Effects of Wagner Group on civilian violence in Central African Republic. (CAR has official contract with Wagner, see: (*UN Urges CAR to Cut Ties with Russia’s Wagner Mercenaries over Rights Abuses*, 2021)

* **Possible research questions:** 
  + why does Russia use the Wagner group at all?
    - For plausible deniability?
    - See (Muratalieva et al., 2022) in Zotero
      * This article discusses Chinese use of PMCs to expand sphere of influence, Russia could be doing something similar
      * Could we use their methods?
  + How does Russia use the Wagner group as an extension of its military?
  + Is the Wagner Group different from traditional PMCs?
    - Does Russia use it differently?
    - Does Russia use it for different purposes?

Current literature on Wagner Group is lacking. Marten, Kimberly. “Russia’s Use of Semi-State Security Forces: The Case of the Wagner Group.” Post-Soviet affairs 35, no. 3 (2019): 181–204.

Head of Wagner? Dmitry Utkin ([wikipedia link](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dmitry_Utkin))

- Use Wagner Group as treatment variable for violence in priogrid areas.

- Provide justification through description

- Use data to show how Wagner Group effects violence in area – 200+ observations (not all violence)

- The puzzle is what happens to levels of violence in particularly conflict prone state when Wagner group is hired out. Does the violence toward civilians increase or decrease?

What sort of assumptions can we make on results?

What are some of the potential issues?

- Largely, endogeneity issues can be cut down by use of priogrid data

- Questions over number of occurrences

Treatment variables:

- Wagner Group

Control variables:

- Peacekeepers from GEOPKO?

Qual paper ideas/notes

Why is the norm of Blackwater's involvement with the US different than Russia and Wagner?

e.g., US ultimately convicted Blackwater contractors of killing Iraqis

If Wagner did something similar, were they punished? (find an example from data)

so, there are 0 repercussions from Russia to Wagner, because acting as a sovereign state

would mean that they should care.

Wagner, acting as an agent of Russia, doesn't have to worry about finding employment like

Blackwater does

General questions:

Does this fit in with hybrid sovereignty?

What about framing the article as definitively linking Russia and Wagner? Too big of a task?

Here’s what Chris Mayer said of Wagner in an email:

1. Wagner-type operations are spreading (witness recent reports on Mali). Wagner is not a single company, nor is it really a company. It is a method of deploying irregular forces for security force assistance and sometimes combat by the Russian government. This is done in a way to avoid accountability under international law. Russia is not the only country to use this method. Turkey in Libya and the UAE in several other countries conduct similar activity. Without accountability, such use will increase.

2. Wagner type activity (whether by Russia or other countries) is not the only example of PMC services that may be involved in combat. There are legitimate, publicly registered and accountable organizations that offer security force assistance that includes direct participation in hostilities. These include Dyck Advisory Group, STTEP, and the newly re-established Executive Outcomes. These meet legitimate needs of national military and police structures for multi-echelon training. This advice and assistance sometimes includes accompanying or advising military units in combat and, on rare occasions, conducting combat operations themselves. STTEP and EO are also particular about meeting all of the requirements for qualified belligerent status for its personnel according to the Hague Convention. These actors should not be conflated with Wagner type operations, which are totally unaccountable.

3. Technically advanced weapons systems and cyber warfare often involve the use of contractor support that touches or even crosses the line to direct participation in hostilities. For example, although military personnel may conduct targeting and weapons system release in unmanned aerial systems, the act of launch and recovery is often conducted by contractor personnel. This launch and recovery as part of a combat mission could be considered DPH under the guidelines published in the ICRC’s publication on the Interpretation of Direct Participation in Hostilities. Cyberwarfare is moving — or has already moved — to a lethal force throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace. What is the extent of contractor personnel in conducting these operations?

4. As a last point, David’s assertion that article 47 of AP2 can be applied to various foreign fighter groups is incorrect. To be considered a mercenary under this article, or the UN Convention against mercenary activity, or the African Union convention, ALL conditions of the definition must apply to the individual. This has been nearly impossible to prove in past cases, so much to the point that it has been said that anyone actually convicted of mercenary activity deserves to go to jail, and his lawyer with him.

None of takes away from David’s main point about the difficulty in definitions. On the contrary, I argue that these considerations make defining the problem even more important.

*More stuff from Mayer in another email*: “There are a number of different Russian/State-sponsored quasi-mercenary organizations, and their particular corporate identity may change depending on the operation. In addition to Wagner, for example, another Russian entity, SEWA, provides protection, security and training in the C.A.R. Unlike Wagner, SEWA is actually incorporated in the C.A.R., but is a subsidiary of Lobaye Invest, which is owned by Prigozhin, who controls (though various subsidiaries) Wagner”

Wagner group possibly preced by: Slavonic Corps?

Also possible that Putin has said stuff about Wagner? Verify for accuracy