

# Class 4: Causes, Radicalisation, Mobilisation

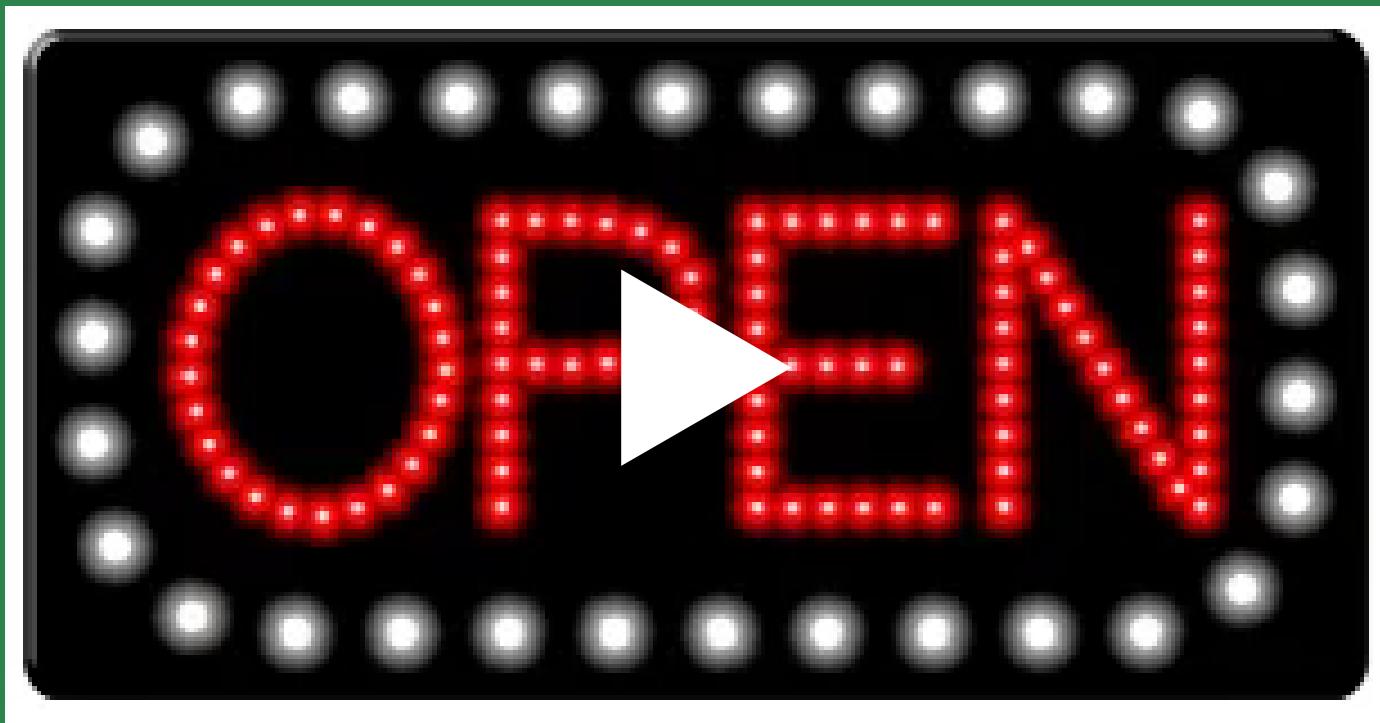
Selecting violent/nonviolent strategies

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

# Agenda for the day

- Opening notes
- Klausur preview
- A conceptual framework of *strategy*
- Poll: strategy formation and effect
- Example from the FARC
- Example of *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*
- Briefly on selecting (and maintaining) nonviolence
- Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

# Opening notes



# Presentation groups

December

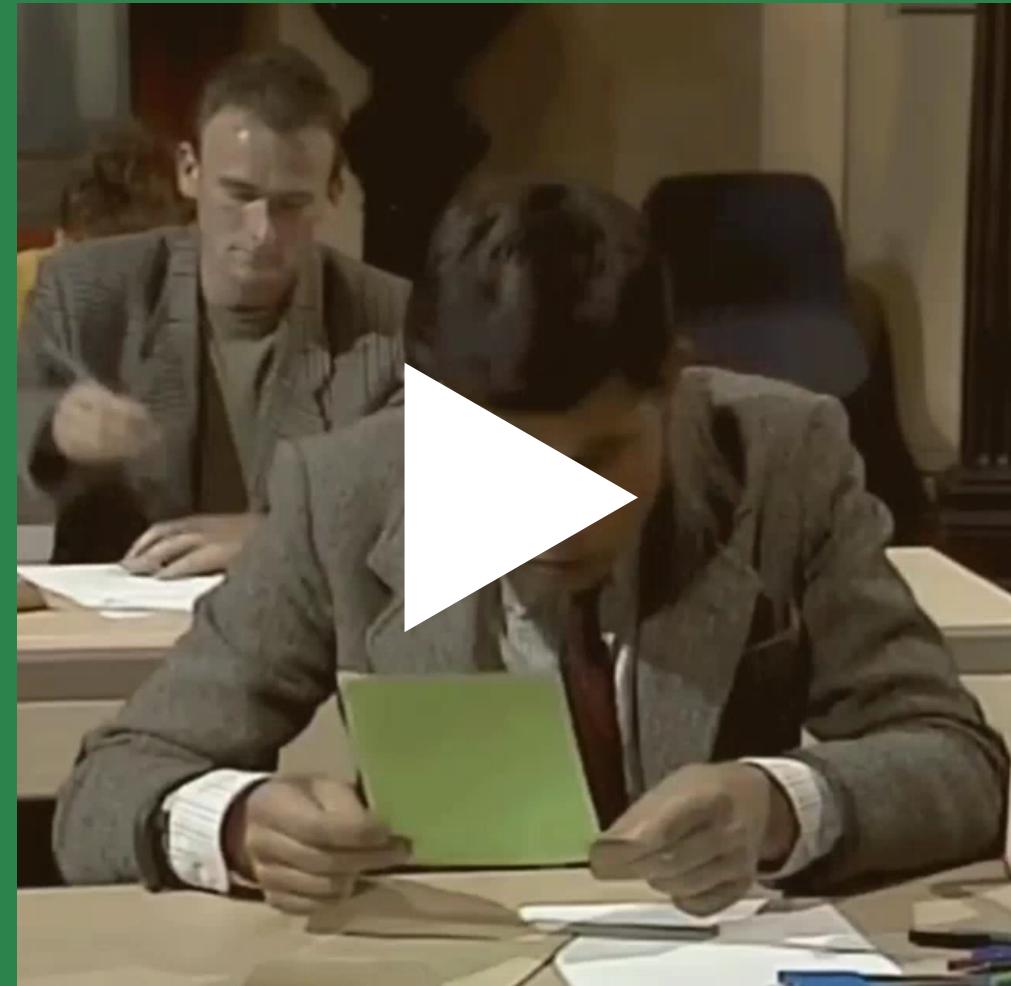
January

## Presentations line-up

Date	Presenters	Method
4 Dec:		TBD
11 Dec:		TBD
18 Dec:		TBD

# Klausur preview

- structure of an essay
  1. Broad introductory response
  2. Elaborate in (sufficient) detail to answer the questions
  3. Describe examples
  4. Concluding summary



# Klausur preview (1)

1. Broad introduction
2. Elaborate in detail
3. Describe examples
4. Concluding summary

*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
How can 'home' countries deal with returning foreign fighters?*

2. Elaborate in detail
3. Describe examples
4. Concluding summary

*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
How can 'home' countries deal with returning foreign fighters?*

## 1. Broad introduction

Foreign fighters are individuals who travel to a conflict zone from another territory. In other words, foreign fighters are individuals who *engage* [remember, about behaviours] in violent activity, which also suggests they have *radicalised* [remember, about attitudes] to some extent. Home countries have a variety of options for dealing with returning foreign fighters ...

# Klausur preview (2)

1. Broad introduction
2. Elaborate in detail
3. Describe examples
4. Concluding summary

*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
How can 'home' countries deal with returning foreign fighters?*

1. Broad introduction

3. Describe examples

4. Concluding summary

*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
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## 2. Elaborate in detail

Foreign fighters travel to engage in violent conflict. They might do so for ideological reasons (including religious motivations), for material benefit, or because of connection to others who travel to the conflict zone (network/interpersonal causes). The extent of radicalisation underlying these reasons for becoming a foreign fighter vary, but the engagement in violence is clear. Given the fighters' engagement in violence and possible criminal consequences of their activities, home countries face a challenge of how to deal with their return. Broadly, state authorities might praise returning foreign fighters, ignore/disregard,

# Klausur preview (3)

1. Broad introduction
2. Elaborate in detail
3. Describe examples
4. Concluding summary

*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
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*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
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## 3. Describe examples

Recent research on ISIS foreign fighters ([Morris 2023](#)) identified common profiles for foreign fighters in the conflict in Syria: young, male, unmarried, urban, well-educated. These characteristics might be applicable to other cases. To assess whether such profiles of foreign fighters are generalizable, one might examine foreign fighters in historical cases, such as the Spanish Civil War where whole brigades of combatants were composed of volunteers from abroad, or contemporary conflicts, such as the Russian war on Ukraine where foreign fighters have formed part of both sides of the conflict. In any case, foreign fighters returning to their home countries can pose a dilemma for state authorities. German state

authorities, for instance, might praise and heroise, such as (some) UK authorities did for fighters returning from Spain in the 1930s; the state might criminalise them, prosecuting and jailing for violence, as with some fighters for ISIS returning from Syria...



# Klausur preview (4)

1. Broad introduction
2. Elaborate in detail
3. Describe examples
4. Concluding summary

*What does 'foreign fighter' mean? Who becomes a foreign fighter?  
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## 4. Concluding summary

The existence of foreign fighters is a longstanding and common form of political violence. Their motivations and characteristics may vary, but by definition they all engage in violence. Their exposure to and engagement in violence can pose threats to their home state and society when they return from conflict zones. States therefore may respond in several ways to minimise the danger of fighters acting violent upon their return.

# A conceptual framework of *strategy*

- strategy defined
- elements of strategy
- drivers of strategy selection
- example from a non-violent but disruptive group
- example from a violent group



# Basic, intuitive definition of *strategy*

**strategy** refers to the approach of an actor(s) to achieve their (political) objectives—connecting **actions** to **goals** (*means to an end*)

- extant definitions identify some elements, e.g.,
  - “a combination of a claim (or demand), a tactic, and a site (or venue)” (Meyer 2007, 82)
  - Ganz (2010, 9): targeting, tactics, timing
    - some overlap with the ‘patterns of violence’ framework discussed in Class 1
- BUT strategy does NOT always or in every situation include using violent tactics
  - many groups use **mixed strategies** of **violence** and **non-violence**

# Elements of strategy

- informative element: **objective(s)** (*why*): what are the actor(s) goals? **minimalist** vs. **maximalist** objectives
- **target** (*what/who*) - what entity is being acted upon?
  - involves choice to commit resources to specific outcomes
- **tactics** (*how*) - types of collective action and their form
  - attempt to deploy *strengths*, exploit target's *weaknesses*
- **site/venue** (*where*) - what place or what forum type is action taken?

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- **site/venue** (*where*) - what place or what forum type is action taken?
- **timing** (*when*) - when are tactics employed against targets

**What are the strategic elements of politically violent groups you know?**

# Drivers of strategy selection

- **strategy** is be a product of (rational) choice

BUT...

- it is also a part **collective identity** (cf. Polletta and Jasper 2001)
  - strategy also involves *moral and emotional commitments*

# An example from the news...

How can we characterise the group's *strategy* here?

# An example from ‘the 43 Group’



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🔊 ⏸ ⏴

# An example from ‘the 43 Group’

post-war Labour government, witnessing low-level fascist-party organising and agitation...

Beckman (2013):

On Tuesday May 21st [1946], [James] Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary, received a deputation from the JDC [Jewish Defence Committee, part of the Board of Deputies of British Jews] led by the Chairman, Gordon Liverman ... They listened to the deputation and said they would consider all the points raised, but nothing tangible happened.

documentary about 43 Group: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBusQBSCAHY>

# Poll: strategy formation and effect

LUDWIG-  
MAXIMILIANS-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNCHEN



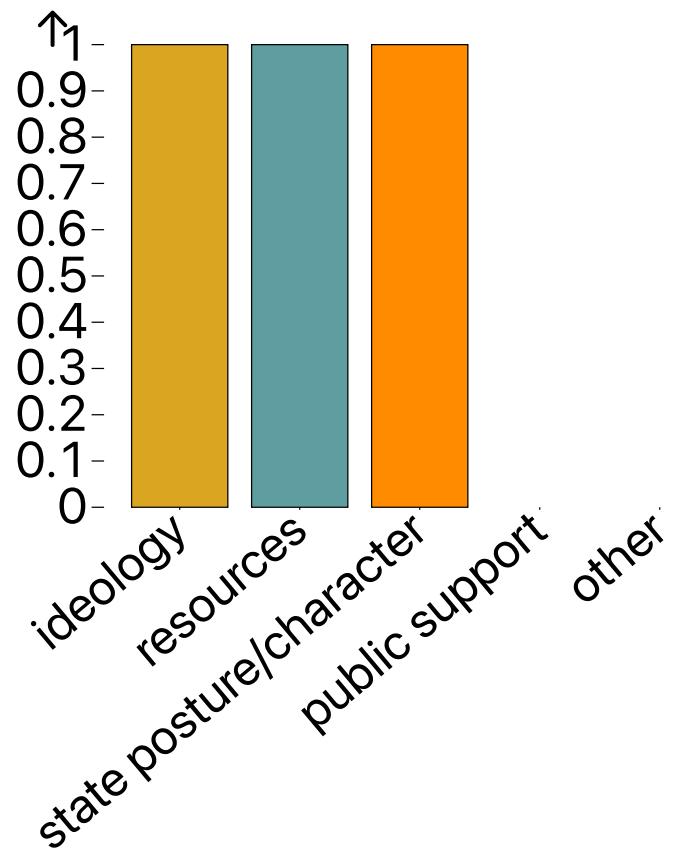
Take the survey at

<https://forms.gle/r9YgxUNgRx4RfGQz7>

- most important factor shaping the strategy of a (possibly) politically violent group?
- do maximalist goals require more violent/extreme strategies?
- is popular support important for a group to take politically violent action?
- main possible strategic advantage of using violence?

# Poll results (Respondents: 3)

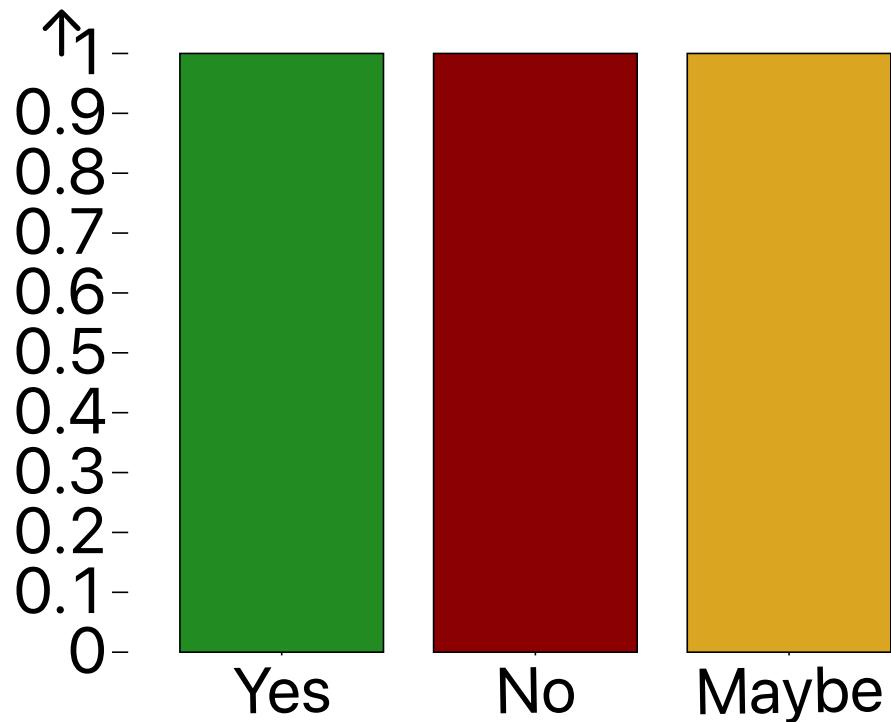
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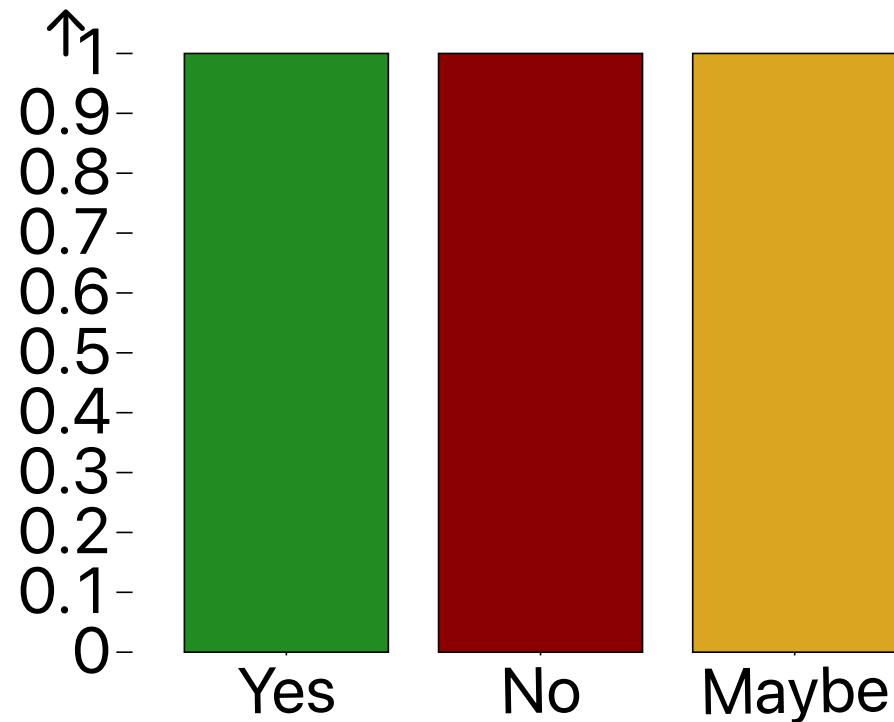


# Poll results

'maximalist' goals = more violent/extreme strategies?



Popular support important for violent action?

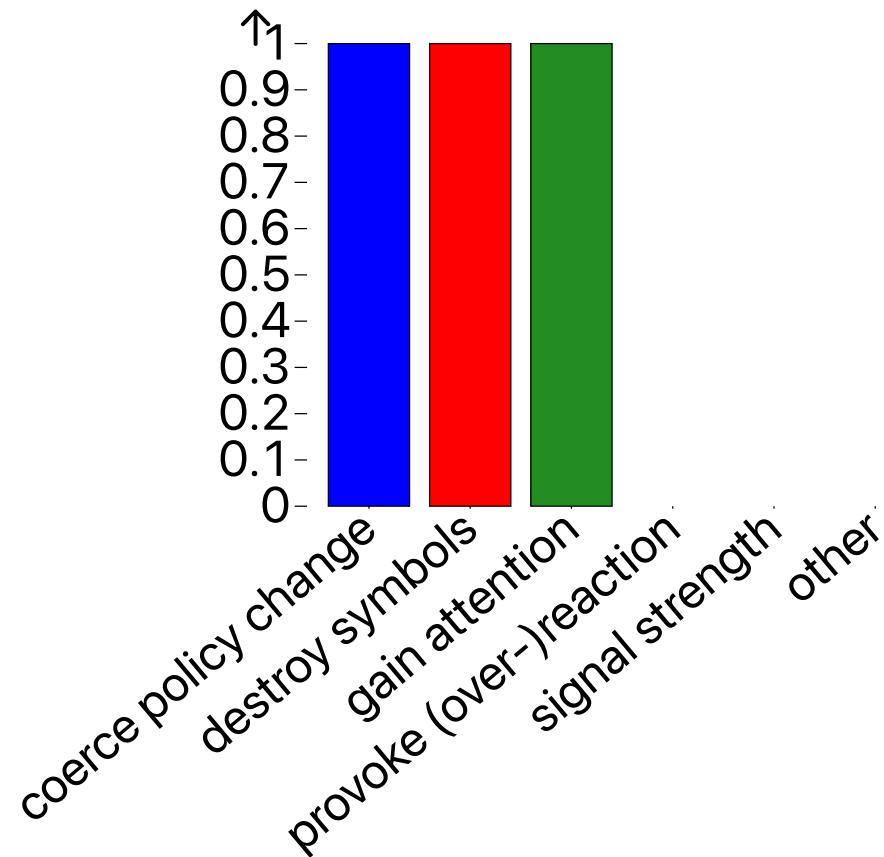


# 'maximalist' goals and concomitant strategies

Piven and Cloward (1979, xxi–xxii)

... by endeavoring to do what they cannot do, organizers fail to do what they can do... all too often, when workers erupted in strikes, organizers collected dues cards; when tenants refused to pay rent and stood off marshals, organizers formed building committees; when people were burning and looting, organizers used that 'moment of madness' to draft constitutions.

# Poll results: possible strategic advantage of violence



# Example from the FARC

*recall...*

- Territory of action: Colombia
- Organisational structure: hierarchical
- Membership: large
- (main) Objective: leftist revolution
- (common) Targets: state institutions, other paramilitaries
- Repertoire of actions: kidnapping, terrorism, drug trade



# Violent strategy, TIMING, and three climacterics

- 1964: FARC, leftist militant organisation mobilises
  - Domestic factors: (longstanding and extreme) **inequality**, emerging from a 10-year **civil war**,  
*La Violencia*
  - International factors:

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- 1982: FARC shifts strategic orientation to **seize power**
  - International factors:

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- 1982: FARC shifts strategic orientation to **seize power**
  - International factors: revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala
- 2012: (new) peace talks between FARC and government
  - Domestic factors:
  - International factors:

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  - International factors: revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala
- 2012: (new) peace talks between FARC and government
  - Domestic factors: (1) ‘Plan Colombia’ (esp. under Uribe) cracks down on narcotics trafficking and guerrillas; (2) FARC commander, Alfonso Cano, killed by army in late 2011; (3) FARC membership/strength sinks from highs of \$\$20,000 to 7,000
  - International factors: U.S. funding ‘Plan Colombia’ (upwards of \$10 billion) – though also funding the FARC through population’s cocaine purchases...
- Plus, **2016: peace deal rejected in referendum** – *quo vadis*
  - from *The Times*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZHT3fOJTXQ&t=429s>

# Points for consideration

- Higher institutionalisation discourages the use of violence (Caiani and Borri 2012, 14)
  - the case of FARC argues against this hypothesis
    - FARC was disciplined and had stringent rules, decided on an overall strategy through organisational conferences and they were resource-rich - i.e., a high degree of institutionalisation
  - there is no straightforward deterministic relationship between institutionalisation and (violent) strategy selection
- FARC violence used strategically and not randomly ... more likely to be exercised when it can be legitimised, **but also that the members adhered to this strategy.** *How and why does FARC manage to maintain this discipline?*- Possible explanations?

# Example of *Euskadi Ta Askatasun*

LMU

LUDWIG-  
MAXIMILIANS-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNCHEN

recall...

- Organisational structure: hierarchical
- Membership: large
- (main) Objective: leftist revolution, independent state
- (common) Targets: state institutions
- Repertoire: kidnapping, terrorism
- founded 1959 by Basque students - formally dissolved in 2018
- 1992 ‘Bidart raid’ decapitates ETA leadership, but...

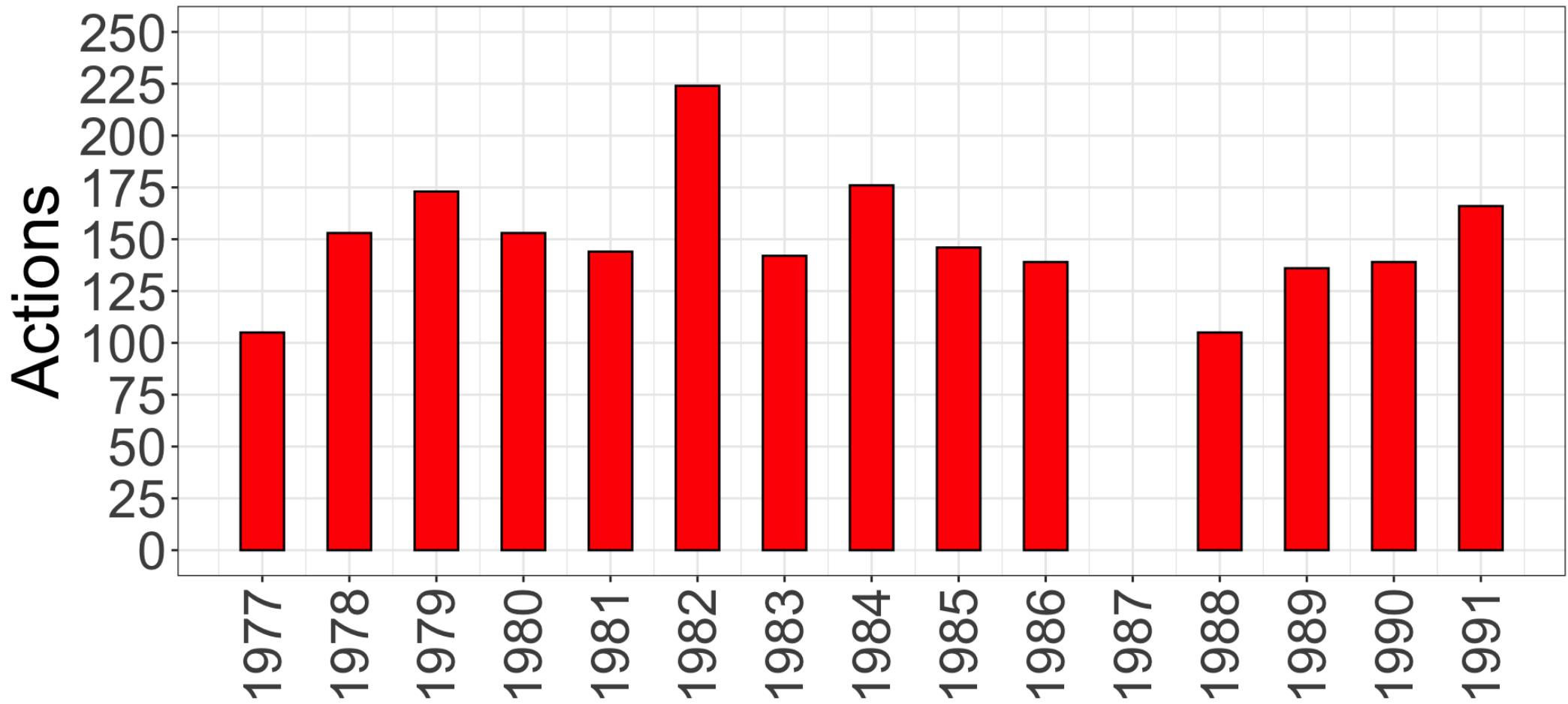


*Bietan jarrai* ('Keep up on both')

# ETA (Lafaye and Brochard 2022)

Period	Context	Type of struggle
1959-1975	Context	Anti-Francoist, action-repression-action strategy
1977-1981	Democratic transition	Offensive against Spanish state
1982-1992	Gov. elected, democracy stabilised	War of attrition
post-1992	Democracy stabilised	Fewer actions by ETA

# Peaks of ETA's armed offensive (Lafaye and Brochard)



Whenever an underground organisation resorts to **using explosives**—rather than executions with handguns—the results of its actions take an **unpredictable turn**, despite precautions by the perpetrators, when it is not their intention to cause the largest possible number of victims. The intention to kill or not to kill targets is part and parcel of the strategy of an illegal political group but the number affected cannot be planned beforehand.

- some famous examples of unpredictability...

- Greenwich Village explosion: 1970 Weather Undergr**LMU** bombs (intended for U.S. NCOs dance, Columbia Univ., and Fort Dix) accidentally explode in lower Manhattan
- Belfast 'own goals': accidental explosions (esp. in 1970s) northern Ireland, by both IRA and Protestant paramilitaries. IRA reportedly lost more than 120 members through premature explosions or accidental shootings...
- 1993 Shankill Road bombing (detonated while placing in chippie)

# ETA - strategic use of violence

- intense post-truce actions
- ahead of negotiations
- during elections
-

ETA endeavoured to take its place on the public scene, as a political player. It did this in various ways: either by **increasing the intensity of its actions after a truce had been broken**, or to influence the “balance of the dialogue” **before negotiations**; or **during elections, when democratic structures were just beginning to be established** in Spain, i.e. in the 1970s, and in the early 2000s, or **when political negotiations were being held in civil society** so that they could influence the search for a solution to the conflict.

# Briefly on selecting (and maintaining) nonviolence

- Mironova and Whitt (2022)
- one noteworthy (other) example



# Selecting (and maintaining) nonviolence (Mironova et al., 2022)

- those who experienced “abuse at the hands of government forces are more likely to justify violence in response to government provocation.”
  - BUT “*socializing effects of nonviolent activism*” builds self-discipline and restraint
  - “*we also find that identity and associational cleavages and divisions within a movement need not undermine protest commitment and dedication to non-violence.*”
- ... “Saunders et al. (2012) who urge scholars ‘to avoid treating protesters as a homogenous group’ (p. 263), distinguishing instead among **novices, returners, repeaters**, and **stalwarts**.”

# Maintaining nonviolence (cf. Mironova and Whitt 2021)

Any ideas what's going on here?



# Maintaining nonviolence (cf. Mironova and Whitt 2021)

Woolworth's lunch counter. Seated activists: John Salter, Joan Trumpauer, and Anne Moody.



At what point can a  
(politically) violent action by a  
self-proclaimed 'lone actor' be  
attributed to a politically  
violent group?

# Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Anonymous feedback here:

<https://forms.gle/NfF1pCfYMbkAT3WP6>

Alternatively, please send me an email: [m.zeller@lmu.de](mailto:m.zeller@lmu.de)

# References

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