

## Volume XIII, Issue 2 April 2019

A JOURNAL OF THE

**TRI** **TERRORISM RESEARCH INITIATIVE**  
Enhancing Security through Collaborative Research

## Table of Contents

Welcome from the Editors.....1

### Articles

A “Lunatic Fringe”? The Persistence of Right Wing Extremism in Australia.....2  
by *Kristy Champion*

Mapping Transnational Extremist Networks: An Exploratory Study of the Soldiers of Odin’s Facebook Network, Using Integrated Social Network Analysis.....21  
by *Yannick Veilleux-Lepage and Emil Archambault*

The Hand that Feeds the Salafist: an Exploration of the Financial Independence of 131 Dutch Jihadi Travellers.....39  
by *Melvin Soudijn*

The Terrorism Recidivism Study (TRS): Examining Recidivism Rates for Post 9/11 Offenders.....54  
by *Omi Hodwitz*

### Special Correspondence

The mid-February 2019 Pulwama attack in Kashmir: an Indian Perspective.....65  
by *Abhinav Pandya*

The mid-February 2019 Pulwama attack in Kashmir: a Pakistani Perspective.....69  
by *Muhammad Feyyaz*

Seeing Political Violence through Different Lenses.....75  
by *Gregory D. Miller*

### Resources

Bibliography: Terrorism and the Media (including the Internet) (Part 4).....79  
*Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes*

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 40 Books on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects.....142  
*Reviewed by Joshua Sinai*

Max Abrahms, *Rules for Rebels: The Science of Victory in Militant History*. (Oxford University Press, 2018).....155  
*Reviewed by Alex P. Schmid*

Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subject.....156  
*Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman*

**Announcements**

**Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (April – July 2019).....190**

*Compiled by Reinier Bergema*

**About *Perspectives on Terrorism*.....197**

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## Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XIII, Issue 2 (April 2019) of *Perspectives on Terrorism*, available online now at: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/PoT>.

Our free and independent online journal is a publication of the Vienna-based Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University's The Hague Campus. Now in its thirteenth year, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has more than 8,300 regular e-mail subscribers and many more occasional readers and website visitors worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer reviewed by external referees while its Research and Policy Notes, Special Correspondence, and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

The first two articles of the current issue deal with right-wing extremism. The opening article by Kristy Champion looks at the historical background of Australian extremism that led to the attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019. The second article, authored by Yannick Veilleux-Lepage and Emil Archambault, is a network analysis of the so-called Soldiers of Odin, a trans-Atlantic network of right-wing extremists. The third article, by Melvin Soudijn, looks at the financing of Dutch jihadi travellers/foreign fighters who went to Syria and Iraq, and arrives at unexpected findings based on unique primary sources. Finally, there is an article by Omi Hodwitz on recidivism among Americans convicted of terrorism, again resulting in new and unexpected findings.

The Special Correspondence section offers the reader two perspectives on the Pulmawa attacks in Kashmir in mid-February 2019, one from the hand of Abhinav Pandya from India and the other from Muhammad Feyyaz from Pakistan. This is followed by a Postscript from Associate Editor Gregory D. Miller.

The Resources section includes our regular contributions from Joshua Sinai (book reviews), Judith Tinnes (bibliography), Berto Jongman (web-based resources), and Reinier Bergema (conference calendar). In addition, there is a review by Alex Schmid of an important new study, *Rules for Rebels: The Science of Victory in Militant History* (Oxford University Press, 2018), authored by Max Abrahms.

The current issue was jointly prepared by Alex P. Schmid (Editor-in-Chief) and Gregory Miller (Associate Editor), with the assistance of James Forest (Co-Editor), Christine Boulema Robertus (Associate Editor for IT), and Jodi Moore (Editorial Assistant).

# A “Lunatic Fringe”? The Persistence of Right Wing Extremism in Australia

by Kristy Campion

## Abstract

*Right Wing Extremism (RWE) in Australia is historically persistent and contemporarily well-established. The persistence is not simply the consequence of an Australian-centric white nationalism, but is the result of international and domestic exchanges. This article investigates the persistence and appeal of Australian RWE groups. The first movements emerged in the 1930s against Bolshevik Communism, and quickly established ties with fellow travellers elsewhere in the Western world. While their influence diminished, their sentiment persisted in subcultural networks which also demonstrated international ties. RWE resurged in the 1980s, seeking to stymie pluralism and immigration. Some extremists travelled overseas, and formed connections with international counterparts. Their activities were suppressed by law enforcement, but the sentiment continues to survive in subcultural networks. RWE resurfaced in the decade prior to the 2019 Christchurch attack, largely targeting ethnic Australians and members of the Muslim community. Currently, the RWE threat in Australia is inherently tied to extremist attitudes regarding jihadism, Muslims, and immigration.*

**Keywords:** Australia, right wing extremism, terrorism, fascism, nationalism, Christchurch

## Introduction

Right Wing Extremism (RWE) in Australia has demonstrated persistence over the past ninety years, despite its relatively peripheral position on the greater political spectrum. The Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) once placed the extreme right on the “lunatic fringe,” which maintained its relevance by public and provocative acts.[1] Notwithstanding this conceptual positioning, the extreme right in Australia has also demonstrated an ability to engage in meaningful international exchange with counterparts elsewhere in the Western world. This exchange is evident from Australian contacts with international counterparts and networks, personal visits, and literature interchanges. The RWE threat in Australia, therefore, did not evolve in isolation from the global right wing community, but in interactions with it. While international studies on right-wing extremism have expanded exponentially in recent years, local studies into the Australian situation remain scarce.[2]

In the wake of the Christchurch attack, the conversation on Australian RWE has been relatively limited by the studies and data available. This article aims to fill the lacuna in the literature by bridging the gap between Australian security studies and the history of Australia’s extreme right. The intent is to provide a descriptive background and context which can be exploited in further studies and analysis. The findings are twofold: that Australia experiment three periods of RWE activity prior to the Christchurch attack; and secondly, that between activity periods, RWE subsides into subcultural networks. Like international counterparts, Australian movements appear to catalyse in response to urgent threats to their constructed identity.

Initially, groups like the *New Guard*, the *Australia First Movement*, and the *Australian League of Rights* were driven by anti-Semitic, anti-Communist agendas. In time, they subsided into subcultural networks or were relegated to the political fringe. Later, the *National Action* and the *Australian Nationalist Movement* drove another activity surge, arguing that the Australian identity was imperilled by Asian immigration. It subsided due to concentrated police action, although RWE again persisted in subcultural networks. Like elsewhere in the world, RWE in Australia also surged in the last decade, where numerous groups appeared, claiming to be threatened by Islam and Muslim immigration. The potential for violence was realised recently, with the Christchurch attacks in New Zealand, perpetrated by an Australian citizen.

In order to establish this persistence, this research uses the historical method, based on with the investigation of archival documents, specialist literature as well as group manifestos. Because of the occasionally incomplete nature of these records, the full measure of this activity may never actually be known. This makes stringent application of theory and definitions somewhat problematic. Broader definitions were found to be more practical for historical inquiry, hence the exploitation of Berger's discussion on pluralism and exclusion with reference to in-groups and out-groups.[4]

Establishing widely agreed upon operational definitions for RWE ideology is also difficult, with a wide variety of competing definitions offered by scholars. At its most reduced level, Pedazur and Canetti-Nisim argue that the primary feature of RWE is "the ideology of ethnic exclusionism," which provides a clear starting point.[5] Midlarsky provided a contrasting perspective, aligning political extremism with classical definitions on fascism, with its restriction on individual freedoms executed in the name of the collective.[6] Carter and Mudde, in separate studies, established transient parameters around the ideology, describing it as authoritarian, anti-democratic or populist, driven by a exclusionary or nativist nationalism.[7] A universal definition is at this stage unattainable. However, Carter's definition has been the most influential in this research.

Extremism does, as it has been suggested by many authors, exist somewhat on a subjective spectrum, removed from socio-political norms. The leading expert on Australia's extreme right, Andrew Moore, provided insight into the Australian context. He described these right wing groups as often nationalist in character, operating from extreme positions, in which conspiracy—usually embodied by a particular group or establishment—is a central organising tenet, underwritten by contempt or suspicion for parliamentary democracy.[8] This was broadly reflective in the groups in this study.

Finally, the definition for terrorism was provided by Schmid.[9] This definition assists in the delineating between terrorism and extremism. Mares in his Hungarian case study noted that the line between street violence perpetrated by subcultural networks can quickly blur into terrorist violence.[10] Prior to the Christchurch attacks, it could be argued that Australian RWE violence was insufficiently severe to be classified as terrorism, being primarily subversion of democratic process through entryism, street fights, harassment, and property damage.

### ***Conspiracies: Communists and Jews***

Mondon recently argued that "Unlike many of its western counterparts, Australia has been spared powerful surges of the extreme right" because of the nature of mainstream policies.[11] Early Australian policies allowed official ethno-exclusivist policies to flourish in the open, rendering extreme right wing parties irrelevant. Mondon compellingly argues this can be traced back well before federation in 1901, driven in part by the Bunyip Aristocracy (a term referring to a growing colonial upper class).[12] Although the roots of ethno-exclusivism run deep in Australia, the emergence of extreme right wing organisations can be traced back only to the interwar period.

World War One and the impact of subsequent policies on global financial markets is well known. The Great Depression, which remains the worst economic crisis in modern history, lasted from 1929 to 1939. Even countries such as Australia, which had not hosted a battle front, suffered. Australia experienced high inflation in 1918 and faced a recession in 1923. The economy had only just begun to recover when it was hit again, this time due to global oversupply reducing wool and wheat prices on which Australia heavily depended. When the US stock market crashed in 1929, Australia's economy went down with it.

It was in this atmosphere of deep financial stress that a movement formed in New South Wales, Australia, called *The Country* by members, and now called the *Old Guard* by historians. This movement, which soon attracted 30,000 members, was deeply concerned about Bolshevik Communist influence in post-WWI

politics.[13] It was averse to publicity, and maintained a clandestine watch on public affairs whilst stockpiling weapons, preparing to intervene should the government collapse. The perceived failure of NSW Labor Premier Jack Lang to prevent economic distress, and his apparent socialist tendencies, saw him labelled a Bolshevik, and subsequently, distrusted by the *Old Guard*. Opposition to Communism is a common element of RWE internationally, with small cells in Hungary surfacing in 1956 with similar agendas.[14] This is also echoed in other parts of Europe and North America.

The *Old Guard* was perhaps too passive for some members. Under Colonel Eric Campbell, a small group of military officers splintered off and formed a new group which was far more Fascist, called the *New Guard* in 1931. Its members organised themselves along military principles, and condemned mainstream politics, perceived disloyalty to the British empire (to which they gave their allegiance foremost), and societal immorality.[15] Early links were established in 1933 between the *New Guard* and Fascist movements in Britain (especially the *British Union of Fascists*), Italy and Germany, when Campbell toured the Old World.

Under Campbell, the *New Guard* advanced a conservative right wing belief system; its members saw their world order was imperilled by the Bolshevik threat and by trade unionism. With unemployment numbers high during the Depression, the *New Guard* formed links with employers' associations (rather than trade unions) to match anti-Communist workers with employment opportunities through a designated bureau. Although the working class was initially a minority in the movement, the *New Guard* soon attracted 36,000 followers.[16]

When labour and left-wing militias formed against them, street fights (of which the Battle of Bankstown was the most prominent) ensued. The *New Guard's* primary tactic was to disrupt trade union and working-class political meetups, which they construed as Communism in action. They engaged in street brawls, as well as tarring and feathering suspected Communists. In 1931, Moore contends that a force of 1,000 Guards attacked left wing meetings in regiments of 200.[17] The violence became so widespread in 1932 that Moore suggests Campbell came close to "mounting a *coup d'état* against the Lang government."[18]

There was also growing support for a formal fascist movement. Admiration for the charisma and leadership of Benito Mussolini, the Italian *duce*, saw Fascist movements gain traction in Australia. This was especially common among the Australian-Italian community, which joined *Fascio* social organisations in Victoria, New South Wales, and Western Australia.[19] *National Socialism*, too, began to attract followers. In 1932, the first *National Socialist* stronghold was established in Adelaide, and strongholds in other capitals soon followed.[20]

Two years later, the *National Socialist German Workers Party* (NSDAP) was formally established in Australia. In 1938, intelligence services believed the *NSDAP* had nearly one hundred members, and that number increased substantially the following year. The main priority of the *NSDAP* was to revive concepts of German identity, and establish international and domestic Germanic communities. Members of the middle class, who were anti-Semitic, anti-Communist, or Fascist, were attracted to the party, due to naivety about its programmes,[21] although intelligence documents suggest subscription to the group was occasionally coerced.[22]

While the Nazi movement in Australia initially grew organically without official assistance from Germany, it was soon administered rather closely by the Third Reich.[23] When Adolf Hitler came to power, all Germans living abroad were declared subject to the Foreign Department, and managed through the *Auslandsorganisation* (Organisation Abroad). This was in pursuit of the *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (fate community) idea, whereupon Germans living in foreign countries could be used as a "substitute for this State machinery." [24] As a result, a large number of Germans were interned during WWII as security risks.

But it would be overly simplistic to describe early RWE as solely a German initiative. Alexander Rud Mills, a Melbourne lawyer, took a more spiritual approach towards the radical right by forming an Odinist cult. The cult believed that modern Christianity was debased "Jew-worship", and the only way to restore Australia was through a racialist interpretation of Odinism. Without it, the so-called British people would become "a race

of mongrels”.[25] Mills wrote several books, aiming at the restoration of British heroes, holy places, traditions, and ideals in Australia.[26] He was well connected in international Fascist circles, meeting Hitler in the 1930s, and sending him a copy of his book, *Fear shall be in the way*. [27] Elements of his work became significant in U.S neo-Nazi circles in the 1990s due to their exploitation by Else Christensen, demonstrating a two-way exchange with international counterparts.[28]

Mills was a loud supporter of the *Australia First Movement* (AFM). The founders were William J. Miles and Percy R. Stephensen, nationalists who guarded against the encroachment of Imperial Britain in Australia—hence their slogan ‘Australia First’.[29] They established *The Publicist* in 1936, which championed a Fascist agenda, while opposing some (but not all) elements of British influence, Semitism, and democracy. According to Miles, “Our aim is limited to arousing in Australians a positive feeling, a distinctive Australian patriotism of a thoroughly realistic kind”.[30] Despite claims within *The Publicist* that an official movement would be formed only after the end of the Second World War, the short-lived AFM was created in 1941.

An inquiry into the movement found it was characterised by a strong hostility “to the Jewish race”, and its members were “keen advocates of Australian nationalism”.[31] Miles believed a White Australia had to be maintained, Australian-centric nationalism had to be deliberately fostered, and any attempt to reduce Australian autonomy had to be resisted.[32] Aligned with Axis ideology, and with tentative links to Italian Fascists, they sought a political alliance with Japan to secure that autonomy. As a result, some followers were classified as a security threat and were subsequently interned under the *National Security (General) Regulations*, emergency powers enacted to safeguard Australia’s internal stability during wartime. Members in Western Australia were also arrested when they were found possessing conspiratorial plans, which detailed the potentiality of siding with the Japanese in case of a Japanese invasion; sabotaging vulnerable strategic areas; killing prominent Australians; and drafts welcoming the Japanese.[33] AFM diminished rapidly after the Inquiry.

The most significant and lasting of the early groups was the *Australian League of Rights*. The first branch of the *League of Rights* was established by Eric Butler in 1946 in South Australia and Victoria. The main thrust, in line with its slogan of “A Movement of the Australian People Fighting for Individual Freedom with Security”, was pro-British loyalism, right-libertarian in substance, and politically conservative with anti-Communist emphasis.[34] Resentment of bureaucratic control figured in nearly half of their objectives. Eric Butler also energetically pursued a Social Credit agenda, positioning Jews and Jewish financing as the force of centralisation and inequity.[35] Their tactics included political pressure, lobbying, and letters to Members of Parliament.

Also in 1946, Butler published *The International Jew: The Truth about the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Although hoax Protocols were common from as early as 1905,[36] Butler had been penning such forgeries since 1937. *The International Jew* proffered one primary contention: that a Zionist super government used its wealth to control the governments of the world.[37] Government submission to this entity, whether conscious or unconscious, was coerced through debt, bonds, and securities. The Jews were portrayed as an existential threat to liberty and personal freedoms, reducing Australia to a slave state.

ALR employed a series of covert strategies for entryism: infiltration, primarily targeting the Liberal Party and the National Party to undermine and replace their core values; elite penetration, whereby they hoped to capture leadership positions in target parties; policy penetration, where they would bloc vote (or branch stack) inside other parties; and agents of influence, where they pressured politicians in target parties.[38] This strategy would be used again in 2018, by the *Lads Society* against the *Young Nationals*. In any event, some of these goals were achieved through the *Voters Policy Association* (VPA), established in 1964. VPAs believed they were “engaged in a life-and-death struggle; that there is raging throughout the world in a highly complex form of warfare in which politics are the most vital aspect.”[39] The VPA formed Action Groups of two to six members to engage in propaganda, recruitment, and political pressure activities.



ASIO was aware of the *ALR* threat, describing it as an anti-Semitic and racist organisation which primarily exerted pressure on conservative political parties.[40] Entryism aside, their activity was largely relegated to rallies, marches, and demonstrations. Although *ALR* did not officially endorse political violence, individual members were assessed to have the predisposition for “low level violence against ethnic targets and at times, politicians and government representatives”.[41] *ALR* was categorised with issue-orientated protest groups, which made it vulnerable to manipulation by pro-violent individuals, although the threat itself was considered negligible.[42]

### ***Subcultural Persistence***

In the sixties, RWE activity appeared to be subsiding when, in 1964, Australian customs intercepted parcels from the United States, addressed to Brisbane. The parcels contained stickers emblazoned with ‘Hitler was Right’ and ‘Unite and Fight’; leaflets titled ‘Peace creeps’; Stormtrooper magazines and manuals; and music from Hatennanny Records, the record label established by American neo-Nazi and politician, George Rockwell. While the parcels were released to their owners (there was no provision prohibiting their importation), investigators deduced that the importation had something to do with the *Australian Nationalist Socialist* movement. Close ties to “organisations in the U.S.A., headed by Dean Rockwell and in England by Sir Oswald Mosely and Clifford Jordan” were suspected.[43]

It is suggested here that investigators misspelled some of the names. They may have actually been referring to George Rockwell, a Nazi party leader in the United States, as mentioned above; and Colin Jordan, a National Socialist in the UK. The spelling of Oswald Mosely, of the British Union of Fascists, was both correct and significant: the Christchurch perpetrator would also cite him as a major ideological influence. These parcels demonstrate that, as far as resourcing goes, Australian RWE were reaching out to counterparts in both the USA and the UK during the sixties. This would suggest that Australian extremists, and subsequently their ideology, was increasingly being informed by international developments.

Despite that, the activities of RWE groups appeared to subside into subcultural networks, notwithstanding attempts of journalist Frank Browne to energise them. Browne, much like *AFM*, envisaged Australia as a muscular white nation with a minimalist government and a strong military, with which it would rule the Pacific.[44] Browne managed to establish a political Nazi identity in Australia which, essentially, formed part of the neo-Nazi subculture. This fed into other neo-Nazi groups, such as the *National Australian Workers Party*, formed in 1959 by some of Browne’s acolytes.[45] His influence was minimal, even domestically.

Following the Second World War, the extreme right had the appearance of a spent force.[46] Sporadic attempts to form a neo-Nazi party in Australia throughout the fifties and sixties failed. In the mid-1950s, Arthur Smith, inspired by Browne, tried to form the *Australian National Socialist Party (ANSP)*. Personality clashes between leaders of the movement was a persistent source of weakness. When the organisation was raided in 1964, it was found in possession of explosives, detonators, and other weapons. Smith was jailed for six months for unlawful possession.[47] Smith tried to revamp the party in years between 1966 and 1968, but again, failed.[48]

### ***Pluralism: Immigration and Identity***

Australian RWE, despite these failures, was reforming itself, and refocusing its ideology. In 1968, the *National Socialist Party of Australia (NSPA)* formed under the leadership of Edward Cawthorn, Ferenc Molnar, Leslie Ritchie, and John Stewart (on the condition that Arthur Smith resigned).[49] Cawthorn believed that Nazism had to take on an authentic Australian style to retain membership, and reorientated the group’s ideology from typical white supremacy to adopting the Eureka flag as an emblem, while exploiting Henry Lawson’s writings.[50] This was a deliberate choice to localise international concepts of National Socialism within the Australian

context, another style choice which would later be replicated by *Antipodean Resistance* in 2018.

The NSPA contested the Senate elections in 1970s. The candidates in Queensland received as many as 12,000 votes, and netted another 8,000 in New South Wales and 1,800 in Victoria respectively. At the time, ASIO believed that the support for the NSPA was more derived from their anti-Communist stance, rather than strict adherence to their policies.[51] It was a vocal supporter of the Vietnam War, staged counter protests against left wing students, and was rumoured they had a secret 'kill list' of one hundred prominent Australian politicians and businessmen. There were also unsubstantiated claims of a training camp in Emerald, Victoria.[52] ASIO also believed that some members were responsible for incendiary bombs which damaged left-wing businesses in Melbourne. Prosecutions apparently followed, although the suspects were not named.[53]

NSPA ideology made them enemies of left-wing student groups, communists, and Australian Jews. The NSPA advocated an ethno-state, reduced Asian immigration, and relegating Aboriginals to a different state in the Commonwealth.[54] As a result, ASIO believed the NSPA remained "a lunatic fringe extremist political organisation promoting a Nazi-type 'ideology' abhorrent to the population at large, and maintaining its very identity through acts of provocation directed at its main ideological targets—jews [sic], communists and radical left-wing bodies generally." [55] Despite their position on the fringe, it was assessed that the RWE organisations, posed a threat to the community, with one document stating: "These groups have definite ideologies, political causes to fight for, and traditions involving the use of extreme violence. They pose an actual and continuing danger for the staging of political [sic] motivated acts of violence." [56] This threat assessment by ASIO indicates an advanced awareness at the time of the potential of RWE to escalate towards violence. It had not only attracted the attention of the security community, but also the academic community.

Sociologist John J. Ray immersed himself in Australia's Nazi community between 1966 and 1973, noting that "I found this relatively easy to do—provided I paid my tax of an occasional anti-Semitic utterance." [57] He found that it was driven by anti-Zionism and suspicion of a *Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG)*, informed by Aryan mythology and desires for ethno-states, and supported by often-aggressive and exhibitionist young men. These descriptors are not entirely dissimilar to Sprinzak's youth counter culture typology, and Ravndal's subcultural network, both of which highlight nationally-orientated, anti-immigrant, 'skinheads', some drawn together by music or cultural rebellion, and whose members frequently engage in street fights with left-wing opponents.[58]

In 1976, ASIO delivered a seminar which covered the existence of right wing groups which had arisen as a result of the domestic political climate, namely, the Labour Government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, which held office from 1972 to 1975. They noted that numerous groups had cropped up, and just as quickly, faded away, demonstrating a swift lifecycle not dissimilar from groups today. Among these groups were *Safari 8*, which engaged in military training the Australian Capital Territory; the *Legion of the Frontiersman of the Commonwealth*, which recruited Vietnam veterans; and the *Australian Youth Coalition*, which threatened violence against government officials. Although no violence ultimately manifested itself, it was believed that "all of these groups are ones which are small, highly dedicated and of considerable danger at the time." [59]

Some Australian extremists found ideological resonance with the American neo-Nazi, William Luther Pierce. Under the penname Andrew MacDonald, Pierce published *The Turner Diaries* in 1978, a book which was to become the bible of right wing extremists.[60] The fictional novel details the experiences of Earl Turner during the early days of an American race revolution. Turner serves the Organisation (and inside it, the Order), which uses terrorism against an unjust US Government because of its submission to the ZOG, strict gun control, and support of civil and sexual liberation movements.

Pluralism (and its alleged watchdog, 'political correctness') is positioned as the primary agents for societal decay, with Pierce articulating a pervasive rejection of the forces of multiculturalism. The novel details a programme of direct action against the US government, incorporating strategic and tactical considerations;

resource acquisition and management; counterintelligence; psychological and propaganda campaigns; and played upon mainstream aversions to paedophilia and rape to demonise the left. The Organisation transitions from terrorism to guerrilla war, ethnic cleansing, nuclear devastation, and finally, global white domination. *The Turner Diaries* did not have much impact until it was picked up by right wing terrorists: David Lane, of *The Order*; and Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber.[61]

Nonetheless, the novel's notion of white peril was similar to the notions espoused by RWE groups in Australia, especially in regard to Asian immigration. The Holt Liberal Government's *Migration Act (1966)* theoretically opened the doors to multicultural immigration in 1966, and in 1973, the Whitlam Labour Government symbolically dropped the White Australia policy, when they removed existing racial clauses from immigration laws. Refugees fleeing the Vietnam War, however, did not really start arriving in Australia until the seventies and eighties. This, in part, drove theories about white peril, endangered by pluralism. Within this environment, RWE opposition to multiculturalism and pluralism simmered.

The previous tolerance for racial exclusivity entrenched in Australian law was being systematically removed. The out-group in the right wing narrative changed: it was no longer personified by the Communist and the Jew; now it was the immigrant. Anti-immigration is a significant theme in international RWE movements, especially European ethno-nationalist groups, in which immigrants are held responsible for economic downturn.[62] Notably, this resonates with German movements in the 1990s, where RWE violence was considered a reaction to immigration, rather than the consequence of eroding social status.[63] Similarly, in Australia, *National Action* is largely believed to have formed in reaction to immigration.

Jim Saleam and Frank Salter established *Australian National Action* (NA) in April 1982, after the successive failures of the *National Resistance Group* (1977), *National Alliance* (1978), *Immigration Control Association* (1981), and the *Progressive Nationalist Party*. [64] It was initially a student-based movement, according to Whitford, which aimed to encourage Australian patriotism and restrict foreign students.[65] Others argue that NA was a reaction to multiculturalism and immigration, although this does not explain their targeting of homosexuals.[66]

NA was a hierarchal and centrally controlled organisation, determined to use direct military action to achieve their goals.[67] This was not unlike the Organisation, described in *The Turner Diaries*. NA believed that Australia was a predominately white European nation, with a cohesive set of values and beliefs. This lifestyle was accordingly imperilled by Asian immigration and foreign ownership of Australian land.[68] Here, multiculturalism, as a force of modernity, was a threat to the idealised the NA life. The NA, according to Saleam, believed that combat was the only way to force political change. It adopted a strategy of "Political Guerrilla Warfare", targeting certain individuals, releasing intimidating and destabilising propaganda, developing counter intelligence, and the use of "soft" violence to indoctrinate members.[69] As a consequence, NA persecuted various racial groups, immigrants, naturalisation ceremonies, and homosexuals. Even the Pitt Street Uniting Church in central Sydney was targeted because of its lesbian reverend, Dorothy McRae-McMahon, and the Church's progressive stance on apartheid, immigration, and sexuality.[70]

In the eighties, international RWE was surging when NA launched a broader intimidation campaign in Sydney, claiming it was "kill and be killed." [71] They stormed the Uniting Church, burned effigies on the reverend's front yard; and harassed members of the gay, lesbian, and migrant communities.[72] They also harassed the *Combined Unions against Racism* (CUAR) organisation, which resulted in NA firebombing a CUAR car in 1984, and they also stormed the Macquarie University campus, allegedly assaulting staff.[73] They were considered responsible for planting a hoax bomb in an Asian restaurant in 1986, and the drive-by shooting of Edwin Funde's (an anti-apartheid campaigner) house in 1989.[74]

Their most significant action was not against their out-group at all, but against the police. NA had a hit list with the New South Wales Special Branch leader's name on it, and NA somehow obtained his address and leaked

it publicly (although no attack is noted).[75] As the eighties progressed, disaffected white males were joining NA based on their already existing white supremacist inclinations, expanding it from a student movement to a subcultural network. NA was eventually subdued through police action, but not before it was connected to Jack van Tongeren.

Jack van Tongeren joined the NA sometime in the mid-1980s, and tried to gain control over the group. He failed in this attempt, splitting from them, and formed the *Australian Nationalist Movement* (ANM), though it is suspected that the two groups remained connected.[76] He formed the ANM in Perth in 1985, and it soon spread to South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania. Van Tongeren styled himself as the “supreme leader” of ANM, along with John van Blitterswyk as second-in-command, Russell Willey as third-in-command and treasurer, other members being Christopher Bartle, Wayne van Blitterswyk, Judith Lyons, and Mark Ferguson. ANM tried to model itself on Irish separatists. During the Irish War of Independence, Irish nationalism had two branches: a military and terrorist branch, the Irish Republican Army; and a legitimate political branch, Sinn Fein.

The ANM was to be the political branch, and the *Australian Aryan Army* (AAA) was to be the military and terrorist branch. John van Blitterswyk was the nominal Commander of the AAA, which never moved beyond the conceptual stage.[77] Willey stated that they aimed for a race war, inspired by *The Turner Diaries*. According to a senior leader, “Our ethos was to terrorise the Asian community through any means possible from arson to anything such as murder.... The basic aim was to discourage other Asians immigrating to Australia and it was also intended to terrorise occupants here to such an extent that they would leave the state.”[78]

In order to advance the AAA, the ANM set up a training facility on a farm east of Perth, called Bindoon. The Bindoon Bunker contained a shelter, lookout, and rifle range. It had strategic value as a training ground for members, while van Tongeren’s home was the headquarters of ANM.[79] In lieu of an operational AAA, ANM tried to assume both roles, unaware perhaps that to be effective, they are necessarily mutually exclusive. Van Tongeren registered the *Australian Nationalist Movement* as a legitimate political party in February 1986. [80] Three years later, in February 1989, the ANM contested the seat of Helena in Western Australia, with van Tongeren as candidate. His election platform was based on resisting the “Asianisation of Australia and to Zionist control of Australia.”[81] Van Tongeren attracted 400-500 votes but did not win the seat.

In 1987, ANM plastered 400 posters all around Perth buses, walls, and depots. Perth citizens were shocked to wake up on 7 December, to read posters emblazoned with the words “Asians out or race war”, and “Don’t lose your job to an Asian. Join the ANM. Stop the Invasion.”[82] In an interview, van Tongeren argued that Asians “are steadily outbreeding and dispossessing Australians,” and therefore his actions were justified as “a basic racial instinct – a healthy mechanism to safeguard our race and culture.”[83] This propaganda transitioned to deed in September 1988. On 1 September, ANM firebombed the China City Restaurant in the Perth suburb of Como, causing \$7000 in damage, and the Man Lin restaurant, causing \$100,000 in damage. On 22 November, six weeks after the first attack, the ANM firebombed the Golden House restaurant in Bellevue, causing a further \$45,000 in damage.[84] In response, a group called *Aussies Against Racism* (AAR) formed to combat ANM. They were immediately infiltrated by ANM. On 13 January, AAR member Nicholas Smurthwaite was lured into a parking lot in Kardinya and assaulted by eight people.[85] Most of ANM’s leadership were either charged or implicated.[86]

Despite that, the poster and firebombing campaign continued. One poster claimed: “Media Coverup. Holocaust a lie. Seek the Truth.” On 16 January 1989, the ANM firebombed the Ko Sing in Ferndale, causing \$17,500 in damage. Two days later, they firebombed the Ling Nan restaurant in Murrabooka, and caused \$39,500 in damage. After the January bombings, the ANM turned its attention away from such acts and towards reinforcing its bunker, as prioritised in *The Turner Diaries*. The crime spree began on New Year’s Day 1989. Over the next two months, ANM stole sandbags, radio equipment, electronic scanners, cameras, video recorders, building materials as well as office equipment. As the stolen goods piled up, and ANM was forced to rent a house to

store it all. The worst ANM bombing came on 25 May 1989, when ANM made an explosive device with power gel (commonly used in mining), wrapped in wire. When it exploded, the wire became shrapnel, and was embedded in the ceiling, tables, and walls of Ko Sing. No one was injured, but the explosion caused a further \$50,000 in damage.

By August 1989, ANM had caused over \$1,000,000 in damage. In response, a 36-man force was drawn from the Western Australian Police Force (WAPOL), tasked with Operation Jackhammer. They conducted a covert investigation into ANM which lasted for six weeks. The operation order read: “The task force was created to investigate the movements of the ANM, the primary role and objective was to apprehend these offenders who had been blatantly committing a series of offenses and terrorising the ethnic community.”[87]

Operation Jackhammer received a tipoff about the Thornlie house. Detectives captured John van Blitterswyk and Russell Willey on 4 July, and Willey turned informant, leading police to weapons caches of firearms, detonators, and silencers.

The trial of the ANM leadership commenced after a series of delays, with the judiciary worried about possible prejudice.[88] When the trial did eventually get underway, Van Tongeren used the court room as his grandstand, declaring:

“I convinced my comrades of the justice of our cause and I led the attack. I threw the first Molotov cocktail. I fought the enemy by talking and by posters and I fought the enemy on the streets.... If I die in jail as the people who run the country intend, then I will defy the corrupt legal code until the end. Australia is worth it. Yes, I am unrepentant and I will stay that way. The time has come to fight. Damn your rotten laws. Australia forever.”[89]

On 15 September 1990, a District Court Jury in Perth handed down a guilty verdict on the ANM leadership. The longest sentence, 18 years, went to Jack van Tongeren, who, much like David Lane, spent his prison time writing. He and Simon van Blitterswyck self-published their first book, *The ANM Story: the Pre-Revolutionary Years 1970-1989*, in 1991.

Upon release in 2002, Jack van Tongeren reconnected with his old comrades. They hatched a new plot to advertise van Tongeren’s book through another poster and firebombing campaign.[90] While they were successfully apprehended, the impact of *The ANM Story* is currently unknown, as it represents perhaps the first proper attempt to construct a cogent ideology to serve Australia’s RWE fringe. Presenting himself as a warrior-scholar, van Tongeren details his previous campaign, and also describes his international travels to engage with RWE leaders in the United States and Europe, even visiting holocaust memorials.

*The ANM Story* offers several conclusions: firstly, that the spirit of rebellion is quintessential to the Australian character, which is derived from Australian bushrangers, ANZAC soldiers (diggers), and the working class (‘Aussie battlers’); secondly, that Australia is a virgin land of European peoples, with spiritualism of the “old gods”; thirdly, the Australian character and way of life is imperilled by Asian immigration, Zionist influence, and foreign ownership of property which was driven by big business and permitted by an illegitimate government. [91]

### ***Subcultural Persistence***

While Tongeren was writing away in prison, ASIO continued to watch right wing extremists, and warned in 1995 of an “upsurge in the activities of religious extremists, doomsday cults, neo-Nazi’s, and right-wing militia groups” according to *The Canberra Times*. [92] Suffice to say, RWE sentiment continued to exist on the political—but also the cultural—fringes. Three groups which demonstrate the subcultural network of RWE

during the nineties are the *Women for Aryan Unity*, *Combat 18*, and the *Southern Cross Hammerskins*.

*Women for Aryan Unity* (WAU14) was established in America in 1990, and soon formed individually-run chapters all around the world, including Australia. Known as the *Women of the Southern Legion*, this WAU14 chapter promotes a racialised worldview, encompassing conservative ideas of womanhood, sisterhood, and motherhood, embedded in pagan spirituality, within a nexus of RWE largely in line with National Socialism. It adopts a National Socialist aesthetic, and Aryan gender roles are perpetuated.[93] While Jack van Tongeren and David Lane are venerated by the *Women of the Southern Legion* (who also distribute their writings), the group does not appear to advocate political change, but exists in the subcultural milieu.

Also established in the 1990s was an Australian-chapter of *Combat 18*, which was originally formed in the United Kingdom. Nicknamed the “Terror Machine” the purpose of *Combat 18* was to establish white-only countries through the violent expulsion of all non-whites, along with the execution of homosexuals and Jews. It soon spread internationally, and established a cell in Western Australia, where it became known as *Blood and Honour* (BnH). On 4 February 2010, two BnH members, Bradley Neil Trappitt and Jacob Marshall Hort, were charged with shooting at a Perth mosque.[94] BnH also plastered playgrounds with anti-Islam stickers in 2015. Since then its presence in Perth has become well-entrenched.[95]

Another RWE import is the *Southern Cross Hammerskins* (SCH). The original *Confederate Hammerskins* were established in 1987 in the United States of America.[96] Also followers of David Lane and his *14 Words* group, SCH is a white supremacist movement which celebrates the Aryan identity while demonstrating hostility to various ethnic out-groups. The Australian chapter, the *Southern Cross Hammerskins*, were likely established sometime in the nineties. They are considered one of Australia’s biggest skinhead groups.[97] It is important to note that while these subcultural networks began internationally, their ideas and beliefs tend to become localised to the Australian context.

One possible reason behind the submersion of RWE sentiment into the relatively overlooked subculture is the tumultuous entry of Pauline Hanson into mainstream Australian politics in 1996.[98] Hanson provided a public, popular platform for the far right with her maiden speech in the federal parliament, where she declared that Australia was being swamped by Asians. Tinning suggests that *One Nation* managed to unite a variety of political fringe elements, and projected a racial representation of the white Australian, the ANZAC soldier, farmers and small businesses, and the male breadwinner.[99] This tied in with existing RWE aversions to multiculturalism, pluralism, and liberation movements. Hanson became the new face of racial nationalism: a nationalism that imagined a white Australian in-group, and defined the out-group as immigrants: initially Asian, and later Muslim.[100]

There were other signs of intolerance. The Cronulla riots in 2005 are another example of growing racial nationalism domestically. In December 2005, a series of violent demonstrations occurred in Cronulla, a beachside suburb in Sydney, by (mostly) white Australians against elements of ethnic communities, including Muslims and Lebanese Australians. Twenty-five people were injured, and sixteen were arrested. Bliuc et al contended that this violence was influenced in part by status dominance, as well as ethnic conflict, in which each group sought to impose its construct of the Australian identity on the other.[101]

### ***Jihadism: Terrorism and Gangs***

Later, on her re-entry into politics in 2016, Hanson continuing exhibiting intolerance, this time towards Muslims (and other fringe politicians also echoed this sentiment).[102] Poynting and Briskman made the compelling argument that the vilification of Muslims in Australia by liberal political leaders and commentators has increasingly normalised intolerance, which is cunningly exploited by the radical right.[103] The designation of Muslims as an out-group is by no means an Australian phenomena: Obaidi et al contended that Islamophobic

rhetoric in Europe and the United States of America creates the perception of a symbolic threat to a group's identity, which is associated with calls for expelling immigrants.[104]

In the early 2000s, there was a lull of RWE in Australia, and also in the United States of America for a time. Towards the end of 2009, however, this trend changed, and RWE activity accelerated in the USA due to domestic factors, such as the election of Barack Obama.[105] The United States did not experience this surge alone: RWE also surged in the United Kingdom and Europe, with an increasing focus on Muslim immigration and jihadism. Anders Breivik's Oslo attacks in July 2011 served as an example of RWE positioning itself against jihadism in the name of white supremacy. Breivik's manifesto, according to Gardell, demonstrates a combination of Islamophobic tradition, conservative white nationalism, and antifeminism.[106]

Australia joined the international community during this activity period. In 2009, the English *Defence League* (EDL) was established by Tommy Robinson (and others) in the United Kingdom. Their members claimed to stand for English rights and democracy whilst simultaneously arguing that British society was imperilled by Muslims and jihadist terrorism. Once again, extremism proved a lucrative import, and that same year, the *Australian Defence League* (ADL) was established by Ralph Cerminara, which modelled itself on the *EDL*. Its Facebook presence demonstrates similar beliefs, opposing Islam in Australia and stalking and harassing members of the Muslim community.[107]

The major movement, however, was *Reclaim Australia* (RA). Founded in January 2015, RA claims to be a patriotic group taking a stand against Islam and domestic terrorism. RA can be understood as being a radical right wing movement which provides the stepping stone into extremism without advocating violence itself. Its activity is limited to rallies and demonstrations, with the occasional brawl or street fight. RA champions an idealised (or fictionalised) Australian way of life, which it believes to be endangered by political correctness, Middle Eastern immigration, and Islam. RA currently has over 100,000 followers on Facebook.[108]

More extreme adherents splintered off RA to form their own organisations, which appeared to be further committed to violence. The *True Blue Crew* (TBC) is a salient example of increasing extremism, through outwardly presenting a concerned citizen persona. The *impressum* on their Facebook page states that: "It is our duty to defend those that want to voice their opinion peacefully, from far left wing thus that make a pass time [*sic*] of violently attacking those of us who hold a different opinion to their own. The *True Blue Crew* will never initiate violence, but will exercise our right to defend ourselves and fellow patriots." [109]

Despite this statement, photos of TBC assaulting left-wing opponents with pipes at rallies remain on the web page. Opposition to the left was nearly as prominent on the site as opposition to Islam. In 2015, TBC member Phillip Galea planned a terrorist attack on the Melbourne *Anarchist Club*, the *Resistance Centre*, and the Trades Hall in Carlton. He was apprehended by police and charged with terrorism offenses in 2016.

Like RWE movements elsewhere in the Western world prone to organisational fractures, members of RA and the ADL splintered off to form the *United Patriots Front* (UPF), under former ADL member, Shermion Burgess. He soon handed leadership to Blair Cottrell, and under Cottrell, the group displayed a similar narrative convergence. The in-group is a loosely defined, amorphous White Australian construct, while the out-group is clearly defined as non-white, an immigrant, and, generally, Muslim (or Jew). This designation plays, consciously or not, on the historical foundations of racial exclusivity in preceding movements and in broader Australian historiography.

UPF disbanded in 2017 to become the *Lads Society*, which appears to be a white nationalist organisation, emphasising brotherhood, community, and the benefits of a garage fight club.[110] In 2018, it appears that it launched a covert infiltration strategy, replicating the one of the *Australian League of Rights* in the sixties – even targeting the same parties. *Lads Society* members and allies joined the *Young Nationals* in NSW, and engaged in branch stacking at the May 2018 conference, pushing an alt-right agenda. As a result of this, a *Society* member

attained a leadership position in the *Young Nationals*. It would appear that the *Lads Society* was joined in this by the *Antipodean Resistance*.<sup>[111]</sup>

The *Antipodean Resistance* (AR) identifies outwardly with National Socialism, and engages in propaganda campaigns against the homosexual community, the Jewish community, and left wing groups.<sup>[112]</sup> Its website echoes the sentiments of *The Turner Diaries*, where modern promiscuity, interracial coupling, and homosexuality are seen as the sources of societal woe. Their anti-modernist ideology is defensive, where it is suggested that their way of life, values, and security, are imperilled. Much like Lane's *88 Precepts*, the AR place a high value on nature, self-discipline, and racial purity. Its website was shut down by the host, GoDaddy, in December 2018 but persists on the unmoderated chat platform, Gab.

While it is difficult to assess the exact popularity these organisations may have enjoyed, the data available suggests occasional surges in popularity. A 2016 study by Dean, Bell and Vakhitova suggests that while groups such as *SCH* and *BnH* peaked in popularity between 2004 and 2006, new groups such as *Reclaim Australia* (RA) and the *Australian Liberty Alliance* (ALA) were the focus of Google searches between 2015 and 2016.<sup>[113]</sup> Dean et al believe this confirms a shift away from traditional supremacy-based RWE, towards a concerned citizen persona.

The concerned citizen guise is not a uniquely Australian manifestation. Co-option and distortion of mainstream ideas is a long-standing RWE tactic in other western countries, in order to recruit the politically marginalised. The most obvious example is *The Turner Diaries*, which sought to capitalise on mainstream repugnance for rape and paedophilia by correlating it directly with minority liberation movements and political correctness gone mad. The shift away from the overt Nazi brand towards a seemingly altruistic façade should be considered both dangerous and subversive.

The present article is not a comprehensive review of RWE-affiliated groups currently operating in Australia. Other groups who contribute to the same ideological nexus in Australia are *Right Wing Resistance* (possibly defunct), *the Proud Boys*, *the Soldiers of Odin*, *Identity Australia*, *the Nationalist Australian Alternative*, *the Australian Traditionalism*, *the Australian Liberty Alliance*,<sup>[114]</sup> *the New National Action*, *the Patriotic Youth League*, and the rather inactive *Freeman/Sovereign Citizen movement*.<sup>[115]</sup> Some groups, such as the *Nationalist Australian Alternative*, no longer have public pages and have retreated to less moderated platforms like Gab.<sup>[116]</sup> This makes assessing the real Australian RWE threat difficult, especially given the capability of RWE groups to promote themselves on social media.

Social media is an enabler for RWE to rally against perceived threats. In January 2019, RWE groups, including the *Lads Society*, staged a rally in St. Kilda against so-called African gangs, making *Sieg Heil* salutes and brandishing an SS helmet.<sup>[117]</sup> Their activity was highly publicised in social media, which mandated a heavy police presence and consequently reduced the risk of serious violence. The rallies are demonstrative of the reactive nature of some RWE groups, which further establishes the security challenge posed by Australia's extreme right.

Somewhere within this hive of activity, the Christchurch perpetrator became radicalised. On 15 March 2019, the perpetrator, an Australian citizen, walked into the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, and began shooting worshippers. He then drove to a second mosque, firing at pedestrians en route. At the Linwood Islamic Centre, he again fired on worshippers whereupon he fled but was subsequently apprehended by the police. The perpetrator live-streamed the attacks, in which he killed fifty people, and injured fifty more. As the case is still ongoing, it would be premature to tie the perpetrator to any specific group, in Australia or in New Zealand. However, based on the wide dispersal of the perpetrator's manifesto, *The Great Replacement*, two preliminary observations can be made.<sup>[118]</sup>

Firstly, he champions a Eurocentric worldview, rather than an Australian-centric worldview, as reflected in his support of Oswald Mosely, the leader of the British Union of Fascists. Australian links to Mosely, as discussed



earlier, were located in 1964, but it is doubtful the perpetrator is aware of them. The graffiti on his weapons suggests immersion in international RWE worldviews. Secondly, the perpetrator ascribed the trigger event as the Ebba Akerlund killing. This may not be genuine, given that the protection of white children from jihadists is not a significant theme in the manifesto, which focuses mainly on the perceived decline of native European people due to, among other issues, immigration, industrialisation, and societal degradation. Ultimately, a comprehensive assessment is only possible when further details of the attacker are made public.

In an earlier iteration of this article, it was proposed that the threat of violence by the extreme right was intrinsically linked to the threat of jihadism in Australia. By labelling themselves defenders against jihadism and the Muslim community, current RWE groups have established a premise for supposedly righteous action. The Christchurch attack has confirmed this, but also demonstrated that the catalyst did not need to be as substantial as a successful jihadist attack in Australia or the West. The perpetrator's view of the supposedly existential threat posed by the designated outgroup was enough for him to justify his attack. Of course, this catalyst for the extreme right has precedent in the 2011 Oslo attacks by A. B. Breivik, an example of an "anti-Islam and -immigration crusade in Europe." [119] It remains to be seen whether the Christchurch attack inspires further copycat attacks elsewhere.

## Conclusion

Right wing extremism in Australia is well-established and persistent, with a propensity to surge in popularity. Until recently, adherents perpetuated a narrative which celebrates a racialised construct of Australian identity, an identity supposedly imperilled by the influence of designated out-groups. These out-groups were initially Communists and Jews, but this circle of enemies later expanded to include immigrants and homosexuals, and then Muslims. It is important to note that out-groups tend to become a permanent feature. Contemporary groups frequently espouse hostility to "lefties" and Jews on their Facebook pages, thereby demonstrating target resonance with historical groups, whilst their main agenda is opposition to Islam and Muslim immigrants.

In between activity periods, RWE sentiment retreats back into the political margins to subsist in subcultural networks. While these groups occasionally attempt to engage in the political process, they met with limited success and ultimately only succeeded in keeping the ideas and networks alive. Domestic chapters of international groups, such as the *Southern Cross Hammerskins*, *Blood and Honour*, and *WAU14*, are suggestive of strengthening international ties in subcultural networks. This is important because it establishes historical persistence, and could further illuminate or explain the context behind the well-entrenched positions of contemporary RWE groups in Australia.

It is significant that Australian RWE groups did not, and have never, formed in isolation of the global RWE community. Even in the 1930s, there was an exchange occurring of people and ideas. Before the Christchurch attacks of March 2019, Australia's biggest RWE export may well have been the Odinism of Mills, which, despite having limited impact domestically, achieved significance internationally. In the aftermaths of Christchurch, The Great Replacement may eclipse it. The personal journeys of Australian RWE leaders to foreign RWE hubs, and their literature exchanges, demonstrate actual international connections, as much as their desire for creating a global (white) community – a concept recently championed by the Christchurch perpetrator. It remains to be seen what impact this international exchange will have on the Australian domestic context, with a heightened threat perception following the Christchurch attacks.

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## Notes

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# Mapping Transnational Extremist Networks: An Exploratory Study of the Soldiers of Odin's Facebook Network, Using Integrated Social Network Analysis

by Yannick Veilleux-Lepage and Emil Archambault

## Abstract

*This article argues that social network analyses of the online communications and structures of right-wing extremist groups can allow researchers to obtain otherwise hard-to-get insights into the ideology, rhetoric, and behaviour of groups. This is illustrated through a study of Facebook-based relations between members of the Soldiers of Odin in Canada, Finland, and Sweden in early 2017. The authors argue that these communications demonstrate the presence of close coordination between the Canadian and Finnish branches of the Soldiers of Odin, suggesting ideological conformity. The authors further demonstrate the presence of a pre-existing divide between the Québec and rest of Canada chapters of the Soldiers of Odin, which contributes to explaining the April-May 2017 schism of the movement. The authors conclude by advocating increased attention to online networks for the study of extremist groups.*

**Keywords:** Soldiers of Odin, right-wing extremism, vigilantism, Canada, Finland, Sweden

## Introduction

In recent years, extreme right groups and activists have greatly benefitted from social media and other online technologies that allow for easier communication, coordination, and propaganda dissemination.[1] As interactive communications facilitate more active involvement and increased coordination between networked extremist groups, the importance of understanding extremist interactions through social media is increasing. The use of new technologies does not merely expand the capabilities of groups, but allows such groups to coalesce into larger scale social movements in which online and offline structures and interactions influence each other and shape the groups' activities, ideology, and rhetoric.[2] Indeed, the last ten years have seen an increase in the political activity and visibility of extreme right political movements on social media platforms, which have, in part, been rewarded with electoral successes in several European countries. In addition, the European and North American social and political scenes have seen the rise of groups which locate themselves in the ideological area of the far right, as well as the spread of episodes of political violence associated with the extreme right.[3]

Given this increasing interconnectedness between groups and individuals, processes of radicalization and dissemination have changed.[4] The dissemination of propaganda is becoming exceedingly easy, which can impact the beliefs and actions of individuals and groups.[5] As such, the study of online networks of communication, information circulation, and interaction acquires a crucial value for researchers, who can—through the study of online communication—potentially trace the processes of radicalization and ideology formation in extremist groups. Consequently, given that extremist groups often communicate online beyond the confines of a localized group, this investigation draws on social movement theory to analyse the process of ideology formation in extreme right groups.

The present study aims to explore the suitability of using Social Network Analysis (SNA) to track the online communication channels of right-wing extremist groups and thereby allow for a deeper understanding of the relationship between online activity and offline behaviors and structures. In other words, it is argued that the relationships and communications established online by members of extreme right groups reflect and shape the offline behaviour of groups and are often easier to access and survey than offline behaviour. As such, probing the online behaviour of group members provides a direct window into the concerns, ideology, and leadership of extremist groups. As such, the theoretical goal of this study is to demonstrate the value of SNA (a



methodology derived from structuralist ethnology) to the study of the extreme right.

In order to advance this argument, the present study explores the structure and the nature of the Canadian chapters of Soldiers of Odin on Facebook, and the significance of their links to the Finnish leadership, treating the group as a social movement based on common interests and mutual legitimation.[6] Methodologically, it is similar to Burris, Smith, and Strahm's Social Network Analysis of the organizational structure of white supremacist groups in the USA through their web sites' related links.[7] A similar methodology is used in this study to analyze the networked Facebook accounts belonging to members of the Soldiers of Odin in Canada and Finland and to build a model "treating these links as ties of affinity, paths of communication, tokens of mutual aid in achieving public recognition, and/or potential avenues of coordination." [8]

Founded in Finland in late 2015 and having spread to Canada in early 2016, the Soldiers of Odin is one of the first extreme right groups to organize almost entirely on the basis of a transnational connection made possible through online communication. As such, understanding the group's online organization provides a direct window into its purpose, ideology, and structure. Pertaining to this case, it is argued that conducting a social network analysis of the activity on Facebook of the Canadian chapters of the Soldiers of Odin provides significant insights into their operational structure and subsequent divisions within the movement and, in turn, informs the understanding of the group's self-perception, including key rhetorical and ideological principles.

Being one of the first transnational extreme right groups to organise almost exclusively online, the Soldiers of Odin presents an ideal case to demonstrate the value of social network analysis in studying the extreme right online. First, the spread of the Soldiers of Odin to Canada, perhaps more perceptibly than other cases, allows for the probing of the complexities of the relationship between online and offline communication and action. Second, while the Soldiers of Odin rely on online communication more than other groups, this case addresses – albeit only summarily – the relationship between local and global factors in fostering hate. Therefore, at a moment when similar extreme right movements appear in multiple Western states, operating in similar ways and with similar ideological goals, the case of the Soldiers of Odin is well suited to demonstrate the use of social network analysis to probe two key questions in the spread of extremist hate. Finally, while the Canadian Soldiers of Odin have not explicitly been linked to acts of terrorism, they participate in fostering a climate of hate which can lead to xenophobic violence, with police-reported hate crimes in Canada rising in 2016 for the third year in a row, and becoming much more violent.[9] Members of the Québec chapter of Soldiers of Odin also participated in the infamous 2017 Unite The Right rally in Charlottesville, where one counter-protester was killed and 38 others injured in violent clashes.[10] Therefore, there is a pressing need to address the online spread of extreme rhetoric and discourse in order to understand the diffusion of extremist ideology and violence.

In sum, this study is exploratory; it is a preliminary effort to research the online and transnational network of the Soldiers of Odin. The first step is to investigate the existence of transnational ties in order to verify that a networked structure of Soldiers of Odin groups is present on Facebook. After demonstrating the presence of such a structured network, the next step is to examine the types of relationships that exist between the Canadian and Finnish chapters on Facebook. The second section analyzes the structure of the Canadian chapters of the Soldiers of Odin, demonstrating the presence of strong connections between the Finnish and Canadian chapters, and leading to the suggestion of the presence of shared commitments and a shared preference for vigilante tactics. The conclusion addresses the end point of the study—namely, the April 2017 split of the Canadian Soldiers of Odin from the Finnish Soldiers of Odin, the subsequent separation of the Québec Soldiers of Odin from the Canadian group, and the subsequent collapse of the Canadian group.[11] This study argues that social network analysis demonstrates the presence of pre-existing divisions between the Québec and rest of Canada groups, which made this split likely.

### ***Social Network Analysis and Social Media***

Social media has undoubtedly contributed to new and revitalised forms of civic engagement. However, despite being celebrated as a great instrument of democracy and global thinking, conveying real-time information and coordinating actions during the early days of the Arab Spring and of the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine, its development has also empowered actors with explicitly undemocratic and anti-inclusive agendas. This is evident in what Caiani and Parenti called “the dark side of the Web”, referring to the emergence of dynamic extreme right activities on the Internet.[12] The extreme right’s early adoption of the Internet has gained plenty of scholarly attention, with recent studies increasingly highlighting how social media is used to “spread propaganda, preach to the unconverted, and as a means of intimidating political adversaries.”[13] Michael Whine was one of the earliest scholars to draw attention to the connection between the extreme right and the Internet, noting that its anonymity, lack of regulation, and accessibility to young audiences make it ideal for the diffusion of racist and xenophobic ideologies.[14]

While extremist organizations may be small in number, in the online public space the use of links between sites within a network helps to create a collective identity. This forges a stronger sense of community and purpose, which can convince even the most ardent extremist that they are not alone and that their views are not, in fact, extreme at all.[15] Similarly, Gerstenfeld et al. has found evidence that right-wing extremists use mutual links to create a collective identity and that these groups often use the same borrowed rhetoric.[16] Moreover, in their study of white supremacist sites, Bih-Ru Lea et al. find that the Internet has helped create a “virtual extremist community, a set of people, organizations, or other social entities connected by a set of socially meaningful relationships...”[17] The importance of understanding how radical right groups interact through social media is becoming more apparent as networked social movements in the digital age represent a new form of political movements, and as interactive communication facilitates more active involvement.[18]

The social networks individuals construct on Facebook reflect the breadth and diversity of users’ offline networks as people establish social ties based on existing relationships such as relatives, friends, or colleagues, or based on common interests and shared tastes.[19] For example, having analysed three online datasets, two of them collected from Facebook and a third from Twitter, Dunbar and her associates found that “the online environments may be mapping quite closely onto everyday offline networks, or that individuals who inhabit online environments on a regular basis begin to include individuals that they have met online into their general personal social network, treating the different modes of communication as essentially the same.”[20] Likewise, research suggests that individuals generally avoid creating online personas that are substantially different from their offline selves because they treat social media platforms as reflections and extensions of their offline selves.[21] Therefore, tracking, mapping, and analysing communities on social media can provide researchers with significant insights into a group’s ideological commitments and a network’s structure and relationships, which will generally tend to mirror offline relationships.[22] Thus, mapping the relationships present between members of the Soldiers of Odin using social network analysis can reveal general patterns of cooperation and contestation among transnational actors, and identify key group members both within Canada and internationally.

Social network analysis is a research approach that analyses the structures and processes of social networks and is made up of nodes (individuals, groups, organization) connected by edges (friendship, kinship, financial transactions). Initially, SNA was an analytical tool developed by structural anthropology and Lewinian sociology to describe relationships among the members of a community.[23] The idea underlying the SNA approach is that interactions and communication flows are the constitutive elements of social groups. The genesis of SNA can be found in the work of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who found that village planning was complexly related to the family and social relationships of the communities he studied. By reconstructing the village plan of populations, it was possible to draw the complicated weaving of privileges, of traditions, of hierarchical degrees, of rights and obligations.[24] As such, rather than specific attributes of individuals such as age, gender or occupation, SNA focuses on the relationships between individuals and the significance of their interactions in order to approach elements which appear in the relationship of individuals but are not located in any specific actor.

This observational procedure was later combined with graph theory. Graph theory is a way to represent relational data by using a combination of points and lines, along with mathematical axioms and formulas, to represent individuals and their relationships.[25] These relationships are established through the use of graphical representation, where nodes represent individual units and links are called edges. This represents relationships in order to answer questions such as ‘who is most connected?’ or ‘who is the most important member in a network?’ The analysis of social networks can be applied to online networks, which are networks created on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter in which information is exchanged in real time through different types of messages, or to offline networks, which are formed by in-person relationships among individuals. Social network analysis has become increasingly important among scholars as a rich source of meaningful information otherwise unobtainable through traditional social science research methods, and has quickly been adopted in a variety of disciplines. For example, SNA is used in anthropology where tribal, urban and informal groups are mapped to facilitate the understanding of formal and informal structure;[26] used in health sciences where diseases such as the Avian flu and HIV/AIDS can be geographically mapped and better prevented through the focus on interactions between infected individuals;[27] and used in criminology where scholars employ SNA to map the structure of criminal organizations and analyse the power dynamics, distribution and criminal patterns of key players.[28]

The role of networks in political violence has become well recognized in recent years, with scholars increasingly employing SNA's unique analytical capabilities to advance the study of this subject. Krebs' use of SNA to map the network responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks and to identify the important actors in the network quickly drew the attention of academics to the potential of SNA.[29] Soon after, Marc Sageman published *Understanding Terror Networks* where, using public sources of information on 100 individuals affiliated with al-Qaeda, he established that there were four major clusters spread across several countries.[30] Several studies similar to Krebs' work have also followed major terrorist strikes, such as the Bali bombing in 2002,[31] the bombing in Madrid in 2004,[32] and the Mumbai attack in 2008.[33] Researchers have also used SNA to draw up hypotheses about how to destabilise covert networks by identifying individuals with dynamic roles whose neutralisation would most disrupt the structure of a network,[34] or to speculate on the potential replacement of Bin Laden as leader of al-Qaeda.[35]

In addition to offline networks, researchers interested in political violence have increasingly employed SNA to analyse online networks, particularly hate-promoting communities on social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. One of the first studies on the subject, conducted by the Anti-Defamation League, examined the use of online bulletin boards by extremists in the United States.[36] As the online sphere developed and became increasingly sophisticated, so did research on the subject. Burriss et al. used hyperlink analysis to explore white supremacist websites in the United States.[37] Elsewhere, Tateo examined the online structure of the Italian radical right through network analysis.[38] Recently, the use of SNA in this relatively new field of study has flourished. Most notably, Caiani and her colleagues have contributed works comparing extreme-right online networks in the United States, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom,[39] whilst Conway et al. identified English and German language extreme right communities on three distinct social networking platforms (Twitter, Facebook and YouTube), as well as cross-platforms interactions.[40]

### ***Methodology and Corpus of Data***

As previously mentioned, the Soldiers of Odin in Canada represent a novel development in the extreme right in Canada. It is one of the first cases of a group founded around a connection to European extreme right groups, seeking to mobilize on the basis of this transnational online link. Therefore, the specificity of the Soldiers of Odin comes not from its ideology nor from the identity of its members, but from its organisational structure and its relationships. For this reason, social network analysis is particularly well suited to analyse the specificity of the Soldiers of Odin.

Social network analysis concentrates on mapping the relationships between individuals or entities and analyses the meaning of these relationships. Accordingly, by studying the relationships formed by the Canadian Soldiers

of Odin both inside the group and with European leaders of the Soldiers of Odin movement, it is possible to gain an understanding of how the Canadian group positions itself in relation to the wider Soldiers of Odin movement. Furthermore, SNA allows one to consider the Canadian Soldiers of Odin as a group which is part of a larger social movement—the Soldiers of Odin worldwide. The group possesses its own organisational structure and conducts its own operations but shares some general principles and identifying symbols such as name and logo with other elements of the social movement. The movement also shares a number of practices, most notably vigilante street patrols meant to deter and prevent crime.[41] By studying the relations between the group and the wider social movement, it is possible to clarify the significance and implications of this shared belonging to a common movement.

In order to study the social interactions between Canadian Soldiers of Odin members and members abroad through the social networking platform underlying these interactions—Facebook—this research initially used the publicly available data crawling application, Netvizz.[42] Seventy-one Facebook groups in 16 different countries with memberships ranging from a handful to nearly 5,000 people were uncovered. Among these, the unique ‘Facebook ID’ number of each member in the 12 Canada based Soldiers of Odin Facebook groups was captured using the web scraping Chrome browser extension DataMiner[43] with various *xpath* queries. [44] Data Miner extracts data from web pages into Excel spreadsheets or CSV files using an appropriate data extraction “recipe”, which consists of pre-programmed extraction instructions that can be modified as needed depending on what data is needed from a given website.

In total, 1022 unique members were identified across the 12 groups. However, membership to a Soldiers of Odin Facebook group was not deemed sufficient for an individual to merit inclusion into the dataset, as that is not sufficient evidence of actual active membership in a Soldiers of Odin chapter. As such, the photos associated with each account were individually examined for clear indications of actual membership in the Soldiers of Odin, such as identifiable pieces of Soldiers of Odin uniform or group logos: only Facebook members who displayed clear Soldiers of Odin logos, clothing, or activity were included in the dataset. When faced with an individual whose privacy settings prevented the display of the pictures in the timeline, the search command “.../search/[Facebook ID]/photos-of” was employed. This specific command displays photos in which the individual is tagged, regardless of whether they are hidden from their timeline. Therefore, given the Soldiers of Odin’s rather strict control of their image—with the leadership actively policing display of branded clothing and logos[45]—it is clear that individuals identified both as associated with Soldiers of Odin Facebook groups or known members and displaying group logos can be considered recognized members of the Soldiers of Odin.

Having identified individual accounts satisfying the criteria for inclusion in the dataset, snowball sampling was employed to identify additional individuals, as it is ideal for overcoming the problems associated with sampling concealed and hard to reach populations such as those engaging in criminal, illicit or socially stigmatized activities.[46] The entire ‘friend’ list of each individual identified from the 12 Canadian groups was then also scrutinized, with the profile of each friend analysed for indications of membership. Unique Facebook ID numbers, geographical location, and their relationship to other individuals meeting the inclusion criteria were then recorded in the database. While this approach originally led to duplications in cases where two linked profiles both had visible friends lists, it also overcame barriers in cases where one individual had implemented privacy settings preventing access to their friends list. In cases where two individuals had private friends lists, capturing the link was not feasible; however, the number of private friend lists encountered was relatively low and could be deemed insignificant (representing less than 1.4% of accounts surveyed). In total, 737 individuals were uncovered, among which there were 265 Canadians, 104 Finns, and 33 Swedes.[47] While this by no means represents the entirety of the worldwide membership of the Soldiers of Odin, it does provide a good estimate as to the composition of the Canadian networks of Soldiers of Odin, along with their international connections. The data collection on the Canadian Soldiers of Odin networks took place between January 22 and March 15, 2017.[48]

To create a visual image of the entire body of data being considered and its network characteristics, the open-source visualization software Gephi was employed. Gephi allows the user to interact with graph representation and manipulate structures, shapes and colours in order to apply a series of force-directed algorithms to reveal

properties which may be hidden or hard to observe. As such, visualization through Gephi allows the observation of clusters of relations and the identification of central nodes, and gives an idea of the structure of a network. The structure of the network helps determine its usefulness to the nodes within it as networks with tighter ties between the nodes may be more useful than those with loose ties. In addition, a network's usefulness to a node may depend on the node's position within the network.

The dataset was subjected to the Force Atlas 2 algorithm, which simulates gravitational attraction between connected nodes in a network. Accounts which share a high level of interconnectivity among each other are placed closed to each other, forming a cluster, while accounts and clusters that share few common connections will repel one another. Whether analysing individual or group accounts, the position of each node in the graph is a function of its links with neighbouring nodes. Force Atlas 2 is especially useful for this study because of its ability to visualize large and complex networks with a highly dense interconnectivity.[49]

To complement the analysis of the dataset and of the networks examined, content analysis of posts on Soldiers of Odin Facebook groups and pages was used to confirm, support, and extend the findings from the social network analysis. This qualitative analysis was limited by privacy settings and restrictions on Facebook. Nevertheless, in many cases, members of the regional and national leaderships identified themselves by rank either in their public profile or in postings on public groups.[50] Moreover, this examination of public Facebook content posted by group leaders and group pages provided information about activities, membership, and chapter structure.

## **Findings**

In order to demonstrate the research objectives of this investigation, which argues that social network analysis allows for a deep understanding of online and offline relationships among extreme right groups, a series of different graphs were constructed from the dataset. These graphs show the relationships—namely Facebook friendships—between identified members of the Soldiers of Odin, classified by geographical location. The use of this graphical representation allowed for the effective overview of the structure of different networks, which was complemented by the use of network metrics. Firstly, a relationship graph of all the Canadian members of the Soldiers of Odin was generated. This graph contained 265 nodes and 4,136 edges and is referred to as CANADA in Figure 1. Secondly, a relationship graph comprising all Finnish links to the Canadian network was generated. This graph contained 369 nodes and 5,392 edges and is referred to as CANFIN in Figure 2. Lastly, a relationship graph of the Finnish and Swedish links to the Canadian network was generated. This graph contained 402 nodes and 5,510 edges and is referred to as CANFINSWE in Figure 3. This graph was used mainly to validate insights from the first two graphs.

In order to properly analyse the topology of these three networks, a series of descriptive network metrics were computed to measure the structural characteristics of the network, which included modularity, whole network density, average path length, and betweenness centrality. Modularity is indicative of the community structure of a network. It is calculated by the number of edges falling within groups, minus the expected number in an equivalent network with edges placed randomly. A positive modularity value implies the possible presence of a community structure, indicating natural divisions in the network.[51] Whole network density refers to the proportion of edges between a set of actors in the network as a whole and suggests the extent to which the actors communicate with all other actors.[52] In other words, it is defined as the total number of actual connections in the network divided by total number of possible connections, ranging from 0 to 1. This measure provides insights into how effectively information may spread among the network users, as it provides an indication of the number of connections between actors through which information may be transmitted. Average path length refers to the average number of steps in the shortest paths between all pairs of nodes. This measure represents the average number of steps it takes to get from one node in the network to any other node. In 2011, the results of the analysis of the friend networks of 750 million active users in Facebook showed that the average distance between Facebook network nodes was only 4.74 degrees.[53] Betweenness centrality is a measure representing how central an individual is positioned in a social network. This metric also indicates a node's social capital. The higher the betweenness centrality, the more the node can serve as a conduit for resources and information

to other nodes, and the greater ability the node will have to shape the flow of information.[54] The measure used here is weighted, according to the importance of the connections to a node: a node connected to other highly connected nodes will have a higher score than a node with low-value connections, reflecting the social power of a node and its ability to shape flows of information.

The three network mapping graphs have been complemented by qualitative analysis of the key imagery and messages publicly available on confirmed members' profiles as well as on public Soldiers of Odin groups. This provides further information about the key members of the Soldiers of Odin and allows for the assessment of the extent to which group hierarchy conforms to the patterns observed in the network analysis, as well as providing important contextual information.

### ***The Canadian Network (CANADA)***[55]

The modularity of the Canadian network is 0.306, providing evidence of a community-based structure. The typology of the Canadian Network shows five major clusters, each roughly separated along provincial lines. At the centre of the network are several members (or recently removed members) of the Soldiers of Odin executive, which implies that these individuals successfully play a role not only as key informants in the movements but also as information brokers, forming bridges between the other clusters in the network. Moreover, this implies that individuals across Canada tend to not only be linked to other Soldiers of Odin members within regional proximity, but are also linked to members of the national executive. Therefore, it would seem clear from this social network analysis that the Soldiers of Odin is a group which is built around a rigid national hierarchy.[56] Regional leaders provide links to other regional leaders of the group, while rank-and-file members tend to be locally based and communicate mainly with members of their own local chapters, as well as with the national leadership. This is reflected in the ranking of betweenness centrality measures: out of the 10 individuals with the highest betweenness centrality, 8 of them were members (or recently removed members) of the Soldiers of Odin executive.

One key finding made possible by Figure 1 is the presence of sharp differences between provincial chapters. As noted above, the rank-and-file members are generally connected to other members of their local chapters, but have limited connections to other provinces, except for members of the national executive. This is particularly significant in Québec, where most of the members are isolated from the rest of the network. Part of this might be due to a language barrier as the Québec Soldiers of Odin seem to operate in French, but there are also differences in operational style and rhetoric, which a quick comparison of three public Facebook groups indicates. These three groups are "Soldiers of Odin Québec Support,"[57] "Soldiers of Odin Northern Ontario Support,"[58] and "Patriots of Unity Regina Support."[59] The groups from Regina and Northern Ontario show a combination of anti-crime, xenophobic and community service postings. In the case of Regina, a particular emphasis was put on snow removal efforts where Soldiers of Odin members would shovel snow on behalf of citizens, as well as emphasis on images from patrols. In the Northern Ontario group, again, anti-immigrant posts were present alongside a focus on community action. Here, drives collecting empty beer bottles and cans for charity were particularly highlighted. The Québec group, meanwhile, is devoid of any posts about community action; rather, it is filled with reports (often from dubious sources) of crimes committed by immigrants, anti-Islamic or anti-immigrant rhetoric, and announcements about upcoming protests and marches. Therefore, the relative distance between the Québec chapters and the rest of the Canadian network may also be due to ideological differences, with the Québec wing being more militant and open about its extreme right stance.[60]

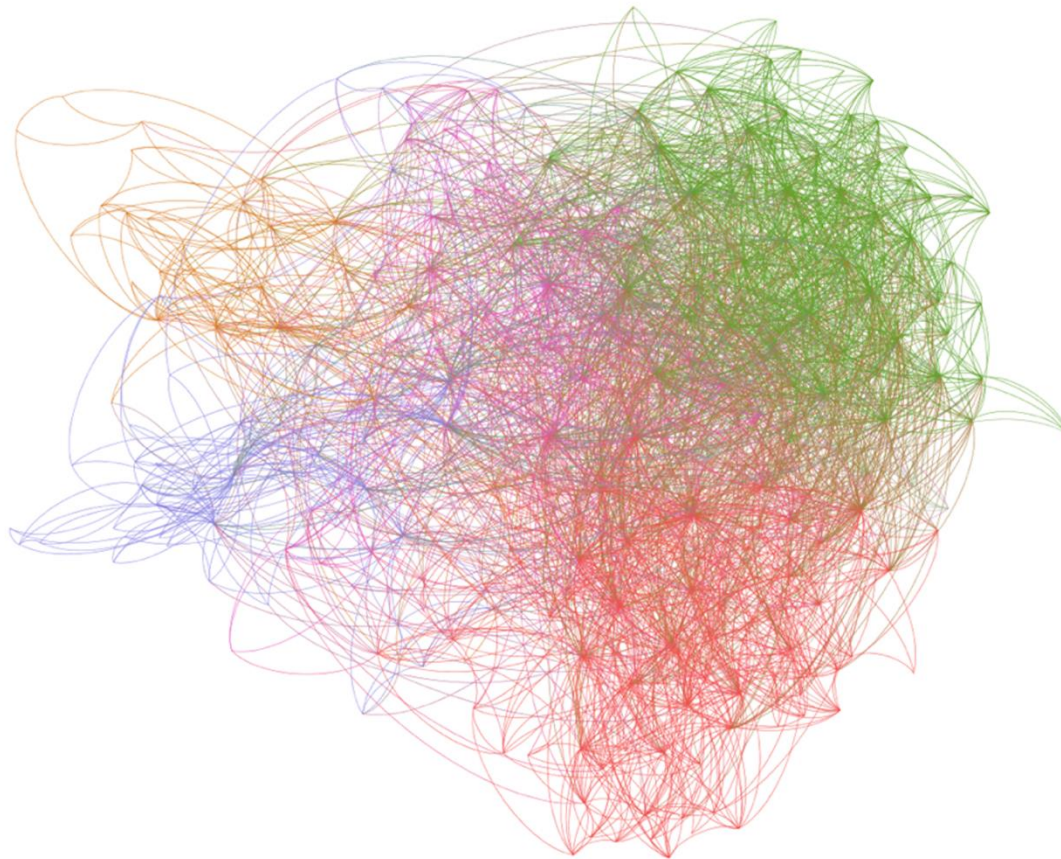
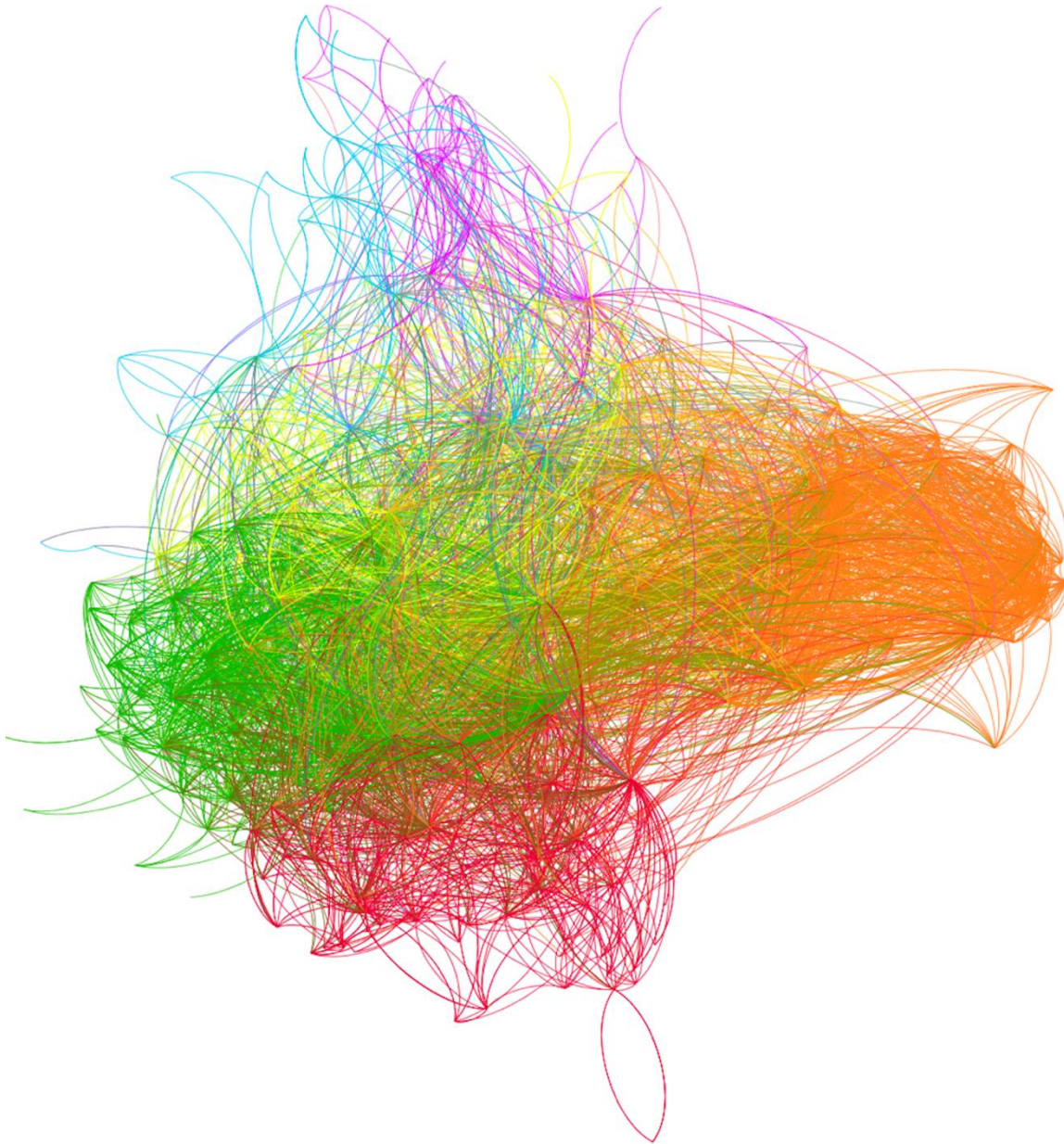


Figure 1: CANADA. Blue: Ontario; Orange: British Columbia; Green: Québec; Pink: Alberta; Red: Manitoba/Saskatchewan.

The network also possesses a relatively high network density at 0.078 (meaning that, on average, any given Soldiers of Odin member in Canada is connected to 7,8% of the Canadian network, that is, approximately 21 members across the country), and at 2.31 the network also possesses a short average path length, especially compared to the average distance between Facebook users across the entire platform, suggesting that the network facilitates the efficient spread of information among the Canadian chapters. This indicates that, on average, there are slightly over two intermediate steps required to connect any given pair of Soldiers of Odin members in Canada.

### ***The Canadian Network with Finnish Ties (CANFIN)***

The analysis of the CANFIN network—that is, Finnish members of the Soldiers of Odin linked to Canadian members, which in large part consists of the Finnish Soldiers of Odin leadership, rather than the entirety of the Finnish membership of the group—also provides some interesting insights. As one would expect, Finnish members are clustered quite heavily. In other words, Finnish members have stronger ties to other Finnish members than to Canadian members. This is undoubtedly due to their position in the group's leadership, regional proximity to each other, their shared language and culture, and potentially also shared membership in overlapping Soldiers of Odin chapters in Finland.[61] Taken by itself, the cluster of Finnish members is more tightly intertwined than the CANADA network previously analysed. While the CANADA network had a group network density of 0.078, the Finnish cluster can boast a staggering group network density of 0.315.



*Figure 2: CANFIN. Orange: Finland; Green: British Columbia; Yellow: Alberta; Blue: Québec; Purple: Manitoba/Saskatchewan; Red: Ontario*

Taken as a whole, the CANFIN network possesses a group network density of 0.086, which is certainly due to the interconnectivity of the Finnish nodes. More interesting is that the addition of the Finnish nodes to the Canadian Network only increased the average path length from 2.31 to 2.35, meaning that information, despite the presence of additional transnational nodes, can spread across the CANFIN network nearly as efficiently as it does within the CANADA network. This means that, notwithstanding potential language barriers, content emerging from the Soldiers of Odin chapters in Finland can spread to Canadian chapters nearly as freely as content emerging from within Canada. In other words, due to their leadership function in the group, the Finnish members identified serve as principal content distributors and aggregators. Furthermore, these Finnish members are highly connected to Canadian members of all ranks, bypassing the hierarchical structure of the Canadian Soldiers of Odin. Therefore, the content emerging from Finnish members appears to be disseminated directly to Canadian members without being filtered by the national and regional leadership.

In this regard, it is worth noting the appearance of Mika Ranta—the founder and first leader of the Soldiers of Odin—as an influential node positioned near the centre of the graph in proximity to members (or recently



removed members) of the Canadian executive.[62] While there is no evidence (as the content of several Soldiers of Odin Facebook groups and members' Facebook page is private) that Ranta actually interacts with Canadian members, his position as a central node (and the high number of connections between him and Canadian members) supports the argument made above regarding the dissemination of racist propaganda within the Canadian Soldiers of Odin network. Ranta possesses in the CANFIN graph the fifth largest betweenness centrality, establishing him as one of the most significant information distributors in the network. It is also worth noting that Ranta possesses well-documented links to white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups;[63] his position as a central node allows him to participate effectively in the dissemination of such content, and implies that Canadian Soldiers of Odin members tolerate or even share his views.

This finding has a profound implication, namely that irrespective of the presence or absence of racist content on the Canadian side of the network, the presence of numerous links to Finnish Soldiers of Odin (where the presence of racism and white supremacism have been widely documented)[64] means that Canadian members of the Soldiers of Odin are exposed to such content on a routine basis. On Facebook, the content to which one is exposed is provided by one's friends. Therefore, the presence of links to Finnish Soldiers of Odin indicates at least a willingness on the part of the Canadian Soldiers of Odin to be exposed on a regular basis to racism and anti-immigrant ideology coming from the Finnish chapters. This, in turn, suggests a much more extreme right-wing side to the movement than their emphasis on community action would otherwise suggest. In other words, given the similar average path lengths, Canadian members of the Soldiers of Odin can be exposed as routinely to content from the Finnish group as they are to content from Canadian chapters. Therefore, even if the Canadian Soldiers of Odin were to refrain from racist anti-immigrant propaganda altogether,[65] it is highly likely that such content would still be disseminated from Finnish sources.

### ***The Canadian Network with Finnish and Swedish Ties (CANFINSWE)***

In addition to Finnish ties, Swedish ties to the Canadian network were also plotted. Once again, these Swedish nodes do not represent the entirety of the Swedish Soldiers of Odin membership but rather the Swedish members tied to the Canadian network, or, in other words, the Swedish Soldiers of Odin who are Facebook friends with Canadian Soldiers of Odin. The subsequent analysis provides insights consistent with the findings derived from the CANFIN network. Firstly, the Swedish clusters also boast an impressive group network density of 0.34, increasing the overall network density. The average path length remained relatively stable at 2.36, thus demonstrating the ease of access to Swedish content enjoyed by Canadian members, a finding of potentially important significance, given that Swedish Soldiers of Odin have previously been involved in violent street fighting and altercations.[66] Secondly, members of the Swedish leadership seem to play a similar role as those of the Finnish leadership, serving as central nodes acting as transnational bridges amongst Canadian and European members. For example, the most important Swedish node amongst the CANFINSWE network is Mikael Johansson, the national leader and spokesperson for the Swedish Soldiers of Odin.[67] In the CANFINSWE network, Johansson has the fourth highest betweenness centrality, while Ranta ranks third.

These high measures of betweenness centrality are particularly stunning given the disproportionate weight of Canadian members in our sample. As mentioned earlier, our full sample for the CANFINSWE graph includes 265 Canadians, 104 Finns and 33 Swedes, meaning that Canadian members outweigh Europeans by a ratio of 2:1. Yet, two of the highest-ranking nodes in the network are European leaders. Thus, despite being thousands of miles away, their influence on the network can be considered equivalent to that of local Canadian leaders. As mentioned above, the reach of European leaders bypasses the hierarchy of Canadian leaders, reaching all ranks of the movement. The high measures of betweenness centrality, as such, confirm the preponderant reach of European leaders in distributing information and propaganda within the Canadian Soldiers of Odin.

Moreover, the Swedish cluster's proximity to the Finnish cluster demonstrates a higher level of interconnectedness amongst both European groups, which was expected. However, the additional exogenous pressure of the Swedish cluster has caused several of the Canadian clusters to collapse into each other: Alberta and British

Columbia formed a single cluster, and Ontario and Saskatchewan formed another, with Québec remaining clearly distinct, once again supporting the finding about the uniqueness of the Québec chapter within the Canadian network as more militant, more open about its extreme right rhetoric, and organisationally separate.

The implications of this collapse are clear: the Québec members are very tightly networked to each other, but their links are distinctly weaker vis-à-vis the other Canadian members. Similarly, the Ontario and Prairies cluster is (geographically) distinct from the Western provinces. While this does not disprove the earlier assertion about the rigid hierarchical structure of the Canadian Soldiers of Odin, it sheds light on the wider international hierarchy of the movement, with Finnish and Swedish members of the network being more influential in structuring the network than regional and local leaders. This is particularly significant for the Québec chapter, where the links of Québec members and leaders to other Canadian regional leaders are distinctly weaker than their links to the Finnish and Swedish leadership, indicating its somewhat marginal place within the Canadian organisation, as the split of April-May 2017 demonstrates.

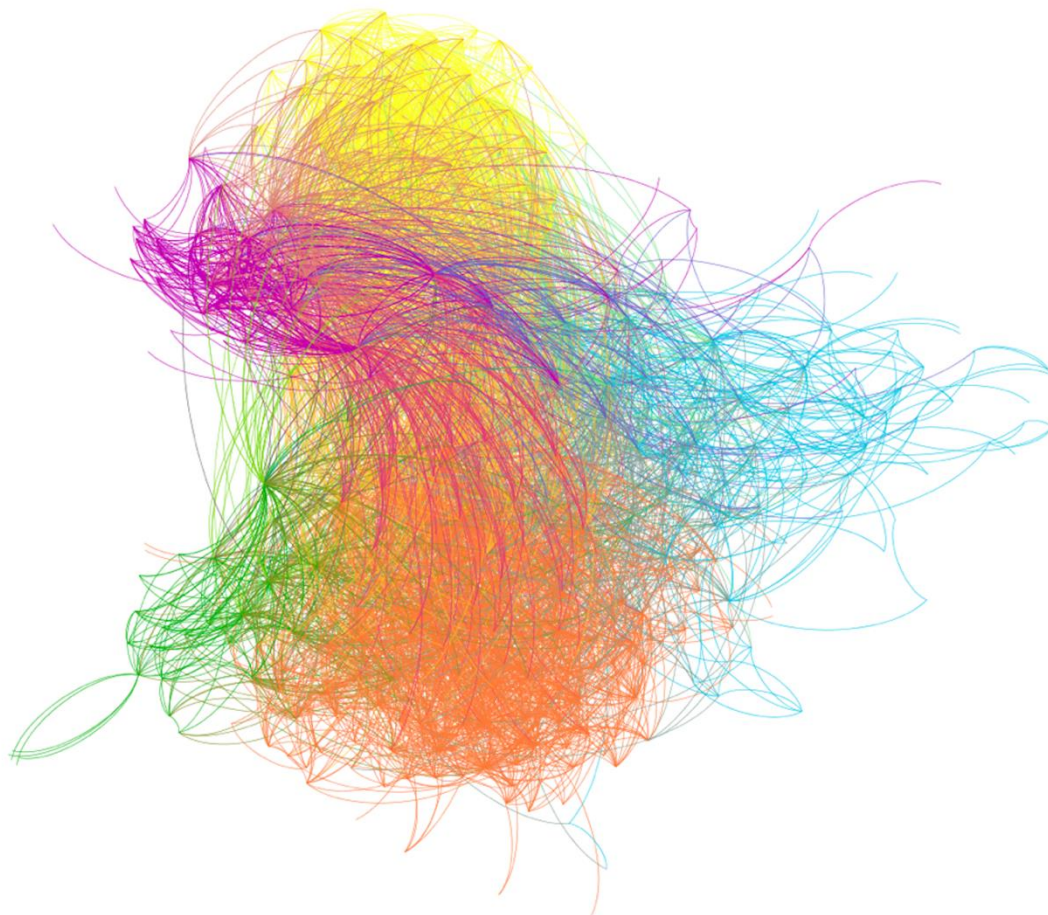


Figure 3: CANFINSWE. Yellow: Finland; Purple: Sweden; Blue: Québec; Orange: Alberta/British Columbia; Green: Ontario/Manitoba & Saskatchewan

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The application of Facebook-based social network analysis to the Soldiers of Odin provides multiple key insights into the group's functioning and structure, which would be hard to obtain through other methods.

As argued previously, online-based social network analysis may allow researchers a broader view than offline studies, due to the ability to gain a comprehensive overview of a group's structure and activities. This research into the Soldiers of Odin, consequently, provides significant and otherwise hard-to-access information about the group's functioning. Here follows a summary of conclusions drawn from this social network analysis.

First, on the most mundane level, this study casts significant doubts on the claim by the Canadian Soldiers of Odin to be independent of the Finnish Soldiers of Odin: "What they do over in Finland and in Europe, they have all sorts of different issues altogether. That's not really what we are. We're an independent charter of Soldiers of Odin; we're a community watch group." [68] As demonstrated above, links run far and deep, and information travels across networks easily. In fact, the average path length between two Canadian users and between a Canadian and Finnish user is virtually the same. Most importantly, however, Facebook friendship links between users are reciprocal—unlike Twitter or Instagram followers—meaning that both parties to a Facebook friendship must consent to becoming each other's 'friend'. [69] The presence of multiple recurring links between Canadian, Swedish, and Finnish Soldiers of Odin therefore indicates clearly that the Canadian Soldiers of Odin, despite their protestations, actively sought—or at least consented—to establishing close links with members of a group which regularly post xenophobic, racist, and often neo-Nazi content. As such, the presence of multiple reciprocal links between Finnish, Swedish, and Canadian members of the Soldiers of Odin indicates a mutual acceptance of the other branches' ideological commitments. The Canadian Soldiers of Odin members accepted the establishing of links with Finnish and Swedish Soldiers of Odin, and therefore it is possible to infer their acceptance of the European Soldiers of Odin's ideological commitments. [70]

As this investigation demonstrates, despite the Soldiers of Odin Canada's denials of the charges of racism and Islamophobia, their close integration with Finnish and Swedish networks suggests otherwise, as information can flow very easily between the Canadian and international networks. Furthermore, due to Facebook's way of curating and presenting content based on friendship links, connections between Canadian and Finnish members mean that Canadian Soldiers of Odin members are exposed to information and ideological rhetoric posted by Finnish members. As such, it should not be surprising to see Canadian Soldiers of Odin users borrow significant propaganda materials, rhetoric, and tropes from the Finnish and Swedish groups. [71] This is evidenced further by the Soldiers of Odin Canada's explicit embracing of the alliance with the Soldiers of Odin Finland up to April 2017. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that while the Soldiers of Odin is relatively flexible in its ideology and oscillates between Canadian ethno-nationalism and a focus on a transnational European culture, in general they are committed to the transnational movement and to a global perception of threat, which may not be informed by their immediate experiences in Canada, but rather decisively influenced by the communications flowing from abroad. Furthermore, as has been demonstrated, the members of these online groups were keen to emphasize the significance of the connection between Finnish and Canadian groups, which bears an influence on the behaviour of the group offline. For instance, the Finnish group emphasises the use of vigilante street patrols as its main form of operation. [72] The Canadian group, by comparison, combines street patrols with community action, such as food collections for the homeless, [73] snow shovelling for the elderly, [74] and cleaning up public parks. [75] Yet, despite this somewhat different focus, street patrols remain a central focus of the Canadian Soldiers of Odin. Mack Lamoureux, [76] for instance, when infiltrating a Soldiers of Odin meeting, noted that the leadership insisted that street patrols would be conducted, despite the apparent focus on volunteerism. When the leader of the Soldiers of Odin in Québec was replaced in December 2016, signalling a return to policies closer to those of the Finnish leadership, this was done in part through a renewed focus on vigilante street patrols. [77] Finally, in their statement announcing separation from the Finnish Soldiers of Odin, the Canadian leadership explained that the Finnish leaders wanted Canadian Soldiers of Odin to shift their primary focus back to street patrols.

As this demonstrates, the presence of a strong connection between Finnish and Canadian Soldiers of Odin, which is clearly discernible on the basis of social network analysis, indubitably influenced the choice of tactics of the Canadian group. What the social network analysis therefore demonstrates, is that the Soldiers of Odin ought to be considered as one diverse yet unified transnational social movement, rather than a collection of isolated chapters. Furthermore—and this analysis highlights an essential limitation of social network analysis—

the binding power of this transnational movement is essentially its rhetoric. The connections between members identified in the network graphs represent channels of communication through which rhetorical tropes, messages, and information are exchanged. There is therefore an increased need, when approaching extremist groups (such as the Soldiers of Odin) to not only consider them as part of wider networked social movements, but also to consider the channels of rhetorical communication and ideology formation these networks entail.

Second, the CANFINSWE graph demonstrates the presence of a structural divide between Québec and the rest of the Soldiers of Odin in Canada, with the Québec network remaining distinct even though other Canadian clusters are collapsing into each other. This is of significance given the subsequent splitting of the Canadian Soldiers of Odin from the worldwide Soldiers of Odin in April 2017, while the Québec Soldiers of Odin in turn split from the Canadian group to remain affiliated to the Finnish leadership.[78] This social network analysis was conducted in the four months preceding the split and identified a clearly visible divide between the Québec and rest of Canada networks. In the CANFINSWE graph, the other provincial chapters in Canada collapsed into two networks—one for Western Canada and one for Central Canada—indicating the relatively weaker strength of hierarchical ties to regional chapter leadership, in comparison to the exogenous influence from Finland and Sweden leadership; the Québec chapter, meanwhile, remained separate from the others (and, as one can see on the graph, several Québec members are connected only to other Québec members and European leaders). This indicates some distance between Québec members and the rest of Canada, and the presence of relatively stronger regional ties within the Québec chapter. As such, this social network analysis provides a structural explanation for the later divide between Canadian Soldiers of Odin chapters and the Québec chapter, indicating that the ideological disagreement was made manifest in the group's structure. While it would likely be possible to discern such structural divides through ethnographic observation or through lengthy interviews, online social network analysis allows for the quick identification of such divisions at minimal cost.

As such, this investigation suggests that researchers ought to further explore the potential of using social network analysis to map, track, and study right-wing extremist groups, particularly where reliable information is difficult to obtain through other means. The ease of online communications and propaganda diffusion has radically transformed the constraints of time and space in organising militant groups such as right-wing extremists. Consequently, direct observation can be difficult to achieve on a large scale, when groups—such as the Soldiers of Odin—seek to organise across countries and continents. As this study demonstrates, social network analysis can yield crucial information and allows researchers to use the structures of social networks to their advantage to gain comprehensive insights into the structure of hard-to-reach groups.

This research into the Soldiers of Odin concluded in May 2017, as the Canadian group split away from the rest of the international movement.[79] Yet, the use of social network analysis to study online communications and links can be effectively transferred to other extremist, covert, terrorist, or violent groups. Right-wing groups in Canada have been increasingly collaborating in more-or-less *ad hoc* coalitions, often mobilizing online through Facebook, while American militia groups such as the Three Percenters have slowly penetrated the Canadian right-wing scene.[80] Social Network Analysis can allow researchers to make sense of the connections—or lack thereof—between various groups, and clarify communication structures and propaganda diffusion channels.

### **Acknowledgments**

*The authors wish to thank Tore Bjørgo and Tommi Kotonen for providing us with a greater understanding of the Soldiers of Odin in Europe during our numerous discussions; we also wish to thank Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens for their nuanced insights into the Canadian far right movement and for perceptive comments on drafts of this article. The authors also wish to thank Mia Bloom for her feedback on this article, as well as Ellie Ashton and Lindsey J. Hand for their editorial assistance throughout the writing process. Thanks go as well to Irina Chindea, who provided excellent advice on structuring this article, as well as to all anonymous reviewers for the constructive comments which have greatly improved this final product. Earlier versions of this research were presented at the Political Studies Association Conference on April 11, 2017, in Glasgow, at the School of Government and*

*International Affairs, University of Durham, on May 3, 2017, and at the Centre d' Expertise et de Formation sur les Intégrismes Religieux, les Idéologies Politiques et la Radicalisation (CEFIR) at Cégep Édouard-Montpetit, Longueuil, Canada, on March 21, 2018.*

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- [41] See the chapters by Tore Bjørgo and Ingvil Gjelsvik, Emil Archambault and Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, Mattias Gardell, and Tommi Kotonen, in Tore Bjørgo and Miroslav Mares, Eds., *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities* (London: Routledge, 2019) [forthcoming].
- [42] Bernard Rieder, "Studying Facebook via data extraction: the Netvizz application," in *Proceedings of the 5th Annual ACM Web Science Conference* (Paris: ACM Press, 2013), 346-355.
- [43] "Data Miner," *Data Miner*. URL: <https://data-miner.io/>
- [44] Out of these 12 Canadian based Soldiers of Odin groups, 10 were closed groups, meaning that members had to be approved by administrators; only these members are able to see posted content. As such, accessing these groups to conduct content analysis of these groups lay beyond the ethical boundaries established at the onset of this study.
- [45] Soldiers of Odin, "Soldiers of Odin Canada Bylaws," 2016; URL: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/308890496/Soldiers-Of-Odin-Canada-Bylaws-docx>.
- [46] Rowland Atkinson, and John Flint, "Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies," *Social Research Update* 33 (2001): 1-5; Maryse Marpsat and Nicolas Razafindratsima, "Survey Methods for hard-to-reach Populations: Introduction to the Special Issue," *Methodological Innovations Online* 5, no. 2, (2010): 3-16; Matthew J. Salganik and Douglas D. Heckathorn, "Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations using Respondent-driven Sampling," *Sociological Methodology* 34, (2004): 193-239.
- [47] The discrepancy between the 1022 members of Soldiers of Odin Facebook group and the 737 members included in our dataset can be explained by the presence of a number of "support" groups. These support groups included a large number of sympathizers—individuals who are not members of the Soldiers of Odin—along with full group members. Due to our coding rules, these unofficial sympathizers were not included in our dataset. Also, due to snowball sampling, a high number of other members of the Soldiers of Odin abroad were identified, including Americans, Germans, Australians, etc. As this study concentrates on the links between Canadian members and those of the two founding national chapters—Finland and Sweden—other members of the Soldiers of Odin were not considered.
- [48] One limitation of our dataset is caused by the breakaway of the Saskatchewan chapters on February 1, 2017 in the middle of our data collection. However, it was decided not to take into account whether an individual had left the group or not at the time of the data collection. Therefore, unless a former member of the Soldiers of Odin deliberately went through their Facebook profile to delete any identifiable link to the Soldiers of Odin, they would still have been captured in our data collection. Furthermore, all of our data collection occurred prior to the Soldiers of Odin Canada's split from the Finland group (and the Soldiers of Odin Québec's split from Soldiers of Odin Canada).
- [49] In Jacomy et al., the authors of the Force Atlas 2 algorithm discuss the respective advantages and drawbacks of their approach in comparison to other popular algorithms. However, as previously noted, there are a large number of other network visualization approaches available both within Gephi and in other network visualization tools, such as UCINET, ORA, NodeXL, NetworkX, and therefore there is no one 'true' representation of any network dataset. Also, see Mathieu Jacomy et al., "ForceAtlas2, a Continuous Graph Layout Algorithm for Handy Network Visualization Designed for the Gephi Software," *PLOS ONE* 9, no. 6, (2011): e98679.
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- [52] Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
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- [54] Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery, “Network Analysis for International Relations,” *International Organization* 63 (2009): 570.
- [55] For a wider survey of the state of Canadian right-wing extremism, see Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens, ‘Uneasy Alliances: A Look at the Right-Wing Extremist Movement in Canada’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39, no. 9 (1 September 2016): 819–841; URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1139375>; Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens, ‘A Climate for Hate? An Exploration of the Right-Wing Extremist Landscape in Canada’, *Critical Criminology* 26, no. 2 (1 June 2018): 169–187; URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-018-9394-y>.
- [56] This is confirmed by content analysis: for instance, much of the group’s communication goes through Facebook groups divided by local and provincial chapters and administrated by members of local, provincial, and national executives.
- [57] “Soldiers of Odin Québec Support,” *Facebook*; URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1292307334178114/?fref=ts>. These three groups are ‘support groups’, for members as well as non-member sympathisers.
- [58] “Soldiers of Odin Northern Ontario Support,” *Facebook*; URL <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1745618239046014/?fref=ts>.
- [59] “Patriots of Unity – Regina Support,” *Facebook*; URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/544191002419317/?fref=ts>. This group, administered by Ryan Ward, transferred to the Patriots of Unity on February 1, 2017, when Ward and most of the Saskatchewan chapters of the Soldiers of Odin left to found the Patriots of Unity. Nevertheless, the content before February 1, 2017 can be reliably considered to be Soldiers of Odin content.
- [60] It is also worth noting that since Dave Tregget’s resignation/dismissal as national vice-president and Québec leader in December 2016, it would seem that no member from Québec has any official function in the national leadership.
- [61] We did not seek to identify the precise location within Finland or Sweden of international members.
- [62] Mika Ranta self-identifies as “National Socialist” and has a long history of belonging to the Finnish far right. See Sara Rigatelli, ‘Personporträtt: Hur det kom sig att Mika Ranta grundade Soldiers of Odin’, text, YLE Nyheter, 7 May 2016; URL: <https://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2016/05/07/personportratt-hur-det-kom-sig-att-mika-ranta-grundade-soldiers-odin>. See also Tommi Kotonen, “The Soldiers of Odin Finland—from a local movement to an international franchise,” in Tore Bjørge and Miroslav Mares, Eds., *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*, London: Routledge, 2019 [forthcoming]. Tommi Kotonen informed us that Mika Ranta announced his departure from the leadership of the Soldiers of Odin in early June 2018.
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- [64] Jake Wallis Simons, “EXCLUSIVE—Nazi Daggers, SS Hats and a Hangman’s Noose: On Night Patrol with the ‘Soldiers of Odin’, Neo-Nazi Led Vigilantes Vowing to ‘Keep Europe’s Women Safe from Migrant Sex Attacks,’” *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016; URL: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3426685/Nazi-daggers-SS-hats-hangman-s-noose-night-patrol-Soldiers-Odin-neo-Nazi-led-vigilantes-vowing-Europe-s-women-safe-migrant-sex-attacks.html>; Kotonen, ‘The Soldiers of Odin Finland (2019); Rigatelli, ‘Personporträtt (2016).
- [65] As mentioned above, a significant number of public postings in Soldiers of Odin groups and by Soldiers of Odin members contain racist, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant messages.
- [66] *The Local*, “Swedish Soldiers of Odin group involved in ‘extremist’ clashes”; Marina Ferhatovic, “Slagsmål på Masthuggstorget när Soldiers of Odin patrullerade,” *Göteborgs-Posten*, (April 3, 2016); URL <http://www.gp.se/nyheter/göteborg/slagsmål-på-masthuggstorget-när-soldiers-of-odin-patrullerade-1.182967>; Ryan Ward, then head of the Regina (Saskatchewan) chapter, explicitly likened the Antifa group involved in the brawl in Jönköping in January 2017 to the Anti-Racist Collective, a group active in Canada in tracing and reporting on right-wing extremist movements. Ryan Ward, “Nationalist ‘Soldiers of Odin’ Clash with Militant Leftists in Sweden,” *Patriots of Unity—Regina Support*, (January 11, 2017); URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/544191002419317/?fref=ts>.
- [67] Mikael Johansson left the leadership of the Swedish Soldiers of Odin in June 2017, after the end of our study, following accusations of embezzlement of funds. Atilla Joldas, ‘Grundaren lämnar Soldiers of Odin’, *Expressen*, 3 June 2017; URL: <https://www.expressen.se/nyheter/grundaren-lamnar-soldiers-of-odin-anklagas-for-brott/>.
- [68] François Biber, ‘Soldiers of Odin Canada Says Group Not the Same as What’s Going on Overseas’, *CBC News*, 14 September 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/soldiers-of-odin-canada-community-group-watch-1.3761178>.
- [69] Group memberships are generally reciprocal as well, since an administrator must accept members into the group. Page ‘likes’ are monodirectional, as the page owner does not vet those who like it; as such, the potential for inference from page likes is much more limited. For this reason, we did not use page likes to elaborate our model.



- [70] For evidence of the Finnish Soldiers of Odin's links to xenophobic, racist, and neo-Nazi circles, see Kotonen, 'The Soldiers of Odin Finland' (2019).
- [71] This identification of Canadian Soldiers of Odin with their European counterparts was made clear by a leader of the Soldiers of Odin in Edmonton, Canada: "The guys in Europe, they're dealing with some real shit, we might not see that here for ten or so years. When that happens we want to look as good as possible"; Mack Lamoureux, 'Soldiers of Odin, Europe's Notorious, Anti-Immigration Group, Beginning to Form Cells in Canada', *Vice Media*, 18 April 2016; URL: [https://www.vice.com/en\\_au/article/soldiers-of-odin-europes-notorious-anti-immigration-group-beginning-to-form-cells-in-canada](https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/soldiers-of-odin-europes-notorious-anti-immigration-group-beginning-to-form-cells-in-canada).
- [72] Kotonen, 'The Soldiers of Odin Finland'.
- [73] *CBC News*, 'Yukon Soldiers of Odin Leader Claims Group Not Linked to White Supremacy', 4 January 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/soldiers-of-odin-yukon-james-albert-1.3920049>.
- [74] *CBC News*, 'Concerns Raised after Soldiers of Odin Offer Free Snow Shovelling', 22 December 2016; URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/soldiers-of-odin-shoveling-snow-1.3909599>.
- [75] Biber, 'Soldiers of Odin Canada Says Group Not the Same as What's Going on Overseas'.
- [76] Lamoureux, 'Soldiers of Odin, Europe's Notorious Anti-Immigration Group'.
- [77] Jonathan Montpetit, 'Inside Quebec's Far Right: Soldiers of Odin Leadership Shake-up Signals Return to Extremist Roots', *CBC News*, 15 December 2016; URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-far-right-soldiers-of-odin-1.3896175>.
- [78] While the reasons for this apparent divide cannot be assessed through social network analysis alone, possible explanations would include the presence of a linguistic divide between Francophone Québec and Anglophone Ontario and Western Canada, which would impede communications (and thus explain the presence of weaker links between Francophone and Anglophone memberships). Archambault and Veilleux-Lepage offers some further thoughts on the distinctiveness of the Québec political environment regarding the Soldiers of Odin in Emil Archambault and Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, "The Soldiers of Odin in Canada" (2019).
- [79] A further survey of the later activities of Canadian Soldiers of Odin members was conducted in September 2017; see Archambault and Veilleux-Lepage, "The Soldiers of Odin in Canada" (2019).
- [80] Mack Lamoureux, 'The Birth of Canada's Armed, Anti-Islamic "Patriot" Group', *Vice*, 14 June 2017; URL: [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/new9wd/the-birth-of-canadas-armed-anti-islamic-patriot-group](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/new9wd/the-birth-of-canadas-armed-anti-islamic-patriot-group).

# The Hand that Feeds the Salafist: an Exploration of the Financial Independence of 131 Dutch Jihadi Travellers

by Melvin R.J. Soudijn

## Abstract

*This article examines the financial life of 131 jihadi travellers (JTs), also known as foreign terrorist fighters, from the Netherlands. For the purpose of the underlying research, access was acquired to all their banking transactions in the year preceding their departure: over 60,000 transactions in total. Their income from work or employment, various forms of social assistance, student grants, and other income or expenditure were all examined. The data provided a good picture of their financial independence, i.e., the extent to which they were capable of making their own living or needed to claim assistance from the Dutch government. The analysis shows that it is highly exceptional for Dutch JTs to be financially independent. Only five percent have sufficient income from work or employment without making any claims on the government for financial assistance, and are free of mounting debts. This low score can largely be explained by the fact that almost half of the JTs are under 23 years of age and/or receive student grants. Their financial situation is not too different from the one of ordinary students. Older JTs (over 23 years of age, and not having received a student grant for at least one year) underperform, however. Only 9% are financially independent. It is thus to be expected that if any of the JTs do return, considering their experiences, life choices, and having been placed on a terrorist watch list, they will be even more financially dependent for many years to come.*

**Keywords:** jihadi travellers, foreign terrorist fighters, terrorist financing, financing of terrorism, financial independence

## Introduction

Since the Arab Spring reached Syria in 2011, and protests against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad were violently put down, the country has been caught up in an increasingly complex civil war. This chaos provided ideal conditions for the emergence of several jihadi combat groups, of which the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is the best known. In 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, proclaimed his so-called caliphate. In various messages, he called on Muslims to join him and take up arms. Thousands of people all over the world answered the call and set off for Syria and Iraq. Leaked internal personnel records from inside ISIS showed that between early 2013 and late 2014, over 4,600 foreign recruits arrived in Syria and Iraq.[1] The Soufan Group calculated that by December 2015, between 27,000 and 31,000 jihadi travellers joined ISIS from at least 86 countries.[2]

Why people were willing to join IS, is not always clear or possible to predict. Research on terrorism shows that, on the individual level, a wide variety of reasons exist. For example, some are looking for excitement and adventure, others feel connected with a specific subgroup, search for meaning in their lives, or simply run into the wrong friends.[3] Because demographic characteristics are wide-ranging (young-old, male-female, married-unmarried, migrant-non-migrant), it seems impossible to determine *the* profile of a terrorist.

Still, most Western jihadi travellers (JTs) apparently have one consistent trait in common, i.e. they belong to the lower socio-economic stratum.[4] Various European studies of JTs note that they mainly come from the lower social classes and are not well positioned on the labour market—if they are in the labour market at all.[5] This is a departure from somewhat older (stock-taking) studies of terrorism. These studies found that terrorists were no different from the general population in terms of income and social status.[6] The older studies on terrorism, however, include terrorist suspects connected to last century's German RAF, Spanish ETA, Italian Red Brigades and Irish IRA. It is likely that modern jihadists are economically less well off than the older generations of terrorists.[7]

Various contemporary researchers link relative deprivation with radicalization, or see it as a significant part in a complex web of motivations.[8] In other words, subjective feelings about an inferior socio-economic status compared to the general population, (partly) helps explain JTs drive to join IS.

Socio-economic backwardness is also translated into criminological ideas about strain.[9] It means that divergent behavior (like wanting to join IS) is interpreted as a solution to an inability to join mainstream society. A low educational attainment level, unemployment, and resulting low or insufficient income thereby indicate risk of social exclusion.

However, there is no evidence of a causal relation between relative deprivation, or feelings of strain, and radicalization. In fact, researchers warn against viewing a low socio-economic position as the proverbial canary in the coalmine for what is radicalization.[10] After all, only a very small minority of all those who live under adverse socio-economic conditions radicalize.

This article proposes to view socio-economic conditions in a different, more pragmatic light, taking a closer look at *financial independence*, i.e., the extent to which persons are capable of earning their own living or need to claim assistance from the authorities. First, measuring financial independence provides objective insights as to whether or not a person has financial problems and sidesteps the question of subjective feelings of poverty or socio-economic backwardness. Secondly, if it turns out that a (potential) JT is dependent on benefits and allowances, this in turn can be evaluated in the framework of terrorism prevention to look for customized solutions and offers monitoring possibilities.[11] Due to the fact that the author of this article was in the unique position to review the formal bank accounts of 131 Dutch JTs, the focus of this study is the situation in the Netherlands. The central research question of the present article is, therefore: to what extent are Dutch JTs financially independent?

Before addressing the findings, an outline of the background of the financial approach to tackling terrorism and jihadi travel is presented. Next, the workings of the instrument known as the ‘independence matrix’ are explained. This instrument can help to gain an overview of citizens’ independence in various domains. For the current article, the relevant domain is that of finance. The ‘Research Data’ section discusses the composition and background of the group of individuals that were the object of study and explains what steps were taken to arrive at the collection of data. The findings are subdivided into various sorts of income and monthly balances. The section headed ‘Independence’ draws on these findings to give an answer to the central research question. The article concludes with a reflection on the results, the limitations of the data and suggests some policy recommendations.

## **Background**

According to the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, hundreds of individuals in the Netherlands showed an interest in going to Syria.[12] Although not all of them acted on their intentions, and some only got as far as a botched attempt to leave the country, a considerable number of people managed to reach the conflict zone in Syria. Official figures released in March 2018 refer to about 300 individuals.[13] These included approximately 40 to 60 children (ranging from toddlers to 17 year olds) who were born in the Netherlands.[14]

Governments implement various measures to counteract radicalization and jihadi travel. Possible measures include confiscating the passports of individuals who try to join the jihad, requiring certain people to report regularly to local authorities, and prohibiting people from visiting certain areas or from having contact with specific others.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) also highlighted the importance of financial alertness and measures to counteract radicalization. The FATF is an independent intergovernmental organization that has been engaged in combating money laundering and terrorism financing since 1990.[15] The FATF developed internationally recognized norms and recommendations and produced guidelines for the legal implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.[16] This legal framework ensures, among other things, that financial institutions and government organizations are in a position—in accordance

with international treaties and each country's constitution—to identify and disrupt terrorist activities and to prosecute the natural and legal persons involved.

The FATF notes, however, that the financial transactions related to jihadi travel are often not picked up, because the sums involved are relatively low.[17] A few hundred euro is all it takes to acquire a plane ticket to travel to the conflict zone, possibly supplemented by some extra purchases such as camping equipment and an international mobile phone plan. Researchers also noted that JTs do not likely receive support from international terrorist organizations to pay for their outward journey; they can manage with their own means (salary or social assistance), possibly supplemented by petty crime.[18] It has therefore proved difficult to put together a specific financial profile that could enable institutions with an obligation to report to detect jihadis proactively.[19] These difficulties are compounded by the fact that advice is available on jihadi websites about how potential jihadis should behave financially to ensure that they do not attract attention when setting out.[20]

All that remains is financial measures after the event. The Dutch “Action Programme for the Integral Approach to Jihadism”[21] outlines some of these measures, which include freezing bank balances and stopping any benefits, allowances, or student grants once it is clear that the recipient left for Syria. Cutting off these sources of income is intended to make it harder for the JT to get by in Syria. The NCTV also advocates for the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) in the Netherlands, as well as investigation teams, to draw up an overview of JTs' finances, with the aim of analysing JTs' financial relations, in search of possible evidence of terrorism financing to be used in criminal proceedings.

Both the FATF's reports and recommendations, and the NCTV's measures focus primarily on combating terrorism and terrorism financing. In this context, the purpose of financial data is to freeze access to bank accounts, stop money flows, underpin court cases, or to identify new suspects. However, such a focus overlooks the fact that financial data can provide insight of a different kind. Financial data represent a huge wealth of information. Marketing people have been using customers' transaction data or purchase history data for years, to gain a better picture of them. The same principle can be applied to JTs. By analysing financial transactions, we can get to know the person behind the JT. Income and expenditure over a longer period can provide insight into the life and behaviour of the individual in question. This may not immediately form the basis for a criminal investigation, but it does tell us something about JTs' socio-economic position. The present article goes a step further and analyses the financial independence of JTs.

### ***Independence Matrix***

To determine JTs' financial independence, an instrument known as the ‘independence matrix’ (IDM) is useful. The Municipal Health Services of Amsterdam and Rotterdam developed the IDM to map out citizens' independence. It helps care providers to assess the domains in which a client may need special attention. The domains assessed include, amongst others, work, education, accommodation, mental health, social relations, or the judicial authorities, but also a specific field for an individual's financial situation. In the most recent version of the IDM,[22] the category ‘financial situation’ is subdivided into five classifications:

1. **Acutely problematic.** No income, growing complex debt;
2. **Not independent.** Too little income to meet basic needs *or* spontaneous and/or inappropriate spending, growing debt;
3. **Limitedly independent.** Income from benefits to meet basic needs. Appropriate spending, any debt present is at least stable or income and/or debt is being managed by a third party;
4. **Sufficiently independent.** Income from work / pension / voluntary income provision to meet basic needs, any debt present is being managed by the individual him- or herself, and any debt present is decreasing; and
5. **Completely independent.** Income exclusively from work / pension / voluntary income provision, money left over at the end of the month, and no debt.

The IDM-matrix distinguishes two categories according to the source of income. The first category relates to income from municipal, regional, or national basic provisions to prevent poverty, such as welfare benefits for adults, supplementary student grants, and housing, healthcare, or childcare allowances. The second category is income from work, or revenue from other services. This includes not only salary, but also the basic pension, savings, and income from assets.

Incidentally, independence is not purely a matter of bare figures. The IDM manual notes that an individual can also, of his or her own accord, call in or organize assistance from others whenever a reduction in performance level sets in that he or she is incapable of solving alone.[22]. Financial problems are also part of individuals' attitude to life and the way they manage their finances.[23]

### ***Research Data***

The present article makes use of a dataset detailing the financial transactions of 131 JTs. To arrive at this dataset, the following four steps were taken.

The first step started with requesting permission from the authorities to carry out a strategic analysis on financial transactions of JTs. Permission was obtained from the Netherlands Police's Central Unit, Central Intelligence Division and the National Public Prosecutor's Office under the provision that no personal information or business records were made public, privacy was guaranteed and the results would not interfere with ongoing police investigations. An advance copy of this study was also to be distributed to the authorities.

The second step was to request a list of JTs who left the Netherlands. At the request of the Financial and Economic Crime (FINEC) Department of the Netherlands Police's Central Unit, in late 2016 the National Public Prosecutor's Office supplied a list of 167 individuals who, at that time, were assigned a 'JT indication' and were known to be staying, or to have formerly stayed, in the conflict zone in Syria or Iraq.[24]

The third step was to map out separately the finances of this group of JTs. To this end, the major Dutch banks were approached via the National Public Prosecutor's Office. The banks were requested to provide FINEC with an overview of all the payment and savings accounts held by the 167 individuals in question. Then—again through the Prosecutor's Office—the history of those identified payment and savings accounts were requested. The period of the requested bank transactions was for one year prior to the date of departure to the date of the request by FINEC (July 2017). Therefore, if somebody set off on 6 May 2014, the transaction data was requested from 6 May 2013 to 1 July 2017. However, generally it emerged that the accounts were blocked or closed shortly after the individual left the Netherlands.

The fourth and final step was to correct for inactive accounts and minors. For a few JTs, no bank data was available, for instance, or the bank account turned out to have been inactive throughout the period requested. In addition, several individuals were still minors when they left the country. Minors are—by definition—dependent, and were not interesting from a financial point of view due to their lack of income. Once corrected for these two factors, 131 were available for analysis out of the 167 JTs who left the country: 97 men (74%) and 34 women (26%). The average age of the women was 24.6 years, with ages ranging from 18 to 45; the men averaged 24.9 years, with a range from 18 to 42 years old.

The majority of the JTs were born in the Netherlands (N=92). The second largest group were born in Morocco (N=11), followed by Iraq (N=6) and Somalia (N=4). The remaining 18 JTs came from 11 other countries. As far as the origins of the JTs' parents are concerned, more than half the JTs had a Moroccan background (N=75). It also emerges that 13% of the JTs are converts (N=17), including 12 native Dutch people.

The 131 JTs had a total of 212 payment and savings accounts. Most of them had one or two accounts at their disposal. The exception was one person who had eight accounts.

For the financial analysis, all 212 accounts were entered into one Excel file. The file consists of 60,548 lines, with each line representing one financial transaction. This transaction may be a once-off bank transfer to another person, company, or body; a direct debit transaction; an ATM withdrawal; or a sum that is received (by bank transfer) or deposited (in cash) in the account. Per transaction, the account numbers of the parties involved, the date (and, depending on the bank, sometimes the exact time), the name of the account holder, and, of course, the sums involved were recorded. Bank transfer payments often also include a short description that provides a little bit of extra information about the transactions. For example, if a municipality transfers money, the transaction description specifies in what connection.

Not all transaction lines are completely filled in, however. Sometimes the name of the other party to the transaction is lacking. Wherever possible, this is added by hand if this can be deduced from the account number or description. There are also some differences between banks in the way data is registered. One bank may use an abbreviation for a certain body, where another bank writes the name out in full. However, if both banks use the same account number, I manually standardized the names. Names of persons were also standardized wherever possible.

The average number of transactions per JT was 451. Sometimes an account (or secondary account) may be inactive and may only take up five lines of direct debit transactions. At the other end of the spectrum, there was one account with almost 7,000 transactions. This was the account of an individual who made his personal account a 'charitable' foundation on which dozens of small sums were received each day from donors. Excluding this account, the average number of transactions per JT is 399.

Since the period in which the accounts were active can differ considerably (some were frozen immediately after the JT left the country, others were not), four identical moments of measurement were picked: eleven months, six months, three months, and one month before departure. The departure month itself was not included because there were large individual differences here. Given that some individuals leave at the beginning of the month, whereas others do not leave until the end of the month, this would result in a distortion in the level of income.

Finally, the findings were discussed with a unit head of the Social Affairs Service who has experience of using the IDM, as well as with three police officers in the field of terrorism and/or the financing of terrorism.

## ***Findings***

To establish the JTs' financial independence, four categories of data were examined. The first category is that of income from work. The second category includes various forms of government support, with the exception of student grants. Student grants are covered separately, as a third category. Finally, we look at the monthly balance of the accounts. Because tax rates and living expenditures differ from country to country, this article expresses JTs' income, government support, and student loans as a percentage of the Dutch national average.

### *Income from Work or Services*

In this section, we take a closer look at net income, or more precisely, in line with the IDM, net income from work or services.

In the four separate months measured before the JTs' departure, 52% of the JTs (68 of the 131 individuals) had income from work at some point. However, not everyone received a salary in all of the four measured periods. Only 22% were employed during the whole year in the age category 18-22, 17% in the age category 23-27, 50% in the age category 28-32, and nobody older than 33. Generally speaking, over the course of the year, the number of individuals with some form of income in any age category dropped by half. Based on the transaction data, it is not clear why the number of individuals working declined. According to a police officer consulted

about the results, at least three individuals encountered problems at work due to their increasing radicalization. These three insisted on wearing full Islamic dress at work, for which reason they were eventually dismissed.[25]

The level of income was generally low. Just nine individuals out of 68 JTs managed to meet at least the minimum wage limit in at least three of the four measurement periods. Out of these nine people, four generated income that was on par with the national average and one person even earned 15% higher.[26] Although younger people (under 23 years of age) do not earn very much, a few hundred euro per month at most, there are two exceptions. Two 22-year old men worked through an employment agency and earned a net salary that was 10% higher than the national average in their age category. They also received a student grant in addition to this income.

For both the relatively higher and lower incomes, it generally holds that no very high level of education is required. A lot of the work was arranged through employment agencies. Common work ranged from stacking shelves in supermarkets, delivering newspapers, shop sales, cleaning offices, and telephone helpdesk staff. Six individuals were paid a salary from reintegration projects or social work schemes targeting young people.

Only 38% of all women received a salary at one time or another, compared to 56% of all men. One woman ranked among the ten best earners, although she held the lowest position, earning less than half as much as the best earning male JT.

It is noteworthy that only eight out of the 17 converts received some salary at one time or another. This salary was insufficient to live on, ranging from only 60 euro to a few hundred euro a month. None of the converts were legally employed longer than two measurement periods.

Finally, not all registered income was legal. One particular JT had a 10% above average net income from advisory activities. Police investigations show that this income was completely derived from fraud. Another individual likely allowed one or more people to work under his identity. Months after his departure, an employment agency in Belgium continued to pay salary into his account. Because information about the legality of all incomes was not available, it is not clear to what extent fraud was committed.

#### *Government Support*

The second category of income investigated consisted of deposits from various benefits agencies. More specifically, this relates to income from municipal, regional, or national basic provisions such as welfare benefits, debt support, housing, healthcare, or childcare allowances. Student grants are not included here and are treated separately under the next heading.

In the four separate months before departure included in the analysis, 95% of the JTs (124 of the 131 individuals involved) received some form of government support. This support differed in amount and was received from different bodies, including the Tax Authority, the Employee Insurance Agency, local municipalities, the Ministry of Social Affairs, or the Social Credit Bank.

Over one year, the number of individuals receiving government support remained relatively stable, although the number slightly rises in the 23-27 age category. This rise is related to the fall in the number of employed JTs in the same age category.

Both at the beginning and at the end of the period measured, the total and the average of the government support received was more or less the same. The people in the youngest age bracket (18-22 years) generally received only a small amount of rent and healthcare allowances. There are exceptions, however, like a 22-year-old person who received over 3,000 euro 11 months before travelling to Syria. This large sum is the result from the once-off allocation of an allowance with retroactive effect for several months. Older JTs generally received less than the minimum wage, but there are exceptions. This is due to the individuals in question simultaneously receiving unemployment benefits, rent, healthcare, and child allowances.

Child allowances can push up the amounts received (sometimes even above average net monthly salaries). The 10 individuals with the highest total income from government support included eight women with children. Compared to men, women received government assistance slightly more often (97% vs 94%).

Converts were also heavily dependent on government assistance. In the four measured months, 15 out of 17 converts relied on government assistance. Three of the younger converts received a very specific type of benefit—(life-long) benefits for younger individuals who have no possibility to work, due to long-term (mental) illness or a handicap.

### *Student Grants*

The third category examined was student grants. The JTs were a relatively young age group, so several of them were likely still in the process of obtaining an education. Indeed, 46% of the JTs (60 of the 131 individuals) received a student grant via the Ministry of Education during at least one of the four measured months. During the year, the number of people with a student grant fell slightly from 41 to 34 individuals.

The grants JTs received are almost exactly equal to what the average ‘normal’ student received.[27] It is therefore striking that one individual in the 18-22 age category received almost five times as much one month before departure. However, the transaction description does not provide any information about possible reasons. Perhaps an extra loan was taken out, but that is not stated.

Male and female students received similar amounts. The only difference is that slightly fewer women (38%) received a student grant than men (48%). Further, six out of 17 converts received a student grant at some point. None of them, however, received a grant over the course of the whole year. Only two converts received a grant in 3 out of 4 measured periods. This suggests a high dropout rate.

Finally, eight of the individuals who received a student grant were older than 25: five individuals were age 26, and three were 31, 32, and 42 years of age respectively. This includes one individual who previously received fraudulent advisory activities, so it is questionable whether this student grant was genuinely spent on studying.

### *Monthly Balance*

The fourth and final area the analysis of was the overall turnover of the payment and savings accounts; this is a separate area from income. In this case, the important question is whether there was money left at the end of the month, or whether withdrawals exceed income and savings.

Out of 131 JTs, 118 had a positive balance at the end of at least one month. However, only three JTs were able to hold this position at any of the four data points. A further 15 individuals had a positive balance in three of the four months, but their accounts were overdrawn in one month. The others ended two or even three months ‘in the red’. There is hardly any difference between age categories.

In the cases where the month ended with a positive balance, this averaged a few hundred euro. One outlier can be detected six months before departure in the 18-22 age category. In that month, one individual had more than €20,000 on his account at the end of the month. The transaction descriptions reveal that in that month the individual in question received €21,919 in compensation for personal injury. In the subsequent period, that money was then mainly transferred to other accounts or withdrawn in cash.

In addition to income from work, government support, and student grants, a few other recurrent items can be noted that fed the accounts. Some individuals lived in a family household, for instance, so the account was supplemented by income from the individual’s partner. A few children who were studying received support from their parents ranging from fifty to a few hundred euro per month. Incidental transfers complete the picture,



e.g. someone sold items on an online marketplace, and one prospective JT sold his car for a few hundred euros.

None of the JTs received financing from Salafist foundations or organizations overseas. However, three individuals systematically received Dutch donations of a religious nature. Each of these three cases is different. Number 1 received exactly €1,000 per month from an Islamic foundation in the Netherlands. The reason is unclear. Number 2 launched a dozen or so non-recognized 'charitable' foundations of his own. He requested money on Islamic forums under the guise of an aid campaign for Syria, Afghanistan, orphans, toys, water wells, or 'sisters'. Hundreds of visitors to these forums responded to his requests and donated small sums of one or two euros, but sometimes also larger sums. A few even simply donated money requesting a prayer to get good grades or to overcome disease. In total, in the course of the four months included in the analysis, he collected about €15,000. Number 3 probably posted a sob story about herself on Islamic forums, because in the months leading up to her departure she received small sums for 'rent for a sister in distress,' often accompanied by religious texts in the transaction tags. She received from over 40 contributors a total well over €1,000.

Some of the extra sources of income also raise questions. Various JTs deposited a few hundred euros in cash to their account. The source of this money is unknown. Furthermore, at least two people were involved in illegal subletting. One individual transferred rent to a housing corporation every month, but in the same period received money in his own account from a private individual, with the description 'rent'. This private individual paid €100 more than the JT had to pay the housing corporation. The JT in question also received housing benefits from the municipal authorities. Two other individuals applied for an extra loan shortly before their departure, or raised their credit limit.[28] As soon as this was granted, the money was withdrawn in cash and the individual left the country. As is to be expected, the borrowed money was never paid back. This leads to the general picture of negative final balances.

Not all the JTs had money left over at the end of the month. At the beginning and end of the year, the number of JTs with a negative balance was more or less the same. Eight individuals had a negative balance at all four data points, and a further 40 individuals had a negative balance at three out of four of the data points. In three out of four age categories, the mean was smaller one month before departure. The reason is unclear. It is possible that some JTs were already overdrawn in the months preceding their departure. They simply could not run up higher debts. Then again, maybe some JTs did not want to risk being stopped at the border because of outstanding debts.

The highest negative amount (-10,808 euro) can be found six months before departure in the age category 18-22. The person in question took 10,000 euro out of his savings account. Others follow a similar pattern, withdrawing hundreds or even thousands of euros in cash in the months leading up to their departure to Syria.

Six persons arranged with local authorities to reduce overdue payments. For several other JTs, however, their debts were out-of-hand. Three people were declared insolvent and were put under extraordinary administrative arrangements. Income and outgoing payments no longer ran through the individual's own account, but were temporarily under the charge of a municipal partner. They were only allowed a small living allowance. A further eleven of the 131 JTs (8%) reached agreements with bailiffs or were subjected to wage garnishment. It could thus be said that 27 JTs (21%) faced serious debt problems.

Taking a closer look at women and converts, it turns out that almost a third (32%) of the female JTs had debt problems, compared to 17% of the men. Almost half of the converts (47%) had debts, compared to 'only' 17% of the non-converts.

## Independence

The above sections relate to JTs' regular income, subdivided into the categories of income from work, government support, and student grants. **Table 1** provides an overview of the total sums in these three categories.

Table 1. Total Figures in Euros

Months before departure	11	6	3	1	Total
Own income	41,109	37,435	29,958	26,116	134,618
Government support	50,838	33,204	44,725	53,136	181,904
Student grant	19,294	24,832	24,878	25,095	94,098
<b>Total</b>	<b>111,241</b>	<b>95,471</b>	<b>99,561</b>	<b>104,347</b>	<b>410,620</b>

The total quantified income for the months included in the analysis amounts to €410,620. Of this sum, 33% was accrued through the JTs' own work (including fraud-generated income). Authorities furnished the remaining 67%, in the form of government support (44%) and student grants (23%). What does this mean for their financial independence rating?

Just nine of the 131 individuals (7%) earned at least a minimum income that covered their basic needs. However, when these nine individuals are scored according to the criteria of the IDM, two need to be excluded because they have debt problems and/or receive substantial financial support from the authorities. In other words, only seven individuals (5%) earned a minimum to middle income, *and* did not receive any government support, *and* had some money left over at the end of the month (five individuals score in the category 'completely independent' and two in the category 'sufficient').

Beyond their comparable financial status, these seven individuals hardly share any overlapping characteristics. They differ in age categories, departed for Syria in different years and came from five different ethnic backgrounds. Some were born in the Netherlands, but others migrated to the Netherlands at a later age. Some were in paid employment, while others obtained income from agency work. Some worked with their hands, others sat behind a desk. Even their financial transactions differed in amounts involved, frequency, and type. Their only similarity is that six out of seven are male and none of them were converts.

The remaining 125 JTs (95%) have to be qualified, in financial terms, as 'limitedly independent', 'not independent', and in a few cases even as 'acutely problematic'. This poor score is partly due to the relatively large proportion of young people. They were still pursuing their education and received student grants, or they just entered the labour market. In other words, they had not yet found their own financial basis.

However, citizens who are over 23 years of age, and who have not received a student grant for over a year, should be able to be financial independent. Of the 58 JTs who fell under these conditions, only five persons (9%) were financially independent. It is clear that the majority had to rely on government support.

The lack of a control group makes it unclear, however, in what ways the JTs were financially unique.[29] It is possible that JTs hardly differ from, for example, others in their neighbourhood (same postal area code) in matters of financial independence. Take the JTs who received student grants, for instance. The National Institute for Family Finance Information (NIBUD) provides figures of the disposable income of the average student.[30] It turns out that JTs in 2015 had on average almost exactly the same disposable income available (although a lower median income of 11%). The number of students with a side job or a paid internship is also comparable, 76% of the average students versus 65% of the JTs.[31]

It is likely, however, that JTs with student grant had more financial difficulties. The NIBUD figures show that 17% of the average students have financial difficulties and 11% had accounts that were overdrawn.[32] But 22% of the JTs who received a student grant had serious enough debt issues to reach agreements with collection agencies or bailiffs and 55% were habitually overdrawn.

Compared to the younger JTs, the older JTs likely deviated more significantly from the average. A quick comparison with the aggregated figures provided by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics shows that 54% of all Dutch-Moroccan citizens and 88% of native Dutchmen aged between 25-44 years had income from some form of paid work.[33] The Moroccan and native JTs only score 20% and 27% in this regard. Dutch converts in particular were financial underachievers. Native Dutchmen should earn above average incomes.[34] In reality, most Dutch converts could only make month ends meet by relying on government subsidies. Moreover, they were often burdened with (serious) debt issues.

## **Discussion**

In the literature, it is argued that Western jihadi travellers (JTs) underperform in the social-economic sense. [35] The analysis of bank transactions adds to this body of knowledge that it is an exception for Dutch JTs to be financially independent. Just 5% of the JTs included in the study managed to obtain their income entirely from their own work or services, did not have to turn to the authorities for financial support, and were not assailed by (mounting) debts. By contrast, 95% of the JTs were financially limited, non-independent, and sometimes even showed signs of acute problems. They received financial support from the authorities in various areas, in the form of benefits, allowances, and/or special provisions.

Parts of this low score can be explained by the large number of JTs who received student grants. It is not surprising that they are not financially independent. They are relatively young, pursue higher education or vocational training, and do not have time to hold full-time jobs. In fact, they have more or less the same disposable income available as the typical Dutch student.

This similarity has an easy explanation. All students have a right to the same grants, supplements, and advances, a right that they apparently used. Furthermore, both normal students, as well as JTs who received study grants, supplement their income with side jobs (the transactions give no indication of systematic discrimination on the labour market) or receive a little extra from family members. Their starting position is thus more or less the same. Besides, the timing of their radicalisation could also have played a role. Research has shown that the process of radicalization by young travellers was sometimes remarkably fast.[36] Some radicalized over the course of a few months or mere weeks. In other words, if young JTs radicalized shortly before their journey to Syria, this would mean that over the year when they received a study grant, they hardly differed from other students.[37] Except that they often had, over the year, more serious debt issues compared to the average student. It is unclear, however, if these issues were already present *before* they started their study (coming, as many did, from a disadvantaged background), or incurred *during* their studies.

Notwithstanding the relative normality of the financial position of younger JTs, JTs of an older age had weak links to the labour market. Only 9% of the JTs who were over 23 years of age, and not having received a student grant for at least one year, were financially independent. The others were (heavily) dependant on government support.

Based on this analysis, it is not possible to demonstrate (or disprove) a link between radicalization and a weak social economic status. In a welfare state, such as the Netherlands, the absence of income from employment by no means equates to a life in abject poverty. On the contrary, the income some of the JTs (especially the female ones) managed to generate from government support was higher than the income generated by several working JTs who were in a higher category as far as independence was concerned. Still, we do not know how anybody viewed their relative poverty status or if they felt some kind of strain.

A lack of financial independence, or a decline in financial independence, is *not* a red flag for radicalization or jihadi travel. After all, the Netherlands numbered just a few hundred JTs, whereas hundreds of thousands of people receive benefits, according to Statistics Netherlands.[38] While the general profile of a JT shows a lack of financial independence, huge differences occur on an individual level. Put them under the microscope, and it turns out that almost half were employed at one time or another. Some received a study grant for only

one month, others during the whole year. Some of their accounts were fully overdrawn months before their departure, while others had hundreds of euros in their account shortly before going to Syria. Some had to reach agreements with bailiffs, but a few were even able to put some money into their savings account.

Although insufficient financial independence is not an accurate predictor (red flag) of radicalization or terrorism financing, in the world of social affairs it often serves as an indicator of the presence of multiple problems. That is to say, in the absence of financial independence, there is a greater chance that problems will also occur in other domains. Structural problems in the area of employment or education, for instance, are often quick to give rise to insufficient income, which can then lead to housing problems. But multiple problems also include issues in the social, societal, or psychological area. These sorts of multiple problems were already noted in connection with JTs. Several studies [39], for instance, show that Dutch JTs as a group have an above-average incidence of psychological problems.[40]

The research data presented here can be qualified as unique. As far as the author is aware, no other study on terrorism has used the bank transaction data of a large group of research subjects over an extended period. The research data provide detailed financial insight into the JTs that was hitherto lacking. It shows exactly what an individual's legal income and expenditure are. The research data is also subject to a few limitations, discussed below.

The first limitation is that the data provides no insight into black or criminal income. Perhaps some JTs have more money at their disposal from e.g. illegal employment or drug dealing. Recent studies report that numerous JTs have a criminal record and refer to the so-called 'crime-terror nexus'.[41] On the other hand, black or criminal income should not be overestimated. The types of crime registered for the 131 JTs at the centre of the present analysis more often consists of forms of aggression in the domestic or public domain than, for instance, large-scale drug trafficking. In those few cases where crime for financial gain was involved, the level seldom went beyond 'petty crime'.

A second limitation refers to the question whether or not all the JTs' bank accounts were surveyed. They could have accounts with smaller banks, or banks in other countries that were not approached in the third step of data collection. However, it is exactly for this reason that JTs for whom bank data was lacking—perhaps precisely because they banked with a smaller bank—were excluded from the study. The analysis of the 131 JTs also did not show that any extra savings disappeared into unknown or foreign bank accounts (or vice versa). As an extra check, the JTs were also ran past FIU-Netherlands, but this produced no unexplained money flows.

A third limitation relates to the question of what happens to money that is withdrawn in cash. It was not possible to trace how this money was spent. However, the focus of the present analysis lies on the JTs' degree of financial independence, and as such on the origin of the money and the extent to which expenditure and income are in balance.

Still, despite these limitations (and the lack of a solid control group), there are more advantages than disadvantages to using bank data. Bank data provide financial insights at a level of detail that has not yet been obtained in any other way.

What will the future bring? Since the fall of Raqqa at the end of 2017, and the definite collapse of ISIS' last strongholds in early 2019, the problem of JTs seems to be solved. Virtually nobody now leaves the Netherlands or other countries to take part in the armed struggle in Syria or Iraq. However, we need to remember that this does not mean that the problem of radicalization has disappeared. New conflict zones may offer attraction in the future. Moreover, authorities are now confronted by the problem of JTs who wish to return to their home country after the fall of ISIS.

Based on the financial analysis carried out for the present article, it is not difficult to predict that the returning JTs will not be very independent, in financial terms, for the years to come. Their distance from the labour market is even greater than before they left, since educational programmes were left unfinished; JTs have 'gaps' in their C.V.; they are quite likely to have a criminal record, and possibly post-traumatic stress disorders

(PTSD) reducing their chances on the labour market. Very young children (many of them born in Syria) often accompany women. There is also the question to what extent the returning JTs have renounced their radical beliefs. If the government has doubts, it is likely that the returnee will be placed or kept on a national terrorist watch list (accompanied by freezing their financial assets). This will further restrict their access to the labour market.

It is therefore highly likely that large numbers of returning JTs will turn to their government to make up the shortfall in their financial independence. In the case of Dutch nationals, that is their right, and the government is obliged to provide for their basic needs. Could the Dutch governments (or other Western countries with an equally extensive system of social benefits) make certain demands in return for financial assistance, with a view to terrorism prevention? The following three aspects come to mind.

First, if somebody requests financial assistance, this could offer the authorities an opportunity to take a look 'inside'. To request assistance, you have to provide (periodic) insight into your financial situation. This means there will be various interviews with officials of the social services to discuss status and progress. Home visits are also a possibility. These contacts can provide up-to-date information not only about the individual's financial situation, but also about various other aspects of their life, such as their mental health condition.

Secondly, the Dutch government currently requires recipients of benefits to meet certain conditions in return. The idea is that people should do something (e.g. voluntary work) in return for receiving benefits. This could provide an opportunity to find a conditionality for returning JTs that is in line with anti-radicalization policies. The government could at least make sure returnees will not end up working with vulnerable young people, especially if there are doubts whether a returning JT has completely renounced his or her extremist views.

Thirdly, it might be worth considering putting returning JTs under strict financial supervision for a longer period. If it emerges that the government is the main source of income for JTs and returning JTs, there might be a strong case to be made—in the context of combating terrorism financing—for comprehensive monitoring.

Of course, implementing these three recommendations is easier said than done. It would require a great deal of insight and quite some resources on the part of social services officials to detect early warning signs of (re) radicalization. Moreover, officials have all sorts of other targets to meet and already have a heavy workload. It has also proved difficult and a laborious process to persuade ordinary benefit recipients to do something in return. It remains to be seen whether JTs are more complacent. Placing returning JTs under financial supervision is also something of a makeshift solution. It is a costly affair, full of legal obstacles, and could backfire because of the potential secondary consequences of reintegration into society. For example, a freeze on someone's bank accounts might limit the possibilities to obtain formal work or limit a person's willingness to take part in the legal economy.

One thing seems to be certain. Dutch returning JTs are likely to be financially entirely dependent on the Dutch government—the same government from which, due to their religious beliefs, they apparently wish to distance themselves.

### ***Acknowledgments***

The author wishes to thank Peter van der Weijden and Michael Levi for their comments.

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## Notes

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- [23] van der Schors, Anna, Minou van der Werf, & Maartje Boer. (2016). *Kans op financiële problemen*: Nationaal Instituut voor Budgetvoorlichting (NIBUD).
- [24] An indication need not be based on conclusive legal evidence. A suspicion or pointer is sufficient and it is left to the regional police unit to decide; the regional police unit then enters the information in the National Law Enforcement Database, in accordance with Section 8 of the Police Data Act.
- [25] See also van San, Marion. (2017). Belgian and Dutch young men and women who joined ISIS: Ethnographic research among the families they left behind. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 41(1), 39-58. She notes on the basis of field interviews that some young people gave up work of their own accord because they no longer found it compatible with their beliefs.
- [26] According to the website <https://www.gemiddeld-inkomen.nl/inkomens-vanaf-1970/>, the average net monthly income in 2013 was €1,773, and in 2015 €1,826.
- [27] See van der Schors, Anne, Gea Schonewille, & Minou van der Werf. (2015). *Studentenonderzoek 2015: Achtergrondstudie bij Handreiking Student & Financien*. NIBUD/Nationaal Instituut voor Budgetvoorlichting. They established that a typical Dutch student receives on average 768 euros, with a median of 686 euros.
- [28] It is not known how many JTs may have applied for a loan or a rise in their credit limit but were refused. The financial position of most JTs was too weak for them to be able to provide sufficient securities and guarantees for regular financial institutions.
- [29] The authorities did not give permission to run a control group that would include information from non-JTs' payment and savings accounts.
- [30] Van der Schors, Schonewille, & van der Werf, 2015.
- [31] Ibid.
- [32] Ibid.

[33] Huijnk, Willem, & Iris Andriessen. (2016). *Integratie in zicht? De integratie van migranten in Nederland op acht terreinen nader bekeken*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Bakker, & de Bont, 2016; Bergema, & van San, 2017; Weenink, 2015; van Leyenhorst, & Andreas, 2017; Normark, & Ranstorp, 2017; Verwimp, 2016; El-Said, & Barrett, 2017.

[36] van Ham, Tom, Lieselot Scholten, & Anton van Wijk. (2016). *Radicalisering in de gemeente Arnhem: Resultaten van onderzoek onder mentoren, welzijnswerkers en jongeren*: Bureau Beke; Feddes, 2017; Weggemans, Daan, Marieke van der Zwan, & Marieke Liem. (2018). *Familie van Uitreizigers: Een onderzoek naar de rol van familieleden bij processen van uitreizen naar en terugkeren uit buitenlandse jihadistische strijdgroepen*. Den Haag: WODC.

[37] This hypothesis could not be tested because the author did not have access to details about JTs' radicalization process.

[38] URL: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2017/11/werkloosheid-neemt-verder-af>.

[39] Weenink, 2015; Weenink, Anton W. (2019). *De Syriëgangers*. Korps Nationale Politie, Landelijke Eenheid, Dienst Landelijke Informatieorganisatie, Analyse & Onderzoek—Team CTER; van Ham, Scholten, & van Wijk, 2016; Paulussen, Christophe, Janne Nijman, & Karlien Lismont. (2017). Mental health and the foreign fighter phenomenon: A case study from the Netherlands. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT).

[40] A pilot project in the UK found that about half of the people referred for being at risk of radicalisation have mental health issues and psychological difficulties. This applied across different ideologies, including far right extremism. See URL: <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/about-us/news/news-archives-2016/ground-breaking-pilot-project-helping-vulnerable-people-to-access-support/>.

[41] Basra, Neumann, & Brunner, 2016; Gallagher, Martin. (2016). 'Criminalised' Islamic State Veterans—A Future major Threat in Organised Crime Development? *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 10(5), 51-67.



# The Terrorism Recidivism Study (TRS): Examining Recidivism Rates for Post-9/11 Offenders

by Omi Hodwitz

## Abstract

*This study examines recidivism rates of offenders convicted of terrorism-related offenses post-9/11 in the United States (N=561). In total, nine offenders recidivated while incarcerated or upon release. Of the 247 who were released during the course of the study, four recidivated. This indicates a recidivism rate of approximately 1.6% among released political extremists. These findings suggest that restrictive policies designed to increase surveillance of released political extremists, such as the recently proposed TRACER Act and other registry-based measures, are unwarranted.*

**Keywords:** Terrorism, recidivism, database, policy implications

## Introduction

In May of 2017, John Rutherford, a Congressperson from Florida, introduced H.R. 2471, the Terrorist Release Announcements to Counter Extremist Recidivism Act (TRACER Act).[1] The TRACER Act requires that, when an individual convicted of “a federal crime of terrorism” is released from a federal facility, the Secretary of Homeland Security notify all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.[2] In September of 2017, the House passed the TRACER Act; however, as of the beginning of 2019, the Senate has not yet taken up the measure.

The TRACER Act reflects a mounting concern among legal authorities. Following the events of September 2001 (9/11), Congress enacted several legislative measures, such as the USA PATRIOT Act and the Homeland Security Act, designed to facilitate the detection of terrorist activities, deter individuals from engaging in violent extremism, and punish those that become involved in terrorism. This led to a considerable post-9/11 increase in terrorism-related convictions in the United States.[3] A recent 2017 Department of Justice report noted that, between 9/11 and the end of 2016, approximately 550 individuals had been convicted of international terrorism-related offenses in federal courts; this number increases when the parameters are broadened to include domestic terrorism and non-federal courts.[4] Many of these individuals are incarcerated in facilities located around the United States; for example, as of October 2015, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) was reportedly holding approximately 350 people with ties to international terrorist groups.[5]

The increase in convictions and incarcerations may appear reassuring; this suggests legislative measures are improving law enforcement’s capability and capacity to detect and intercept terrorist activities. However, this trend also presents law enforcement with a new challenge: preparing for and responding to the release and potential recidivism of a unique group of offenders. As noted by academics, media sources, and legislators alike, very little is known about recidivism among individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses.[6] While reliable recidivism metrics exist for the apolitical offending population, they are notably absent for political extremists.[7]

Prior to 9/11, counter-terrorist legislation was limited, law enforcement was focused on other issues, and convictions and incarcerations were minimal.[8] In addition, state and academic interest and funding for terrorism studies and policy analysis were virtually non-existent.[9] This collection of factors resulted in a notable deficit in research exploring recidivism rates among offenders convicted of terrorism-related activities. Post-9/11, the increase in identified offenders offers researchers the opportunity to correct this deficiency of results; however, the legal and research communities have not, as of yet, begun the task of systematically exploring recidivism patterns among politically-oriented offenders. The assumption is that the “recidivism

rate among violent extremist offenders within the U.S. is unlikely to be zero”, but what that rate may be is currently unknown.[10] This continuing dearth of information is, at least in part, due to the fact that policy-related studies often require a lengthy period of time following implementation before meaningful analysis can be carried out, particularly when assessing recidivism. Once a policy has been implemented, recidivism analysis can only occur after enough time has passed for a sizeable sample of offenders to be identified, arrested, convicted, sentenced, incarcerated, released, and liberated long enough to recidivate. Given that U.S. counter-terrorism legislation is, for the most part, less than two decades old at the time of writing this article, it is no surprise that researchers have not yet presented an impressive array of empirical findings. The scarcity of recidivism information is not isolated to the United States; other Western democracies also lag in the study of terrorist recidivism, leaving policy makers and practitioners with little guidance regarding expectations of post-release behavior for extremists, both locally and internationally.[11]

When discussing recidivism, it is important to note that, although religiously-motivated terrorism is subject to increased scrutiny in a post-9/11 world, other ideologues inspire terrorist action globally and historically. Nationalism, environmentalism, and right wing terrorism are but a few examples of the non-religious motivations that facilitate violent extremism.[12] Despite the diversity in ideology, contemporary conversations regarding recidivism have tended to focus on religious communities. Perhaps this is due to the assumption, as stated by Pluchinsky in an early article discussing potential recidivism in jihadist communities, that “terrorists with a secular motivation and goal are more likely to be reformed in prison than terrorists who are driven by religious grievances.” [13] As such, the few deradicalization programs implemented in countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Egypt, and Yemen, tend to focus on theologically-oriented transitions in beliefs and motivations.[14] Results suggest some promise for religiously-oriented deradicalization programs, but do not directly address recidivism among political offenders, particularly those adhering to secular ideologies.

In the absence of empirical direction, legislators and law enforcement are faced with a difficult decision; should they adopt the position that politically-motivated offenders are similar to apolitical offenders in their post-release behavior or should they assume that political offenders are atypical? If the latter, should expectations lean towards an optimistic or pessimistic outlook on the potential for recidivism? Although there has been limited legislative action, the tides seem to be turning towards the assumption that political offenders are atypical and, in the absence of contradictory evidence, that they are more dangerous upon release than apolitical offenders. Congressperson Rutherford’s TRACER Act, which has been likened to a sex offender registry in its blanketing reporting procedures, demonstrates this pessimistic proclivity.[15] In addition, legislators in Florida, Louisiana, and Missouri are introducing similar bills in their own states. Other government representatives have also suggested measures that align with this sentiment. For example, Richard Clarke, a former National Security Council advisor, advocated for the implementation of a team of parole officers with special training to monitor released individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses.[16]

There is a strong argument to be made in favor of assuming the worst outcome for politically-motivated releasees. Terrorism is a devastating activity that disrupts and destroys local and global communities and, therefore, it may be prudent to adopt any and all measures designed to decrease politically violent recidivism. In addition, extremists often carry out their activities with the express purpose of achieving a common goal and experts have hypothesized that this kind of ideological orientation may make reformation or deradicalization difficult.[17] Lastly, in the post-9/11 world, terrorism-related incarcerations have increased dramatically, not only in the United States but also around the world, leading to large politically motivated prison populations that have no historical counterpart with which to compare. In light of the serious consequences of terrorism, the decreased potential for offender rehabilitation, and the burgeoning extremist prisoner population, measures such as the TRACER Act that aim to curb extremist recidivism should be considered. However, the situation is not so simple and experts have offered a counter-perspective. Critics of the TRACER Act and similar measures posit that individuals who have completed their sentences and repaid their debt to society should not be penalized further but, instead, should be treated in a manner similar to apolitical releasees. Karen Greenburg from the Center of National Security at Fordham University, for example, states, “I do not distinguish them as any more

dangerous than other people...who were convicted of committing a crime.”[18] In the absence of information suggesting high rates of recidivism, proponents of this position argue for equal treatment or a presumption of reformation of political releasees.

In sum, opinions regarding recidivism rates for politically-motivated releasees tend to originate from two opposing camps; those that assume a high likelihood of recidivism and, as such, advocate for extreme post-release measures, and those that champion a presumption of reformation and advocate for traditional post-release actions. Regardless of which perspective dominates the social and political narrative, proponents of both sides will likely agree that policy and practice should be evidence-based and, to this point, the lack of informative evidence regarding recidivism is a major shortcoming of any legislative action. This is particularly problematic when considering the projected number of offenders that are scheduled to be released within the next two decades.[19]

This article is an attempt to provide empirical evidence regarding recidivism for this unique population of offenders. It introduces the Terrorism Recidivism Study (TRS), a database collected with the sole purpose of filling in some of the blanks regarding recidivism rates and characteristics of individuals convicted of terrorism and terrorist-related offenses in the United States following 9/11. The article begins with a brief overview of the TRS data collection and coding strategies, followed by a descriptive narrative of the population of interest. It concludes with an assessment of recidivism rates, recidivist characteristics, and a discussion of policy implications stemming from TRS results.

### ***Data Collection and Coding***

The TRS is the byproduct of an informal conversation from 2016, during which a state representative disparaged the fact that there were a number of politically-oriented offenders (“terrorists”) scheduled to be released within the next few years and law makers and enforcers alike were concerned that they did not know what to expect from these offenders. What to expect is, in part, a data-related question but, at the time of the noted conversation, the data did not exist. That, however, is not difficult to remedy with the right resources, such as court records and media reports, to name but a few. The TRACER Act further highlighted the pressing need to assess extremist recidivism and, shortly after Congressperson Rutherford introduced the Act, researchers began data collection for the TRS.

The TRS data are collected from a variety of sources, including offender datasets, state arrest records, Department of Justice (DOJ) records, and media sources. Researchers began by identifying potential offenders included in other datasets, including *The Intercept’s Trial and Terror* dataset, the *Global Terrorism Database*, and Charles Kurzman’s *Muslim-American Violent Extremism* data. In addition, researchers used a number of internet-based search terms to identify other cases for inclusion.[20] The goal of the TRS investigators was to identify as complete a population of offenders convicted in the United States between 9/11 and the beginning of data collection as possible. In order to accomplish this goal, multiple researchers cast a wide net, adjusting search terms, locating additional datasets that were directly or marginally related to political violence, scouring them for mention of offenders, and reviewing case files.

Once a near-exhaustive pool of potential terrorism-related offenders was collected, researchers reviewed reputable media sources and state and federal arrest and court records to confirm the existence of each case and to identify potential co-defendants. No case or offender was included in the TRS unless validated by two or more credible sources. In total, researchers flagged 848 cases between September 11, 2001, and March 6, 2018.[21] Each case was then compared to a set of exclusionary factors and, if any factors were met, the case was removed from the dataset. These included cases that resulted in deportation, those that were originally linked to terrorism-related activities but were later processed as non-political crime, offenders that passed away during criminal justice proceedings, and arrests that did not result in convictions. This produced a set of 561 recidivism-eligible individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses in the United States between September of 2001 and March of 2018.

Once individuals were identified, coders began the careful process of documenting key information for each case. In total, the TRS consists of 58 variables grouped into five thematic categories: demographic characteristics, event description, arrest/conviction/sentencing information, release details, and reports of recidivism. Coders once again relied on credible media sources and legal records to confirm and code the details of every person included in the TRS. Table I provides a list of variables included in each thematic cluster.

Table 1: *Thematic Clustering of Variables Included in the TRS*

Demographic Characteristics	Event Description	Arrest, Conviction, and Sentencing Information	Release Information	Recidivism Information
Name and aliases	Event summary	Arrest date and charges	Date of release	Record of recidivism (y/n)
Age at time of conviction	Organizational affiliation	Convictions and date of convictions	Supervised release (y/n) and length of release	Record of post-release recidivism (y/n)
Gender		Disposition plea	Probation (y/n) and length of probation	Recidivism summary
Race		Imprisonment (y/n) and length of imprisonment	Fine (y/n) and amount of fine	
Prior criminal record		Correctional institution name, location, and level of security		

### Sample Description

The first thematic cluster consists of offender demographic characteristics. The majority of the sample is male (93%), with an average age of 35.8 years (minimum of 17 years and maximum of 77 years). Most offenders are white (64%), followed by Afro-American offenders (24%), Asian offenders (8%), and other offenders (4%; this category includes Native Americans or Alaskan Natives, Latinos, and Pacific Islanders). It is interesting to note that the demographic characteristics of the TRS sample are nearly identical to what is observed in the apolitical incarcerated population in the United States. According to the Bureau of Prisons (2018), the federally incarcerated apolitical population is, on average, 35.2 years old and is 93% male. Racial distribution differs somewhat in the apolitical sample; the majority of incarcerated offenders are white (58%), followed by black (38%), and Asian (1.5%). The political and apolitical groups result in the same overarching profile: white male offenders with an average age in the mid-thirties.

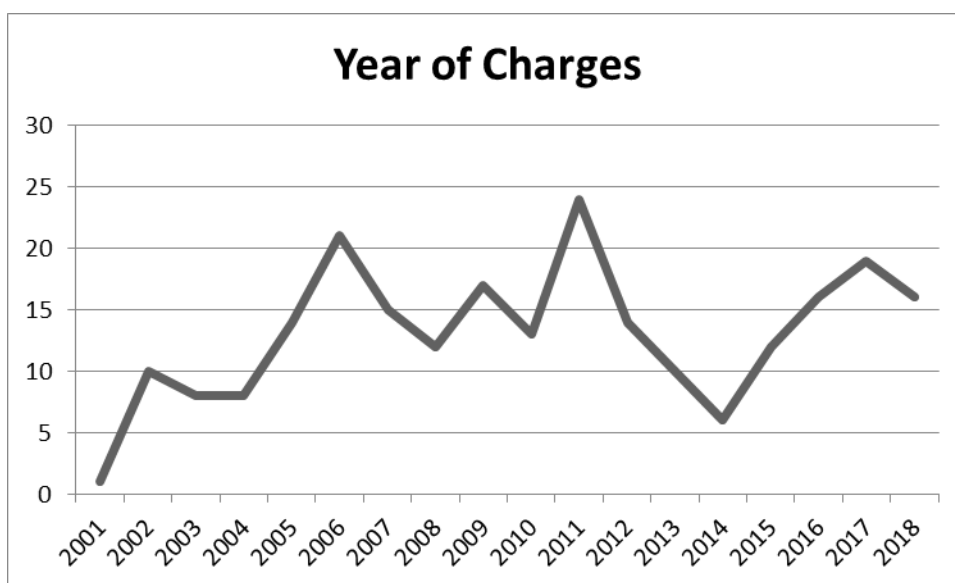
The TRS also included information about offenders’ prior criminal records. In total, 17 of the sample had a prior criminal record at the time of their terrorism-related arrest. Detailed information was missing for a little less than half of these cases, so the descriptive value of this variable is limited.[22] Bearing that in mind, there were 10 cases for which information could be located. These offenders had diverse criminal records, ranging from drug charges, robbery and assault, marriage fraud, firearm possession, and lewd and lascivious acts with a minor.

The event description cluster includes, among others, variables reporting the state where the offense occurred, whether the offender has ties to a known terrorist organization, and the types of activities the offender was accused of committing. Terrorism-related events occurred in 38 states and the District of Columbia, although the majority of offenses were localized in a handful of key states. New York bore the lion’s share of TRS offenders with 137 in total or 24% of the full sample, followed by Florida and Virginia (each were host to 49 offenders or 9% of the sample), California (42 offenders or 7%) and Michigan (38 offenders or 7%). Of the 561 individuals included in the TRS, 125 had known ties to a terrorist organization.[23] The top-ranking organizations are as follows: 36 individuals were affiliated with Hezbollah, 27 were associated to Al-Qaeda, 14

had ties to the Islamic State, and 12 were linked to Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).[24] The individuals included in the TRS sample were accused of a variety of activities ranging from intent to use weapons of mass destruction through to the false use of a passport, but the common theme among the sample was non-violent financially-oriented crimes. More than half of the sample were accused of multiple offenses, making descriptive analysis difficult, but several activities appeared frequently, including providing material support, fraud, and racketeering.

The bulk of the TRS variables fell into the arrest/conviction/sentencing cluster. The arrest variables overlap considerably with the event description cluster summarized above resulting in a high number of non-violent financially-oriented offenses. Figure 1 reports the years offenders were charged for their offenses, which trended upwards following 9/11 and has remained relatively high ever since.

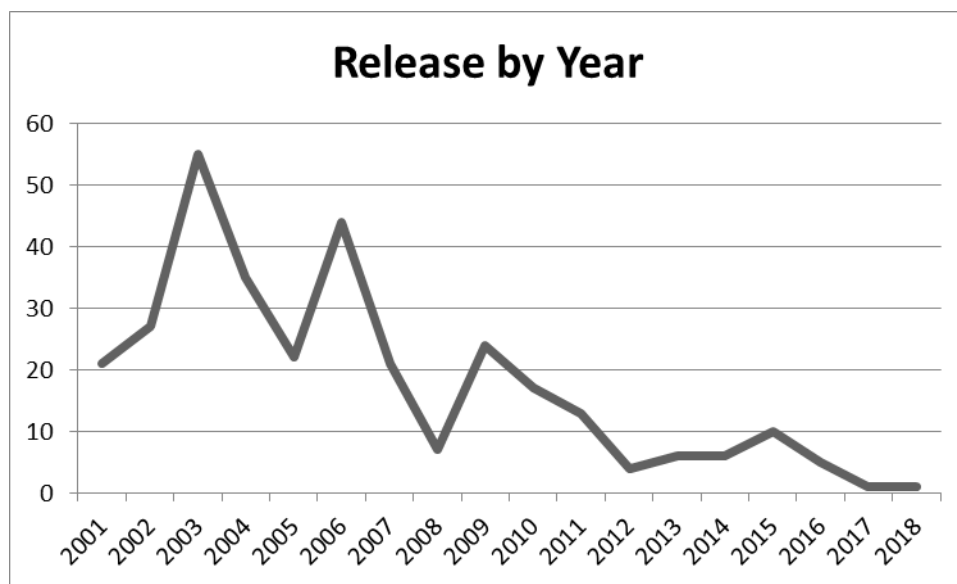
Figure 1: Annual Count of Terrorism-Related Charges



Regarding disposition, three quarters of the sample pleaded guilty and one-quarter were found guilty by a judge or jury following legal proceedings. For the most part, the convictions were similar in content to the arrests; the most common occurring convictions included fraud, providing material support, and making false statements. For those that were incarcerated, the average length of the sentence was 12.9 years and most offenders were placed in medium- or minimum-security prisons.[25]

Figure 2 reports the years of release for TRS offenders. Approximately half of the TRS sample were released from prison (247 individuals or 44% of the sample) while, as of March 2018, 241 or 43% of the sample remained incarcerated. Release information was not available for 72 individuals or 13% of the TRS offenders. Approximately 62% or 348 offenders received supervised release with an average of 8.1 years per offender. Total fines for the sample equaled 75 million dollars, which averaged out to \$490,000 across the 157 individuals that received fines.

Figure 2: Annual Count of Terrorism-Related Releases



### Recidivism

The goals underlying the collection of the TRS are two-fold: the primary goal is to examine the rates of recidivism for individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses in the United States following 9/11 and, depending on recidivism rates, a secondary goal is to identify factors that separate political recidivists from a matched sample of apolitical recidivists. Addressing the first goal illustrates the futility of the second goal. Out of the 561 offenders included in the TRS, *only nine recidivated over the entire period of analysis*. In other words, only 1.6% of the TRS sample recidivated between 2001 and 2018. Eight of the recidivists were men, seven were white, and their ages ranged between 19 and 46 years. Original convictions for the recidivists were a mixture of non-violent and violent offenses, including fraud, material support, firearms possession, conspiracy to commit murder, and using weapons of mass destruction. All had been incarcerated for their original convictions, with an average sentence of 16.3 years and all who had been released had been granted supervised release, with an average of 5.2 years of supervision. All had a history of organizational affiliation, including Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and Al-Fuqra.

In addition to the low rates of recidivism, it is also noteworthy that five of the recidivists reoffended while still incarcerated, dropping the total number of released recidivists to four. Those that reoffended in prison were charged with attempted murder and attempting to radicalize others.

Table 2: Post-Release Recidivist Descriptions

	Offender Characteristics	Original Conviction	Original Sentence	Recidivist Event	Recidivist Outcome
Offender 1	White male  Affiliated with the Islamic State	Providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organization	Five years imprisonment and fifteen years supervised release	Violated plea agreement by using the internet	Remanded to twelve weeks in a halfway house
Offender 2	White male  Affiliated with Hezbollah	Aiding and abetting fraud	Two years and nine months imprisonment and three years of supervised release	Committed fraud by illegally buying food stamps	Reincarcerated for two years
Offender 3	Black female  Affiliated with Al-Fuqra	Possession of firearms and conspiracy to defraud the government	One year and three months imprisonment and two years of supervised release	Convicted of forgery and uttering	Reincarcerated for unknown length of time
Offender 4	White male  Affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban	Conspiracy to solicit murder, conspiracy to make threatening statements, and conspiracy to use the internet to place others in fear	Eleven years and six months imprisonment and three years of supervised release	Parole violation due to drug possession	Reincarcerated for 90 days

Only two individuals attempted murder and both incidents do not appear to be politically motivated; instead, offenders sought to eliminate witnesses or exact revenge on those perceived to be responsible for their conviction. In contrast, those who attempted to radicalize others were clearly politically motivated. As for the four post-release recidivists, this group engaged in a mix of offenses, including drug-related crimes, fraud, and conspiracy to commit murder. Table 2 provides brief profiles of the four post-release recidivists.

Given the unexpectedly low rates of recidivism, there is limited value in matching the political group of recidivists to a group of apolitical recidivists to isolate and identify potential explanatory factors. Instead, the best this author can do is superficially compare recidivism rates between apolitical offenders and political offenders. Regarding apolitical offenders, statistics vary depending on the source and level of offender. In 2016, the US Sentencing Commission reported that within eight years of release, half of a federal sample were rearrested, one third were reconvicted, and one quarter were reincarcerated.[26] In 2018, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported recidivism rates for a sample of state prisoners, noting that within the first year, 44% of the sample had been rearrested and, within three years, 68% had been rearrested.[27] Following in the footsteps of these reports, this comparison focuses on released offenders only. A total of 247 political offenders were released between 2001 and 2018. Of those 247, four recidivated, resulting in a recidivism rate of approximately 1.6%. Recidivism and rearrest occurred between three months and three years following release, with an

average of one year and nine months and a mode of two years. To put it simply, political offenders were less likely to recidivate than apolitical offenders and, when they did recidivate, they did so in the years immediately following their release. In other words, although political and apolitical offenders are very similar in gender, age, and race, there are dramatic differences between these two groups when it comes recidivism rates and, to a lesser extent, to the length of time between release and rearrest. Of course, this comparison is based on a political sample of only four recidivists so must be interpreted with great caution.

### ***Explanatory Considerations***

As summarized above, reported recidivism is exceptionally rare for US-based politically-motivated offenders included in the TRS. There are several potential explanations for this finding. A straightforward explanation is simply that individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses are less likely to recidivate when compared to apolitical offenders. Whether the credit goes to a criminal justice system that effectively rehabilitates or deters, or to a characteristic that is prevalent in politically-motivated criminal populations that makes recidivism less attractive or realistic, the rates reported here may reflect a true anomaly characterizing political offenders.

A second explanation is that political offenders may simply take longer to recidivate when compared to an apolitical population. As noted previously, recidivism rates differ, based on the reporting agency, the level of offender, and the year of study. It is possible that political offenders require a longer observation period and, as such, a 10-year or 15-year follow-up may produce recidivism rates that are similar to what we have grown to expect from an apolitical population.

A third explanation is more troubling. Perhaps political offenders are better at disguising their activities the second time around. In other words, upon release they may reoffend at rates comparable to or greater than apolitical offenders but do so with greater care and caution so as to make their activities less discernable to legal authorities. It may be that a number of offenders listed in the TRS are currently engaged in political crime that have yet to be discovered by law enforcement. Although this is more problematic it is also the least likely explanation for recidivism rates recorded in the TRS; as described previously, authorities are more inclined to intensify surveillance of political releasees, increasing the likelihood that reoffending behaviors would be identified.

### ***Policy Implications***

The TRS data project began in response to a gap in the literature and a push in policy; the goal was to provide empirical evidence that could inform policy maker and practitioner expectations regarding recidivism rates for offenders convicted of terrorism-related offenses post-9/11. Contrary to popular belief, the data indicate very low recidivism rates for political offenders, particularly when compared to apolitical offenders. As outlined above, there are a number of possible explanations for this observed outcome, resulting in a range of policy implications.

Low rates of recidivism may be due to a number of factors, including discrete reoffending, a delay in reoffending, or a lack of reoffending. If low rates are the result of discrete reoffending or recidivism that goes undetected, restrictive policies, such as the TRACER Act, that increase tracking and surveillance of political releasees are warranted. Increased monitoring would improve chances that post-release criminal activity is exposed and thwarted. However, there are two factors that undermine this argument. First, although restrictive reentry policies are not yet in place, post-9/11 counterterrorism policies, such as the USA PATRIOT Act, have already granted law enforcement agencies increased surveillance capabilities, particularly in relation to terrorism-related activities. In simple terms, law enforcement already applies rigorous surveillance of politically-oriented offenders, suggesting that low recidivism rates do not reflect a lack of detection. Second, as illustrated by the profiles reported in Table 2, surveillance of releasees seems to lead to detection of parole violations and minor offenses only. These ends do not necessarily justify the means, particularly in light of the argument presented at



the beginning of this article: in the absence of evidence pointing to escalated recidivism, politically-motivated offenders who have repaid their debt to society should be treated not differently than apolitical offenders and to fail to do so would be arguably unjust.

A second explanation for low reported recidivism in the TRS is the possibility of a lag in recidivism for political offenders when compared with apolitical offenders. The policy implications of this position are less clear. An argument could be made to implement long-term surveillance of political releasees with the expectation that reoffending would occur, although not within a timeline typical of apolitical offenders. The ethical and financial implications of long-term surveillance may be justified if evidence supported a lag in recidivism. However, the TRS data do not support this lag; of the offenders included in the TRS that were released, approximately 45% were released at least 10 years prior to the time of writing this article.[28] It seems reasonable to expect to see, even with a lag, some indications of recidivism within the first decade of release. In light of this lack of supporting evidence, long-term registry or surveillance measures are difficult to defend.

The third explanation, as outlined previously, is that the TRS reports a legitimate phenomenon: political offenders are less likely to recidivate than apolitical offenders. The policy implications for this finding are clear: restrictive measures such as the terrorism registry proposed in the TRACER Act are unnecessary and unjustified. In addition, implementing such measures may be costly on several fronts. Economically speaking, a terrorism-related registry would not oversee a large population, keeping the expenses low, but it would require some level of infrastructure, supervision, and maintenance, making the expense greater than zero. In addition, if the TRS report of low recidivism is accepted as valid and reliable, any restrictive policy would defy the evidence, delegitimizing it from the start and making it vulnerable to legal challenges. Lastly, policy makers, practitioners, and the public in the United States have demonstrated an implicit tendency to apply stereotypes and biases when discussing and assessing terrorism.[29] A registry and other surveillance protocols provide grounds for oversurveillance of racial or religious communities.

The explanations for low recidivism rates summarized above point to the need to continue to observe and build the TRS in order to determine if the reported recidivism patterns persist over time. Persistence in low rates of recidivism will provide support for the position that political offenders are less likely to reoffend, while changes in reoffending patterns may support the remaining two explanations: discrete recidivism or a delay in recidivism. It is also possible that the unique character of the offenses is a factor in assessing recidivism. As noted previously, many of the terrorism-related convictions were non-violent financial crimes; crimes that are not typically prominent in the criminal histories of apolitical recidivists. One area of future research could involve a detailed comparison of reoffending patterns of apolitical and political offenders with a history of similar convictions. A final area of future research involves a careful assessment and comparison of the risk and protective factors found in political and apolitical offending populations. For example, do political recidivists share similar risk factors as apolitical recidivists? On which factors do political recidivists and non-recidivists differ?

In conclusion, the results reported here suggest that offenders convicted of terrorism-related crimes are unlikely to recidivate and, when they do, their offenses tend to be minor violations. In light of these findings, policy measures that aim to increase tracking and surveillance of politically-motivated releasees are, at best, questionable. Measures such as the TRACER Act that propose the creation of an offender registry can incur costs on a financial, legal, and ethical level, and may have very little benefit. While extremist offenders do recidivate, these numbers appear to be so low (less than two recidivists for every 100 releasees), that it would be difficult to argue that the ends justify the means.

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**Notes**

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- [2] The proposed Bill does not include a list of offenses that would fall under the auspices of a “federal crime of terrorism.”
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- [18] Beavers, O., “US faces new challenge with pending release of terror convicts.”
- [19] According to Counter Extremism Project, 61 people convicted of terrorism-related offenses are scheduled to be released between

2018 and 2024. - Morton & Silber, “Ex-terrorists, walking the streets: We’ve got to get better, and quick, about reintegrating former jihadists into society.”

[20] Search terms varied between cases, but the main staple terms included: terror\*, recidiv\*, reoffen\*, crim\*, arrest\*, convict\*, incarcerat\*, sentence\*.

[21] Case identification began in March of 2018 and, as a method of capping identification efforts, March 6<sup>th</sup> was selected as upper bound for case identification.

[22] This is likely due to the fact that, for many of these offenders, early criminal offenses occurred as early as the 1970s or 1980s.

[23] Offenders were coded as having ties to known organizations if this was reported in the media or in court documents. “Having ties” is an elusive term but often was not expounded upon by source reports. When sources did clarify the meaning of group affiliation, it typically referred to any of the following: pledging allegiance to an organization, claiming membership, communicating directly or indirectly with known organizational affiliates, or having an organization identify the offender as a member or active affiliate.

[24] There was a number of individuals who were affiliated with multiple organizations. For the sake of simplicity, the organization affiliations reported here exclude those cases.

[25] A portion of the sample was sentenced to life imprisonment. To calculate the average sentence, 30 years was used as a proxy for a life sentence.

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## Special Correspondence

# The Future of Indo-Pak Relations after the Pulwama Attack

by Abhinav Pandya

### Abstract

*The post-Pulwama Indo-Pak stand-off marks a strategic change - a much more assertive Indian state in response to the terrorist activities of Pakistan-sponsored non-state actors. It demonstrates India's firm determination to root out terrorism even if that requires smart cross-border operations, violating the sovereign space of Pakistan, and risking a full-fledged war. Also, with the global attention that the recent stand-off received, it is highly likely that the Kashmir issue, which has somehow remained a local problem, will not be so anymore. Any Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir is likely, in the future, to have strong international ramifications.*

**Keywords:** Kashmir, India, Pakistan, Pulwama attack, Jaish-e-Mohammed

### Introduction

On 14 February 2019, a vehicle-borne suicide bomber attacked a convoy of buses carrying Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) security personnel on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway at Lethpora (Pulwama district), in the militancy-ridden state of Jammu and Kashmir (India). The Fidayeen attack led to the deaths of 40 CRPF personnel and the attacker. The Pakistan-based Islamist militant group *Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)* claimed responsibility for the attack. In informal murmurings in Indian security circles, this Fidayeen attack has been branded as “na bhuto, na bhavishyati” (something that is unprecedented and is not likely to repeat itself ever).

The immediate fallout of the attack led to a flare-up between India and Pakistan and both countries, in a span of few days, were almost on the verge of a full-fledged conventional war, after the Indian air strikes on the *JeM* training camp of Balakot (Pakistan). Some strategic experts even feared the most dreadful scenario of an escalation to a nuclear exchange. Eventually, an unexpected chain of events that included the downing of a Pakistani F-16, the unconditional release of an Indian pilot by Pakistan, and the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's emotional peace overture prevented the escalation and brought a quick-fix peace in the world's most militarized flashpoint. However, things are still not entirely smooth between India and Pakistan. With India's Prime Minister Modi making loud proclamations of retaliatory strikes, and with intense cross-border firing going on, fears of either a deliberate or an accidental escalation still loom on the horizon.

The recent flare-up between India and Pakistan looks like a game-changing event in South Asia. The geopolitics of South Asia has changed in real terms. Gone are the days of status quo and classic strategic restraint, exercised by India. The uniqueness of the current face-off needs to be analyzed to forecast some future geopolitical contours of South Asia.

Let us begin with the incident itself. The most disturbing feature of the Fidayeen attack is that a local Kashmiri boy was indoctrinated to volunteer as a suicide bomber. The local version of Islam in Kashmir is very liberal, and local youth are unlikely to volunteer for ISIS-like suicide bombings. It demonstrates that the Kashmiri militant movement has drifted far away from a separatist political campaign and is currently entangled in the grips of Islamist jihadi extremism. That said, it clearly emerges that apart from the role of foreign proxies there has also been a significant issue with India's handling of the Kashmir issue. The very fact that Islamist and jihadi organizations like *Jamaat-i-Islami* have managed to entrench themselves so deeply speaks volumes about where India failed in reigning in the growth of extremist organizations and in addressing the alienation of local people. India never had a clear and well-thought-out policy for Kashmir. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was always a laboratory for miscalculated experiments launched by bureaucrats, directionless spooks

and an incredibly selfish and incompetent political leadership. Such short-term and foolhardy experiments resulted in high levels of alienation, a trust deficit, and growing jihadi radicalization in a state that was once famous for its superb cultural refinements and its spiritual and intellectual pursuits. In the future, if local youth joining suicide squads indeed becomes a trend - which looks quite likely with the present levels of alienation, radicalization, and Delhi's security-centric approach - then India has a lot to worry about. Also, this opens the way for the entry of transnational terrorist organizations, like al-Qa'ida or the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, Afghanistan (ISKP), [ ] into Kashmir and possibly also the rest of India, where so far the local Muslim populace more or less stayed away from terrorist organizations.

In the past, India faced the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks, which immediately received global attention because of the death of several foreigners and the barbaric nature of the killing of civilians in the attack. However, the Indian response, once again, was one of strategic restraint, fearing that in the event of escalation or even a limited retaliation, Pakistan would respond with a nuclear strike. However, in the post-Pulwama flare-up, India could not be expected to display a weak-kneed gesture as PM Modi's central election plank was a tough and powerful approach in defense policy vis-à-vis both Pakistan and China. There was huge resentment and anger among Indian voters over the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance's (UPA) timid response to Pakistan-based incessant terrorist intrusions into Kashmir and the mainland. They voted Modi into power with huge expectations of a more assertive gesture against Pakistan and China. Modi's hard-nosed approach and zero-tolerance for terrorism was already evident after his surgical strikes against Pakistan, in response to the Fidayeen attack at Uri brigade headquarters by the *JeM* in 2016. Post Uri, sane strategic minds had a strong inkling that in the event of any such future transgression from Pakistan, Modi's India may go for a massive retaliatory action, which may range from limited missile strikes on terrorist camps to full-scale war.

With the post-Pulwama standoff between India and Pakistan, India has finally called off Pakistan's nuclear bluff. Now it is evident in no uncertain terms that if Pakistan continues to harbor terrorist groups against India as its strategic assets, there will be no space for military restraint by India in any future attack, as long as Modi is in power. There appears no guarantee that Pakistan will bring significant changes to its behavior. However, the Indian threshold on the question of cross-border terrorism has undoubtedly hit rock bottom. Any misadventure from the Pakistani side is most likely to result in gruesome retaliation, indeed, with a likelihood of escalating into a nuclear face-off. Also, Indian strikes in Balakot, which is in mainland Pakistan, not in the disputed PoK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) area, speak volumes of India's capabilities to strike deep into the mainland, displaying an assertive force-posture. Besides, Modi's India is firmly under the influence of Hindu nationalism. With 24/7 news channels raising war hysteria, and ordinary people enthused with a rejuvenated pride in Hindu nationalism, even if the center-left and the milder Congress party come to power, the Indian government can hardly go back to the old policy of strategic restraint against Pakistan, without risking major electoral defeat.

Although Pakistan kept India on tenterhooks for almost two decades by playing its nuclear card, the recent surgical strikes and the previous Balakot strikes not only enabled India to call off Pakistan's nuclear bluff but also exposed the loopholes in Pakistan's nuclear card. India has made it categorically clear that even in the event of a limited attack by tactical nuclear weapons, India will respond with massive retaliation. Further, there is also a strong possibility of India reviewing its nuclear doctrine and altering its no first use stance. Pakistan realizes that even if it uses nukes against India, then in any retaliatory strike Pakistan would be annihilated, as admitted recently by none other than Parvez Musharraf, the former President of Pakistan. Short of nuclear war, in any conventional war, India has a clear advantage, and India's armed forces realize that.

Moreover, as seen in the recent standoff, Pakistan will not be able to sustain a long-drawn war effort due to its miserable economic condition. Furthermore, on account of its global diplomatic clout and much greater financial strength, India is likely to use its diplomatic heft in isolating Pakistan, pursuing multilateral institutions to impose sanctions against Pakistan, and declare it a terror-sponsoring state, though not quite successfully so, as became evident in the last five years. Not surprisingly, in the recent standoff, Pakistan's all-weather friends like Saudi Arabia and China were hesitant to lend open support in any war effort against India. Saudi Prince Muhammad Bin Salman visited India after his visit to Pakistan and was seen exchanging warm

hugs with Modi. India's deft diplomatic encirclement of Pakistan was also visible when the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC),<sup>(1)</sup> of which Pakistan is a founding member, invited India as its guest of honour this year - despite Pakistan's opposition. Furthermore, the OIC did not include any reference to Kashmir in its final Abu Dhabi declaration (2019), and the UN Security Council condemned the Pulwama attack and named *Jaish* as the culprit. Even China could not prevent that.

### ***Internationalization of the Issue***

In spite of the UN-mandated plebiscite for Kashmir, four wars with Pakistan, and Pakistan's repeated efforts to internationalize the issue, India has in the past managed to prevent internationalization and remained steadfast in insisting on the conflict's bilateral nature. However, with the nuclearization of South Asia, the internationalization of the regional Indo-Pak conflict was long overdue. With the post-Pulwama standoff and the global attention it received - including the high-profile formal and backchannel diplomatic activity involving global powers - there is hardly any doubt that any future Indo-Pak confrontation will have strong international ramifications. In the United States' strategic calculus, India can serve as a great bulwark against China. With US-Pakistan frictions sharpening over Pakistan's non-compliance on actions against the *Haqqani* network, and China's stakes increasing in Pakistan with its \$62 billion investment in CPEC with the broader objective of achieving superpower status, the fault lines are becoming more explicit in South Asia. China has, in fact emerged as a vocal advocate of the proscribed *JeM* and its chief Masood Azhar. However, bilateral bonhomie is still a dominant factor in Asian and West Asian geo-politics, giving much strength to smokescreens and grey zones. The US still needs Pakistan for a dignified withdrawal from Afghanistan. India, as witnessed in its traditional inward-looking approach and its obsession with protecting its strategic autonomy, is not yet fully committed to volunteering itself as an American foot soldier against China. India and China have always surprised the world by resolving their so-called "alarming" and "threatening" disputes in a very mystic and oriental style of diplomacy, which has remained quite elusive to the Western intellect. Also, China, much to the chagrin of Pakistan, has never lent full-fledged support to Pakistan, whenever the need arose - be it in the Kargil crisis or the post-Pulwama standoff.

Moreover, Pakistan has openly aligned with Sunni Muslim powers by joining the Saudi-led Islamic Counter-Terrorism Military Coalition. Also, Pakistan's support to terrorist groups in Iran and the treatment of Shias in Pakistan have always been an irritant between Iran and Pakistan. India might leverage its goodwill with Afghanistan, another victim of Pakistan's proxy groups, and Iran. India already enjoys a strategic footprint in Iran and Afghanistan. With the current Modi-led regime being Hindu-nationalist, a question that often comes up in diplomatic circles is, will the India-Pakistan conflict increasingly take on the character of a conflict between the Muslim and the non-Muslim world?

In the view of this writer, it appears highly unlikely for several reasons. First and foremost, India has not projected itself against the Muslim world. Instead, India has consistently maintained that its fight is against terrorism, making it unequivocally clear that it is not against any particular religious community. India has the world's second-largest Muslim population, which has so far stayed away from global Islamism on account of its robust syncretic roots with non-Muslims in India. Hence, India cannot afford to project it as a fight between the Muslim and the non-Muslim world. Such a projection would have disastrous consequences for the country's internal peace and for communal harmony in India. Also, in spite of the BJP being avowedly Hindu-nationalist, one hardly comes across major digressions from the founding principle of secularism in India's foreign policy.

On the contrary, PM Modi has cultivated strong personal and official relations with the Muslim

World and its leaders. Saudi Arabia even awarded PM Modi with its highest civilian award. India has earned the goodwill of Muslims in Afghanistan. Not only this, India continues to enjoy a friendly and warm relationship with interests that are at odds with each other - such as Israel and Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iran, Palestine and Israel, and Russia and the United States. It appears quite puzzling as to how India can negotiate a space between

mutually conflicting nations like Saudi Arabia and Iran. The fact is that India has negotiated that space quite smoothly over the last several decades. India prefers to stay away from, global military alliance systems, and will continue to do so. India's approach is defensive with a strong focus on securing its immediate frontiers. Hence, India has nurtured strong bilateral relationships, staying away from military interventions in foreign countries (exceptions being the secession of Bangladesh in the 1970s and the failed peace-making attempt Sri Lanka in the 1980s), and remained reasonably transparent in its objectives and intentions vis-à-vis foreign powers. Such an approach has enabled it to project an image of objective neutrality and strike a classic "strategic balance."

Having addressed diverse issues related to long-range geo-political ramifications of the post-Pulwama flare-up, it looks as if the incident has indeed been a game-changer in South Asia. India's response demonstrates a strategic breakthrough - a much more assertive Indian state in response to the terrorist activities of Pakistan-sponsored, or at least -tolerated, non-state actors. It not only confirms and shows India's zero-tolerance to terrorism and a firm determination to root out terrorism from its soil, but also the intent to take smart cross-border operations if the need arises. However, India's assertion was measured and dignified. The official statement of India's Ministry of External Affairs categorically stated that the air-strikes were not against any nation, but against terror. India did not attack its neighbor's military installations whereas Pakistan did so. There can be little doubt that the Balakot airstrikes signal the advent of India as a more active – but still restrained - military actor in world affairs.

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## Contextualizing the Pulwama Attack in Kashmir – A Perspective from Pakistan

by Muhammad Feyyaz

### *Abstract*

Ever since its occurrence in mid-February 2019, the Pulwama incident has obsessively gripped Indian and Pakistani political circles and society alike. It has also remained at the centre of policy, security and opinionated analyses within and beyond South Asia. Ironically, most of these encounters, barring a few notable exceptions, have largely been ridden more by polemics underlying typical Indian and Pakistani nationalism and by partisan descriptions rather than being the product of a systematic analysis of the possible causes behind the incident, the cycle of reactions that it has produced and the ensuing very dangerous security implications. The present account contextualizes the incident within a broader, quite complex, and multi-tier national and geopolitical landscape, to determine its objective status, and reflects on a few broad policy implications.

**Keywords:** Kashmir, India, Pakistan, Pulwama, nuclear war

### *Introduction*

Perhaps never before has a single violent act in the Indo-Pakistan context provoked reverberations of the same order as have ensued from the Pulwama bombing in Indian Held Kashmir (IHK) on 14 February 2019. In its essence, it was a simple act of violence by a Kashmiri perpetrator to exact a heavy toll of casualties from a contingent of Indian security forces. Although exceptional in terms of tactics, broadly speaking, the attack was also a continuation of an ongoing campaign of sub-conventional warfare in IHK.

If the target, the anatomy and the persistent nature of non-state violence which is traditionally tagged ‘terrorism’ by India and characterized as manifestations of a liberation movement by a majority of Kashmiris as well as by Pakistan, were not so unusual, why did Pulwama turn into something approaching national hysteria in India and a matter of socio-political security concern in Pakistan? The media, regional as well as international, have covered the event and its aftermath extensively. There have been numerous analyses by political dissidents, policy and security analysts published in foreign quality magazines and newspapers. In addition, the Pulwama incident significantly shaped the direction and mood of election campaigns in India, not to speak of the unrelenting propaganda battles that have since raged on official channels and in social media spaces between the militaries and the youth cohorts of the two countries.

Most of these encounters, barring a few notable exceptions, have largely been ridden more by polemics underlying typical Indian and Pakistani nationalism and by partisan descriptions rather than being the product of a systematic analysis of the possible causes behind the incident, the cycle of reactions that it produced and the ensuing, very dangerous, security implications. Resultantly, the broader, quite complex, and multi-tier national and geopolitical landscape within which Pulwama ought to have been viewed, has been obscured.

This commentary raises, and then attempts to respond to, a few fundamental questions to make sense of the incident. It invites a broader reflection by academic and policy stakeholders to understand: (i) why Pulwama occurred, what were its underlying dynamics and, importantly, does the attack represent a turning point regarding Kashmir; (ii) what intended or unintended effects it generated; and (iii) what policy implications it sets for India and Pakistan, and the broader international community.



### *The Context*

The rapidly evolving geopolitical conditions, and the manifold layers of national and international politics surrounding the uprising in Kashmir, dictate that the backdrop to the Pulwama attack is different from similar perpetrations in the past. That uniqueness also influences its serious consequences for regional peace and stability.

In its immediate context, Kashmir has been called, e.g., by Arundhati Roy, a celebrated Indian writer, a 'real theatre of unspeakable violence and moral corrosion.' A similar assertion is put forth by Yashwant Sinha, the former Indian minister for Foreign Affairs from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He observed that a 'doctrine of the state', or what is commonly referred to as the Doval doctrine, is being played out in Kashmir to quell the armed rebellion through the brutal use of military force. It is common knowledge that IHK is the most densely militarized zone in the world, and that the incumbent government in India nurtures a revisionist Hindutva agenda, both of which reinforce the perspectives by Roy and Sinha and the one of many other members of the moderate segment of civil society in India. The fact that in the wake of Pulwama, a number of Kashmiri workers and students were subjected to torture by enraged Hindutva vigilantes throughout India and that the BJP leadership tacitly encouraged the pogrom, reflects seeping of a renewed hatred against the Kashmiris or, for that matter, Indian Muslims in general.

While suspicion of Kashmiris as 'disloyal' citizens is a ubiquitous sentiment since the partition of British India in 1947, the last five years in particular have witnessed Kashmiris being reframed as 'terrorists' – a term used for both rebel combatants as well as common stone throwers comprising school and college youth. Sharply opposed to it, in Pakistan, the label used for Kashmiri fighters and for those who have been employed as proxies to support the struggle, is freedom fighters or mujahideen; indigenous Kashmiris also use these latter labels for those killed by Indian security forces. Perhaps apart from the Israel-Palestine conflict, South Asia is another and more lurid site of a contentious construction of terrorism. It was unsurprising therefore, that Pulwama was consistently classified as a terrorist act in India, and starkly different in Pakistan where it was more often termed an act of violence.

In geopolitical terms, Kashmir conspicuously staggers in the intense competition between China and India for the domination of vital lines of communication around the Indian Ocean. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is part of China's strategic Road and Belt initiative, not only emanates from a disputed territory, i.e., Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region adjoining China's *Xinjiang* Autonomous Region, but the CPEC runs perilously close to the IHK. This conceivably creates alarms among Indian decision-makers and strategists of a potential encirclement, in combination with a similar string of Chinese bridgeheads (through sea ports etc.) in India's northern-eastern neighbourhood.

Pakistan's Balochistan province is the territorial terminal of CPEC at Gwadar Port, which is situated in proximity to its assumed competitor, the Indian developed Iranian seaport of Chabahar in the Persian Gulf. CPEC as well as Balochistan therefore stand out in India's wider security and economic calculation and appreciably parcel into the evolved power struggle between the two powers. Notwithstanding apprehension among Baloch nationalists about China's strategic involvement as a measure of military expansionism, and efforts to obtain further control of local resources by the Pakistani central government, the existence of the mega project in Balochistan foreshadowed from the outset the possibility of a likely clash of Indo-Sino interests in South Asia, as well as greater incentives for terrorism in Pakistan.

To be clear, the Indian geo-strategic alignment with the United States is no secret; the Americans have been propping up India as a counter weight to China since at least the 1970s. However, China's global Road and Belt initiative, and especially its expanding role in the heartland of Asia where India occupies a focal position as a bulwark against the Communist regime, has radically disturbed the existing geo-political equilibrium. Pakistan which is one overt geo-strategic and geo-economic face of resurgent China and wields considerable influence over the Afghan Taliban and Kashmiri groups, is not a very likeable actor for either India or the US.

The 13 February 2019 attack on Iranian Revolutionary Guards (a day before the Pulwama incident occurred) by

*Jaish al-Adl*, a militant group based in the Pak-Iran border region of Balochistan, which the Iranian government alleged was carried out at the behest of the US and Israel, further highlights intricacies involved in regional politics.

In sum, indeed we can look at Pulwama simply according to existing orthodoxy i.e., Pakistan's historical effort to seize Kashmir by means of a sub-conventional apparatus. Nevertheless, studying the Pulwama incident in context and more thoroughly is likely to lead to a better informed assessment. It essentially implies that a terrorism framework alone cannot provide a comprehensive analytical lens to grasp the complexity underlying the situation.

### ***The Possibilities and Effects of Pulwama***

Rather, given the above backdrop, a number of scenarios can be conceived that may have inspired the perpetration of the Pulwama attack. Notably, depending upon the analytical pair of lenses that we may wear to view the Kashmir conflict, each contextualized scenario can be reckoned to have produced its own set or series of effects in terms of actions, claims, narratives, discourses, counter actions and counter claims and related implications. Six possible perspectives are outlined below.

#### *(i) Tyrannicide*

As a consequence of the perpetual state of oppression and repression, the situation inside Kashmir prior to Pulwama could be reckoned somewhere between a rebellion and revolt, a mix of open defiance of the order and an armed resistance that has become gradually more offensive, to push out the Indian occupation forces. Within this scenario, Pulwama can be seen as a reaction, an expression of disaffection or alienation and anger, or an act of revenge, serving to forge solidarity with or among the broader Kashmiri freedom collectivity. The attack seems to have generated both positive and negative effects: a visibly newfound impetus infused in the Kashmir liberation movement, a clear shift from rebellion to revolt. On the other hand, it simultaneously provoked a further clampdown on civil liberties through a wave of arrests, torture, forced disappearances, and the banning of pro-independence political parties.

#### *(ii) Covert Warfare*

A second perspective views the Pulwama incident as yet another manifestation of covert warfare. Both India and Pakistan have been engaged in a drawn-out covert warfare played out not only in IHK but also in Afghanistan and in Pakistan itself. Viewed through this lens, the Pulwama attack can be seen as a response to a few recent provocations from the Indian side through its proxies, for example: the assassination of the pro-Pakistan Baloch leader, Siraj Raisani, by a suicide bomber in July 2018 which killed 147 people; the attack on the Chinese Consulate in Karachi in November 2018 by Baloch rebels; as well as a number of suicide attacks in January 2019 in the Loralai District of Balochistan province on a military garrison and a police gathering.

A suicide attack in Kandahar, Afghanistan in late December 2018 that killed the mastermind of the attack on the Chinese consulate was perhaps, conjecturally speaking, the first episode of a Pakistani sponsored retaliation, and Pulwama, the second, consequent to attacks in Loralai. Overall, from this perspective, the spate of violence can be characterized as part of a convoluted cycle of provocation, retaliation and revenge. It is not inconceivable that the Pulwama attack had a tacit Chinese nod due to India's support of Baloch militants against CPEC infrastructures and against the Chinese consulate. If one views this to be a credible scenario, Pulwama was not simply a retaliatory act but also meant to be a symbolic act of communication involving deterrence by punishment.

#### *(iii) Proxy Warfare*

According to this perspective, the Pulwama attack was orchestrated by Pakistan's 'Deep State' to avenge atrocities against Kashmiris and inspire freedom fighters. and perhaps also as a way to internationalize the Kashmir issue. Such an assumption is in accord with past precedents, therefore the Indian government,

its allies as well as major Western countries seem powerfully influenced by it. Indeed, Pulwama must have assured many Kashmiris about Pakistan's resolve for sustained support. However, it drew condemnation from members of the United Nations Security Council. Specifically, India and some of the Western states (especially the US) were even more unequivocal in their commitment to support India. They made it abundantly clear that armed liberation struggles in the post 9/11 environment are no longer acceptable, and hence plausibly legitimized India's right of self-defence. Aside from the ill-treatment of many Kashmiris in India (not to speak of accounts of torture-induced death of Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails), not only was Pakistan stripped of its most favoured nation status by India, a ban was also slapped on Pakistani film artists and their products. Curiously, Iran also joined with India in announcing reprisals against *Jaish al-Adl* in Pakistan. There was also political division in Pakistan itself about the utility of pro-Kashmir banned militant organizations and there was renewed discussion about the need for concerted action against a broader circle of militants in the country.

The Balakot air strike by India on 26 February 2019 unleashed another set of dynamics, resulting in a counter strike by the Pakistani air force and the downing of two Indian fighter planes. In addition, several casualties were inflicted on Indian ground forces along the Line of Control by a nibbling ground riposte. While Balakot initially brought cheers from many Indians and dismayed common Pakistanis, the air and ground response reversed the emotional reaction. The unraveling of intelligence about a possible missile attack by India to avenge the shooting down of its aircraft and the resultant readiness by Pakistan for retaliation, conveyed through international channels to India, later brought the two countries to the brink of war. Intriguingly in the process, the Kashmir problem was internationalized. In essence, historical anti-Pakistan feeling on the one hand, and consistent moral and material backing of the Kashmiris' rights of self-determination by Pakistan and distrust of the Kashmiris as pro-Pakistani by the Indians on the other hand, played a measurable role in giving credence to the perception for a proxy war narrative.

#### *(iv) India's Pre-Election Subterfuge*

Indian analysts as well as Pakistani foreign office spokesmen had warned about the probability of a momentous diversionary incident by the BJP government prior to Indian elections, to cover up governance failures, to neutralize political opponents, and to rally Hindu voters behind it. In this context, the Pulwama attack was seen by some Indian political dissidents as a false flag operation, orchestrated by the Hindu extremist group RSS. In the wake of the Pulwama and Balokot attacks, it looked, at least for a while, that the BJP government achieved its aim of patriotic mobilization. The BJP gained political mileage and successfully diverted attention away from other pressing problems of governance. At the end, participants in the Indian election campaign were discernibly divided over whether or not a war narrative, or a religiously sanctioned hysteria produced by politically motivated violence, should be employed as part of electoral canvassing.

#### *(v) Spoiler's Bid*

In late 2018, Pakistani authorities announced the opening of the Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, a sacred site for Sikhs, for the first time since 1947. This was meant to facilitate the commemoration of the 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the spiritual founder of the Sikh religion. The Sikh community was exhilarated by this Pakistani initiative to open the border for its members without visa requirements and the corresponding positive response from the Indian government to partake in it. This created a win-win sentiment on both sides. An India-Pakistan normalization, however symbolic, was desired and hailed by the international community. But then the Pulwama attack occurred. The setback to the evolving peace environment was its major achievement. Extremist forces in India were emboldened to take a tougher stand against Pakistan. It suddenly raised the specter of a strategic war between nuclear-armed neighbours with global ramifications and the prospect of imminent chaos and anarchy in the region. There are many beneficiaries for such a scenario in both India and Pakistan. Consequently, the possibility of the Pulwama attack being a bid to spoil bilateral peace cannot be altogether ignored. Who could have been behind it? Among other hardline nationalists and rogue elements in India and Pakistan, Pakistani jihadi renegades could have been responsible. Alternatively, elements from Daesh (IS), which has obtained a certain foothold in IJK, could be behind the attack.

*(vi) International Conspiratorial Project*

A close examination of the Pulwama attack reveals that it clearly produced a threefold effect, provocation, alienation, and mobilization. This is a time-tested tactic, typically employed by terrorist organizations. The Indian government and sections of the public were provoked as witnessed in the overreaction in the form of crackdowns by the security forces in Kashmir, the widespread violence and vilification of Kashmiris in mainland India, and the restrictions imposed on their movement. The range of arbitrary persecutions and victimizations further alienated Kashmiris, thereby harnessing more sympathizers for the separatists or other conspiratorial groupings and evoking mobilization for further escalation or at least for sustaining the current level of militancy. Likewise, India's cross-border military aggression into Pakistan provoked the political leadership in Islamabad to respond while the Pakistani population was mobilized for demonstrating more solidarity with the Kashmiri freedom struggle. In this context, it should be remembered that an Indo-Pakistan war was once conceived by Osama Bin Laden as beneficial to al-Qaeda's cause since it would mean a weakening of the conventional potential of the two countries through mutual destruction. In turn, this might have facilitated an Islamic reign project by al-Qaeda after defeating the residual forces through armed jihad. Even though this may be a far-fetched scenario, it cannot be discounted out of hand.

**Conclusion and Broad Implications**

The foremost inference that can be drawn from the aforementioned discussion is that the Pulwama incident can be approached from a variety of analytical angles, each with a distinct set of implications. Out of the six hypothetical scenarios discussed here, it arguably emerges that not only was Pulwama avoidable, but its subsequent effects would have been more manageable if the concerned states - especially India - had acted with care, prudence, and astute statecraft. Ironically, the kind of reactions that the attack generated, primarily in India, demonstrate a widespread absence of critical, fair-minded, and holistic analysis. Rather, most local and international reactions straightway construed the act as 'terrorist'.

Besides, what Pulwama has unambiguously changed - and what is more worrisome - is that not only the cost of covert warfare has upended the previously acceptable threshold of pain. Most significantly, the past connotation of Kashmir being a dangerous flashpoint has undergone a salient inflection warranting a major policy revision in the strategic calculus of the two countries. Previously, the notion of Kashmir being a 'flashpoint' implied that any untoward occurrence in this Himalayan region, or elsewhere in India, could spiral into conventional war. That is no longer relevant. Instead, the recent states' behaviour has shown that India and Pakistan disregard deterrence, and that they are willing to at once move to a strategic level of warfare. Consequently, any military exchanges incited by Pulwama-like episodes in the future, are understood to inhere the dangerous potential to instantly engulf the region into a mutually destructive nuclear conflict.

On the other hand, insinuations in the majority of the hypothesized scenarios sketched above point out that there is scope for increased interstate cooperation as well as for a helpful role by members of the international community. This could contribute to a meaningful arrest of political violence as well as control of the renegades and other clandestine international non-state actors operating in South Asia. Specifically, expert and material assistance to Pakistan for demobilization of the personnel of banned militant organizations could improve prospects for a broader peace in South Asia.

All in all, the analysis emphasizes that a solution to the Kashmir problem can and should be explored through constructive rather than impulsive actions. For this purpose, multiple mechanisms already exist. What can pave the way for such a constructive engagement is that both countries need to agree mutually or through international mediation on a common and binding definition and prohibition of terrorism, which in and of itself, would be a breakthrough for a forward looking dialogue to resolve conflicts, including the one around Kashmir.

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## Seeing Political Violence through Different Lenses

by Gregory D. Miller

### **Abstract**

*This Editorial Postscript was a late addition to this issue of Perspectives on Terrorism, but it felt necessary to contribute something to the Special Correspondence. There is value in the essays by Muhammad Feyyaz and Abhinav Pandya[1], even taken separately, but greater significance comes from discussing where the authors agree and where they disagree, both about Pulwama and about its consequences. Below is an attempt to connect the two pieces, to help generate broader discussions over the challenges of studying and writing about political violence.*

**Keywords:** Kashmir, India, Pakistan, Pulwama, political violence

### **Introduction**

“One person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter”. This commonly used phrase is problematic because there are real differences between an act of terrorism and an act of guerrilla warfare, having to do with the victims, nature, and purpose of the attack. Distinctions can blur when guerrillas attack civilians, or when terrorist groups attack military targets. However, the phrase illustrates how one’s background, experience, and personal biases color perceptions of an event as being terrorism or some other form of political violence.

The two pieces in this issue’s Special Correspondence illustrate both the value and the challenge of scholars being influenced by their perspectives. Both authors have their own biases[2] and discussing these different perspectives is critical for understanding conflicts in general, and especially those that involve terrorism. Particularly instructive are the differences and the similarities evident in the two pieces. Below I discuss some of these, and then provide a bit of my own perspective. My hope is to help bridge the gap between perspectives, and to highlight the continued challenges, not just for resolving the conflict in Kashmir, but also for understanding political violence more broadly.

### **Article Purpose**

While both pieces discuss the same event, the authors have different goals. Pandya focuses on India’s evolving security policy as a result of the incident, and Feyyaz focuses more on Pulwama itself, examining various narratives that exist or that may arise, regarding the causes and consequences of the violence. This difference affects how each author approaches the problem as well as their conclusions, and highlights how different purposes influence an author’s writing.

The author’s keywords hint at these different purposes. Both authors use the same first four keywords, and in the same order: Kashmir, India, Pakistan, Pulwama. The difference is in the fifth keyword. Feyyaz uses “nuclear war”, emphasizing the potentially catastrophic consequences of the event. In contrast, Pandya’s fifth keyword is Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM), the group that claimed responsibility for Pulwama, suggesting a focus on the perpetrators of the event.

### **Language**

One of the challenges in writing about political violence is terminology. We see this both in academic writing and in the media. It relates to the problem of defining terrorism, especially since there is no agreed-upon definition of terrorism. It is also a function of every individual’s background, experience, and bias.

A difference in terminology is how each author refers to the location of the attack. Both use Kashmir as a keyword, but in the essays Feyyaz refers to “Indian Held Kashmir (IHK)” while Pandya refers to “Jammu and Kashmir (India)”. This subtle difference creates an important distinction between the authors’ views of the problem. Feyyaz’s use of IHK, consistent with Pakistan’s official term for the area, suggests that India’s involvement in Kashmir is part of the problem. Pandya’s use of the territory name, Jammu and Kashmir, suggests that India’s involvement is legitimate and justified.

Use of the word terrorism is especially problematic. This is partly due to misappropriation of the term by politicians and pundits, often used to refer to any activity with which they disagree. Even academics have a difficult time using the term in a consistent and unbiased way. The two essays highlight this problematic label. Pandya uses the words terror, terrorist, or terrorism 18 times, and refers to Pulwama as an “attack”. Feyyaz uses the terror words nine times, three of which are in quotes indicating India’s perspective of the incident. Also, rather than label Pulwama an attack, Feyyaz refers to it as “an act of violence” and an “incident”. Perhaps I am reading too much into word choice, but terminology can illuminate an author’s perspective about an idea or event, especially when chosen subconsciously.

### ***The Event***

Building on language, the authors refer to the victims of the attack in different terms. Feyyaz refers to the victims as “Indian security forces”, making no distinction between military or police personnel. Pandya refers to the victims as “Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)”. Although CRPF is a paramilitary force that often engages in counterinsurgency operations, using the official name could give the impression that the victims were law enforcement personnel.

The authors also disagree on what Pulwama means. While both claim it is unique in how it escalated tensions between the two states, Pandya suggests it is an unprecedented and shocking event, which explains India’s strong reaction. Feyyaz sees it as merely “a continuation of an on-going campaign”, representing a tipping point rather than a shock, which would lead to confusion over India’s apparent overreaction.

Pandya refers to the dangerous evolution of the conflict, in which a local Kashmiri boy was radicalized to carry out the attack, firmly planting the blame for the attack on radical Islam. He sees this as indicating future danger in Kashmir, while dismissing the likelihood of Muslim radicalization within India. In contrast, Feyyaz sees the radicalization of youth as a function of the continued conflict between India and Pakistan, especially India’s approach towards Muslims, and expects the radicalization of Muslims in the region to continue.

### ***Security Consequences***

Several areas of agreement relate to the effects of further violence on relations between India and Pakistan. Both authors agree that India’s domestic politics played a role in its response, and both are critical of India in this respect. Pandya puts much of the blame on Prime Minister Modi, whose election platform called for a tougher stance towards Pakistan. Feyyaz agrees that politics played a role in India’s reaction, but sees it as a more systemic problem in India and thus likely to continue long after Modi is out of office.

Both also agree that future conflict over Kashmir risks escalation to war, even a nuclear exchange, and that Pulwama changed the security calculus of both states. They appear to agree that these events weakened deterrence between the two states, although Feyyaz sees it as a mutual weakening, while Pandya suggests it is mainly Pakistan’s deterrence that is weakened. This dangerous situation, where one state believes deterrence is still effective while its adversary sees it as weak, can lead to conflict.

### ***Regional and International Consequences***

The two essays agree about growing international concern over conflict between India and Pakistan. Pandya calls it “a game-changing event in South Asia” while Feyyaz refers to its “serious consequences for regional peace and stability.” Both scholars discuss Sino-Indian tensions, and China’s inclination towards supporting Pakistan, which effects India’s security and its prosperity. Likewise, both discuss close U.S. ties to India, at least partly as a balance against growing Chinese power and influence.

There is obviously fear of a Kashmir conflict dragging Great Powers into a war in South Asia. Though from an outsider’s perspective, I am not entirely convinced that either China or the U.S would be reliable allies in a ground war, especially with the risk of a nuclear exchange. This potentially creates another dangerous situation, where one state believes its allies will support it in war but that its rival’s allies are unreliable, that can lead to conflict.

### ***Another Perspective***

I would be remiss if I do not take the opportunity to offer a third perspective on Pulwama, from the point-of-view of someone outside the region. In terms of broader implications, I defer to the authors who know significantly more about their country and the region, so I will focus on Pulwama. This event displays many of the indicators of an act of terrorism, yet one could make several arguments for labeling it some other form of political violence.

JeM wants Kashmir to become part of Pakistan and wants Pakistan governed by an extreme interpretation of Sharia law. JeM is on several state lists of terrorist organizations and has carried out attacks against civilians since it split from Harkat-ul-Mujahideen in 2000. The U.S. designated JeM a Foreign Terrorist Organization in December 2001 after an attack on India’s Parliament (India and the United Nations Security Council also designated JeM a terrorist organization in 2001). Pakistan banned the group and froze its assets in 2002 and those of its splinter groups in 2003, but India still blames Pakistan for at minimum providing a safe haven for JeM’s leadership, if not giving outright support to the group. Pandya references this state sponsorship several times, while Feyyaz focuses on Pakistan’s efforts to weaken groups like JeM.

Many view attacks against military targets as guerrilla warfare rather than terrorism, and a high percentage of JeM’s attacks are against the military. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), of the 77 terrorist attacks carried out by JeM through 2017, 56 targeted the military or the police, or both. The other 21 were against “soft” targets, like private citizens, business, etc.[3] Despite this high percentage of military targets, one could argue the victims are often non-combatants at the time of the attack; the victims of Pulwama were in buses, with no reasonable expectation of combat. However, given the contentious nature of the territory (both authors refer to it as the world’s most militarized zone), the U.S. Department of State’s definition of terrorism suggests the attack would be something other than terrorism.[4]

Of the 77 JeM attacks in GTD, 21 were suicide bombings. The suicide bombing tactic used at Pulwama might suggest an act of terrorism, but we would need to know more about the group and the individual responsible. Suicide bombing can be a sign of determination or an act of desperation. It is still a popular tactic for drawing attention to a cause, because it is shocking to the public. It is also incredibly effective to diminish the military capabilities of a larger force.

The perpetrator’s motivation is also a factor, but one that is frequently overlooked before labels are attached to an attack. If this was an individual’s act of revenge against India’s security forces,[5] then that places it more on the side of terrorism. If the individual and group saw it as an opportunity to weaken India’s military capabilities in the area, then that is more akin to guerrilla warfare. There may be other goals, and until we know the intent, any label is premature.

### ***Conclusion***



Like many acts of political violence, Pulwama will be viewed differently depending on a number of factors, including one's own biases, whether or not one views the JeM cause as legitimate, and one's willingness to tolerate the use of violence to achieve political goals. In any case, more discussions that incorporate multiple perspectives are important for developing a better understanding of political violence, and reducing both its frequency and severity.

The two essays in this issue's Special Correspondence are interesting and informative on their own. Drawing connections between the two creates a greater understanding both of the event in question and its aftermath, but also hopefully enhances our appreciation for the link between personal biases and our understanding of terrorism, as one form of political violence. I thank the authors, Muhammad Feyyaz and Abhinav Pandya, for contributing to this dialogue, and I hope it will continue.

*Note: The views expressed in this essay are the author's alone and do not reflect the position or policy of the Air University, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.*

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## Notes

[1] Muhammad Feyyaz, "Contextualizing the Pulwama Attack in Kashmir – A Perspective from Pakistan," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no.2 (April 2019); Abhinav Pandya, "The Future of Indo-Pak Relations after the Pulwama Attack," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no.2 (April 2019).

[2] I use the term bias in a purely academic sense, not as a criticism of the authors. Both essays are informative and I hope both authors view this postscript as part of an academic dialogue rather than as a criticism.

[3] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2018). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>. JeM may be responsible for other attacks that are not catalogued in GTD, if those attacks do not fit the database definition of terrorism, such as they were directed against combatants. GTD also relies heavily on Western media reports for its data, so it is possible some JeM attacks are not included in the database even if they fit the definition of terrorism.

[4] The U.S. Department of State defines terrorism as, "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents." It then defines non-combatants as civilians and "military personnel (whether or not armed or on duty) who are not deployed in a war zone or a war-like setting." U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2017* (September 2018), 339, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2017/index.htm>.

[5] According to the perpetrator's family, he radicalized after being beaten by Indian security forces. Fayaz Bukhari "Kashmir Suicide Bomber Radicalized after Beating by Troops, Parents Say," *Reuters.com* (15 February 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-bomber/kashmir-suicide-bomber-radicalized-after-beating-by-troops-parents-say-idUSKCN1Q41LK>.

## Bibliography: Terrorism and the Media (including the Internet)

(Part 4)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Bibliographic Series of Perspectives on Terrorism – BSPT-JT-2019-3]

### Abstract

*This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on the multi-faceted relationship between terrorism and the media, including the Internet. To keep up with the rapidly changing media landscape (particularly social media) and the technological developments in the online environment, more recent publications have been prioritized during the selection process. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to broaden the search.*

**Keywords:** bibliography, resources, literature, media, Internet, social media, terrorism, electronic jihad, cyberterrorism, narratives, counter-narratives

NB: All websites were last visited on 24.03.2019. This subject bibliography is conceptualised as a multi-part series (for earlier bibliographies, see: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#)). To avoid duplication, this compilation only includes literature not contained in the previous parts. However, meta-resources, such as bibliographies, were also included in the sequels. - See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

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## Note

Whenever retrievable, URLs for freely available versions of subscription-based publications have been provided. Thanks to the Open Access movement, self-archiving of publications in institutional repositories, professional networking sites, or on author homepages for free public use (so-called Green Open Access) has become more common. Please note, that the content of Green Open Access documents is not necessarily identical to the officially published versions (e.g., in case of pre-prints); it might therefore not have passed through all editorial stages publishers employ to ensure quality control (peer review, copy- and layout editing etc.). In some cases, articles may only be cited after obtaining permission from the author(s).

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## Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 40 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

*This column consists of short capsule reviews to cover numerous important recently published books, including several books published in recent years that still merit attention. The reviews are arranged topically as "Terrorism," "Countering Terrorism," "Countering Violent Extremism," "Maritime Terrorism," "Psychology of Terrorism," "Women and Terrorism," "Legal," "China," "Iran," "India/Kashmir," "Sri Lanka," and "United Kingdom." Within these topics, the books are listed in alphabetical order.*

### **Terrorism**

**Daniela Pisoiu and Sandra Hain, *Theories of Terrorism: An Introduction*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 200 pp., US \$ 128.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 36.76 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-4158-2608-2.

This textbook presents a multi-disciplinary theoretical and methodological overview of terrorism studies. This framework is applied to examining issues such as how to define terrorism, how to study terrorism, how individuals are radicalized and recruited into terrorism, the manifestations of terrorism at the organizational level, the measures involved in countering radicalization, disengaging and de-radicalizing from terrorism, the phenomenon of state terrorism, terrorism in cyberspace, and the components of counter-terrorism. As a textbook, each chapter includes call-out boxes that illustrate the text, a summary, exercises, reference resources, and suggestions for further reading.

**Ammar Shamaileh, *Trust and Terror: Social Capital and the Use of Terrorism as a Tool of Resistance*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 144 pp., US \$ 120.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1382-0173-6.

An empirically-based account of why some individuals select to protest collectively via non-violent means, while others choose violent means to express their grievances. A central thesis is that the nature of political protest movements, particularly the role of interpersonal trust between an individual and the chosen group, is a determinant in the decision to protest collectively non-violently or violently. This thesis is applied to cases such as the Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt, Libya and Syria. Statistical tests of the relationship between interpersonal trust with a group and terrorism form the basis for the book's empirical findings, which are also generalized globally. The appendices provide the statistical methodology and data used in the study.

**Jeffrey D. Simon, *The Alphabet Bomber: A Lone Wolf Terrorist Ahead of His Time*** (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 272 pp., US \$ 29.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6123-4996-1.

An account of one of the earliest manifestations of lone actor terrorism in the United States, when a bomb exploded at the Pan Am terminal at Los Angeles International Airport on August 6, 1974, killing three people and injuring thirty-five others. The perpetrator, Muharem Kurbegovic, a troubled Yugoslav immigrant, followed up on his attack by leaving a cassette tape announcing that while "This first bomb was marked with the letter A, which stands for Airport," successive bombs would be associated with other letters "until our name has been written on the face of this nation in blood." Interestingly, Kurbegovic invented the fictitious group "Aliens of America" as the responsible group, which is highly unusual for a lone actor. After bringing Los Angeles almost to a standstill for several weeks with a series of additional bombings, following an intensive manhunt, Kurbegovic was eventually arrested on August 20, 1974. The significance of this case is, as the author writes, that "He was among the first lone wolves to demonstrate that one does not need training, financial assistance, or logistical support from a larger organization to launch a major campaign of terror. He was also one of the first terrorists to threaten to release nerve agents in populated areas, to acquire sodium cyanide, and to use the

media in a systematic way to communicate his message and to spread fear among the public” (p. 6). In addition to the author’s detailed discussion of the case, the book is also noteworthy for its discussion of the lone actor terrorist phenomenon, including the use of psychological profiling techniques to analyze their characteristics.

### ***Countering Terrorism***

**Martin Bouchard (Ed.), *Social Networks, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 256 pp., US \$ 136.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 47.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1388-2856-8.

The contributors to this volume utilize the lens of social network analysis (SNA) theories and methodologies to examine the radicalization and recruitment processes into terrorism and the effectiveness of counter-terrorism responses. These issues are examined by SNA methodologies and conceptual frameworks drawn from sociology, computer science, geography, history, engineering, and criminology as well as political science. The volume’s chapters cover issues such as the root causes of terrorism, the utilization by terrorists of the Internet to radicalize and recruit members, the nature and effectiveness of models of public safety in Canada, developing a computational framework for counterterrorism and public safety, and future research directions. In the conclusion, Martin Bouchard and Evan Thomas conclude that “The introduction of social network analysis can help evaluate inter-agency cooperation and collaboration” in countering terrorism, as well as in countering the ease of terrorist adversaries in gaining access to the Internet’s social media sites to maintain their anonymity, particularly in the Dark Web, where appropriate technologies can also enable counterterrorism services to identify and track their activities “(p. 227). Regarding future directions in research on the online presence of extremists, the authors recommend pushing for innovations to take advantage of social network analysis-based technologies, which also implies formulating new units of analysis (p. 227).

**John Cox, *To Kill a People: Genocide in the Twentieth Century*** (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 272 pp., US \$ 24.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-1902-3647-2.

This textbook examines the proliferation of genocide in the last twenty years in general and through the four case studies of the origins, extent of the atrocities, and outcomes of the Armenian, Nazi, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocides. Two key themes in genocide studies are examined in particular: how to define “genocide” (including providing the author’s definition) and how to place genocide in relation to other mass atrocities, and how to detect and analyze the social, historical, and cultural forces that produce genocidal violence. As a textbook, each chapter includes a conclusion, primary sources, study questions, as well as maps and figures. The appendix includes a bibliographical essay and suggested films, as well as a timeline of genocide and genocidal crimes against humanity from 1900 to the present.

**Mathieu Deflem (Ed.), *Terrorism and Counterterrorism Today*** (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2015), 280 pp., US \$ 157.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7856-0191-0.

The contributors to this volume apply multiple theoretical approaches and methodological orientations to the examination of the relation between crime, criminal justice, law, and social control, and terrorism and counter-terrorism. The volume is divided into three parts. The chapters in Part I, “Perspectives and Concepts in the Study of Terrorism,” cover topics such as the contribution of the discipline of criminology to the study of terrorism since 9/11, terrorism as ‘gravitational attraction,’ terrorism and genocide, and the social construction of terrorism. The chapters in Part II, “Variations and Realities of Contemporary Terrorism,” examines issues such as the emergence of lone actor terrorism, its behavioral manifestations, and implications for intervention; the emergence of “hybrid” terrorist perpetrators who self-radicalize and conduct attacks on their own initiative; the phenomenon of “second order” terrorism, in which the responses to significant terrorist attacks might result in follow-on secondary attacks; and the nature of suicide terrorism. The chapters in Part III, “Counterterrorism Law, Policy and Policing,” discuss issues such as the challenging presented by the prosecution of terrorists; the use of coercive interrogation techniques, such as torture; changes in local policing in the post 9/11 era; and

implications of counterterrorism policies on the legitimacy of state actors.

**Brian Drohan, *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire*** (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 256 pp., US \$ 45.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5017-1465-8.

An account of the impact of the activities of human rights activists on British governments' counterinsurgency military tactics in three British counterinsurgency campaigns - Cyprus (1955 - 1959), Aden (1963 - 1967), and the peak of the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland (1969 - 1976). Among the author's conclusions is that the role of human rights in counterinsurgency by democratic governments is still relevant, with "debates over interrogation, detention, and drone strikes highlight[ing] the centrality of moral issues in contemporary warfare..."(184). The author drew on more than one million archival files of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the "Troubles" collection at Linen Hall Library in Belfast, and other sources in researching the book.

**Alastair Finlan (Ed.), *The Test of Terrorism: Responding to Political Violence in the Twenty-First Century*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 94 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1387-9048-3.

The contributors to this volume apply multi-disciplinary approaches to examine the effectiveness of how Western states, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, and non-Western states, such as Nigeria, have attempted to counter terrorist threats since 9/11. The issues examined include "terrorism as a philosophical discourse"; the implications on effectiveness of counterterrorism, the accidental shooting by British security forces of Jean Charles de Menezes on July 7, 2005 in the London subway; and "learning in counterinsurgency" in terms of "the theories, hypotheses, research strategies, threats to validity, methods of measurement, treatments of time, and general lack of statistical analysis" in the discipline. The volume also contains recommendations for future research; a quantitative analysis of whether counterterrorism spending levels affect the incidence and lethality of attacks by their terrorist adversaries in 34 countries; and an assessment of Nigeria's counterterrorism campaign against Boko Haram. This book was originally published as a special issue of *Defense and Security Analysis*.

**Judith Grohmann, *Fighting the War on Terror: Global Counter-Terrorist Units and Their Actions*** (Havertown, PA: Pen & Sword, 2018), 175 pp., US \$ 32.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5267-2745-0.

An account, based on the author's journalistic interviews, of the roles, missions, and operations of elite counterterrorism (CT) SWAT units in 16 countries around the world. Following the author's introductory overview, the book's chapters profile the elite units of the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg Germany, Italy, Israel, Austria, Jordan, Portugal, Russia, The Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, and the United States. In the epilogue, the author observes that "an enormous amount of work goes into planning the perfect elite police tactical unit," that they are "team-orientated and work in unison," that their "operations play out extremely swiftly," and that skillful analysis is involved in their investigations of terrorism perpetrators, such as, in the case of apprehending the April 2013 Boston Marathon bombers, "skillful photographic analysis, file comparison and countless interviews..."(p. 172).

**Marianne Heilberg, Brendan O'Leary, and John Tirman (Eds.), *Terror, Insurgency, and the State*** (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 512 pp., US \$ 53.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 44.97 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-8122-3974-4.

The contributors to this volume apply the findings of their multi-year project, which involved extensive field research with rebel groups and government officials, to examine the nature of the insurgencies by 11 groups. Following an introductory overview, separate chapters cover 11 groups: the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers (LTTE), the Northern Ireland IRA, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Peruvian Sendero

Luminoso, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Basque Country and Liberty (ETA), the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the Jammu and Kashmir Hizb-ul Mujahideen (JKHM), the People's Liberation Army of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (PLA CPN - M), the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the Lebanese Hizballah, and the Palestinian Hamas. The concluding chapter presents the authors' findings on the components of effective counterterrorism. These include the need for evidence-led policy to be informed and guided by science (p. 391); that analysts need to utilize "the protocols of careful statistical reasoning" (p. 393); that social network analysis, epidemiological modeling, or agent-based simulations "may help us produce better forecasts" (p. 394); that CT policies need to take into account the fact that terrorists use violence as "part of a battle for ascendancy within a constituency as well as a strategic choice against a regime" (p. 398); that government repression might backfire (p. 408); that "concentrated" and "dispersed" incarceration of terrorist prisoners might disorganize insurgents, but it also ends up creating 'insurgent universities' and "makes them less negotiable" (p. 410); that even when governments and insurgents state they will never negotiate with each other, they generally negotiate at the end (p. 416); and that third party international actors can play a constructive intervening role, although not necessarily in every case (pp. 420-421).

**Luke Howie, *Terrorism, the Worker and the City: Simulations and Security in a Time of Terror*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009/2018), 206 pp., US \$ 155.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-8153-9732-8.

An account of the post-attack psychological and imagery impacts of terrorist attacks on the targeted populations and the businesses and organizations that employ them, as well as the capability of bounce back in terms of continuity of business operations for owners and employees. The impact of the apprehension of potential terrorist threats on the Australian city of Melbourne, Australia is used as a case study to examine these issues and generate findings for comparable multicultural cities around the world.

**Sondre Lindahl, *A Critical Theory of Counterterrorism: Ontology, Epistemology and Normativity*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 188 pp., US \$ 112.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-8153-5923-4.

Rooted in the sub-discipline of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS), this book presents a theory and model of the components of effective counterterrorism through what the author terms as a radical rethinking of the ontology, epistemology and the agenda of 'conventional' counterterrorism. Effective counterterrorism, in the author's view, involves a commitment to emancipation as a "value-axiom" in which violence as a tool is reject and the "the development of possibilities for a better life" are emphasized (p. 166). This approach is part of the CTS's model of counterterrorism, which is outlined in a call-out box (p. 107). In the book's second part, the author applies his theory and model to examine the effectiveness of Norwegian counterterrorism, which he believes support the thesis that governments' non-violent solutions to terrorism can be effective. The Norwegian model of international counterterrorism is outlined in a call-out box (pp. 156-157).

**Leanne McRae, *Terror, Leisure and Consumption: Spaces for Harm in a Post-Crash Era*** (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018), 192 pp., US \$ 64.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7875-6526-5.

An account, based on case studies in European cities where significant terrorist attacks have occurred, such as Berlin, Germany, Turkey, Paris, France, Manchester and London, England, and Stockholm, Sweden of the relationships between "harm, crime, deviance, leisure and capitalism." One of the author's findings is that "Everyday leisure has become harmful because of its intimacy with capitalism and its exchange of violence that exist at the core of consumerism." As a result, "The 'externalities' – unexpected harms created by business (leisure as consumption) – and 'special liberties' are amplified, and they return in the accelerated violences of terrorism that create a spectacle of horror within the everyday" (p. 158).

**Manfred Nowak and Anne Charbord (Eds.), *Using Human Rights to Counter Terrorism*** (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing), 384 pp., US \$ 148.50 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7847-1526-7.

The contributors to the volume apply legal analyses to examine the links between human rights and counterterrorism to test the thesis that a human rights approach does not necessarily undermine the effort against terrorism. Following the editors' introduction, the book's chapters cover topics such as key trends in counterterrorism and international human rights law; the use of coercive counterterrorism measures, such as mass digital surveillance, the deployment of drones, and the use of torture in interrogating terrorist suspects; how the U.N. Security Council and human rights are applied to managing the challenges presented by the proliferation of foreign terrorist fighters; intelligence gathering and human rights; and an assessment of the human rights implications of the use of preventive criminal justice against terrorism. The final chapter discusses the issue of accountability in countering terrorism and finds that "Experiences since 9/11 have demonstrated that not only can legitimate security imperatives be accommodated within the rule of law and with full respect for international human rights law, they are most effective when anchored in these legal principles, norms and standards" (pp. 336-337).

**Bruce Oliver Newsome, W. James Stewart, and Aarefah Mosavi, *Countering New(est) Terrorism: Hostage-Taking, Kidnapping, and Active Violence – Assessing, Negotiating, and Assaulting*** (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2018), 381 pp., US \$ 66.36 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1385-0159-1.

This comprehensive and detailed handbook examines new trends in terrorism in the form of more lethal and less compromising types of hostage-taking, kidnapping, and active violence, and presents best practices for countering such emerging threats. As a manual, the volume includes analyses of terrorists' psychology and behaviors, visual decision trees on how to negotiate terrorism-related crises, how to assess the risk of terrorism, and how and when to counter terrorists via law enforcement and military means. The chapters include introductory chapter objectives, and conclude with simulated practices and practical prescriptive advice, where relevant. Findings from terrorist incident databases are also included.

**Scott Poynting and David Whyte (Eds.), *Counter-Terrorism and State Political Violence: The 'War on Terror' as Terror*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 264 pp., US \$ 140.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 47.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-4157-4809-4.

The contributors to this edited volume examine the nature of the use of coercive measures by states in the 'war on terror' as a 'form of terror.' These themes are tested from a "psychological-warfare and hegemonic perspective" in the case studies of the Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States' criminalization of the anti-colonial struggle in Puerto Rico, Colombia and narco-terrorism, Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) insurgency, Israeli operations against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Spain and the Basque Province, Indonesia and Timor-Leste and West Papua, and the United States and the West against al Qaida. In the conclusion, the editors observe that the volume's case studies "can be understood as a political struggle around concrete issues, often involving movements for self-determination and struggles against expropriation and exploitation, and the state suppression of that which is irreducibly political". (p. 241).

**Michael R. Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime: Intelligence Gathering, Analysis, and Investigations*** [4th Edition] (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2018), 444 pp., US \$ 75.16 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1387-0346-9.

This textbook provides a comprehensive coverage of the issues involved in law enforcement's management of the intelligence component in counterterrorism, which is a crucial foundation of intelligence-led policing. The volume's chapters provide protocols and techniques involved in examining issues such as how to recognize the signs of radicalization and recruitment into terrorism in local communities, the criminal and gang roots of terrorism, the indicators of an imminent terrorist attack, how to investigate the role of the Internet's social media sites in terrorism, how to deter an attack, how to transform raw information into actionable intelligence,

including intelligence sharing, in managing the response and the terrorist threat, as well as legal concerns. Additional chapters cover the role of fusion centers, investigating terrorism financing, handling of classified materials, the role of the National Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative, as well as pre-incident indicators and behavioral traits associated with terrorism.

**Joel Simon, *We Want to Negotiate: The Secret world of Kidnapping, Hostages and Ransom*** (New York, NY: Columbia Global Reports, 2019), 189 pp., US \$ 15.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-9997-4542-7.

An account of the phenomenon of the kidnapping by criminal and terrorist groups of journalists and humanitarian assistance workers in conflict zones. The author also discusses the debate over the management of the release of such hostages, particularly the ethical, legal, and strategic issues involved in ransom payments by governments and private sector organizations and companies to the hostage holding criminal groups. To explain these issues, the book's chapters cover the roles of major players in managing the hostage rescue process, such as a hostage advocate, a general, an insurance broker, a treasury official, aid workers, and parents, with their roles illustrated by accounts of their involvement in hostage taking cases. In the conclusion, the author recommends a new approach to replace a "no concessions policy" since, in his view, this policy "isn't working" because there is no "incontrovertible evidence that many other lives will be saved" by such a policy" (p. 163).

**Fabian M. Teichmann and Bruno S. Sergi, *Compliance in Multinational Corporations: Business Risks in Bribery, Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing and Sanctions*** (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018), 160 pp., UK £40.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7875-6870-9.

This is a practitioner-oriented detailed account of the effectiveness of the enforcement of anti-bribery, anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorism-financing regulations vis-à-vis how multinational corporations deals with criminal and terrorist "clients" who engage in activities such as money laundering, bribery, and the sale of antiquities and real estate. The authors conclude that "To prevent corruption in multinational corporations, the incentive systems should be designed to incentivize compliance with rules and regulations, rather than paying bribes. However, in practice, this poses many challenges" (p. 127). As a result, compliance mechanisms such as performing due diligence and 'Know Your Customer' principles should guide ones dealings with criminal and terrorist 'clients,' with all such measures carried out in a complementary manner (p. 131). The book's analysis is based on an empirical analysis of 100 expert interviews, which are utilized to serve as a practical guide for compliance experts.

### ***Countering Violent Extremism***

**Michael Erbschloe, *Extremist Propaganda in Social Media: A Threat to Homeland Security*** (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2019), 234 pp., US \$ 79.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1384-9367-4.

A utilization of technological and social perspectives to examine the impact of propaganda in social media on the rise of extremism on what the author terms "Blisstopian Societies." Such subcultures are characterized by the author as abiding in the "ignorance is bliss" principle, in which the receiving population is complacent and unquestioning in its acceptance of propaganda as "news" however extremist it might be, without challenge and introspection. In these subcultures, the malleable population dismisses objective news, with fake news reinforcing their stereotyped beliefs about society and the world. Such fake news poses a threat to national security, especially counter-terrorism, intelligence, law enforcement agencies, as it has led to increased political politicization in the United States (and elsewhere around the world), where perpetrators of violent attacks are being radicalized by such fake news to carry out their hateful vengeance against their perceived adversaries.

**Catherine McGlynn and Shaun McDaid, *Radicalisation and Counter-Radicalisation in Higher Education*** (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019), 216 pp., US \$ 64.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7875-6005-5.

An account of the nature and impact of the United Kingdom's 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act in making it mandatory for the universities to establish counter-radicalization programs. Drawing on an assessment of university policy documents and focus group research with university lecturers and undergraduate students, the authors analyze the risks involved in such counter-radicalization programs and provide recommendations for navigating these policy challenges. Also discussed are issues such as the origins of radicalization into extremism in general and at universities, and recommendations on effective responses to radicalization for policymakers and university staff and students.

**Farah Pandith, *How We Win: How Cutting-Edge Entrepreneurs, Political Visionaries, Enlightened Business Leaders, and Social Media Mavens Can Defeat the Extremist Threat*** (New York, NY: Custom House, 2019), 528 pp., US \$ 28.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-0624-7115-4.

An account by a former U.S. government official of her approach to countering the threat of violent extremism, which focuses on the mobilization of the expertise and resources of government officials such as diplomats, and private sector corporate leaders, mental health experts, social scientists, entrepreneurs, local communities, as well as the affected youth around the world. Such multi-disciplinary expertise is required, the author argues, because of the immense problems that create environments conducive to extremism. She writes: "Extremists succeed with recruiting because youth crave answers to the problem of who they are or are supposed to be, how to live as Muslims, and how to belong to a community. They feel disconnected from traditional authorities and the answers they offer. Challenged to find their own answers, they buy blindly into homogeneous notions of 'correct' or 'authentic' religion that they encounter and that are frequently embedded or expressed in their consumer activities. All of this leaves youth vulnerable to extremists and their narratives. These malevolent actors understand what you are experiencing, and they patiently and proactively offer answers in an attempt to ensnare them. *That's the real problem we need to address*"(pp. 9-10). An effective countering violent extremism (CVE) campaign, the author concludes, should not be based on the conventional governmental deployment of power, but on a new strategic approach to 'soft' power which she terms "open" power, which "entails a more fluid, nonhierarchical, and creative relationship between government and private actors"(p. 396). Here, "Rather than executing specific policies itself, government 'opens up' the challenge, soliciting potential solutions from diverse actors"(p. 396).

### ***Maritime Terrorism***

**Bruce A. Elleman, *Seaborne Perils: Piracy, Maritime Crime, and Naval Terrorism in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia*** (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 272 pp., US \$ 80.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 35.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-4422-6019-1.

A comprehensive survey of historical and contemporary issues related to maritime crime, including piracy and terrorism, with particular focus on Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The author's definitions are worth noting, with piracy defined as taking place on the high seas, maritime crime takes place within a country's territorial waters, while maritime terrorism occurs in either one of these maritime zones. Future maritime threats include the potential transport and detonation by a maritime 'actor' of WMD devices.

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***Psychology of Terrorism***

**Raymond H. Hamden, *Psychology of Terrorists: Profiling and Counter Action*** (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2019), 160 pp., US \$ 79.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-4398-1002-6.

An examination by a forensic psychologist of the psychology of terrorists. Following an account of the history of terrorism, the author discusses his psychoanalytic approach to studying terrorists, which he categorizes into four distinct profiles: psychopathic, ethnographic religious, ethnographic political, and retributational. The remaining chapters discuss techniques for counter-terrorism practitioners to conduct interviews, interrogations, and interventions with individuals on the trajectory into terrorism. Also discussed are the methods, tactics, and weapons used in terrorist attacks, and the author's approach to profiling individuals (including groups) who become terrorists and how to counter them.

***Women and Terrorism***

**Margaret Gonzalez-Perez, *Women and Terrorism: Female Activity in Domestic and International Terror Groups*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 164 pp., US \$ 136.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 47.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-4155-7073-2.

An examination of the relationship between women and terrorist activities in the post-World War II era. The author utilizes a comparative research methodology to generate findings about women's involvement in 26 terrorist organizations around the world. One of the findings is that women are significantly more active in domestic terrorist organizations than in international groups, although new developments in terrorism since 2009, when the book was published, might provide different findings. Nevertheless, the book's empirical methodology is still an important contribution to the literature on women's involvement in terrorism.

**Candice D. Ortals and Lori M. Poloni-Staudinger, *Gender and Political Violence: Women Changing the Politics of Terrorism*** (New York, NY: Springer, 2018), 349 pp., US \$ 159.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-3-3197-3626-6.

An examination of the role of gender in terrorist-, guerrilla- and genocidal-type conflicts worldwide, within the broader context in which males (and masculinity) tend to predominate as perpetrators of aggression, violence and power, while women are viewed as passive victims without power. The book's chapters cover issues such as women's involvement in terrorist, guerrilla, and genocidal groups, women as suicide bombers, women as victims of such violent groups, women's involvement in terrorism-related social protest movements, and gender and counter-terrorism, including in countering extremism and de-radicalization programs. The concluding chapter summarizes the book's findings and themes, including in a table that outlines how five central themes were analyzed in the book's 10 chapters. In a section on future research, the authors propose three main areas: the women's role in how terrorists leave violent organizations and how they experience the processes of de-radicalization and disengagement (including whether women might function in "new social and employment contexts" (p. 327); the role of women as lone-wolf terrorists and whether men are more likely than women to become lone-wolf terrorists; and the use of primary data to research issues such as women's participation as activists and leaders in social protest movement, including public opinion sentiments on these types of political violence (p. 328).



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## Legal

**Fergal Davis, Nicola McGarrity and George Williams (Eds.), *Surveillance, Counter-Terrorism and Comparative Constitutionalism*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 346 pp., US \$ 128.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 41.56 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1380-9431-4.

The contributors to this volume examine the impact of the enactment of counter-terrorism laws around the world on their countries' constitutional laws and civil liberties. These challenges are viewed within the context of the increased surveillance powers in the form of wiretapping and other means granted to law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Also examined is the emergence of new actors in the 'surveillance state,' such as local communities and private organizations, the use of surveillance material as evidence in court, and the effectiveness of constitutional and other forms of review of surveillance powers in balancing the requirements for security and civil liberties.

**Colin King, Clive Walker, and Jimmy Gurulé (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Criminal and Terrorism Financing Law, 2 Volumes*** (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1,260 pp., US \$ 329.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-3-3196-4497-4.

The contributors to this double-volume handbook examine the roles of criminal and terrorism financing laws in managing the threats presents by such groups related to the legality, security, and stability of contemporary societies and their economies at the national, regional, and international levels. The contributors utilize disciplines such as law, criminology, political science, international studies, and business to examine issues. The two volumes are divided into four parts. Part I, "Introductory Section," provides an overview of criminal and terrorism financing law. The chapters in Part II, "Anti-Money Laundering," cover the issues of anti-money laundering (AML), the global AML regime and the European Union; globalization, money laundering and the city of London; unusual transaction reporting in retail banking, the legal profession, cyberspace, Bitcoins; the use of fake passports; the application of AML in Australia; and the effectiveness of AML policy. The chapters in Part III, "Asset Recovery," cover topics such as an overview of asset recovery; post-conviction confiscation in the United Kingdom, United States, Italy, Canada, and how these issues are approached by the European Union and the United Nations. The handbook's volume II presents the chapters of Part IV, "Counter-Terrorism Financing," which cover issues such as an overview of counter-terrorism financing in general and in the cases of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, the European Union, and the United Nations. These chapters also present case studies of applying social network analysis to counter terrorist financing; criminal prosecutions for terrorism financing, an assessment of the application of the material support statute to prosecute ISIS's foreign financiers; responding to money transfers by foreign terrorist fighters; terrorism financing and the governance of charities; kidnapping and terrorism financing; and an overview of terrorism financing and the illicit antiquities trade. The second volume also includes an extensive 20-page selected bibliography.

## China

**David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier*** (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 368 pp., US \$ 41.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-6746-6037-3.

An account of the history and current status of China's Muslim Uyghur community in the northwest province of Xinjiang, and how these Central Asian Muslims responded to the various challenges facing their community in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Russia and China by reinventing themselves as the modern Uyghur nation. These issues are crucial in understanding the historical context that is currently playing out in the violent conflict between the Chinese government and the Uyghur community in Xinjiang.

**Iran**

**Amin Saikal, *Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic*** (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 328 pp., US \$ 29.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-6911-7547-8.

This is a general assessment of the emergence of the Shia clerics'-dominated Islamic Republic of Iran following the overthrow of the Shah's monarchy in 1979, and the current challenges facing it, such as domestic upheavals over the need for economic and social reforms, the imposition of Western sanctions, its involvement with the Lebanese Hizballah and the Palestinian Hamas, and the threats presented to it by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

**India/Kashmir**

**Christophe Jaffrelot, *Religion, Caste and Politics in India*** (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 600 pp., US \$ 30.00 [Hardcover], US \$ [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-2317-0261-4.

An account of the transformation of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's three pillar-based post-independence vision of India as dominated by secularism and democracy in the political domain, state intervention in the economy, and diplomatic non-alignment in foreign relations, into an emphasis in the current era on the preeminence on Hindu nationalism, in which minorities and secularism are on the defensive, with a liberalized economy marked by large disparity between urban and rural areas. These types of transformations have also affected the terrorism challenges facing India, particularly with the rise of Hindu nationalism, with "protest against so-called sacrilegious attacks against symbols of Hinduism generally [translating] into calls to agitate" (p. 309) and exploitation by "ethno-political entrepreneurs from the BJP and the VHP who attempt to mobilize – and gain followers – for a crucial cause" such as what the author terms a "vulnerability syndrome," with "those who suffered from this syndrome considered that it was Muslims who posed the greatest threat to Hinduism..." (pp. 309-310).

**Türkkaya Ataöv, *Kashmir and Neighbours: Tale, Terror, Truce*** [Routledge Revivals] (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001/2018), 270 pp., US \$ 108.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1387-2450-1.

This book was first published in 2001 and reissued in 2018. It examines the historical evolution and consequences of the militant terrorist activities in the Indian-Pakistan bordering Kashmir, with additional discussion of such activities in the Punjab and India's North-East. A counter-terrorism international regime is recommended as a possible solution to the conflict.

**Sri Lanka**

**Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity, Political Economy*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), pp., US \$ 144.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 43.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-4157-7678-3.

An account of the origin, evolution and, at the time the book was published, possible solution of the separatist insurgency by the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern provinces. Although the LTTE's insurgency was militarily defeated by the Sri Lankan government in May 2009, following this book's publication, its analysis and conceptual framework are an important contribution to the literature on conflict resolution in understanding the broader context of the conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state, especially the wider issues that still need to be addressed, such as how ethnic-based conflicts are not necessarily bi-polar in nature, but are shaped by local historical social forces. Such a multipolar analysis, the author explains, needs to take into account diverse ethnic groups involved in a conflict, including intra-ethnic,

social class, caste and other variables at the local, regional and international levels, as well as the importance of third-party mediation efforts.

### ***United Kingdom***

**Jessie Blackburn, *Anti-Terrorism Law and Normalising Northern Ireland*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 198 pp., US \$ 128.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 43.16 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1382-0196-5.

An assessment of the consequences of the implementation of the Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland, particularly the factors involved in bringing about a 'normal, peaceful society.' Eight aspects of Northern Ireland are proposed as benchmarks for normalization and peaceful success: the contested constitutional status of Northern Ireland, the devolution of power, decommissioning, the removal of emergency laws, demilitarization, police reform, criminal justice reform, and paramilitary prisoners.

**Colin Breen, *A Force Like No Other: The Real Stories of the RUC Men and Women Who Policed the Troubles*** (Newtownards, UK: The Blackstaff Press, 2018), 198 pp., US \$ 14.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-8564-0972-1.

An insider's account of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) as related by the former officers who had served in the police force. These accounts cover significant aspects of RUC policing, such as handling informants, conducting interviews with criminals, and dealing with the aftermath of terrorist bombings. The author, a former RUC police officer, had inside access to interviewees, whose stories provide a unique and frank picture of the challenges facing RUC officers in such a difficult environment.

**Cedric Delves, *Across an Angry Sea: The SAS in the Falklands War*** (New York, NY: Oxford University Press/London, UK: Hurst & Company, 2018), 256 pp., US \$ 29.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-7873-8112-4.

An insider's detailed account of the role of the UK's Special Air Service (SAS) D Squadron 22, which was commanded by the author, in the war against Argentina over the Falklands, in May and June 1982. In the war, eight of the SAS's fighters were killed, with more wounded. The SAS squadron's fighters were the first to raise the Union Jack flag over Government House in Stanley on June 14, 1982.

**Priya Dixit, *The State and 'Terrorists' in Nepal and Northern Ireland: The Social Construction of State Terrorism*** (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Press, 2015), 214 pp., US \$ 120.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-7190-9176-6.

An account of how states' use of the 'terrorism' label as a de-legitimizing strategy against their sub-state adversaries in the context of how the governments of Britain had used such a label against the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the 1970s-1990s and Nepal had used it to describe the Maoists in the post '9/11' era. An empirically-based rhetorical analytical approach is used to study such labeling. Also discussed is the use of the terrorism label by the United States government in the context of its 'war on terror' following the 9/11 attacks. A consequence of such labeling, the author argues, has led to the formation of 'suspect communities' and increased 'terrorization' of the affected societies.

**Charles Husband and Yunis Alam, *Social Cohesion and Counter-Terrorism: A Policy Contradiction*** (Bristol, UK: The Policy Press, 2011), 272 pp., US \$ 38.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-8474-2801-1.

An empirically-based, and theoretically informed examination of the impact of post 9/11 implementation of the British government's counter-terrorism policies on the social cohesion of Muslim communities at the local level in Britain. Primary research was conducted to interview the senior management and staff, operational staff and local councilors of five metropolitan authorities. Specifically, the book examines the intersection between

the 'Prevent' strand of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy and the Community Cohesion strategies that emerged after civil disturbances in several northern English communities, including Burnley and Oldham after 2001. The authors find that the counter-terrorism policies' focusing on identifying and promoting 'moderate' Muslim leaders and similar measures ended up amplifying social disorder and eroding fundamental human rights, necessitating new directions in government CT policies that promote an appropriate balance between collective and individual human rights. (p. 224)

**Michael Kenney, *The Islamic State in Britain: Radicalization and Resilience in an Activist Network*** (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 298 pp., US \$ 99.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1084-7080-3.

An ethnographic study by the author in London's local Muslim communities of how the al-Muhajiroun-linked network engaged in Islamist activism, and the involvement by some of its adherents in terrorist attacks in the UK, as well as joining the ranks for foreign fighters on behalf of the Islamist State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. All this was part of the officially outlawed al-Muhajiroun's (Arabic for 'the Emigrants') objective to create an Islamic state in Britain through its radicalization, indoctrination and recruitment activities. To study these issues, the author drew on "148 interviews, hundreds of hours of field work, and thousands of news reports" to "explain how al-Muhajiroun adapted its activities in response to government efforts to destroy it"(pp. 3-4). The group's size has always been relatively small, the author points out, with some 150 to 200 dedicated members (known as "intellectual affiliates") and several hundred supporters (known as "contacts") in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The group declined to several dozen intellectual affiliates and a little more than a hundred contacts around 2005, and a couple dozen intellectual affiliates and several dozen contacts during the 2010 to 2015 period.(p. 5). Of particular interest is the author's finding that the UK government's counter-terrorism's "disruption of al Muhajiroun may be considered a success" forcing them to be "smaller, more fragmented, and less capable than they have been since the earliest days of their activism" (p. 230). The UK government's countering violent extremism (CVE) and de-radicalization programs, on the other hand, have been less successful since few of the group's former activists had participated in such programs because "They all left the activist network on their own" and "for their own reasons"(p. 233). For these reasons, the author proposes a different strategy that would promote "a small, community-led intervention composed of former members who come together on a volunteer basis to engage young people who are still involved in the activist network"(p. 235). To be successful, such programs should also provide these formers activists "alternative networks and communities that understand what they are going through and can reinforce their intellectual journeys away from the network"(p. 235).

**Quentin Outram and Keith Laybourn (Eds.), *Secular Martyrdom in Britain and Ireland: From Peterloo to the Present*** (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 346 pp., US \$ 99.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-3-3196-2904-9.

The contributors to this volume examine the impact and effectiveness of the concept and practice of the 'people's martyrology' as a secular strategy and tactic by certain opposition movements and individuals in the modern era of Britain and Ireland. As the editors explain, the features of 'people's martyrology' are "the association of a violent or premature death or suffering with a cause which is the focus on conflict with the qualities of innocence, faultlessness, courage, and steadfastness, either alone or in combination, to the martyr; and the memorialization of the martyr" by the construction of memorial objects and buildings, the institution of anniversaries, songs, and myths that are admired by members of his or her community.(p. 288). These issues are examined through case studies in Britain and Ireland, such as Peterloo; Tolpuddle; Featherstone; Tonypandy; Emily Davison (fatally injured by the King's horse on Derby Day, 1913); the 1916 Easter Rising; Jarrow ('the town that was murdered, and martyred in the 1930s'); David Oluwale (a British Nigerian who drowned in the River Aire in Leeds, West Riding of Yorkshire, in 1969); and Bobby Sands, the IRA prison hunger striker who died in 1981.

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## **Max Abrahms, Rules for Rebels: The Science of Victory in Militant History** (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 285 pp., US \$ 50.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1-988-11558.

Reviewed by Alex P. Schmid

This is a ambitious book as the subtitle already indicates. Its title echoes Saul Alinsky's book *Rules for Radicals* which was published in 1971. This is also a very erudite and well-argued volume, based, on the study of hundreds of militant groups and on field research, case studies, regression analysis, and experiments. Almost every second sentence of its chapters is referenced by an endnote – more than 1,200 altogether. The bibliography alone takes 45 pages and the very detailed index another 16 pages. Max Abrahms' volume is the result of a long series of examinations, starting with his 2006 study "Why Terrorism Does Not Work" - a theme he has explored tenaciously ever since.

One of the paradoxes of terrorism is that practitioners of the philosophy of the bomb have an unrealistic and exaggerated expectation of their chances to achieve their objectives, partly based on false analogies with some guerrilla-led decolonisation struggles. The latest example of this hubris has been the Islamic State which in the end faced a coalition of more than sixty state and non-state actors to deprive it of a fixed territorial presence in its shrinking caliphate straddling the Syrian-Iraqi border. Max Abrahms opening chapter to 'Rules for Rebels' is titled 'The Stupid Terrorist' and notes that "The history of militant groups is thus a story about failure. But not always (...) Triumph is possible"(p.1). The author then explores the secrets of success and claims that there is 'a science to victory in militant history', derived from 'three simple rules of successful militant leaders' (p.1): 1.They recognize that not all violence is equal for achieving their stated political goals (...) Compared to more selective violence against military and other government targets, indiscriminate violence against civilian targets lowers the likelihood of political success (...) 2. The second rule is to actively restrain lower-level members from committing it.(...) 3. And the third rule for rebels is to distance the organization from terrorism whenever subordinates flout their targeting guidelines by attacking civilians"(...) These three rules for rebels – learning, restraining and branding to win – are the secrets for victory" (pp.8-12). The book's following 13 chapters and the statistical appendix flesh out these bold claims in great detail, based on a wealth of historical materials.

In the concluding chapter 'The Future of Terrorism', Max Abrahms postulates that "Terrorism will continue as long as leaders believe that it works"(p.198). Unfortunately, their beliefs are nurtured by the way most media report on them. The author blames them for "...constantly talking up terrorists as masterminds. Whatever happens to be the consequence [of an attack, APS] is allegedly what the terrorists want" (p.200). Abrahms is even harsher on some academic pundits and opinion makers explaining to the public what great things the Islamic State was up to even as its caliphate crumbled before their eyes: "By repeating their [the terrorists', APS] talking points, pundits thus exaggerate public perceptions of terrorist skill and accomplishment. Opinion-makers weaponize the prospect of terrorist success to advance their policy preferences" (p.204). True and sad enough. One of the book's final and more hopeful conclusions is that "Indiscriminate violence is counterproductive for state and non-state actors alike" (p.207).

While one may disagree with some of the author's conclusions, Abrahms' book is refreshingly unconventional and hopefully forces others – including rebel leaders tempted to use terrorism – to rethink their position. It deserves to be studied seriously as it goes against much that is taken for granted in terrorism research. Max Abrahms is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts.

*About the Reviewer: Alex P. Schmid, is a Research Fellow at ICCT (The Hague) and Editor-in-Chief of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'.*

## Resources Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects

Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

Most of the items included below became available online between February and April 2019. They are categorised under twelve headings:

1. Non-Religious Terrorism: Actors, Groups, Incidents and Campaigns
2. Religious (mainly Jihadi) Terrorism: Actors, Groups, Incidents and Campaigns
3. Terrorist Strategies and Tactics
4. Conflict, Crime and Political Violence other than Terrorism
5. Counter-Terrorism – General
6. Counter-Terrorist Strategies, Tactics and Operations
7. State Repression and Civil War at Home and Clandestine & Open Warfare Abroad
8. Prevention and Preparedness Studies (including Countering Violent Extremism, De-Radicalization, Counter-Narratives)
9. Intelligence
10. Cyber Operations
11. Risk & Threat Assessments, Forecasts, Analytical Studies
12. Also Worth Reading

*N.B.:* 'Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects' is a regular feature in 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. For past listings, see 'Archive' at [www.terrorismanalysts.com](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com) and at <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism>

### 1. **Non-Religious Terrorism: Actors, Groups, Incidents and Campaigns**

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**About the Compiler:** **Berto Jongman** is Associate Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He is a former senior Military Intelligence Analyst and currently serves as International Consultant on CBRN issues. A sociologist by training, he also worked for civilian Swedish and Dutch research institutes. Drs. Jongman was the recipient of the Golden Candle Award for his *World Conflict & Human Rights Maps*, published by PIOOM. He is editor of the volume 'Contemporary Genocides' (1996) and has also contributed to various editions of 'Political Terrorism', the award-winning handbook of terrorism research, edited by Alex P. Schmid.



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**Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (April – July 2019)**

Compiled by Reinier Bergema

The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), in its mission to provide a platform for academics and practitioners in the field of terrorism and counter-terrorism studies, compiles an online calendar, listing recent and upcoming academic and professional conferences, symposia and similar events that are directly or indirectly relevant to the readers of *Perspectives on Terrorism*. The calendar includes academic and (inter-) governmental conferences, professional expert meetings, civil society events and educational programs. The listed events are organised by a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including several key (counter) terrorism research centres and institutes.

We encourage readers to contact the journal's Assistant Editor for Conference Monitoring, Reinier Bergema, and provide him with relevant information, preferably in the same format as the items listed below. Reinier Bergema can be reached at <[r.bergema@icct.nl](mailto:r.bergema@icct.nl)> or via Twitter: [@reinierbergema](https://twitter.com/reinierbergema).

**April 2019****Terrorism Conference: Active Shooter and Terrorism Readiness**

*Public Agency Training Council*

3-5 April, Las Vegas, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@PATCupdates](https://twitter.com/PATCupdates)

**RAN Meeting: Current and Future Most Used and Most Watched Narratives and Strategies of Far Right Extremists and Islamist Extremists**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) POL & C&N*

4-5 April, Stockholm, Sweden

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](https://twitter.com/RANEurope)

**Lessons Learned From the Iraq War**

*Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD)*

9 April, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@fdd](https://twitter.com/fdd)

**VIII. International Conference on Conflict, Terrorism and Society**

*Kadir Has University*

8-10 April, Istanbul, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@icctsmmedia](https://twitter.com/icctsmmedia)

**RAN Meeting: Evaluation of the Impact of Victims of Terrorism Testimonials**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) RVT*

10-11 April, Turin, Italy

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](https://twitter.com/RANEurope)

**Collaboration Networks in Conference Diplomacy: The Case of Non-Proliferation Regime**

*Center for International Security and Cooperation*

11 April, Stanford, California, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@StanfordCISAC](https://twitter.com/StanfordCISAC)

**ETH Workshop on Swiss Security Policy: World Politics in 2019***ETH Zürich*

12 April, Zürich, Switzerland

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter:**IAFIE Europe 2019***“Mihai Viteazul” National Intelligence Academy (MVNIA)*

14-17 April, Bucharest, Romania

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@sri\\_official](#)**The World at Night: 21st Century Global Security Challenges***Syracuse University Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism*

15 April, Syracuse, N.Y., United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@INSCT](#)**NATO COEDAT Course: Defence Against Suicide Attack***NATO Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism*

15-19 April, Ankara, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a***Gender & Genocide: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis***Syracuse University Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism*

16 April, Syracuse, N.Y., United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@INSCT](#)**Why Democracy Matters for Muslim-Majority Societies and the West: Lessons from the Last 20 Years***Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy*

18 April, Washington, D.C., United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CSIDDC](#)**Red Sea Rivalries: The Gulf, The Horn, and the New Geopolitics of the Red Sea***Brookings Institute*

18 April, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@BrookingsInst](#)**Crisis in Yemen: A Strategic Threat to U.S. Interests and Allies?***Hudson Institute*

18 April, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@HudsonInstitute](#)**International Conference on Law and Social Science Research (ILAS)***Research Synergy Foundation*

22-23 April, Taipei, Taiwan

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a***RAN Meeting: Children Growing Up in an Extremist Family***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) YF&C*

24-25 April, Rome, Italy

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**RAN Meeting: Grooming for Terror – Manipulation and Control***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) H&SC*

24-25 April, Bucharest, Romania

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

**Emerging Trends: New Tools, Threats and Thinking***Intelligence Studies Consortium*

25 April, Arlington, Virginia, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@insalliance](#)**Central African Republic: An Unstable Settlement***International Institute for Strategic Studies*

25 April, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@IISS\\_org](#)**RAN Kick-off Meeting Prosecutors***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)*

25-26 April, Paris, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**Conferences on the Law of Armed Conflict***Israeli Defense Forces*

25-27 April, Tel Aviv, Israel

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@IDF](#)**Future of Islamic World in the Horizon of 2035***The Institute for Islamic World Futures Studies*

28-29 April, Tehran, Iran

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a***Future of War Conference 2019***Arizona State University Center on the Future of War*

29 April, Washington DC, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@Future\\_of\\_War](#)**May 2019****III. International Conference on Terrorism and Political Violence***Eastern Mediterranean Academic Research Center (DAKAM)*

3 May, Istanbul, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@dakamtr](#)**ARTIS Seminar Series on Political Violence: Michele Gelfand***John Jay College of Criminal Justice Center on Terrorism*

3 May, New York, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@JohnJayCNow](#)**Workshop ‘Omgaan met controverse en polarisatie’**

[‘Dealing with Controversy and Polarization’; in Flemish]

*Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering en de Provincie West-Vlaanderen*

3 May, Brugge, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a***America’s Middle East Purgatory: The Case for Doing Less***Center for International Security and Cooperation*

7 May, Stanford, California, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@StanfordCISAC](#)

**RAN YOUNG Academy Session 2 – Challenges & Progress***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) YOUNG*

7-8 May, Bordeaux, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**RAN Meeting: Police Role in the Reintegration and Risk Management of Released Violent Extremist Offenders and Returnee Fighters Coming Home***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) POL*

8-9 May, to be confirmed

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**Citizenship and Discontent in the Middle East***Chatham House*

15 May, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ChathamHouse](#)**Century of the Radical Right: CARR Inaugural Conference CfP***Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right*

15-17 May, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@C4ARR](#)**Lessons from the Past, Dilemmas of the Present and Challenges for the Future: What is an 'Effective CT Strategy'?***International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) & Asser Institute*

16-17 May, The Hague, The Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ICCT\\_TheHague](#); [@TMCAsser](#)**NATO COEDAT Course: Critical Infrastructure Protection from Terrorist Attacks***NATO Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism*

20-24 May, Ankara, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a***24th German Congress on Crime Prevention***Deutscher Präventionstag*

20-21 May, Berlin, Germany

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@praeventionstag](#)**RAN Member State Workshop: Developing in-depth Train the Trainer***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)*

22 May, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**Verdiepingsleergang Terrorisme, Recht en Veiligheid**

[Advanced Course Terrorism, Law and Security, in Dutch]

*Leiden University*

23-24 May, &amp; 6-7 June, The Hague, The Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@UniLeiden](#)**Summer Law Programme on International Criminal Law & International Legal & Comparative Approaches to Counter-Terrorism***Asser Institute & American University Washington College of Law*

26 May – 20 June, The Hague, The Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@TMCAsser](#)

**Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism**

*NATO Centre of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism (COE-DAT)*

27-28 May, Ankara, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a*

**RAN Multi-Agency Meeting: Taking Mental Health Issues Into Account in CVE and PVE**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) LOCAL-HeSC*

28 May, Paris, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

**RAN Policy & Practice Event Correlation Between Violent Extremism and Mental Health Disorders**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)*

29 May, Paris, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

**Modern Deterrence Conference**

*Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)*

29 May, London, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RUSI\\_org](#)

**NATO COE-DAT Conference: Annual Counterterrorism Discipline**

*NATO Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism*

29-30 May, Ankara, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: *n/a*

**June 2019****Book Launch Event: The Three Pillars of Radicalization**

*National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)*

5 June, University of Maryland, College Park, United States

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@START\\_umd](#)

**RAN Multi-Agency Meeting: Connections, Roles and Quality Review of Rehabilitation, Resocialisation and Exit Activities**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) EXIT-PerP*

5-6 June, Budapest, Hungary

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

**RAN Multi-Agency Meeting: Extremists Being Released From Prison**

**- Community and Family Acceptance**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) YF&C – PerP*

6-7 June, Budapest, Hungary

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

**GLOBSEC 2019 Bratislava Forum**

*GLOBSEC*

6-8 June, Bratislava, Slovakia

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@GLOBSEC](#)

**RAN Steering Committee**

*Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)*

11 June, Brussels, Belgium

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)

**Schools and Challenging Far Right Extremism***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) EDU*

13-14 June, Berlin, Germany

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**Preparation Remembrance Day 2020***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) EDU*

20-21 June, Bilbao, Spain

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**VOX-Pol Summer School 2019: Topics in Violent Online Political Extremism***VOX-POL*

10-14 June, Dublin, Ireland

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@VOX\\_Pol](#)**VSE Annual Conference 2019: Victim Recovery – A Road of Many Routes***Victim Support Europe*

12-13 June, Strasbourg, France

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@VictimSupportEU](#)**NEXT Seminar***Network for Young Researchers on Extremism – NEXT*

19 June, Oslo, Norway

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CrexUiO](#)**The Data Revolution in Terrorism Research: Implications for Theory and Practice***Society for Terrorism Research, C-REX, University of Oslo & the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI)*

21-21 June, Oslo, Norway

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@CrexUiO](#)**Terrorism and Social Media: An International Conference***Swansea University*

25-26 June, Swansea, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ctp\\_swansea](#)**July 2019****Peace, Conflict and Pedagogy***Liverpool Hope University*

2 July, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@LiverpoolHopeUK](#)**Narratives and Strategies of Far Right Extremists and Islamist Extremists***Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) P&P*

4 July, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@RANEurope](#)**Executive Certificate Program in Counter-Terrorism Studies***International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*

7-26 July, Herzliya, Israel

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ICT\\_org](#)

**MENA Think Tank Forum: Migration and Diaspora**

ORSAM Center for Middle Eastern Studies

9-10 July, Ankara, Turkey

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@orsamtr](#)

**Violence: An Inclusive Interdisciplinary Project**

*Progressive Connexions*

15-16 July, Verona, Italy

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@ProgConnex](#)

**The 7th International Academic Conference on Social Sciences (IACSS)**

*International Institute for Academic Development*

26-27 July, Prague, Czech Republic

Website: [visit](#) | Twitter: [@IIACD](#)

**Acknowledgement**

*Special thank goes out to Berto Jongman and Alex Schmid. for their contributions to this conference calendar.*

**About The Compiler:** **Reinier Bergema** is a Research Fellow and Project Manager at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) and an Assistant Editor at *Perspectives on Terrorism*. His research interests include, inter alia, radicalisation and Dutch (jihadist) foreign fighters.

## About *Perspectives on Terrorism*

*Perspectives on Terrorism* (PoT) is a joint publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University, Campus The Hague. PoT is published six times per year as a free, independent, scholarly peer-reviewed online journal available at <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism>.

PoT seeks to provide a platform for established scholars as well as academics and professionals entering the interdisciplinary fields of Terrorism-, Political Violence- and Conflict Studies.

The editors invite researchers and readers to:

- present their perspectives on the prevention of, and response to, terrorism and related forms of violent conflict;
- submit to the journal accounts of evidence-based, empirical scientific research and analyses;
- use the journal as a forum for debate and commentary on issues related to the above.

*Perspectives on Terrorism* has sometimes been characterised as ‘nontraditional’ in that it dispenses with some of the rigidities associated with commercial print journals. Topical articles can be published at short notice and reach, through the Internet, a much larger audience than subscription-fee based paper journals. Our on-line journal also offers contributors a higher degree of flexibility in terms of content, style and length of articles – but without compromising professional scholarly standards.

The journal’s Research Notes, Special Correspondence, Op-Eds and other content are reviewed by members of the Editorial Team, while its Articles are peer-reviewed by outside academic experts and professionals. While aiming to be policy-relevant, PT does not support any partisan policies regarding (counter-) terrorism and waging conflicts. Impartiality, objectivity and accuracy are guiding principles that we require contributors to adhere to. They are responsible for the content of their contributions and retain the copyright of their publication.

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