



Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

FACULTY
OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



HAMBURG POLITICAL SCIENCE SEMINAR SERIES – HPS³

INVITATION

Please be invited to the Hamburg Political Science Seminar Series - HPS³ in Summer Semester 2025.

The HPS Seminar Series features international speakers presenting cutting-edge research in empirical political science and political economy. It takes place on Thursdays and Wednesdays. For further information about dates and speakers in SuSe 25 please refer to the [HPS³ Website](#).

We welcome on

April 23, 2025 17:15-18:45 CET in VMP9 B130

[Melanie Sauter](#) (University of Mannheim)

Title: Retaliatory Strikes: Russian attacks on healthcare in Ukraine

Authors: Melanie Sauter (University of Mannheim), Scott Gates (University of Oslo / Peace Research Institute Oslo)

Abstract:

Recent studies on the micro-dynamics of conflicts have advanced our understanding of when and why civilians are attacked in irregular warfare, but the dynamics of modern interstate warfare are less understood. In this article, we ask when and why Russia targeted civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, with a specific focus on attacks against healthcare. We propose that these attacks are intentional and Russia primarily directs its attacks on healthcare following its own battlefield losses. Such actions undermine the healthcare system, which not only poses long-term public health risks but also deprives already vulnerable populations of critical care. By disrupting healthcare services, Russia penalizes both the Ukrainian civilian population and the Ukrainian military, which relies on these services to treat its wounded soldiers. We test this argument with new data on attacks against healthcare in Ukraine, and find a positive effect immediately after military losses on the Russian side. This article highlights the punitive nature of Russia's strategic approach to warfare, showing its strategic use war crimes to punish the civilian population.

We invite everyone interested to attend!