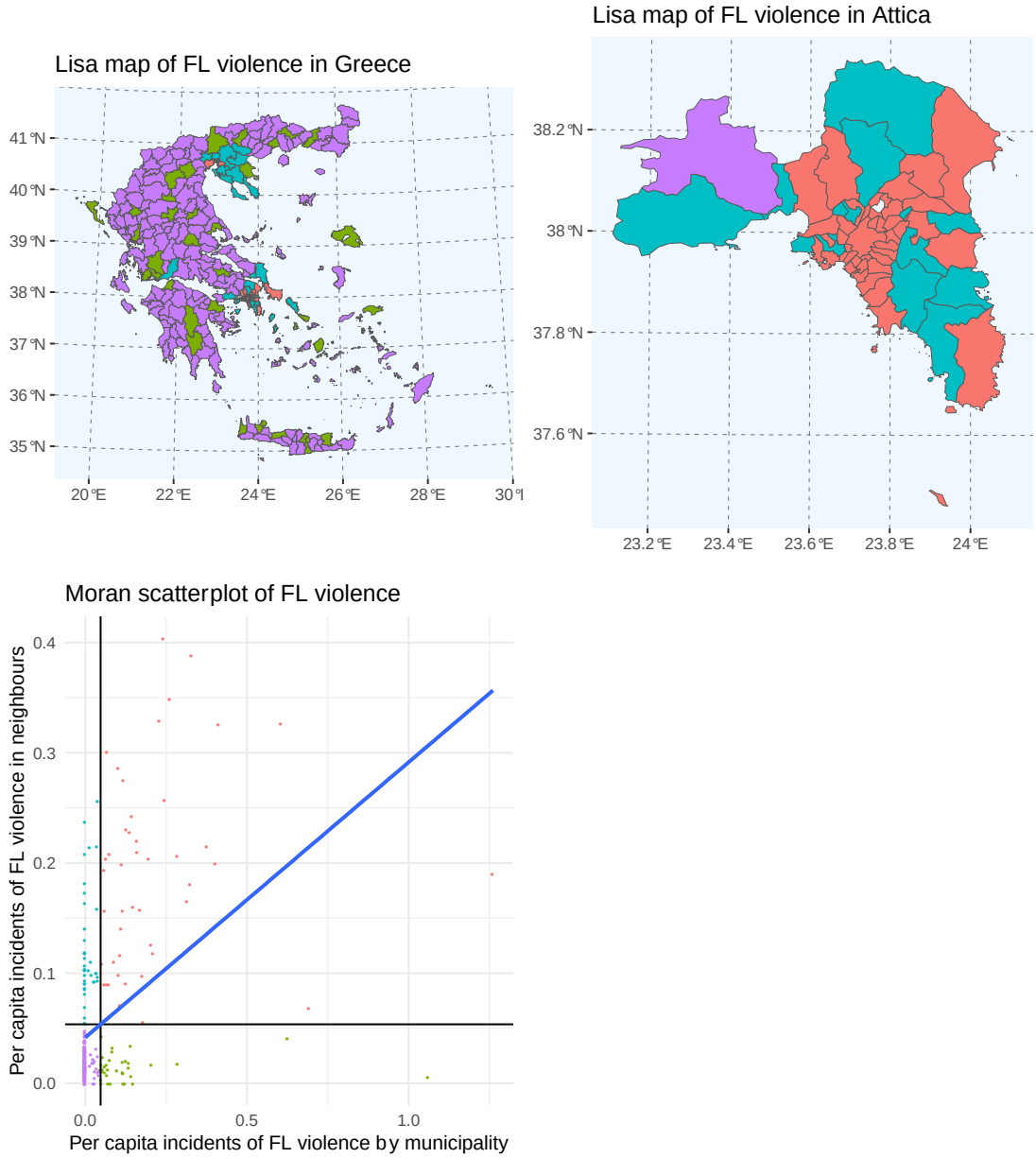
Sources: authors' calculations based on incidents of political violence reported in the media 2008-2019.

This seems to be corroborated by spatial analysis of how incidents of political violence in municipalities relate to incidents in neighboring municipalities. To identify possible clusters of transmission of FL and FR political violence, we calculated per capita incidents of political violence in each municipality for the duration of our sample. We then calculated the spatial lag of per capita incidents in each municipality using a neighborhood matrix identifying the 10 closest neighbors. We plot Lisa maps (for the country and for Attica which includes the capital) with the corresponding Moran scatterplots for FL and FR political violence in figures 3 and 4. The Moran scatterplot in figure 3 plots FL political violence in each of Greece's 325 municipalities against its spatial lag. The vertical and horizontal black lines give the means of the two. Quadrant I, depicted in red color, plots areas with incidents above the mean and neighboring levels of FL violence which is also above its (neighboring) mean. So that a point in the first quadrant corresponds to a municipality with higher than average incidents per capita, with neighbors who also have above average incidents per capita. Quadrant II, in light blue color, depicts areas with low incidents, neighboring municipalities with above average incidents. Quadrant III (negative quadrant) in purple color, depicts municipalities with below average incidence that have neighbors with also below average incidence of FL violence. Finally, quadrant IV, in green color depicts municipalities with high incidence having neighbors with low incidence of political violence. We fit a linear regression line in the plot which clearly shows a positive relationship between FL violence and its spatial lag. This points towards spatial correlation of FL violence. With a Moran's I index of 0.25 (p-value = 0) the null of no spatial autocorrelation is rejected.

The two Lisa maps in figure 3 correspond points of the Moran plot to Greek municipalities (the right hand side map is an enlarged map of Attica, including the capital Athens). Red areas, corresponding to quadrant I, depict municipalities with above-average FL violence with above-average neighbors. These are situated almost exclusively in the urban areas of Attica and Thessaloniki. The rest of Greece consists mostly of municipalities with low levels of political violence. Hence, we detect few spatial clusters of increased political violence in large urban municipalities and clusters of low levels of FL violence in rural areas in the rest of the country, consistent with

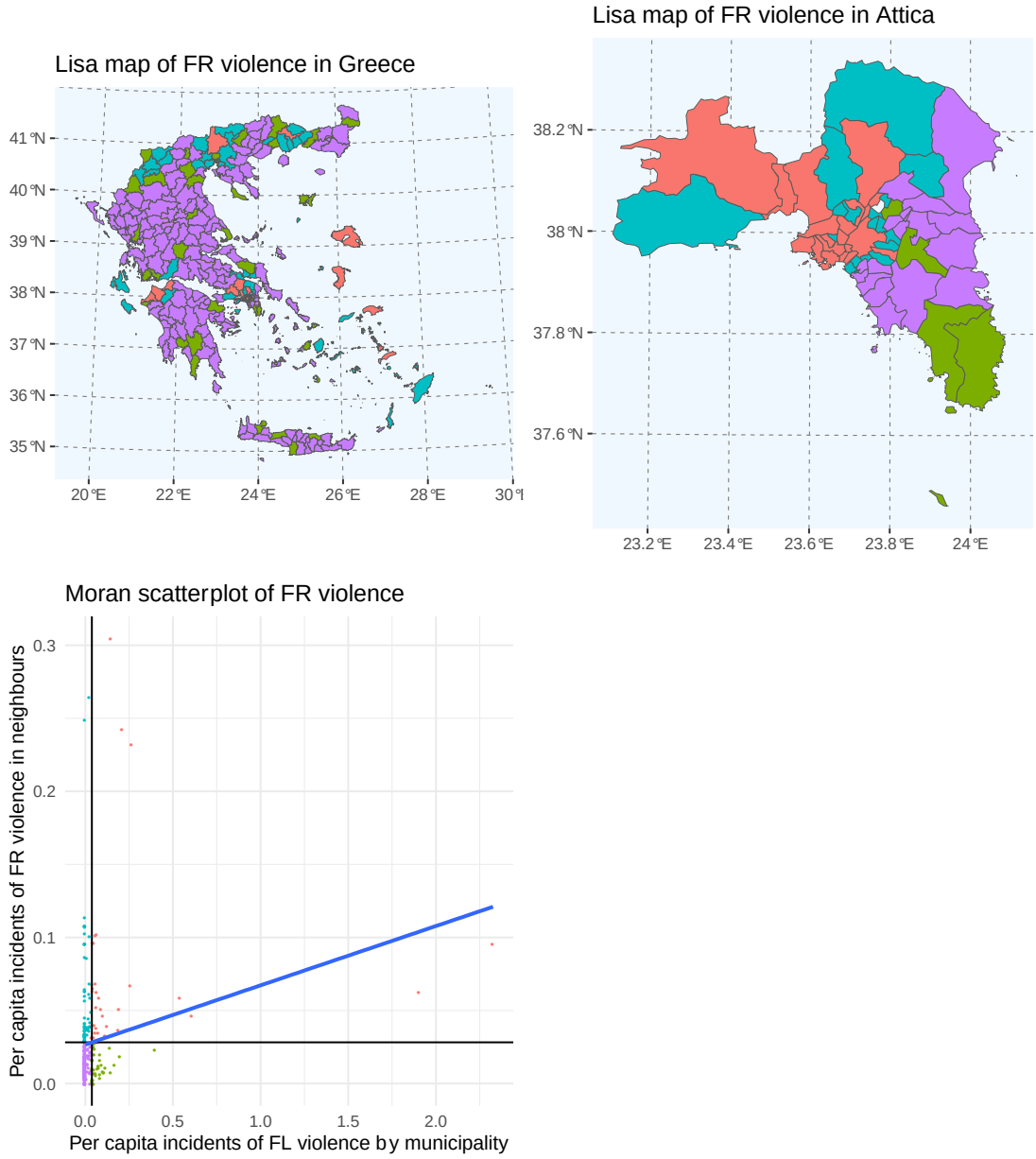
positive spatial correlation. Some scattered clusters of negative correlation are associated with low-violence municipalities close to Athens and Thessaloniki and some isolated high-violence municipalities in the central Peloponnese, Macedonia and Eastern Aegean.

Figure 3: Lisa Maps and Moran scatter plot for FL political violence



Sources: authors' calculations based on incidents of political violence reported in the media 2008-2019.

Figure 4: Lisa Maps and Moran scatter plot for FR political violence



Sources: authors' calculations based on incidents of political violence reported in the media 2008-2019.

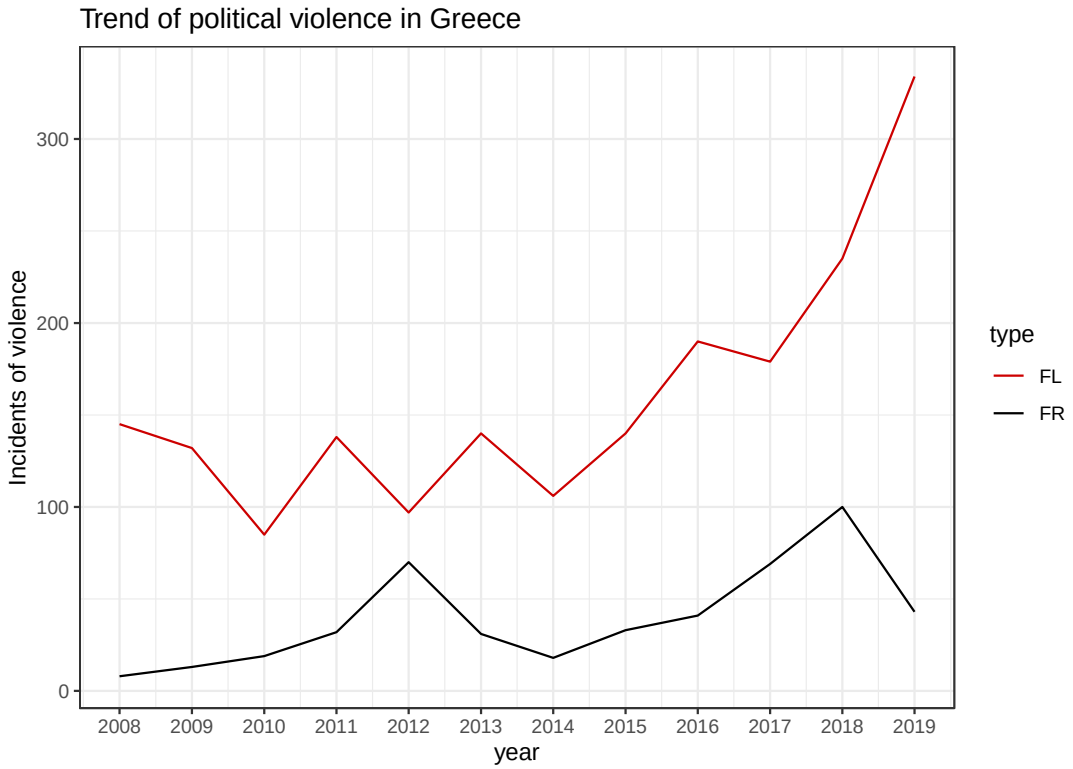
Figure 4 repeats the spatial analysis for the case of FR violence. The evidence of positive spatial correlation in the case of FR is more nuanced. There is some evidence of positive spatial correlation. With a Moran I of 0.04 (p-value = 0,03), the correlation coefficient is both much smaller in magnitude and less statistically significant. FR violence is a less spatially correlated phenomenon compared to FL violence. What is interesting is that positive spatial correlation is less associated with large urban municipalities such as municipalities in Attica and Thessaloniki. Municipalities in

Thessaloniki show no positive spatial correlation whereas municipalities in Attica present a much more nuanced behavior than was the case with FL violence. FR violence doesn't cluster in densely populated areas. In fact, we observe clusters of high incidence of FR areas in rural areas northwestern Peloponnese, Eastern Aegean and Macedonia.

5.2 Trends in time

To gain a more spherical understanding of the landscape of political violence in Greece, we proceed with various statistical measures of violent incidents by the two kinds of political violence in time. Figure 5 provides an overview of the overall trend of political violence between 2008 and 2019. Despite fluctuations and different magnitudes, the general long-run behavior for both kinds of violence in most years under study shows an increasing trend. We overall find 1,925 of FL episodes and 504 of FR. FL violence is 3,8 times bigger than the FR, whereas FR violence is steadily diminishing after 2018, following the trend of its electoral fate and organizational disintegration.

Figure 5: Monthly incidents of political violence reported in media

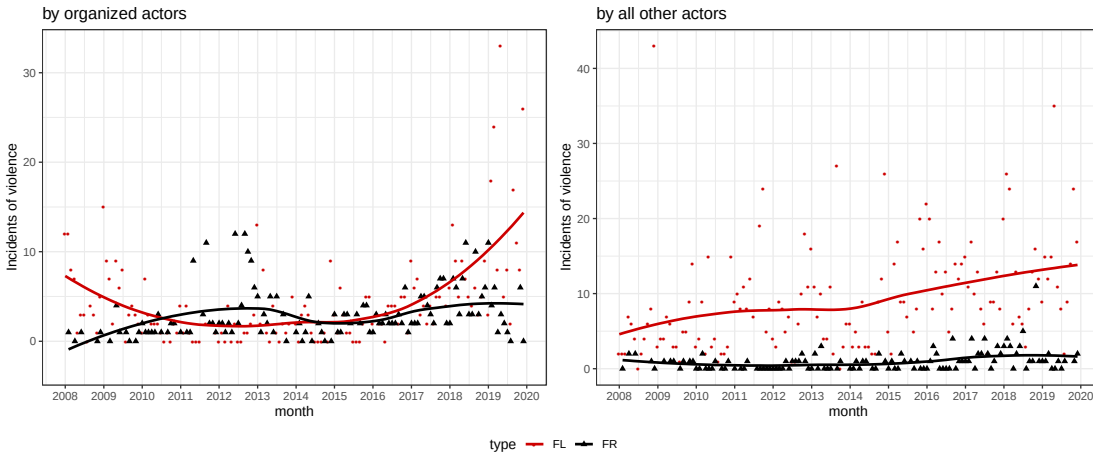


Sources: Incidents of political violence as reported in the media (authors' calculations).

We next explore the trends of organizational features of FL and FR political violence. In particular, we are interested in the evolution of organized versus unplanned incidents for the two sides over time and in indices of stability in the frequency and intensity of political violence. Figure 6 plots the incidents of political violence committed by organized actors and by all other (not explicitly identified as connected with a known organization) actors.

It is interesting to note that whereas incidents committed by non-organized actors for the FR exhibit a very stable path of around 2 hits per month, for the FL the number is both much higher and shows far greater dispersion. So that, whereas we identify months of low activity with around 2-3 hits, we can also identify months when the number of hits far exceeded 20. What is also striking is that organized FL and FR acts of violence exhibit a much more similar pattern, particularly between 2010 and 2017, after which the two diverge, with the incidents of violence committed by organized FL actors increasing considerably, whereas the FR following a stable if not decreasing course.

Figure 6: Incidents by organized and non-organized actors

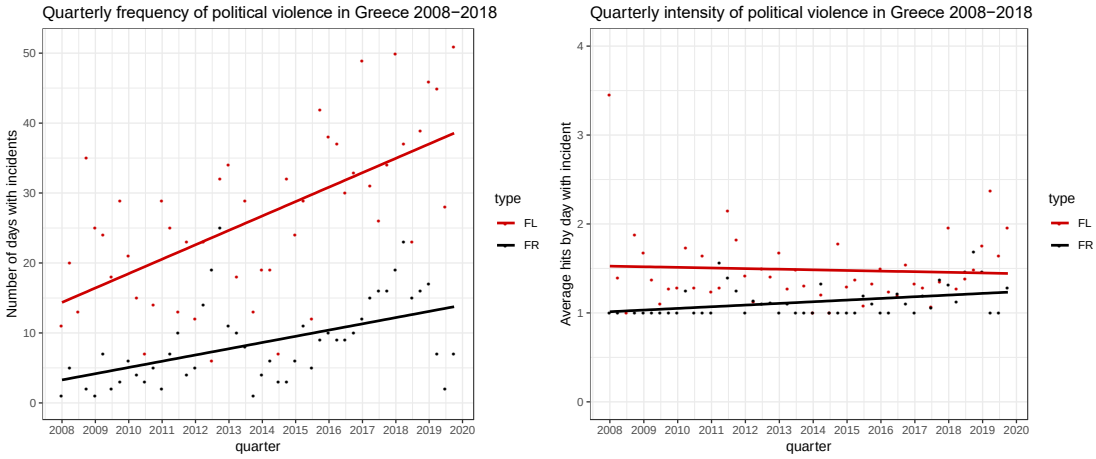


Sources: authors' calculations based on incidents of political violence reported in the media 2008-2019.

Another interesting organizational aspect of FL and FR violence is depicted in figure 7. The figure plots the quarterly frequency and intensity of political violence. By frequency we mean the number of days in a quarter with reported incidents of

violence in the media. By intensity we mean the average number of incidents per reported day with incident(s). FL and FR political violence differ mostly in frequency of violent acts. FL starts with around 15 days of violent acts per quarter at the beginning of our sample and escalates to almost 40 days with incidents in the end of 2019. FR frequency also exhibits an increasing - however less steep - course with around 3 days of incidents per quarter in 2008, increasing to below 15 days towards the end of 2019. The difference between the two in intensity is less striking but noteworthy. The FR typically engages in 1 hit per day with incident for the duration of our sample. The FL often engaged in multiple hits per day of incident, pointing towards what seems to be a more spontaneous way of acting.

Figure 7: Frequency and intensity of political violence



Sources: authors' calculations based on incidents of political violence reported in the media 2008-2019.

5.3 Qualitative indices

To gain more insight into different aspects of FL and FR political violence, we next analyze three qualitative indices of political violence: actors, targets and escalation. Table 2 and figure 8 depict summary statistics per actor for the two kinds of political violence.

The vast majority of violent actors on the FR are groups and organizations, whereas the anarchists are the primordial actor on the FL. Anarchists can be unorganized, self-

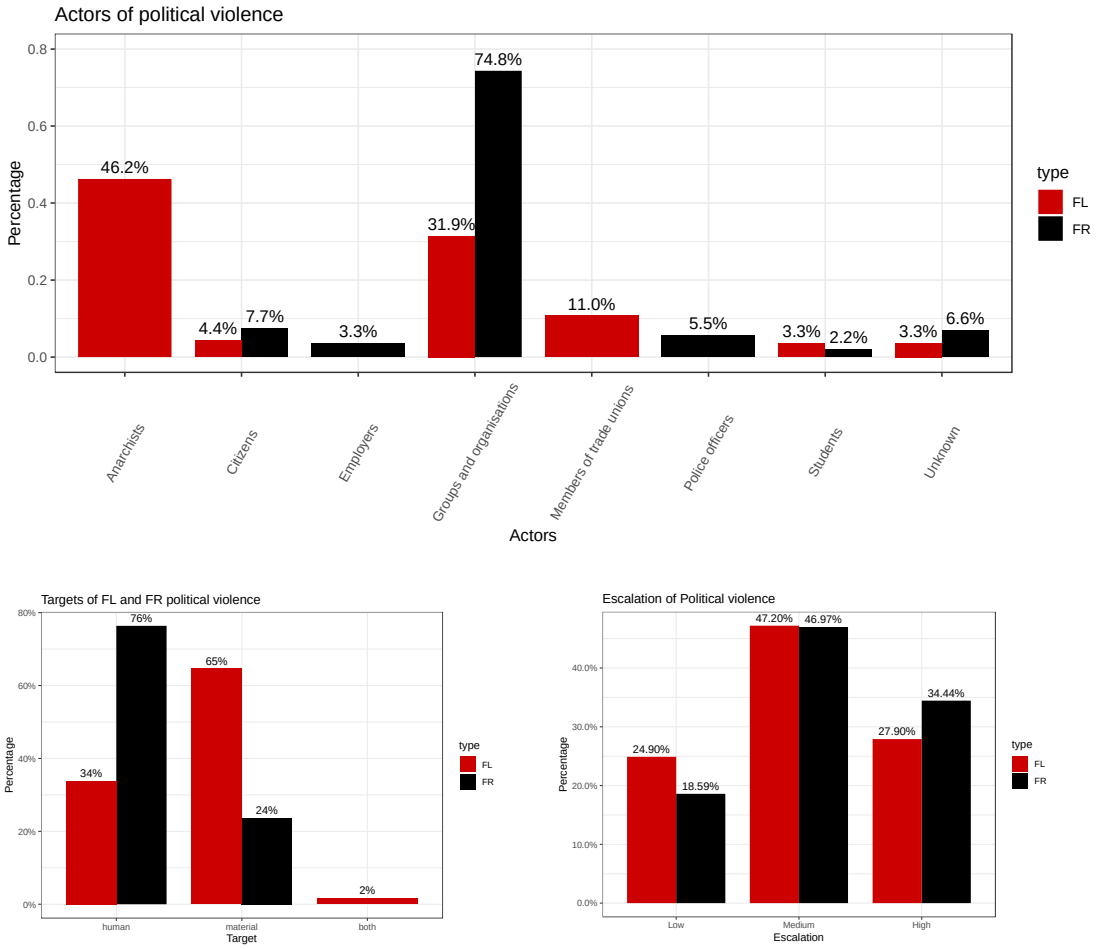
organized or low-organized, whereas they maintain close contacts with leftist groups. Violence is also practiced by institutional actors on both sides of the spectrum, in a manifest or latent way. FL trade unionists commit 11% of FL violent episodes, whereas police officers – out of duty – have been reported to act 5.5% of FR incidents. FR and FL violence differs substantially with respect to the targets chosen. FL actors prefer material targets, whereas the vast majority of FR violence is against human targets.

Table 2. Summary statistics

Actor/ type	Target						Escalation						Total	
	Human		Material		both		Low		Medium		High			
	FL	FR	FL	FR	FL	FR	FL	FR	FL	FR	FL	FR	FL	FR
Anarchists	509		359		22		129		658		103		890	
Citizens	59	35	25	3			25	10	53	13	6	15	84	38
Groups and organisations	14	296	586	78	6		98	43	120	190	388	141	606	374
Members of trade unions	30		175		2		180		24		3		207	10
Students	20	2	47	8	1		43	8	24	2	1		68	
Employers	18						3		9		6			18
Police officers	28		1				2		22		5			29
Unknown	19	5	51	30			5	28	28		37	7	70	35
Total	697	338	1244	119	31	0	485	89	938	205	549	163	1925	504

Another substantial difference between the two kinds of violence appears with respect to the escalation. We divided the episodes to three levels of violence following the possible harm caused to the targets: the first one aggregates the incidents of lower violence, the second incidents of medium violence and the third one incidents of higher violence. While the two types of violence seem to have similar proportions of medium escalation incidents (47.2% vs 46.97%), FL violence has a higher percentage of low escalation hits (24.9% vs 18.6%), whereas FR violence has a higher proportion of high escalation hits (34.4% compared with 27.9% for the FR). This is consistent with the FL's focus on material targets whereas the FR targets predominately human targets, rendering its actions more threatening to human life.

Figure 8: Actors, targets and escalation of political violence in Greece



6. Concluding remarks

PVGR is the first dataset which systematically monitors politically violent episodes in Greece for a timespan of 12 years covering a critical period in the country's history since the 1974 restoration of democracy. Collecting data from media sources permits to detect the magnitude and evolution of the phenomenon, as well as to empirically discern similarities and differences between ideologically and organizationally different perpetrators and violent entities. We found that FL violence appears 3,8 times bigger than FR violence. FR seems to be more evenly spread, less variable in time, consistent in terms of frequency and intensity. FL seems to be more prone to external and random stimuli. It is less consistent and presents greater variability in time and space. It is an urban phenomenon that flares up in densely populated areas at times of inflammation. The FR is neither urban nor rural and doesn't fluctuate as much. It has greater consistency over space and time. Organised violence seems to behave similarly for the two ideological sides. However, the FL consists of a much larger part of anarchist episodes which show little consistency in time and seem spontaneous although they might conceal a more rigid organizational frame. They finally differ with respect to targets: FL perpetrators prefer material targets, whereas FR prefer human.

PVGR can nourish research on political violence both as a dependent or an independent variable. Core theories on political violence can be tested, shedding light not only on the causes of the phenomenon, but also on the variation of the explanatory power of those theories for the FR and the FL violence. PVGR can further be used as an independent variable, interpreting the weight of the media and journalistic strategies on a series of contextual parameters. Last but not least, the new dataset can inform policy makers on strategies for preventing and countering political violence, permitting tailor-made and targeted policies and proactive options for the FR and the FL, drawing from the differences in their causes, reservoirs, repertoires and organizational architecture.

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APPENDIX

I. Data collection

a. *Method*: Data was collected by manual research and classification of relevant information. The unit of analysis is the violent attack for each of which specific parameters such as actors, targets, type, date, location were identified. A series of keywords and phrases were used for the initial research that refer to the category of political violence, the choice of which was theory-driven defined according to Kalyvas (2019) conceptualization of non-state violence. Keywords and phrases were searched mainly via search engines of a series of chosen media sources and google. The text data gathered from media sources were further analyzed, coding information about violent attacks relative to the afore-mentioned parameters.

b. *Definition of violent attack:* The dataset includes non-state violent attacks which fall within the category of low-intensity / civil violence. We register all politically violent episodes irrespective of the ideological orientation of the actors and/or identity of violent practices.

c. *Sources*: In order to maximize coverage, we included an exhaustive grid of national and local media published in print or on websites, online media sources, as well as governmental, NGO, big data collections and institutional sources sites. The criteria of political plurality, content diversity, diversity in media ownership and format, geographical coverage, nature of the source (online, printed), and readership/visibility were taken into account. We implement the same coding criteria searching for violent incidents in media and non-media sources. The precondition was that each source selected disposed an open access or subscription-based web search engine. The following table presents the exact sources used.

News websites	**National media**	**Local media**	**Far left websites**	**Far right websites**	**Institutional & civil society websites**
Athensvoice.gr	Ant1news.gr	Acharnorama.gr	agros.espivblogs.net	hellasc18.blogspot.gr	hrw.org
Alfavita.gr	Avgi.gr	Lerosnews.gr	autonomosteki.espivblogs.net	xrisiavgi.com	jailgoldendawn.com
Alterthess.gr	Documentonews.gr	Ikariologos.gr	asmpeiraia.blogspot.com	maiandrioi.blogspot.com	minedu.gov.gr
Cnn.gr	Efsyn.gr	Lesvosnews.gr	indymedia.org	hellasc18.blogspot.gr	kis.gr

Enallaktikos.gr	eleftherostypos.gr	Life-events.gr	kar.org.gr		avmag.gr
Enikos.gr	Enet.gr	moschatotavros.gr	ksm.gr		hrw.org
Ereportaz.gr	Ert.gr	politischios.gr	mpalothia.net		
Gazetta.gr	Espressonews.gr	rethnea.gr	pandiera.gr		
lifo.gr	Ethnos.gr	thebest.gr	strouga.espivblogs.net		
News247.gr	Kathimerini.gr	Typothess.gr	kentauros.espivblogs.net		
Tvxs.gr	Left.gr	Thestival.gr	Provo.gr		
Huffingtonpost.gr	Protothema.gr	xanthipress.gr	agros.espivblogs.net		
Ifemerida.gr	real.gr	zarpanews.gr			
msn.com	Rizospastis.gr	achainews.gr			
Naftemporiki.gr	Skai.gr	cretapost.gr			
News.gr	Tanea.gr	fanaripress.gr			
Newpost.gr	Topontiki.gr	hfonitoudimoti.blogspot.com			
Newsbeast.gr	Tovima.gr	kavalapost.gr			
Newsbomb.gr	902.gr	patratimes.gr			
Newsit.gr		thessaliatv.gr			
Zougla.gr		Voria.gr			
In.gr		xanthi2.gr			
Indicator.gr		tourkikanea.gr			
Presspublica.gr					
reader.gr					
thecaller.gr					
thepressproject.gr					
Thetoc.gr					
Vice.gr					

Of the 94 sources selected, 7 disposed a search engine covering the whole period and 9 dispose a feature for specific daily research in their engines. For the 3 sources which covered less years during the period under study via their search engines, as well as

for those media sources not disposing search engine, the google search engine was used by implementing a specific way of tracing violent events which rectified for the gaps in the media engines, giving access to the websites archives. Searching via google for those specific media and periods not covered by the websites' pages was registered exhaustively.

d. *Criteria of inclusion of cases*

Data collection was designed to cover exhaustively cases of political violence appearing in any of the media sources between January 2008 and December 2019. Coders were instructed to register all types of violent attacks that come under the umbrella of political violence appearing in the websites' search engines for each keyword and phrase. In total, 48 keywords and phrases were searched for each of the 94 media.

For each attack an observation was added in our database. Coders further searched in each of the media sources selected for every single observation in order to register how many of those media reported on the observations and to gather enough data as to populate all the classification criteria: actor, target, type of attack, date, location, as well as additional attributes such as context, organizations involved, etc. of violent events. False positives were excluded by reading one by one the observations registered and their description, erasing all duplicated by human coding. False negatives were minimized by delving in the search engines of those news sources and scrutinizing media reporting. We stopped including cases in the dataset when there were no new cases to register and no new information about the cases to enter in the database.

II. Missing values

Several information about violent attacks were missing or unknown and therefore parameters of observations remain incomplete. For values to be inserted in the database, that information had to be *expressis verbis* mentioned or available by the context. Missing values were not compensated by the coders if the sources did not contain the relevant, concrete information.

III. Variables

Political Violence: measures the number of violent episodes stemming from the FR and the FL in a specific period of time. The indicator of political violence is the violent attack.

Actor: qualifies the identity of the perpetrator as this is described by the media sources. The vast majority of violent actors are groups and organizations. Actors from the anarchist, anti-systemic and antifascist scene - a multifaceted arena from an organizational point of view - compose however a relevant part of violent perpetrators. Violence is also practiced by institutional actors like trade unionists, whilst off-duty police officers have been reported to act violent incidents. Employees, students and citizens attack without belonging in organized structures.

Groups and organizations
Anarchists/Anti-systemic/Antifascists
Members of trade unions
Employees
Students
Police officers
Citizens
Hactivists
Unknown

Target: qualifies the identity of the target against who or which the violence is exercised. Targets can be material, human or both. Among human, targets are institutional actors, opponents, minorities. Among material, institutional buildings, residencies of opponents, professional, religious and political spaces are targeted.

Human	**Material**
Citizens	Banks
Disabled	Buildings of public order
Employees	Embassies/Consulates
FR & FL activists	Institutional spaces
Immigrants-Refugees	Immigrants' professional spaces
LGBTQ	Mass media
Members of Trade Unions	NGOs/associations/institutions

Police Officers	Party headquarters/Electoral kiosks
Politicians	Political spaces
Roma	Pre-electoral rallies
Student Unions	Professional spaces
Students (higher ed)	Religious spaces/Monuments
Students (high school)	Residencies of politicians
	Residencies of public figures
	Residencies/Squats of immigrants & refugees
	Schools
	Shelters
	State Buildings
	Universities
	Vehicles
	Websites

Attack: qualifies the type of violence operated. We discern sub-categories of both main types of violent attacks. Among attacks against humans, we distinguish a series of attacks from verbal to physical; among attacks against material targets, variety of violent incidents are coded including damage, vandalism, arson or desecration.

Squat-Invasion
Threat-Blackmail-Cyberattack
Insult-Racist Speech
Vandalism-Desecration
Attack with paint, stones, mauls
Assault-Beating- Torture
Riots-Pogroms
Arson
Armed Attack
Bombing
Sabotage (Food)

Escalation: qualifies the level of violence against the backdrop of the possible harm caused to the targets. We distinguish three levels of violence: low, medium and high. For each level of violence we aggregate the relevant types of attacks.

	Low	Medium	High
Far right	squats/occupations invasions threats insults racist speech camouflage vandalism desecration	bullying/jeering beatings torturing riots/pogroms attacks against FL activists	arson attacks armed attacks
Far left	squats/occupations invasions threats blackmails digital attacks	bullying/jeering attacks with helves, stones, paints riots attacks against FR activists	sabotage against products arson attacks bombings armed attacks beating attacks with petrol bombs

Geographical location: variable which traces spatially the violent episode, by identifying the region and the municipality in which the episode occurs.

Date: variable that concretizes the time (year, month, day) at which violent episodes occur.