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Table of Contents

Words of Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XVI, Issue 4 (August 2022) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* (ISSN 2334-3745). Our independent online journal is an Open Access publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), Vienna, and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University's Campus in The Hague. All past and recent issues can be found at: *https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism*.

Perspectives on Terrorism (PoT) is indexed by JSTOR, SCOPUS, and Google Scholar where it ranks No. 3 of journals in the field of Terrorism Studies. Jouroscope™, the directory of scientific journals, has listed PoT as one of the top ten journals in the category free open access journals in social sciences, with a Q1 ranking. Now in its 16th year of publication, PoT has close to 8,000 registered subscribers and many more occasional readers and website visitors in academia, government and civil society worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while its Research Notes and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

The current issue features three Articles. The first, *The Contagion and Copycat Effect in Transnational Far-right Terrorism: An Analysis of Language Evidence,* by Julia Kupper, Tanya Karoli Christensen, Dakota Wing, Marlon Hurt, Matthew Schumacher and Reid Meloy, shows in great detail how social media provided an eco-system for contagion and the spread of copycat crimes by ten lone actors from the extreme right. The second article, by Joe Whittaker, *Rethinking Online Radicalization,* argues that the distinction between online and offline no longer makes much sense as "most people are either online or in a state of online readiness 24/7." The third article, *Terrorism Experts' Predictions Regarding the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Activities of Violent Non-State Actors,* by Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, Tommy van Steen, and Maria-Elena Kisyova present findings based on 142 responses to a questionnaire sent out by the authors.

The **Resources** section features, in its CT-Bookshelf, eleven short reviews by our book reviews editor, Joshua Sinai. Our information resources editor, Judith Tinnes, offers in her *Resources List for Terrorism Research: Journals, Websites, Bibliographies* a unique instrument for researchers in the field of (counter-) terrorism studies. Associate Editor *Berto Jongman* contributes another of his wide-ranging surveys of recent online resources on terrorism and related subjects.

In **Announcements**, *Olivia Kearney* presents her regular "Conference Calendar. There is also a job vacancy announcement, since Olivia has moved to another field of research. Finally, the brief **About Perspectives on Terrorism** section lists the people behind the journal and their tasks.

The texts of the current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* have been selected and prepared by *Alex Schmid* and *James Forest,* the journal's principal editors, with the help of our Associate Editors. Editorial Assistant *Jodi Moore* handled proof-reading, while the technical online launch of the August 2022 issue of our journal has been in the hands of our Associate Editor for IT, *Audrey J. Vrolijk* (ISGA, The Hague).

The Contagion and Copycat Effect in Transnational Far-right Terrorism: An Analysis of Language Evidence

by Julia Kupper, Tanya Karoli Christensen, Dakota Wing, Marlon Hurt, Matthew Schumacher and Reid Meloy

Abstract

This article corroborates the continued threat of extreme right terrorism by exemplifying textually interconnected links across linguistic evidence composed prior to or during attacks in the United States, New Zealand, Germany, Norway and Sweden. A qualitative content analysis of targeted violence manifestos and live-streams, attack announcements on online platforms, and writings on equipment (e.g., firearms) used during the incidents reveals an emerging illicit genre set that is increasingly consolidated in form and function. The messages accentuate an intricate far-right online ecosystem that empowers copycats and escorts them on their pathway to violence. A definition for targeted violence live-streams is proposed and operational applications are discussed.

Keywords: Far-right terrorism, targeted violence, lone actors, manifestos, live-streams, forensic linguistics

Introduction

During the past decade, several lone-actor terrorists motivated by extreme right-wing ideologies attempted or conducted seemingly unconnected mass casualty events across the globe. The perpetrators—originating from North America, Europe and Oceania—often distributed manifestos just prior to their attacks, and in some instances broadcast their offenses via live-streams. As a common trait, the offenders perceived Western culture as superior, argued for a racially segregated society, and expressed a strong fear of being culturally eliminated through the so-called *Great Replacement* theory.[1] This menacing conspiracy narrative propagandized by the far-right alleges that white populations are being purposefully and deliberately replaced by a malevolent coalition (i.e., a hidden Jewish cabal and/or democratic elites) with non-white immigrants from the Middle East and Africa. Furthermore, it is claimed that social privileges traditionally associated with (the male) gender, (the white) skin color, (the Christian) religion and (hetero-)sexuality are intentionally diminished to engineer and provoke a *white genocide*, the extinction of the white race.[2] It is frequently paired with *accelerationism*, the belief appropriated by the extreme right that the breakdown of liberal democracies and the collapse of the modern progressive world can be accelerated by terrorist actions conducted by lone actors or small groups. One narrative that has been influential in accelerationist ideology and strategy is *The Turner Diaries*, a novel written and published by the white supremacist William Luther Pierce in 1978. Extremism researcher J.M. Berger has stated that the novel inspired over forty terrorist attacks and hate crimes, including the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, committed by Timothy McVeigh.[3] Moreover, the notion of accelerationism advocates that terrorizing political tension must be created in order to overhaul institutions and inspire a race war to establish a white-dominated future.[4] This justification of violence is closely connected to "the speed in which social media allows for the amplification and glorification of attacks," with successful assailants often being portrayed as heroes and saints on online platforms—such as the *chan cultures*—to mobilize supporters and inspire future incidents.[5] Subsequently, the online celebration of lone-actor terrorists has created a subculture of violent copycats—imitators who self-radicalize in cyberspace.[6]

Drawing inspiration from notorious role models is not a new phenomenon in international terrorism, with previous studies and articles having highlighted parallels in extreme ideologies, online radicalization and modus operandi.[7] However, this article examines the contagion and copycat effect in ten contemporary far-right terrorist attacks, investigating the intertextuality and interconnectivity of different types of lan-

guage evidence that was produced among these events. By analyzing the incidents through a genre lens, content patterns across manifestos and live-streams, announcements on digital platforms, and writings on equipment utilized during the attacks are highlighted. Our primary focus is on the communications produced by Anders Breivik, Brenton Tarrant, John Earnest, Patrick Crusius, Philip Manshaus, Stephan Balliet, Hugo Jackson and Payton Gendron. Furthermore, we discuss the historical context of two additional solo operators—Dylann Roof and Robert Bowers—to highlight the importance of shared language, motivation, means and opportunity across the assailants.

All of these attackers are linked by their lone-actor status, which suggests that certain parts of the terrorist cycle are undertaken alone, specifically logistical and tactical elements in preparing for such an attack.[8] This might include later-stage markers on the pathway to violence, such as research, planning, preparation, surveillance and implementation.[9] However, as this article demonstrates, the evolution and interrelatedness of a complex far-right ecosystem of online platforms and narratives influenced our sample of lone offenders. For instance, the *Great Replacement* conspiracy narrative is reflected in the selection of most of their targets, which facilitates the eliminationist doctrine and ideas of Renaud Camus, the developer of the contemporary theory.[10] Nonetheless, this protean meaning can take different forms; some of these perpetrators devolved in their ideology from targeting a particular group that they believed was conspiring to advance the *Great Replacement* to believing that the majority of (non-white) humans are "disgusting," and thus developing a misanthropic mindset.[11] As such, inspired by Brenton Tarrant's manifesto that was filled with elements of that conspiratorial ideology, John Earnest and Stephan Balliet originally planned to attack the Muslim community but later changed their targets to include Jewish individuals.[12]

Table 1: Perpetrators and operational details of their attacks (n = 10)

Name	Date	Location	Target	Manifesto	Q&A	Announcement on online platform	Live-stream	Writings on equipment
Anders Breivik	22 July 2011	Olso and Utøya, Norway	Labor party youth camp and government building	Yes	Yes	Via emails	YouTube (attempt)	No
Dylann Roof	17 June 2015	Charleston, South Carolina, U.S.	Baptist church (Black community)	Yes	No	Personal website	No	No
Robert Bowers	27 October 2018	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.	Synagogue (Jewish community)	No	No	Gab	No	No
Brenton Tarrant	15 March 2019	Christchurch, New Zealand	Mosques (Muslim community)	Yes	Yes	8chan	Facebook Live	Previous offenders, names of victims
John Earnest	27 April 2019	Poway, California, U.S.	Synagogue (Jewish community)	Yes	Yes	8chan	Facebook Live (attempt)	No
Patrick Crusius	3 August 2019	El Paso, Texas, U.S.	Supermarket (Hispanic community)	Yes	No	8chan	No	No
Philip Manshaus	10 August 2019	Bærum, Norway	Mosque (Muslim community)	No	No	Endchan	Facebook Live (attempt)	No
Stephan Balliet	9 October 2019	Halle, Germany	Synagogue (Jewish community)	Yes	Yes	Meguca	Twitch	No
Hugo Jackson	19 August 2021	Eslöv, Sweden	School (non-whites)	Yes	No	Discord	Twitch	Previous offenders, names of victims
Payton Gendron	14 May 2022	Buffalo, New York, U.S.	Supermarket (Black community)	Yes	Yes	Discord	Twitch	Previous offenders, names of victims

The Eslöv School Attack

On 19 August 2021, 15-year-old student Hugo Jackson entered his secondary school *Källebergsskolan* in Eslöv, a small town in the southern part of Sweden. He was clothed in black, wearing a bulletproof vest, a military green helmet with a GoPro camera and stickers of the Swedish flag on his body armor. Equipped with a double-edged knife and two non-functioning handgun replicas, he pulled up his skeleton mask and began playing a carefully crafted playlist, which included World War II and anti-Muslim propaganda music.[13] Before walking into the school to execute his targeted act of violence, the perpetrator started his 21-minute broadcast on Twitch, an online live-streaming platform. In a pre-attack note written in English for his international audience, Jackson laid out his plan:

> "I'll try to kill as many as possible in the cafeteria then i'm gonna go for the 7th graders because they won't be able to do shit, just a bunch of midgets running towards me basically. Then I'll just try to get as many as possible by knocking on offices, whoever comes in my way."[14]

After stabbing and seriously injuring a 45-year-old teacher and threatening fellow students and staff, Jackson had second thoughts and discontinued his rampage. When he was confronted by a responding law enforcement officer, he directed one of his forged pistols at him in an attempt to die by suicide-by-cop. However, the policeman fired a warning shot and Jackson eventually surrendered.

The Copycat Effect in Transnational Terrorism

When the investigating authorities entered Hugo Jackson's parental home post-incident, they noticed that the teenager's room was covered in Nazi symbols and writings, including drawings of a swastika, the SS symbol, "1488" and "Drittes Reich".[15] The following quote was scribbled on his bedroom wall: "Hi my name is Anon, and I think the holocaust never happened. Feminism is the cause of decline of the West which acts as a scapegoat for mass immigration and the root of all these problems is the Jew."[16] These words were originally uttered by the German lone-actor terrorist Stephan Balliet in the opening statement of his live-stream during an attempted mass shooting at a synagogue in Halle, Germany, in October 2019. Unable to breach the security doors, he subsequently killed two individuals nearby. Balliet broadcast 35 minutes of his attack and part of his escape on Twitch, the same platform Jackson would use nearly two years later. Furthermore, Jackson said the words "Ah, Scheiße"—the German equivalent of 'oh, shit'—twice in his live-stream, another direct reference to Balliet's recording, who used identical words when experiencing difficulties with his equipment.[17]

The police also discovered a handwritten letter on Jackson's desk, which stated "in memory of [Anders] Breivik (…) and Brenton Harrison Tarrant ♡ trying to make life and society better."[18] After seizing his electronics, the investigating authorities located photos and writings of Breivik, Tarrant, Balliet and Patrick Crusius on his computer. The names of these perpetrators form direct links between seemingly isolated terror incidents and document a transnational and digital network of right-wing extremists.[19] The attack was eventually classified as a "racially motivated serious violent crime", as the juvenile offender intended to carry out a terrorist attack inspired by the *Great Replacement* theory, despite being non-white himself.[20]

Background

Fact Patterns of the Other Attackers

On 22 July 2011, Anders Behring Breivik detonated a bomb outside the government quarter in Oslo, Norway, and proceeded to conduct a shooting rampage at a labor party summer camp on Utøya, Norway, killing 77 persons and injuring 319 others. Breivik's attack has been described as a historical change for the online far-right community; he circulated his propaganda to thousands of international extreme-right groups and individual actors in Europe and the United States in the hours leading up to his attack.[21] Moreover, he

had intended to live-stream one specific part of his act on an iPhone and planned to upload the footage to YouTube: the beheading of Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway's former labor prime minister.[22] His writings have been discussed as the first "do-it-yourself-guide" for solo operators that went viral and received attention beyond far-right circles, giving specific instructions on how to conduct these types of terroristic attacks, with a focus on "if you want something done, then do it yourself."[23] Breivik incorporated several text elements from Ted Kaczynski, the so-called "Unabomber", who was among the first to spread his ideology to a large audience by getting his manifesto printed in various newspapers.[24] Breivik instituted a turning point because "he was sort of a proof of concept as to how much an individual actor could accomplish (…); he killed so many people at one time operating by himself, it really set a new bar for what one person can do."[25] Since then, he has inspired a number of similar acts of terror, some successful, many thwarted.[26]

On 17 June 2015, Dylann Storm Roof killed nine people and injured one, specifically targeting the Black community at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. At the time of his attack, the online far-right community on 4chan and other imageboards was still ambivalent on whether or not large-scale terrorist attacks would harm the attempts to 'mainstream' the movement, which conventionally deployed humorous and argumentative methods to gain new followers from the mainstream of society.[27] Subsequent to his act, an online hero cult developed around him, calling themselves the "bowl gang" because of Roof's distinct haircut.[28]

On 27 October 2018, Robert Gregory Bowers killed eleven and injured seven people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the most serious single act of anti-Semitic violence in the history of the United States. The mass shooting was a turning point in the media coverage and online debate in the above-mentioned imageboard communities, and cemented a shift into pro-violent attacks, although Bowers himself was not an active member of the *chan* community.[29] Instead, he favored the far-right Twitter clone *Gab*, which is where he published his final post with an announcement of the attack, a new modus operandi that would be copied by many: "HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."[30] The climate on these fringe forums had changed, with a weakened tactical opposition to acts of violence and an increased glorification of perpetrators.[31]

On 15 March 2019, Brenton Harrison Tarrant killed 51 and injured 40 individuals at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. Tarrant was fundamentally influenced by Breivik in terms of ideology and modus operandi, selecting multiple targets and a variety of weapons, including firearms and explosives.[32] Mimicking Breivik, Tarrant distributed his writings to newsrooms, the prime minister of New Zealand and other recipients. He has since been viewed as the "most influential and important far-right 'martyr' [on social media in the extreme-right sphere], even more so than Breivik who inspired him."[33] The primary cause for this is that Tarrant was the first to successfully live-stream a far-right terror attack to an international audience using *Facebook Live*, which became available in 2016, five years after Breivik's attempt to film his act.[34] Tarrant created a successful formula for subsequent attacks, becoming a catalyst for future incidents around the globe. Baele, Brace and Coan talk of the 'Tarrant effect' with reference to the glorification of his persona on 8chan, which they explain by his direct relationship to the forum and the novelty of his modus operandi, including his announcement of the attack on an imageboard.[35]

On 27 April 2019, John Timothy Earnest killed one and injured three individuals during a shooting rampage at a synagogue in Poway, California. Planning to imitate Tarrant's attack one month prior, he disseminated a manifesto and a link to his live-stream on 8chan. He allegedly failed to broadcast his operation, due to the privacy settings on his Facebook account; a GoPro camera was found in his vehicle after the arrest.[36] Weeks earlier, he had attempted to burn down a mosque in the nearby city of Escondido, California. On 3 August 2019, Patrick Wood Crusius killed 23 individuals and injured 23 during a mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. He also distributed his manifesto on 8chan, stating that he was inspired by Tarrant's writings.

A few days later, on 10 August 2019, Philip Manshaus attempted to storm a mosque in Bærum, Norway,

injuring two, after having killed his step-sister because of her Chinese origin. Aiming to copy Tarrant (and not Norway's native Breivik), he claimed to have been motivated by white supremacy, selected a mosque as a target and announced his violent actions on an imageboard. Manshaus reportedly watched the recording of Tarrant's live-stream but only decided to act after having read his manifesto eight days before he rushed to commit his own attack.[37] Although he did not author a declaration himself, he told investigators that he was directly inspired by Tarrant and frequently visited the *chan* forums where he was radicalized.[38] Manshaus' live-stream malfunctioned, as he was unable to connect his GoPro camera attached to a helmet to the internet; nonetheless, the recording of his thwarted act was later played as evidence during his trial.[39]

As we were in the final stages of authoring this article, another lone-actor terrorist, Payton Gendron, carried out a mass shooting at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, on 14 May 2022, targeting the Black community. Claiming to be self-radicalized on 4chan within a relatively short time frame, he started "getting serious" in January 2022, three months prior to his act—which might be an example of the pathway of violence becoming a runway to violent action.[40] According to his online diary, he originally planned to carry out the attack on 15 March, the anniversary of Tarrant's act of violence.[41] Gendron claimed in his manifesto that his motivating force was the same fear-instilling conspiracy narrative, declaring that "I carried this attack out so I can influence others into defending themselves from the replacers, becoming infamous was the only way."[42] His operational approach was similar to previous assailants: he selected a public location with a "high percentage" of targets, wore tactical gear for protection, used a semi-automatic assault rifle for effectiveness and live-streamed the event on Twitch with a GoPro camera.[43]

Method

Intertextuality

This study investigates how a new, complex genre set of targeted violence manifestos and live-streams, attack announcements on digital platforms, and writings on equipment has been emerging globally. In order to identify how these varying text types are amalgamated, we firstly assessed their forms and functions through an intertextuality lens. Secondly, we conducted a qualitative content analysis to detect any potential links to previous perpetrators' writings and to establish if patterns in content could have emerged from a contagion or copycat effect. Briggs and Bauman argue that "genre is quintessentially intertextual";[44] intertextuality can be linked through all levels of language, such as lexical items, morphology, syntax, rhetorical structure and thematic content. Intertextuality relies on Bakhtin's observation that all language use is related to both past and future utterances. This allows for an understanding that a text can be "lifted from its originating context (...) and inserted into a new setting."[45]

The primary materials for most of the subjects had been identified during an earlier study authored by this article's first and last authors [46]; the remaining files were obtained via systematic open-source research and through law enforcement and extremism experts' contacts. Several documents were provided to us that have not been released to the public. As all of the data discussed in this article were sensitive in nature, the language evidence was only stored on the first author's laptop. Ethical and legal considerations were reviewed, and found that the majority of data utilized in the study were based upon archival analysis of open-source material. This obviated the need for an IRB review of this effort, as well as consideration of any informed consents.

Illicit Genres and Their Uptakes

When emerging from a targeted violence environment, communications such as manifestos and live-streams can be considered a "socially deviant" or "societally illicit" genre.[47] In contrast to conventional genres—such as editorials or job applications—illicit genres—such as threats of violence and hate speech—are more heterogeneous and have fewer structural elements. However, they can be recognized by their core functions, which are destructive and disruptive, as they tend to "upset society and commonly affect their targets negatively."[48] For instance, Bojsen-Møller et al. have identified that the primary function of threats is the

intimidation of an addressee, which is accomplished by informing the recipient of a future harmful act for which the threatener is responsible.[49] For some subcultures, such as the far-right online ecosystem, an otherwise illicit genre takes on a community-building function when it is embraced as a valid and useful type of expression.[50] This makes the preferred text types of the subculture especially prone to the consolidation of structural elements familiar from other, non-illicit genres. Responses to a genre, whether illicit or not, are called "uptakes".[51] The idea is that a text can be responded to—"taken up"—in myriad ways, and that these uptakes are crucial for the interpretation and the wider impact of the text.

Contagion and Copycat Effect

Meloy has advanced the idea that contagion and copycat should be separated.[52] 'Contagion' refers to an acute period—a hot zone—following a widely publicized mass attack, usually several weeks, and is the imitation of the act.[53] There is an increase in the frequency of targeted violence events before a return to base line.[54] The term 'copycat' refers to a chronic phenomenon, extending over months if not years, and involves the imitation of both the acts and the actors.[55] When aggregated, copycat events become a subcultural script—a prescription for problem-solving via a violent attack—that is most often emulated by young males in the construction of a new, dark identification or self-identity.[56] Subjects will attempt, however, to distinguish themselves from prior attackers through tactical innovations and increasing the number of casualties.

Definition and Functions of Targeted Violence Manifestos

Kupper and Meloy coined the term "targeted violence manifesto" in a recent study on spoken and written leakage, due to the lack of a distinct description of the word "manifesto" in a criminal context. They formulated the following definition:

> "A written or spoken communication intended to justify an act of violence against a specific target by articulating self-identified grievances, homicidal intentions, and/or extreme ideologies for committing an attack. Generally composed by a single author before the incident occurs, it sometimes expresses beliefs and ideas to violently promote political, religious, or social changes."[57]

In a subsequent article, Kupper added that manifestos "are often created for and accessible by a public audience in furtherance of inspiring like-minded members and opposing groups to commit similar attacks (i.e., copycats)."[58] Indeed, part of the terror orchestration is to share ideological motivations, operational strategies and tactical advice. The functions of targeted violence manifestos have been previously discussed by Kupper and Meloy; in this article, we extend their definition to include an additional core social function of these types of communications: to signal the author's membership in the intricate digital ecosystem of the global far-right.[59] The manifestos of contemporary extreme right-wing terrorists appear to be a cultural code to claim in-group membership to a force that takes their virtual frustration to the physical world by conducting mass attacks. Unlike, for example, traditional white supremacy movements that interact face to face during meetings, live concerts and other means of social bonding activities, these lone offenders communicate only via virtual forums, whilst seemingly acting on their own orders. Though they self-radicalize online, virtual (and physical) connections to others can play a critical role, such as exchanging ideas with like-minded people in these digital communities.[60] Solitary perpetrators typically decide when and where to attack on their own, which makes them autonomous in that respect. In fact, the majority of lone actors identify with larger movements that advocate "violence-justifying ideologies."[61] This can be at least partially attributed to "the advent of social media; now, fewer attackers feel a need or desire to affiliate with an actual group on the ground when they can be informed and inspired online, especially from the writings of previous attackers."[62]

Moreover, an important subfunction of manifestos is to control the narrative following the event, something that is particularly true of documents that are distributed online or sent directly to mainstream media

outlets prior to the terror attack. Notably, this same function was theorized as one performed by realized threats (but not by non-realized or 'empty' threats) by Hurt, a genre which is closely related to the manifestos analyzed here.[63] If the perpetrator fails to publicly declare his intentions and investigating authorities are unable to single out a clear motivating factor, such as in the case of the 2017 Las Vegas shooting by Stephen Paddock, those left behind may never find closure—and the mystery therein may perpetuate study and interest in the case.

For this article, another crucial enhancement is added to the typical composition of targeted violence manifestos: they occasionally include self-interviews in a question-and-answer (Q&A) format. We believe that the main function of these interviews is a form of self-representation to display awareness of the mainstream society's conception of their fringe views, while offering an opportunity to counter that narrative with their self-prescribed triggers and motivations for the attack. The secondary function appears to be a mockery of the establishment, as the Q&As mirror the well-known interviewing format, with some representing hostile lines of questioning, as might be posed by interrogating law enforcement officers or journalists, but tailored to the attacker's own specific needs. Ostensibly, the idea that journalism can access any kind of information and report news objectively is mocked because—in their minds—everything is relative, and by posing their own questions, they frame the narrative. In addition, these self-interviews reveal the bi-directionality of communicating both to the out-group (i.e., targets and the rest of society) and the in-group (other far-right individuals and movements). It could also mirror the style of digital communication found on mainstream and fringe platforms, such as Twitter or the *chan* boards, where users engage in conversational dialogues and discussions. Another essential element is that this attractive Q&A format in the manifestos has been readily distributed by the mainstream media, often without fact-checking its content, which reinforces the ideas of these perpetrators even further.[64]

Definition and Functions of Targeted Violence Live-streams

Another crucial digital component of recent far-right attacks has been the online broadcasting of their real-world offenses, which was arguably inspired by "snuff" films that were available for many decades on the black market—videos for sale of killings—and later influenced by jihadist propaganda campaigns. It appears that the filming of violent acts with a GoPro camera originated from "leaderless jihadi" millennials in France; one of the earliest examples is Mohammed Merah, who went on a 10-day killing spree in France in 2012 while recording his attack with this type of equipment.[65] Four years later, Larossi Abballa utilized *Facebook Live* to address his audience during a lethal attack on two married French police officers in their home while taking their three-year-old son hostage.[66] Follman reported that a 4chan user had posted a message in 2018, inquiring if "(…) anyone ever livestreamed a mass shooting with a GoPro helmet?"[67] Brenton Tarrant answered this call the following year, showcasing the feasibility and lethality of his destructive events while creating a digital template for real-life actions and subsequent acts of far-right violence.

Live-streams in particular make attacks more accessible, as they are portrayed in the first-person shooter perspective and blur the lines between play and reality.[68] Moreover, they can be viewed and replayed by an immediate global audience, with the multimodal, visual aspect not limiting the audience to any particular language user in the same way as written manifestos.

We propose the following definition for *targeted violence live-streams*:

> "A real-time transmission of an attempted or executed act of violence over the internet, broadcast to a global audience by the perpetrator who plans to conduct the attack. It is the action component of what is frequently merely theoretical in a targeted violence manifesto."

Live-streaming attacks appears to be a more powerful tool for propaganda than manifestos: echoing the words of the written materials, they are more intimate and bring the operational plans to life. When the live-stream starts, it automatically produces indisputable evidence, not only linking the perpetrator to the act of violence but bridging the gap from the textual desire in the manifesto to actionable encouragement and en-

hanced self-confidence in the real world. The core functions of live-streams can be categorized into external and internal components, with the overarching framework consisting of creating an immediate contagion or a long-term copycat effect. In an attempt to inspire future terroristic acts, the perpetrator mimics combat video games, visualizing the idea of a mass shooter for the next imitator. By acting as a double-edged sword, live-streams target the in-group and out-group of the perpetrator simultaneously. On the one hand, their own community will use the recordings of these videos to preserve the memory of their "heroes" and glorify their actions, while seeing their biased attitudes confirmed and reinforced.[69] On the other hand, they act as psychological warfare for their enemies, causing fear and anxiety in the targeted communities.[70] Posselt has pointed out that hate crimes do not only affect the immediate victims but that the message is communicated "on several levels and to different addressees: to the attacked individual and bystanders, to the social group the individual belongs to and to sympathizers of the offender as well as to society at large."[71]

Furthermore, live-streams are a crucial instrument for disseminating the message of the terrorist without having to rely on the mass media to report on the attack, with recent recordings having spread like wildfire online. At the same time, this strategy creates a visual hook, which ensures that the incident—including its live-stream and manifesto—will go viral and spread horizontally online. Thus, the mainstream reporting is inevitable; notwithstanding, if the media broadcasts snippets or a screenshot of the perpetrators' live actions, their ideas are suddenly exposed to millions of potential copycats. As Macklin and Bjørgo have previously pointed out: "For Tarrant, livestream video was the more important communicative component of his terrorism. It was not a medium for his message. It was the message. The central point of the attack (…) was not just to kill Muslims, but to make a video of someone killing Muslims."[72]

Results

The Circle of Contagion and Copycat

In our sample of perpetrators (n = 10), interconnectivity is noticeable across five stages, corresponding to the pathway of intended violence [73]: during the self-radicalization process, offenders study targeted violence manifestos and live-streams from infamous role models, which inspire them to commit attacks. While planning and preparing for the act, these writings and recordings are utilized as a do-it-yourself guide, providing tips on targets, training and operational intelligence, such as surveillance. During the mobilization stage, the subjects proceed to compose manifestos themselves, which often reference notorious same-genre authors, copying structural components and citing or rephrasing textual elements from previous writings. While implementing the terrorist attack, the assailants announce their planned actions on a digital platform shortly prior to the act, again quoting or rewording the language from previous online postings. In the final phase, the perpetrators broadcast their acts of violence on mainstream online platforms, which often entails a visual display of weapons that reference the names of preceding attackers or victims of opposing attacks. These communication strategies are designed to create an operational manual to incite others to commit additional mass casualty events, while simultaneously demonstrating their inclusion within the far-right online ecosystem. Along with these stages or patterns of movement on the pathway to intended violence, we also see content patterns.

Content Patterns Across Targeted Violence Manifestos

1. Referencing Names of Notorious Same-Genre Authors

Across Brenton Tarrant's manifesto, remarks about Dylann Roof and Anders Breivik were detected two and three times, respectively. The perpetrator also included the names of other far-right inspired attackers that are not included in this study: "I support many of those that take a stand against ethnic and cultural genocide. Luca Traini, Anders Breivik, Dylan Roof, Anton Lundin Pettersson, Darren Osbourne etc."[74] In turn, John Earnest referenced Tarrant eleven and Robert Bowers five times in his writings, exhorting readers to "FIGHT BACK, REMEMBER ROBERT BOWERS, REMEMBER BRENTON TARRANT."[75] Patrick Crusius referenced Tarrant's pamphlet twice, opening his narrative with the words "In general, I

support the Christchurch shooter [Tarrant] and his manifesto."[76] Although Philip Manshaus did not author a statement, his online announcement of the attack referenced Tarrant twice, and Earnest and Crusius once. In addition, he attached a drawing that depicted the three as "chads" to his imageboard posting.[77] Stephan Balliet made one reference to Tarrant's name in his unpublished Q&A guide: "Is there anyone you want to thank? Yes, Brenton Tarrant." [78] Hugo Jackson alluded to Tarrant's name once throughout his manifesto. Payton Gendron referenced Tarrant's name six times throughout his writings, with Breivik, Roof, Earnest and Crusius each mentioned twice, and Bowers and Manshaus once. Copying his "idol" Tarrant, Gendron also included the same names of other extreme-right offenders, merely changing the order of their appearance: "I support many of those that take a stand against ethnic and cultural genocide. Brenton Tarrant, Patrick Crusius, John Earnest, Robert Bowers, Phillip Manshaus, Luca Traini, Anders Breivik, Dylann Roof, Anton Lundin Pettersson, Darren Osborne etc."[79] As these examples of intertextuality and interconnectivity illustrate, previous far-right attackers have a substantial effect on successive perpetrators; similar references have been detected in the writings of school shooters.[80]

2. Copying Structural Components and Citing, Rephrasing or Plagiarizing Textual Elements from Previous Manifestos

John Earnest and Hugo Jackson included direct quotes of Tarrant's manifesto in their scripts: "Tarrant was a catalyst for me personally. He showed me that it could be done. And that it needed to be done. "WHY WON'T SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING? WHY WON'T SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING? WHY DON'T I DO SOMETHING?"—the most powerful words in his entire manifesto" and "For the thousands of European lives" - Brenton tarrant."[81]

However, the most extensive form of copying was noted in Payton Gendron's manifesto: in terms of structure, the author duplicated the Q&A section from Tarrant and continued categorizing the content into different sections on "Blacks", "Jews" and "East Asians", which is homogeneous to Dylann Roof's statement.[82] Gendron also included his "goals"—which are similar to Stephan Balliet's "objectives"—and added neatly organized pictures of his weapons, also imitating Balliet's manifesto:

- Balliet: "1. Prove the viability of improvised weapons. 2. Increase the moral of other suppressed Whites by spreading the combat footage. 3. Kill as many anti-Whites as possible, jews preferred. Bonus: Don't die."[83]
- Gendron: "Kill as many blacks as possible, Avoid dying, Spread ideals."[84]

The closing part of Gendron's manifesto returned to the anatomy of Tarrant's screen, duplicating his "messages to various groups", "general thoughts" and "who is truly to blame?" sections.[85] In terms of lexical borrowing, Gendron copied entire pages from Tarrant's manifesto, with the Anti-Defamation League stating that a comparative text analysis found that 23% of Gendron's writings matched Tarrant's declaration word for word.[86] Occasionally, Gendron revised certain passages to adjust the content to his mission, for instance exchanging "Muslim" with "Black" and "New Zealand" with "United States", as seen here in their respective Q&A sections:

- Tarrant: "Did/do you personally hate muslims? A muslim man or woman living in their homelands?" and "By living in New Zealand, weren't you an immigrant yourself?"[87]
- Gendron: "Did, or do you personally hate blacks? A black man or woman living in their homelands?" and "By living in the United States, weren't you an immigrant yourself?"[88]

3. Including Self-Interviews in a Q&A Format

One of the earliest instances of a self-interview was detected in Pekka-Eric Auvinen's writings in 2007, when the perpetrator of the Jokela school shooting in Finland raised several questions in his script: "What do I hate / What I don't like?", "What do I love / what do I like?" and "How Did Natural Selection Turn Into Idiocratic

Selection?"[89] All interrogatives were accompanied by lengthy answers in his manifesto. In 2011, Anders Breivik created a 64-page self-interview, primarily using the first-person plural pronoun 'we' to appear to be part of a group;[90] it has been reported that he derived the structure for his "mock interview" primarily from celebrity profiles he had studied.[91] Breivik himself stated that "[t]he following interview (...) might be considered irrelevant to many people. However, I decided to add it as I personally would enjoy reading a similar interview with another resistance fighter."[92] Four years later, Christopher Sean Harper-Mercer, the Umpqua Community College shooter from Oregon, included a "frequently asked questions" section in his manifesto, which included the following interrogative and response: "How come you've not had a girlfriend, are you gay? No I'm not gay, girls just didn't want me. As I said before they went for the thug blacks."[93]

In our sample, Brenton Tarrant, John Earnest, Stephan Balliet and Payton Gendron duplicated this format and interviewed themselves in their manifestos, fluctuating between why and yes/no questions. Interrogatives ranged from background information on the authors to motivations and triggers for the attack, rounded off with details on their belief systems and mental health. Balliet's Q&A was not publicly disclosed, as he decided against leaking it with his manifesto. According to investigation files from the *Bundeskriminalamt*, Germany's federal criminal police, the assailant stated that the self-interview would have justified his violent act, which, in his opinion, did not require any justification.[94]

A textual comparison of mock interviews authored by Breivik, Tarrant, Earnest, Balliet and Gendron (n = 5) revealed that several interrogative sentences contained identical or similar strings of words across at least one other self-interview, with occasional lexical overlap across all Q&As. Breivik's self-interview contained a total of 73 questions, with Tarrant posing 87 interrogatives to himself. Though Tarrant did not copy any of Breivik's questions directly, six of them are similar in content, such as: "Why do you think it has come to this? What tipped the scales for you?" (Breivik) vs. "Why did you carry out the attack?" (Tarrant).[95] John Earnest's interview contained 20 interrogatives, including two identical ones to Tarrant's pamphlet: "Are you a conservative?" and "Are you a Trump supporter?"[96] Thirteen of Earnest's questions appeared similar to Tarrant's Q&A, and five were original in content. Balliet's self-interview consisted of 23 questions, with a couple of them being identical to Tarrant's: "Who are you?" and "Are you a Racist?"[97] Six of Balliet's interrogatives seem to be unique, whilst the remaining 74% corresponded to previously raised questions by Breivik, Tarrant and Earnest. For instance:

- Breivik: "You know that a large majority of people will end up viewing you as a complete nut right, despite your own and others efforts to justify violence?"[98]
- Earnest: "Are you insane/crazy?"[99]
- Balliet: "Do you think you are crazy?"[100]

Payton Gendron's writings incorporated 67 questions, with 49 of them being an identical match to Tarrant's manifesto (73%), and a further 17 only containing minor edits, such as the addition or deletion of one word. There was one original interrogative in Gendron's statement: "Do you actually believe this garbage?" and one question that was homogenous to Balliet's writings: "Are you a white supremacist?"[101] Below is one example of similar utterances that were observed across all five manifestos:

- Breivik: "But doesn't it worry you that 95% of all Europeans will openly detest you and call you a murderer and a terrorist?"[102]
- Tarrant: "Do you consider it a terrorist attack?"[103]
- Earnest: "Are you a terrorist?"[104]
- Balliet: "Are you a Lone wolf?"[105]
- Gendron: "Do you consider the attack an act of terrorism?"[106]

This analysis illustrates the intertextual links between several manifestos, whose authors copied or para-

phrased questions from foregoing same-genre Q&As. Thus, it can be deduced that Breivik's writings were utilized as a template by Tarrant, whose document was later used by Earnest, whose adaptation in turn was copied by Balliet and subsequently by Gendron. This chain reaction suggests that the authors successfully reached their intended audiences, ultimately inspiring sympathizers, i.e., copycats, to author corresponding communications and conduct similar acts of violence. However, a second consequence, equally important to the communication strategy of a terrorist, is that this type of Q&A format appears to be an effective tool for influencing the media narrative by giving its author "a 'voice' he would be deprived of if he was either killed or apprehended during the commission of his attack."[107]

Content Patterns Across Attack Announcements on Digital Platforms

Minutes prior to their targeted acts, several perpetrators in our sample leaked short messages to announce their violent attacks on imageboards, which appear to have become an assembly point for geographically dispersed extremists. Though the online postings were distributed on various platforms, the audiences of these forums appear to be mostly homogenous, i.e., frequented by the same people.[108] From mid-March to early August 2019, Brenton Tarrant, John Earnest and Patrick Crusius uploaded their communications, including links to their manifestos and live-streams, to the fringe forum *8chan*. Crusius' attack took place on 3 August 2019 and caused the website to be taken offline by its internet provider. Due to this, Philip Manshaus posted his notice on the derivative *Endchan* on 10 August 2019, while Stephan Balliet published his message on the imageboard *Meguca* on 9 October 2019. According to transcripts of Balliet's court proceedings, it was a "coincidence" that he uploaded his files to this specific platform, which appears unlikely as every other aspect of his attack was meticulously planned.[109] Hugo Jackson sent his original announcement to two friends on the instant messaging social platform *Discord* and asked them to disseminate his manifesto and live-stream.[110] Although Payton Gendron's published Discord logs indicate that he drafted posts for 4chan and 8chan, he only circulated his materials on Discord itself.

Within our small sample (n = 7), we recognized several common themes across the attack announcements on online platforms:

- ***86% (6 out of 7) encouraged users to raise awareness about their attacks by disseminating copies of their manifestos and recordings of their live-streams, while motivating them to create memes.***

This promotes an immediate response and reaction by the intended audience, in other words: uptakes.[111] Similar language was detected in the content of Tarrant, Crusius, Jackson and Gendron's announcements:

- Tarrant: "please do your part by spreading my message, making memes and shitposting as you usually do"[112]
- Crusius: "Do your part and spread this brothers! Of course, only spread it if the attack is successful"[113]
- Jackson: "Anyway I want you guys to make edits/shitpost about this thing. And I might also fail but still meme if I do"[114]
- Gendron: "Record everything you can and continue making memes like you already do"[115]

As pointed out in a previous study, the "idea is that a copycat attacker can copy the format and add individual content and ideas (…). The aim is to establish terrorism as a cultural artifact, through meme-like charging. Through music, images, videos, [and] obscure references, the online meme aesthetic is adapted to the real world."[116] It is noteworthy that several of the perpetrators mention memes as a way of communicating to a wider audience. Askanius has described how the extreme right in Sweden produces manuals for meme production with the stated purpose of gaining more followers.[117] The attackers in our sample utilize online platforms as a dual mediator; firstly, to promote and share the offenders' ideologies with in-group members by making post-attack requests and commands. Secondly, by encouraging the distribution of current

and future texts (e.g., manifestos and memes) to be spread beyond the forum and reach out-groups, such as the mainstream society and media. The goal is again two-fold: by reaching a wider audience, the assailants hope to attract more followers, i.e., to widen the in-group, but also to spread fear in possible future victims, i.e., to terrorize members of the out-group.

- ***86% (6 out of 7) of perpetrators alluded to live-streaming their attacks and provided links to streaming platforms where the recording was to be broadcast, along with their manifestos and other files.***

This illustrates a deliberate cross-media presence, designed to ensure a widespread uptake by followers and mainstream society alike, as the offenders move between different modes connected to their attacks: mobilization—i.e., authoring the manifesto—and implementation—i.e., live-streaming the act.

- Tarrant: "I will carry out and attack against the invaders, and will even live stream the attack via facebook. The facebook link is below, by the time you read this I should be going live. https://www.facebook.com/brenton.tarrant.9"[118]
- Earnest: "Livestream link is below as well as my open letter. Livestream will begin shortly. https://www.facebook.com/john.earnest.96780"[119]
- Manshaus: "stream: stupid shit won't work https://www.facebook.com/philip.manshaus"[120]
- Balliet: "I prefer live testing: https://www.twitch.tv/spilljuice"[121]
- Jackson: "And in about some hours or minutes when this shit releases I will be going live. So Bounce into my stream, sit back and enjoy. (…) https://www.twitch.tv/spectatorsolvent - My twitch where the action will be happening."[122]
- Gendron: "I'm going to be carrying out an attack against the replacers, and even livestream it via twitch and discord. (…) Below are my twitch and discord links. https://discord.gg/Z3ATN29ENq https://www.twitch.tv/jimboboiii. Below are copies of my discord transcript and le manifesto, read it if you want."[123]

The effects are comparable to the first point, as intended and unintended audiences will take up the writings and recordings of the targeted attacks, creating planned and unpredicted responses from different readers and viewers.[124]

- ***71% (5 out of 7) of authors commented on the potential outcome of the attack (i.e., death) and/or included references to God, heaven or hell.***

- Tarrant: "If I don't survive the attack, goodbye, godbless and I will see you all in Valhalla!"[125]
- Earnest: "May the LORD Christ be with you all."[126]
- Crusius: "I'm probably going to die today"[127]
- Manshaus: "valhall venter"[128]
- Jackson: "See you all in hell one day."[129]

The far-right has adopted various imagery from the popular Viking culture to create specific narratives around the alleged 'pure' white race to highlight the connection to the old whiteness of the North. The term Valhalla, for example, means 'the great hall of the fallen' and originates in Norse mythology, symbolizing the resting place for heroes who died in combat. Breivik raised the questions "What happened to those Vikings, anyway? Did they drink too much mead in Valhalla?" in his manifesto, while Balliet stated "Repeat until all jews are dead or you prove the existence of Waifus in Valhalla, whatever comes first."[130] A "waifu" is a term from anime culture referring to an attractive female or (dream) wife. Tarrant, subsequently copied in Gendron's manifesto, also made an explicit reference to Valhalla in his pamphlet: "Goodbye, god bless you

all and I will see you in Valhalla," identical wording to his imageboard post.[131] These examples demonstrate the common themes across online platform posts and targeted violence manifestos, as "Valhalla" appears to speak to the in-group audience of dying in martyrdom for a cause, in this case saving the white race. Am & Weimann point out that "dying as the result of a successful terrorist attack is not a key requirement to becoming a martyr for the Far-Right movement—carrying out the attack and being jailed for it is sufficient."[132] But the willingness to fight and die for the cause is critical to the motivation of these attackers and their claims of infamy. The fact that these attacks are waged against unarmed civilians, however, is ignored.

- ***71% (5 out of 7) thanked their followers and/or other users of the forum for their support, entertainment and information.***

This directly addresses the intended audiences of the platforms and seems designed to cause an immediate reaction. Similar text elements were detected in Tarrant, Manshaus, Jackson and Gendron's posts:

- Tarrant: "Well lads, it's time (…) It's been a long ride and despite all your rampant faggotry, fecklessness and degeneracy, you are all top blokes and the best bunch of cobbers a man could ask for"[133]
- Earnest: "It's been real dudes. From the bottom of my heart thank you for everything. Keep up the infographic redpill threads. I've only been lurking for a year and a half, yet what I've learned here is priceless. It's been an honor"[134]
- Manshaus: "well cobbers it's time (…) it's been fun"[135]
- Jackson: "Well lads, I guess this is it. You are all just top notch people that have been following me."[136]
- Gendron: "Well lads (…) It's been a long ride to get here, I'd like to take this time to thank you guys for the laughs and the shitposts of top-tier quality. (…) Thanks guys G\"[137]

Earnest's red pill theme stems from the incel subculture but originated in the film *The Matrix* where the protagonist is given the choice between consuming a red or a blue pill, with the red pill symbolizing learning the ultimate truth. Within the extremist environment, the red pill truth is connected to "political awakening, rejecting scientific knowledge and democratic processes in favour of a white supremacy worldview."[138] Tarrant also referenced this idea in his manifesto.

- ***43% (3 out of 7) of perpetrators encouraged others to commit future attacks.***

Thus, they directly engaged with their immediate and intended audiences:

- Crusius: "Keep up the good fight."[139]
- Manshaus: "i was elected by saint tarrant after all (…) if you're reading this you have been elected by me"[140]
- Jackson: "You! Are the chosen one. and one that will maybe see this life. (…) I'm rootin for ya lads"[141]

Reaching out to their primary audience in this way is a necessary step to incite further violence, a purpose which forms part of a larger strategy of fomenting sufficient copycat attacks to destabilize society. It can be argued that the theme of "selecting" subsequent offenders could have been derived from Tarrant's manifesto, which stated that: "But I have only had brief contact with Knight Justiciar Breivik, receiving a blessing for my mission after contacting his brother knights."[142] This in turn referenced a section in Breivik's writings on the Knights Templar and a ritual to become a "Justiciar Knight"—Breivik's reinvention of a holy knighthood—which he referred to throughout his script.[143] In addition, Earnest stated in his document that "Brenton Tarrant inspired me. I hope to inspire many more."[144]

- ***43% (3 out of 7) highlight their mobilization and repositioning from online chatter to real-world action.***
  - Tarrant: "Well lads, it's time to stop shitposting and time to make a real life effort post. I will carry out and attack against the invaders"[145]
  - Manshaus: "you gotta bump the race war thread irl [in real life]"[146]
  - Gendron: "Well lads I guess it's time to stop shitposting and time to post a real life shitpost. I'm going to be carrying out an attack against the replacers (…) Now it's time for some action"[147]

These communications are the essential components for encouraging real-life attacks from the digital sphere, directed at the immediate and intended audiences (in-groups). As Heine and Magazzini have stated, the "logic of these groups is that you only count for something when you act."[148] Tarrant's strategy proved successful, as the words of his announcement were taken up in Gendron's message, with the latter repeating the wording—and subsequently the actions. While Jackson was unsuccessful in carrying out a mass attack, the inspiration from Tarrant's post is clear in the direct quote he left on his computer keyboard in the form of a handwritten letter: "Well lads, I think it's time to stop shit-posting and make a real life effort post."[149]

Content Patterns Across Targeted Violence Live-Streams

Citing or Copying Textual Elements from Previous Live-Streams or Manifestos

As alluded to in the introduction, the case of Hugo Jackson clearly shows how the genres of extreme right terrorists are taking form in the uptake of previous perpetrators' writings. Firstly, he transcribed the opening lines of Balliet's live-stream on his bedroom wall.[150] Secondly, he said "Ah, Scheiße" twice in his live-stream, a direct reference to Balliet's broadcast.[151] Thirdly, Jackson declared "Subscribe to PewDiePie" in his live-stream, directly referring to Tarrant, who proclaimed "Remember lads, subscribe to PewDiePie" as he was exiting his vehicle during his broadcast shortly before entering the first mosque and committing his mass attack.[152] PewDiePie is the moniker of Swedish online gaming personality Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg, one of the most popular YouTubers in the world. Kjellberg has been criticized for amplifying anti-Semitic and racist views in his recommendations of other YouTube channels. This may be the reason Earnest wrote in his document, "I had the help of a man named Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg. He was kind enough to plan and fund this whole operation—the sly bastard. Apparently, Pewdiepie hates Jews as much as Pajeets. Who would've known?"[153]

Referencing Names of Notorious Same-Genre Authors or Victims of Opposing Attacks on Equipment used During Attacks

Tarrant wrote the names of several far-right perpetrators on the firearms and magazines he used during his acts of violence, for instance Pavlo Lapshyn, Anton Lundin Pettersson, Alexandre Bissonnette, Darren Osborne and Luca Traini.[154] These names are connected to attacks that were conducted across Europe and North America between 2013 and 2018. Jackson penciled "Stephan Balliet" and "Anton Lundin Pettersson" on the mask he wore during his incident, among some other unintelligible writings.[155] In addition, the phrase "Kebab Remover" was visible on Jackson's mask and on a non-functioning air gun, which is a direct reference to a term utilized by Tarrant in his manifesto: "More recently I have been working part time as a kebab removalist."[156] Gendron wrote Tarrant, Roof, Bowers, Earnest, Breivik and Manshaus' names on the firearms employed during his shooting, and had added the number "2083", the title of Breivik's manifesto.

Furthermore, several perpetrators hailed white victims of other terrorist attacks. Tarrant had marked his rifle with "For Madrid", a reference to the 2004 Madrid train bombings in Spain, which were directed by Al-Qaeda and resulted in 193 fatalities and many more wounded. Tarrant, Jackson and Gendron wrote the name "Ebba Akerlund" on their guns, a reference to a little girl who became a victim during the jihadism-inspired truck attack in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2017. Her name is frequently referenced in the far-right milieu to "seek revenge" for the murder of a white, deaf girl who did not hear the oncoming destructive vehicle.

Gendron included the names of victims who were killed by Black perpetrators, such as Wilhelm Hospel, Tamara Durand, Leanna Owen, James Coolidge and Virginia Sorenson. These individuals lost their lives during the Waukesha Christmas Parade attack in November 2021. Moreover, Gendron's gun included the name Jason Rivera, the New York Police Department officer who died in a shooting in Harlem, New York, in January 2022.

These types of writings appear to have several meanings: they are a glorification of those who attacked in the past, or whose names the perpetrator wants to preserve. Wing identified similar patterns of labeling weapons with personal names when assessing the writings of school shooters, suggesting that it infuses a feature of animacy for an inanimate object, thus enhancing an emotional connection with the weapon(s).[157] It could also be a form of encouragement for the offenders to bring their violent plans to life, following in the footsteps of previous, successful assailants. Lastly, it might be a reminder for the victims that the past influences the present, spreading fear among their communities.

Discussion

Are we taking this global epidemic seriously? Our textual samples demonstrate the interconnectivity of recent far-right attacks and highlight the importance of digital ties formed in the complex extreme-right digital ecosystem, which weave through the stages of radicalization, mobilization and implementation. We see the emergence of a complex genre set of interrelated text types—manifestos, Q&As, online announcements and live-streams—that is becoming increasingly consolidated as a way of spreading a particular subversive and hateful worldview.[158] The objective of these communications is continually bidirectional: they address and encourage a transnational assemblage of online followers by saluting previous attackers and inciting further violence, and simultaneously disseminate hatred of already-marginalized groups, based on their religion, race or ethnicity.

Operational Implications

Interconnectivity in the short term is a cognitive-affective viral contagion: self-propagating, mutating and defeating the "immune" resistance to violence as it is read and rewritten. It might kill its host, i.e., the perpetrator, but the virus ensures that it is transmitted and spread more widely, infecting both the individual and society. The virus actively changes the individual host's thinking and motivation in the process of reading to copying and writing a new manifesto. Comparable to a written motivational interview, the author changes himself while showing us how his beliefs are formed, gestated and grown. He then leads himself down the pathway to violence, spreading the viral contagion to the next victim via both the attack itself and the self-replicating cognition. Moreover, the affected community actively spreads the cognitive contagion widely via repetitive media, leading in theory both to the real division and hatred to manifest in our society, and providing the contagion which motivates the next attack. Fundamentally, this metaphor is in line with Dawkins' original conception of a 'meme' as a "unit of cultural transmission" which, if it catches on, "can be said to propagate itself, spreading from brain to brain."[159]

Operationally, it can be assumed that there is an absence of outside interventions—for instance through threat assessment and management: the host consumes the viral contagion in a friendly environment, in this case the online ecosystem, where there is minimal social resistance to overcome its spread. Subsequently, the viral content moves from perpetrator to perpetrator to replicate an attack and more viral contagion via their own manifestos, arguably creating a new patient zero with every act of violence. Similar to a virus, it retains old patterns (e.g., Breivik's or Tarrant's writings) while adapting and adding newer and better content. The world watches the results, the success of a new viral contagion is obvious, and the attack, political and mediatic responses in themselves spread the infection to a wide array of possible new hosts. Seemingly, the real-world social factors for group belonging and social manipulation in an analog terror group have been replaced by social media and the viral manifestos in the digital groups, i.e., the leaderless cells. The menacing novelty is that the assailants' competition with one another serves to improve both lethality of the viral

contagion and its transmissibility. Our societal immune system attempts to defend against viral hate by condemning, emoting, mourning and spreading outrage, hate and fear while metastasizing the contamination further. We accomplish the terrorists' aims of viral contagion and amplify them as we try to combat them.

Over the longer course, we see copycats emerge who imitate the previous attacker; and when these copycats are aggregated over time, as in this decade of cases, what constellates is a subcultural script that provides rules of behavior and engagement for those who are willing to carry the fight to the "enemy." The enemy in these cases are typically non-white, non-Christian, non-traditional hierarchical, non-cisgender subjects within the out-group who pose an imminent existential threat. Follman has investigated and documented the copycat phenomenon in relation to the Columbine massacre in 1999, and identified >100 cases of individuals over the past twenty years, who carried out or were thwarted in their attacks, which specifically imitated the behaviors of the attackers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.[160] Meloy and Mohandie wrote about this prior to the advent of social media in their work on aggression immersion, and referred to this as both theme consistency and scene specificity through the repetitive viewing of "screen violence"—at that time limited to television and movies.[161]

At a deeper psychological level, both contagion and copycat effects are behavioral markers for identification with the aggression or with the aggressor, respectively. The terms originated in the works of Sándor Ferenczi and Anna Freud and have been reformulated in the context of threat assessment by Meloy et al.[162] It is a largely unconscious identification, with elements of conscious imitation, that suggests both a desire to be like the attacker who has preceded oneself, but also to master the previous attacker with a more innovative strategy or a higher body count, a pathologically narcissistic endeavor with incalculable destructive outcomes. Identification as a proximal warning behavior for targeted violence has been shown to strongly correlate with and in some cases to predict such attacks.[163]

Strategic Prevention and Tactical Reaction

Motivated by violence-justifying ideologies and personal grievances, these subjects have declared war on democracy and pose a real threat to communities around the world. Critical to identifying and mitigating these threats is to understand this very specific kind of violence, which can be accomplished by taking these mass murderers at their word. This group of lone-actor terrorists tell us who they are, whom they hate and why they will kill. We have the necessary intelligence and can model innovative programs to develop the algorithms that will detect these online signals amidst the cyberspace noise, and the multidisciplinary threat assessment teams to then conduct on-the-ground investigations to mitigate such risks. But do we have the political will to advance and fund such work for decades, and legislate for oversight at tech companies? This transnational movement thinks not. However, in a bold move to hold social media companies—such as Facebook and YouTube—accountable for their content, Australia passed a legislation one month after Brenton Tarrant's attack in New Zealand in 2019. It involves significant fines of up to 10% of their annual profits and jail time for their executives if they fail to swiftly remove "abhorrent violent material", including footage of terroristic acts.[164]

Future Research

We acknowledge that the corpus of language evidence is very limited in this study. Future research could involve a textual comparison to far-right online postings from mainstream platforms and fringe forums, as well as visual (e.g., images and memes) or auditory (e.g., music) elements through a semiotics study. It would also be of interest to investigate the eyeball-to-violence ratio in the context of targeted violence manifestos and live-streams that inspire and influence real-world actions: "the ratio between the number of people who have seen terrorist images or manifestos, and the number of those individuals who have subsequently gone on to use terrorist violence."[165] Such work could help contribute to understanding whether or not we have entered the fifth wave of global terrorism.[166]

About the Authors:

Julia Kupper *is a forensic linguist and independent researcher based in California, United States. As a consultant, she collaborates with law enforcement agencies and threat assessment teams throughout Los Angeles. As a scholar, she studies targeted violence communications to enhance the mitigation of different types of violent threats.*

Tanya Karoli Christensen, *PhD, is professor of Danish language at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, with a specialty in forensic linguistics. She recently led a 3-year research project on the language and genre of threats, delivering a digital, linguistically annotated corpus of threatening messages. She consults regularly on linguistic evidence for police and attorneys and offers training for the Danish police.*

Dakota Wing *is a PhD candidate in linguistics and applied linguistics at York University, Toronto, Canada. He regularly consults as a forensic linguist and co-maintains ForensicLing.com. His research focuses on police discourse and linguistic ideologies guiding the admissibility of language evidence in court. He has applied discourse analysis methodologies to the writings of school shooters, extremist propaganda and online radicalized communities.*

Marlon Hurt, *PhD, is an adjunct professor of linguistics at Hofstra University's Master of Arts in Linguistics: Forensic Linguistics program (New York, United States). He also works as an analyst on active legal cases with the Institute for Forensic Linguistics, Threat Assessment and Strategic Analysis under the direction of Dr. Robert Leonard.*

Matthew Schumacher, *PhD, is a national security psychologist with expertise in conducting intelligence, irregular warfare, counterterrorism and anti-hate operations. Formerly a lieutenant commander in the US Navy, he has 15 years of experience in Los Angeles, Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa in support of MARSOC, NSW, USSOCOM, FBI, DIA and law enforcement agencies. As a psychiatry professor in the military, he led crisis and emergency response teams, taught emergency and deployment psychology, and completed a post-doctoral training in advanced operational psychology at DIA/DEVGRU.*

Reid Meloy, *PhD, is a forensic psychologist and voluntary clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego. He has been a consultant to the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit, Quantico, for the past two decades. He is coeditor of the International Handbook of Threat Assessment, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 2021), which recently won the Manfred Guttmacher Award from the American Psychiatric Association.*

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Rethinking Online Radicalization

by Joe Whittaker

Abstract

This article seeks to re-ontologize online radicalization. Individuals becoming terrorists after being exposed to online content have become a prescient concern for academics, policy makers, and journalists. Existing theoretical contributions to the concept have assumed that there are two ontological domains—online and offline—that can be meaningfully separated. This article will draw from several arguments from other fields which critique this position; the contemporary information environment enmeshes the two inseparably. This argument is then advanced to demonstrate that online radicalization is a redundant concept by drawing on empirical research as well as recent case studies of terrorism. Instead, scholars should consider holistic theories which account for a range of other factors beyond online communication technologies.

Keywords: Terrorism; radicalization; social media; extremism

Introduction

The threat of online radicalization has been highlighted as a key policy priority by a range of stakeholders, including: governmental organizations,[1][2] law enforcement,[3][4] and the media.[5] Recent years have seen an increase in data-driven studies on this topic. However, much of the theoretical work is older and focuses on previous iterations of online technologies, as well as on previous terrorist threats. This article addresses this by offering theoretical insights which account for the advancements in communications technologies, drawing from recent research and terrorist case studies. The argument is simple: dichotomizing between "online" and "offline" realms is not ontologically defensible and can lead to missing important factors in radicalization trajectories.

The article consists of three parts: to begin, an overview of the theoretical research on online radicalization is presented, which mostly assumes that the online domain is distinct and separable from the offline. This is followed by a discussion of the work of scholars who challenge this dichotomy (mostly on topics besides terrorism), suggesting that the two spaces are inseparably intertwined. Finally, this argument is applied to recent research and terrorist case studies from the author's existing research[6] to demonstrate why it is both empirically and ontologically unsound to rely on this dichotomy. The use of these case studies—focused specifically on the so-called Islamic State (IS) within the US—are not intended to be representative, but rather used as exposition to demonstrate the ways in which terrorist activities protrude over both domains. The article argues that scholars should attempt to understand the wider information environment rather than fixating solely on one domain. Existing theoretical work, such as Situational Action Theory, as proposed by Wikström and Bouhana[7] offer a more complete picture in understanding how environments affect individuals' norm-based motivations than the theories that focus explicitly on online radicalization.

Just as Borum encouraged readers to "*Rethink Radicalization*,"[8] this article argues that we should reconsider how online radicalization is conceptualized. Borum and others have asserted that the notion of radicalization has become too ambiguous, particularly as it relates to whether it is a process of developing extreme beliefs (i.e., becoming an extremist) or engaging in extreme actions (e.g., committing an act of terror).[9][10] Although there is substantial merit to these arguments, for the sake of conceptual clarity, this article will adopt a working definition of "radicalization" which focuses on terrorist behaviors as an end point, similar to Borum's "action pathway" understanding: "the process of being involved in terrorism or engaging in violent extremist actions."[11] This does not downplay the importance of adopting extreme beliefs but rather defines the end point as behavioral.

Theorizing Online Radicalization

Since the emergence of the concept of online radicalization, scholars have attempted to theorize the process. Sageman argues there are several differences between acting online and offline, including: anonymity; younger populations; vitriolic views being expressed; easier exit ramps; nonhierarchical structures; and a lack of incentives to evolve.[12] These factors dramatically transformed jihadist terrorism from the early 2000s, in which most terror networks relied on face-to-face interactions between friends. Famously, he argued that "face-to-face radicalization has been replaced by online radicalization."[13]

Neumann offers six dynamics drawn from the academic literature which help to explain online radicalization.[14] The first two relate to exposure to extremist propaganda: *mortality salience* can lead to individuals considering their own death and increase support for violence[15] and videos from conflict zones which portray Muslims suffering which create *a sense of moral outrage.*[16] The third and fourth mechanisms relate to online communities. The Internet can act as a *criminogenic environment* in which deviant behaviors are learned and normalized,[17] which he links to the concept of an "echo chamber". Like Sageman, Neumann points to the proliferation of vitriolic views due to the *Online Disinhibition* effect.[18] The fifth process relates to the interplay between the social and interactive nature of the Internet; individuals *role-play* an idealized version of themselves online which is more zealous and supportive of violence.[19] The final dynamic is simpler; it relates to the Internet's ability to *link up with terrorist structures* and connect individuals with similar interests across great distances and no previous interactions; offering a far larger recruitment pool from previous generations.

Ducol *et al.* derive several potential radicalization dynamics from the social psychology literature, positing factors that differentiate acting online from offline.[20] The Internet may provide an opportunity for individuals to participate in new groups and the anonymity may trigger a process of deindividuation—aligning behaviors with the group and creating a diffusion of responsibility.[21] They also note that online activity may amplify attraction to a specific in-group while increasing hostility toward out-groups, which may trigger a perceived threat to the individual's identity.[22] They argue that selective exposure may create a cognitive bias which promotes polarization, as well as providing an outlet for individuals to express their "true self" by sharing their stigmatized identities with like-minded people.[23][24] Ducol and colleagues also state that online relationships may take longer to build but could result in more intimacy and connection than offline ones.[25] Moreover, individuals tend to seek out homophily, which social media platforms are specifically designed to facilitate, potentially creating an environment in which deviant subcultures can form. These subcultures are aided by secrecy and anonymity that the Internet can provide, as well as offering more settings which are prone to collective dynamics by leading to more agreement amongst members.

Radicalization is conceptualized by Koehler as a process of depluralization from political concepts and values (such as justice, freedom, and democracy) toward a specific ideology. He argues that the Internet is a main facilitator of this process as it provides an ideological pillar with the infrastructure of a radical social movement. It provides cheap and efficient communication where individuals can share crucial information, as well as being a constraint-free space with anonymity in which individuals can become "more" than their offline personas.[26] It also gives a perception of a larger critical mass of the movement, and an opportunity for individuals to directly reflect on the effects on propaganda. Koehler argues that the Internet is the most important space to learn the necessary skills to join offline groups and advance within the social hierarchies and therefore is a major driving factor to establish and foster the development of what he calls "radical contrast societies" which transmit violent ideologies and transmit them into political activism.

Scholars have attempted to "model" the process by sequencing multiple dynamics to explain how they develop into online radicalization. Saifudeen argues that the Internet has unique attributes, noting that it is akin to a buyers' market in which individuals can pick and choose the interactions and communities that best suit them.[27] He uses an analogy of a planetary orbit with five levels: *Scepticism, Validation, Activism, Extremism, Violent Extremism*. The individual remains in the orbit of their chosen online counterculture which reinforces their current mindset while "gravity wells" can pull individuals further inward. Online dynamics

can cause individuals to jump orbits very quickly given the speed of information absorption and resonance in cyberspace. Neo offers a similar approach, positing a five-stage model of *Reflection, Exploration, Connection, Resolution,* and *Operational.*[28] Like Saifudeen, Neo argues that the wide array of ideas available offer many opportunities for cognitive openings to occur and an individual's worldview can be challenged. Moreover, the Internet's anonymity facilitates an environment where an individual can experiment with an array of ideas with little consequence while having limitless access to propaganda. Combined, such exposure can help to frame and prime individuals to a new potential worldview which can exacerbate radicalization.

Drawing from their empirical research into Canadian foreign fighters, Bastug, Douai and Akca propose a four-step model to explain how online radicalization occurs.[29] It begins with the *Accessibility and Proliferation* of content, such as propaganda or contact with sympathizers. The social and psychological factors—*Susceptibility and Predisposition* —help to explain why this content may resonate with some audiences. This can move toward *Terrorist Mobilization,* in which social media plays an active role, which leads to individuals *Sharing* their own experiences on the Internet, which creates a feedback loop to the beginning by creating more content to be accessed. Weimann and Von Knop propose a model, beginning with the *Searching* phase in which individuals seek information online to fulfill their personal or spiritual needs, followed by *Seduction* where they are introduced to radical ideologies.[30] From here, users enter *Captivation*, which they argue is the most important because users begin to visit blogs, fora, and chat rooms and become attracted to seductive messages. Individuals then become integrated with their online community as part of the *Persuasion* phase and for most, this is where the road ends. However, only a select few will enter the *Operative* phase in which they gain access to contacts and materials and could be invited to join a terrorist organization. They suggest that there are several factors which cause the Internet to exacerbate radicalization, including the anonymity of the Internet, the fact that websites cater to alienated diaspora communities, and the acceptance and approval that members gain when interacting in the online milieu.

Offering a post-structuralist model, Torok likens the Internet to a Foucauldian institution in which networked powers operate and radicalize, suggesting that the online environment is a "Castle" which represents self-imposed isolation which individuals enter willingly and breeds ideological homophily.[31] In these environments, radical beliefs and behaviors become normalized and individuals become polarized as they identify as part of an in-group and therefore disparage a targeted out-group. Importantly, social media represents the "battleground" for the hearts and minds of the vulnerable and disaffected as it can replace moderate beliefs with extreme ones.

Several inferences can be drawn from these theories and models. Rather than suggesting a distinct cause-and-effect relationship, the literature suggests potential dynamics—none of which are necessary or sufficient—that may be either exclusive to, or a prominent feature of the Internet. This is analogous with radicalization research more broadly, which highlights the complexity of the process and the diversity from case to case.[32][33][34] Another prominent feature is the lack of theory derived from empirical research. Aside from Bastug, Douai and Akca's model,[35] the above research is derived either from anecdotal data or imported from other parts of social science and has not yet been tested on terrorist populations. This too, is like radicalization research—Jensen, Atwell Seate and James argue that a lack of rigorous empirical testing makes it difficult to judge how well theories work as general explanations of radicalization.[36] Instead, they argue that most theories in the field are supported by anecdotal evidence with nebulous selection criteria.

Theories also purport that engagement with propaganda is an important aspect of online radicalization. Some make this a key component,[37][38][39][40][41] while for others, such as Koehler, Neumann, and Ducol *et al*., this position is offered with a note of caution, noting that this relationship is unproven.[42][43][44] The effects of terrorist propaganda on users is still a young field with a dearth of data-driven research. Experimental studies have indicated that individuals may be more likely to engage with, or be persuaded by, extremist propaganda if they have certain characteristics like a preference for hierarchically organized societies with dominant groups within it;[45] display manipulative "Machiavellian" personality traits;[46] engage in subversive online activities such as abuse, harassment, or engagement on problematic platforms;[47] or if uncertainty or existential threat is primed.[48][49] While these studies are valuable as starting points,

experimental research struggles to recreate the complex personal and social dynamics that go into engagement with terrorism.[50] Previous research into terrorism has often assumed that propaganda will resonate and radicalize their audience with little empirical basis, akin to the now discredited "Hypodermic Needle" model of mass communication.[51][52][53]

Most importantly for what follows immediately below, theories and models assume that the online domain is distinct and separable from the offline one. By its nature, theorizing "online radicalization" implicitly suggests that a meaningful dichotomy can be drawn to show how the Internet can provide a markedly different radicalization process. Several scholars refer to the "real world" which may be dynamically connected to the Internet, but is clearly distinct.[54][55][56][57][58] Others do not explicitly use the phrase, but still imply that the two domains can be separated.[59][60] This framing of two distinct ontological realms is, it is argued here, not defensible and results in a narrow understanding of the role of communications technologies in the radicalization process.

Ontological Challenges

In the mid-2000s, Floridi predicted that in the future, the threshold between the online and offline worlds would disappear, noting that the "infosphere"—i.e. the whole information environment, the entities that exist within them, their properties, interactions, processes, and mutual relations—was being re-ontologized because of the convergence between digital resources and tools.[61] He argues that there is no longer a substantial difference between the processor and the processed, causing a gradual erasure of friction between the two ontological domains. Human beings will turn into "inforgs"—connected informational organisms, who exist in the infosphere, which is not merely supported by a material world, but will be interpreted and understood as part of an entire, singular environment, made up of both the processors and processed, online and offline.

The dichotomy of "digital dualism" is challenged by Jurgenson who argues that communications technologies have effectively linked the two domains; both spaces now enmesh to form an augmented reality.[62] Social media supplements, rather than replaces, our offline lives. Offline factors affect our friends, our social location, demographics, and epistemological standpoints, which in turn, affect our posting behaviors. Conversely, social media affects our offline activity; we are conditioned to look for the perfect photo, check-in, or status update, even when we are not logged in (if there is even a state of "not being logged in" in 2022). Jurgenson argues that nothing on the Internet exists outside of longstanding social constructions, but rather we implant these into our new augmented reality. Rey and Boesel advance and develop this into the concept of "augmented subjectivity," noting that both domains are co-produced, and experiences exist over one single, unified reality. Humans are now embodied by organic flesh and "digital protheses"—in which they can perceive, and act in, the world; neither of which can ever be isolated from experience and are inextricably enmeshed.[63] They point to a naturalistic fallacy in which the offline domain is considered as the primordial state, which in turn encourages normative judgment that gives primacy to the "real world" at the expense of digital interactions.

A group of scholars, including Floridi, have described this new hyperconnected reality as "Onlife", arguing that it no longer makes sense to dichotomize between the two domains because communication technologies have become environmental forces that affect self-conception, mutual interactions, as well as concepts of reality and interactions with it.[64] Rather than artifacts operating according to human instructions: "data are recorded, stored, computed and fed back in all forms of machines, applications, and devices in novel ways, creating endless opportunities for adaptive and personalized environments".[65] This has led to four major transformations: a blur between reality and virtuality; an unclear distinction between human, machine, and nature; a reversal between information scarcity and abundance; and a shift from the primacy of stand-alone things, properties, and binary relations to the primacy of interactions, processes, and networks.

We no longer simply "go online". This notion is a relic of the 1990s in which a user needed to make a delib-

erate decision to dial up a modem on a personal computer. Today, mobile data and devices mean that we are online almost all the time. The average person worldwide spends just under seven hours online per day, with 5.2 billion unique mobile phone users accessing the Internet for an average of four hours. Activities are split between messenger apps, social media, streaming videos, and games.[66] However, even when we are not actively online, we are not unplugged given the proliferation of push notifications, in which devices send notifications to users' home screens. This transcends the divide between purposeful and incidental exposure and has been shown to increase Internet usage.[67] Most people are either online or in a state of online readiness 24/7.

One consequence of this blurred information environment is that the distinction between public and private communications has transformed. Thorseth notes that the ubiquity of social media has changed the nature of "public space." Topics that were considered intimate (such as sexual relations or political affiliations) are now disclosed prominently on public platforms.[68] Concepts such as "public" and "private" should be now considered complementary categories, rather than mutually exclusive, which are challenged by communications technologies. The new hyperconnected world has affected our social relations; we used to have few friends with convivial relations who were mostly located near us, but now the social fabric has dramatically evolved, and people are now connected with up to (and beyond) thousands of "friends" or "followers" around the world.[69]

Another significant change is the level of information that is available to individuals within the information environment. Previously, information was considerably much more scarce than it is today and held by gatekeepers (editors of television, print media, etc.). It was also more difficult to access and disseminate than in the contemporary world, and because of the smaller economy of attention, individuals had a large internal capacity to receive it.[70] Today the opposite is true, there is an abundance of information, but we have little capacity to attend to it. Social media companies have attempted to exploit the economy of attention by designing platforms designed to retain users, which has resulted in volatile and piecemeal identities that lack empathy and capacity to read other persons' intentions. Thorseth argues that the information environment has led to wide access to information, but that we lack the capacity to incorporate diverging opinions.[71] She draws on Sunstein's concept of the *Daily Me*, in which individuals only have access to a narrow range of information that coheres to their existing worldview.[72]

This perspective has typically focused on broader sociopolitical issues rather than specifically on political violence. However, some have warned of the risks of this re-ontologized world. Jurgenson argues that it is a flammable space, referring to the Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street protests, which highlight the intersection between digital technologies and physical space.[73] He noted that protesters took photos and videos and were able to spread them quickly around the world to a greater audience. Rather than merely shouting in the wind, the content was met by an interested network, which in turn gave the protesters more motivation to continue. Thorseth's discussion of individuals' inability to incorporate diverging opinions briefly touches on the case of the Norwegian white supremacist terrorist attacker, Anders Behring Breivik's manifesto to demonstrate the vast quantity of information available but also a failure to incorporate the perspectives of his targeted out-groups.[74]

Re-Ontologizing Online Radicalization

Several scholars have pointed to a false dichotomy between online and offline radicalization. Gill and colleagues argue that their empirical investigation into terrorists' use of the Internet shows that "there is no easy offline versus online violent radicalization dichotomy to be drawn….Plotters regularly engage in activities in both domains."[75] These findings and sentiments are mirrored by Whittaker, whose research into the online behaviors of US-based Islamic State (IS) terrorists also found that their behaviors were spread over both domains, noting that the "melding of the online and offline environment lends further credence to the argument that it is a false dichotomy."[76] Using the same data set, Herath and Whittaker expanded on this by creating four "ideal type" pathways of terrorist engagement which describe different patterns of online

and offline behaviors. Rather than a simple dichotomy of "online" versus "offline" radicalization, their findings showed that each of the pathways exists on a spectrum.[77] These findings are supported by research conducted by Kenyon and colleagues, who used closed-source data on convicted UK terrorists. They found that although the use of the Internet was increasing, it was not replacing offline interactions—rather individuals tended to operate in both domains.[78]

Research conducted across eight countries by Hamid & Ariza found that of 439 terrorists, the majority (238) were radicalized "mostly offline", while 77 were "mostly online" and 8 were classified as "online asocial radicalization".[79] In their study of lone actor terrorists, Lindekilde, Malthaner and O'Connor highlight that behavioral patterns exist across both domains simultaneously, and as a result are mutually reinforcing.[80] Ducol offers a theoretical approach to radicalization based on Situational Action Theory in which he critiques existing theoretical discussions that assume there are two worlds, "virtual" and "real," that do not affect each other, suggesting instead that theory should conceptualize different "life spheres" in both domains (such as friends, family, social media, websites) that can become intertwined and lead to a cognitive monopoly which can radicalize.[81]

Each of these authors argues that there is a false dichotomy, but they still assume (in some cases implicitly by their coding system) that online behaviors can be meaningfully separated from offline. This section will push these arguments further by demonstrating that many of the behaviors that one might consider belonging to one domain cannot be easily demarcated. Rather than showing that terrorists tend to operate in both, it will, using the arguments laid out in the previous section, re-ontologize the debate and question the utility of considering this simplistic demarcation. To do this, this section will draw on existing empirical and theoretical research, as well as case study examples of terrorists for the purpose of exposition.

The largest existing contribution to this argument is made by Valentini, Lorusso and Stephan, who develop the Onlife thesis to radicalization. They argue that scholars in the field have conceptualized virtual spaces as distinct from the "real world"—which this article has demonstrated above. Rather, in contemporary extremism, such spaces are not clearly defined, and the two domains conflate in unprecedented ways: "radicalization processes evolve, and develop, by integrating elements that pertain to both."[82] They make this argument by discussing an online environmental dynamic—content-sharing algorithms—to demonstrate why scholars ought to rethink this dichotomy. These algorithms draw heavily on factors from both domains, such as online history, and tracked information such as location, recent purchases, and phone calls. Moreover, time spent away from social media platforms and unposted comments also affect how algorithms operate.[83] They also highlight the importance of portable devices, which help platforms to structure accurate information on users, even in the offline domain. They reconceptualize the notion of an "echo chamber"—featured in almost every online radicalization theory above—as an "echo system" which incorporates both domains in a constant and seamless feedback loop with each other. This is in keeping with previous research, which highlights the importance of offline homogenous groups as well as online ones.[84][85]

Propaganda Engagement

The blurry intersection between online and offline extremist behavior is further exemplified by Baugut and Neumann's interviews with 44 convicted and former German and Austrian Islamists. Their participants consumed propaganda online, then discussed it with their peers and preachers face-to-face. The converse was also true; individuals would have face-to-face discussions at mosques in which peers would recommend content, which they would watch later online.[86] Moreover, participants watched online propaganda *with* their offline networks, sitting together and watching radical preachers on YouTube and discussing afterward. They were also drawn further into radicalization by the platform's recommendation system. They noted that in their sample, the two modes of communication were strongly intertwined, lending further weight to the notion that there is a false dichotomy.

Terrorist cells in the US have also held "viewing parties" in which they would congregate at co-ideologues' houses and watch radical content together. In a group of would-be travelers to IS in Minneapolis/St. Paul:

"the men would spend hours watching a YouTube channel called Enter the Truth…all slick Islamic State productions, focused on the suffering of Syrian children and the moral corruption of the West."[87] The group would also sit in a circle, swapping devices with each other to share and recommend propaganda.[88] The cell responsible for the attack in Garland (Texas), watched content together, expressing their pleasure while watching execution videos and being visibly excited after the Charlie Hebdo attack.[89] Other small cells displayed similar behaviors, including Jaelyn Young and Mohammed Daklalla[90], Munther Omar Saleh and Fareed Mumuni,[91] Mahmoud Elhasssan and Joseph Farrokh[92], and Sixto Ramiro Garcia and Asher Abid Khan.[93]

These case studies and the interview research by Baugut and Neumann help to demonstrate that engagement with terrorist propaganda is more than a unidirectional relationship in which the content can radicalize its audience like a hypodermic needle injection. Instead, there is a complex information environment that protrudes over both domains. Rather than audiences being passively radicalized by propaganda, content is a topic of conversation or an activity between like-minded friends. After watching IS's video *Healing the Believers' Chests* which depicts the immolation of Jordanian pilot Muath Safi Yousef al-Kasasbeh, several terrorists discussed it and drew justifications from IS propaganda. Arafat Nagi told an unnamed co-ideologue "do to them as they do to you…they drop bombs and burn people,"[94] while Terrance McNeil took to Facebook and said "This is what happens when you bomb women and children and get caught. Alhumdullilah I was worried for a while they might let that murderer go."[95] Many others shared the video with their followers, such as Islam Said Natsheh,[96] David Wright,[97] or Khalil Abu Rayyan,[98] while others expressed explicit support amongst their peers.[99][100][101] Some of these instances took place online, others took place offline, but they both demonstrate that there is a complex information environment. Rather than mere consumption of propaganda, these cases demonstrate active dialectical engagement.

Terrorists as Prosumers

Online radicalization theories tend to focus heavily on the consumption of radical propaganda. Far less attention is paid to them as "prosumers," who are at the same time *pro*ducers and con*sumers* of violent extremist materials.[102] This is also an activity that straddles both domains; terrorists regularly take and upload photographs of themselves for their audience on social media. Jalil Aziz donned military gear, an AR-15, a knife, fingerless gloves, and a balaclava and uploaded it to his contacts on Twitter,[103] while Gregory Lepsky uploaded photos to Facebook holding a semi-automatic rifle and a pistol with the comment "look at these sick photos of me yooo."[104] Others adopted symbols of IS in their uploaded content—e.g., the tawheed gesture, such as Harlem Suarez[105]—or posed with the group's black standard flag.[106][107]

Terrorists also create and share videos for their audiences; Haris Qamar visited several tourist sites around Washington DC with a confidential FBI source to create a video for IS which encouraged lone actor attacks. As they drove past the Pentagon, Qamar shouted "bye bye DC, stupid ass kufar, kill 'em all."[108] Zakaryia Abdin uploaded a video to social media of himself shooting an AK-47 at a local gun range in South Carolina.[109] Other terrorists planned to make videos if their plots were successful, such as Munir Abdulkader and John T. Booker, whose respective plots involved abducting military officers or veterans and executing them on camera.[110][111] Each of these activities was designed to be uploaded and shared on the Internet, yet they fundamentally relied on actors' non-virtual activity in risky or noteworthy places to create the content.

These outward expressions of ideology on public social media platforms seem to be counterintuitive. Research has demonstrated that terrorists who act online are less likely to be successful than those who do not, possibly because they announce their intentions, allowing law enforcement to open investigations against them.[112][113] Understanding these behaviors within the re-ontologized information environment helps to offer a clearer picture. As discussed above, the traditional distinction between public and private has become blurry and individuals negotiate and manage identity for their perceived audiences.[114][115][116] This type of reputation management has been called "staged authenticity"[117] in which individuals create an ultra-pious and zealous jihadist avatar for their audience.[118] These activities are not merely confined to

the online domain; individuals broadcast to their contacts who are often made up of offline networks; chose to take photos in hostile physical spaces; or with terrorist symbols because, as argued above, the infosphere trains users to look for the perfect photo, check-in, or status update in physical spaces.[119]

Understanding Radicalization Environments

If the online and offline domains are ontologically inseparable, then "online radicalization" becomes a redundant concept. As Gill and colleagues argue, we should not fixate on a simple location of radicalization but instead need to "understand the drives, needs, and forms of behavior that led to the radicalization and attack planning and why offenders chose that environment rather than purely looking at the affordances the environment produced."[120] The frame of a binary dichotomy tends to result in the Internet being given radicalizing agency, which overlooks other important factors such as vulnerabilities, stressors, or how online and offline factors combine. For example, in research conducted by Reynolds and Hafez, they tested three hypotheses to best explain the recruitment of German foreign fighters, including ones that emphasise the importance of online radicalization and offline networks.[121] However, as argued above, we must understand that being situated in (and around) radical communities affects propensities to engage online. Offline proximity is an important factor in determining how social media content-sharing algorithms prioritize interactions.[122] Users are more likely to be shown or recommended materials if they come from an individual that is part of their local network.

Therefore, the question should not be "do terrorists radicalize online?" but instead "what role do information environments play in radicalization?" This reframing forgoes an online/offline dichotomy, which is neither empirically nor ontologically defensible. Individuals' environments are made up of interactions that span across both domains in ways which are not easy to separate. One existing framework that is well suited to doing this is Situational Action Theory (SAT) which assesses how an individual's propensity to radicalization (such as their vulnerabilities or stressors) interacts with their environment to affect their norm-based motivations. In other words, why do some individuals see terrorism as an acceptable (and often the *only* acceptable) form of action?[123] SAT does not assume propaganda will influence its audience, nor does it preclude it, but instead attempts to understand why it may resonate with some, but not others, based on the individual and their environment. The theory highlights the importance of socialization within certain settings, regardless of whether they are offline or online.[124] Taking the example of the "viewing parties" discussed above, it is not relevant whether this is an example of online radicalization or not, it merely attempts to understand how environments affect norm-based motivations.

One might reasonably argue that there are practical applications to an online/offline dichotomy, particularly when considering behaviors (such as assessing whether someone has radicalized entirely online or offline) or the benefits and challenges of counter-extremism interventions, such as counter-messaging or signposting toward services. However, it is argued here that there is greater utility in *more* specificity rather than relying on a simplistic dichotomy. Taking a more holistic view also offers an opportunity to attempt to understand the environmental differences between platforms and how they may affect radicalization. Rather than grouping a range of distinct behaviors as "online" (such as posting on Twitter; watching videos on YouTube; communicating visually on Skype; or interacting anonymously on Telegram), these platforms offer entirely different user experiences and have a different set of rules and realities. For example, when comparing political discussions on Facebook and YouTube, Halpern and Gibbs found differences in user deliberation. The former's interconnectedness and lack of anonymity expands the flow of information and allows for symmetrical discussion, while the latter, which is more anonymous and deindividuated, results in less polite discourse.[125] Rather than saying "this terrorist acted online," or "this is an example of an online intervention," there is greater utility in speaking specifically about the affordance of the platform in question.

Conway identified this as a major knowledge gap, suggesting that research should compare the different functionalities of platforms and how extremists exploit them.[126] Presently, we do not know how Twitter users' experience of 280-character posts, public audiences, and algorithmically sorted timelines com-

pares with Telegram's invite-only groups, self-destruct messages, and relative lack of content moderation. Therefore, when groups like IS migrated from the former to the latter,[127] we have little idea of how each platform's environment affected radicalization. If there is an "online disinhibition" effect that could exacerbate radicalization,[128][129] we do not know if platforms do so uniformly. Moreover, research has suggested that platforms' recommendation systems are not uniform when it comes to promoting extremist content,[130] which suggests environmental differences when it comes to algorithmic amplification. Rather than grouping all platforms as "online", it is more analytically useful to understand these user experiences in relation to each other as part of a wider environment. It is possible that there are more differences between some types of online communication than between online and face-to-face communication.

Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate that online radicalization is a redundant concept. Academic theories have hypothesized dynamics to explain that acting on the Internet may exacerbate radicalization. The purpose of this article was not to rebut these dynamics; given the weight of evidence, concepts such as disinhibition, echo chambers, or deindividuation could indeed play an important role. Instead, the argument is that it is not analytically useful to dichotomize between an online and offline domain. Not only has existing research shown that terrorist behaviors tend to spill across both, but existing critiques demonstrate that it is not an ontologically defensible position. Many behaviors that would be considered evidence of online radicalization—such as streaming propaganda; posting pictures on Facebook; or being recommended content on YouTube—cannot be easily attributed to a single domain. Rather, terrorists engage in an ongoing socialization process within their environment that often protrudes this simple dichotomy. As noted above, the examples offered were intended merely as exposition and a jumping-off point to explain this critique. Future research should analyze and begin to theorize this ontological framework in a more rigorous way. In particular, it will be fruitful to compare different ideologies who may have different norms when it comes to communications—for example, to assess whether "very online" communities such as incels or QAnon interweave the two domains in a comparable manner.

It seems advisable to avoid theories which attempt to explain how *online* radicalization works, instead focusing on more holistic theories that account for individuals' predispositions, stressors, their engagement with their environment, and systemic level factors. This article proposes that theories such as SAT offer a clearer road to understanding the role of communication technologies in their wider context, rather than focusing merely on the technologies themselves. While policy makers may opt for monocausal explanations of radicalization that fixate on a specific location, holistic theoretical understandings will be a key tool in explaining the complexity of radicalization to decision makers.

About the Author: **Joe Whittaker** *is a lecturer in cyber threats in the Department of Criminology, Sociology, and Social Policy at Swansea University. He completed his joint PhD at Swansea University and Leiden University's Institute of Security and Global Affairs on the topic of online radicalization. He also researches extremism in the context of recommendation algorithms, video games, and counter-messaging. You can contact him via email (j.j.whittaker@Swansea.ac.uk) or follow him on Twitter (@CTProject_JW).*

Notes

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Terrorism Experts' Predictions Regarding the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Activities of Violent Non-State Actors

by Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, Tommy van Steen, and Maria-Elena Kisyova

Abstract

This article seeks to systematically collate the assessments and predictions of terrorism experts through a survey of 142 terrorism experts' evaluations. In light of the recent emergence of a growing number of policy and peer-reviewed publications dealing with the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of violent non-state actors—whether in terms of propaganda, radicalization, violent action, or recruitment and mobilization—this article seeks to evaluate the degree of consensus within the field of terrorism studies on these effects. Because terrorism experts play an important role in the formulation of national security decisions and the shaping of public debates, and their analyses of current and future threats frequently influence policy considerations, this study provides insight into the prevalent attitudes among terrorism experts in the midst of the pandemic. This is important as these prevailing attitudes may shape future research in the field of terrorism studies and subsequently impact governmental policies.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, prediction, terrorism experts.

Introduction

As the world continues to grapple with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it is abundantly clear that this crisis will have long-lasting and multifaceted consequences. Following the declaration of a global pandemic in mid-March 2020,[1] and as governments around the world adopted various measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission in their communities, scholars and pundits alike began to contemplate how this unprecedented public health crisis would impact their respective fields of expertise.[2]

Within the field of terrorism studies, a growing number of policy and peer-reviewed publications—along with countless webinars, online symposia, conferences, and discussions on social media—soon emerged. These publications and events revealed perspectives and assumptions regarding the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of violent non-state actors, whether in terms of propaganda, radicalization, violent action, or recruitment and mobilization. Some scholars suggested that extremists may seek to capitalize on the crisis to boost recruitment and mobilization,[3] while others warned about the possibility that COVID-19 and similar biological agents could be weaponized.[4] Experts also described how both far-right extremists and jihadists had taken or would seek to take advantage of lockdown measures and the corresponding increased use of the Internet in order to promote their ideologies.[5] Also postulated was that these actors might employ the COVID-19 pandemic as part of accelerationist and apocalyptic narratives to create a new ideational background for their ongoing ideological struggles.[6] Furthermore, scholars warned of extremist groups utilizing the pandemic to incite violence against ideological enemies.[7] In addition to the existing security concerns posed by far-right extremists and jihadists in North America and Europe, scholars have warned that the reallocation of resources to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic may impede international cooperation against terrorist groups as well as reducing military presence in conflict zones. This by-product of the pandemic, scholars argue, may lead to the establishment of new 'safe havens' in which terrorists can plan and direct attacks against the West with impunity.[8] Others, however, have warned against exaggerating the impact of COVID-19 on violent non-state actors' abilities and motivations.[9]

Considering these wide-ranging debates, and the increased scholarly attention upon the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of violent non-state actors, this study has a dual aim: to systematical-

ly collate the assessments and predictions of terrorism experts, and to measure the degree to which there is consensus within the field of terrorism studies. In order to achieve this aim, we conducted a survey of 142 terrorism experts. A summary of the results of this survey is as follows:

- Far-right terror in Europe and North America and the proliferation of far-right propaganda is—at this time—generally deemed to pose a bigger threat than Islamist extremism;
- Violent non-state actors in the Middle East and North Africa (henceforth MENA) and Sahel region are generally seen as having leveraged the crisis through pro-social activities rather than violence;
- The threat of bioweapons continues to be deemed rather low compared to conventional attacks, despite the increased scholarly attention paid to the subject.

Terrorism experts play an important role in the formulation of national security decisions and the shaping of public debates, and their analyses of current and future threats are frequently incorporated into policy considerations.[10] As such, this study seeks to capture prevalent attitudes among terrorism experts in the midst of the pandemic, given that these might not only shape future research within the field of terrorism studies, but also influence governmental policies.

The approach adopted in this study builds on similar work on knowledge production in the aftermath of catalytic changes. For example, in the aftermath of the September 11 (henceforth 9/11) attacks, Czwarno sought to identify the prevalent postulates in pre-9/11 terrorism literature in order to better understand why the academic community failed to warn policy-makers about the possibility of an event on the scale of the attacks.[11] Czwarno points toward ontological, methodological, and conceptual problems, as well as a skewed focus on potential threats posed by China's economic and military rise, and suggests that these created a gap in knowledge about jihadist terrorist groups like al-Qaeda. Similarly, Schuurman[12] and Phillips[13] have argued that terrorism scholarship post-9/11 was largely characterized by a new singular focus on jihadist terrorism, which in turn de-emphasized the threat posed by far-right extremism and terrorism.

Unlike the aforementioned studies, which attempted to identify influential postulates retrospectively, in this study we seek to capture a contemporary snapshot of how the field of terrorism studies has responded to the current public health crisis. Our hope is that this survey will serve as a sort of 'intellectual time capsule' that will capture prevalent assumptions, expectations, predictions and assessments during this public health crisis, which in turn can be used in subsequent studies to trace the evolution of academic thought, research, and public policy concerning terrorism and non-state violence.

COVID-19 and Violent Non-State Actors

A survey of the growing literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reveals the emergence of important debates within the academic community as to how the current pandemic would impact the behavior of violent non-state actors. Broadly speaking, four—at times overlapping—prevailing postulates can be distilled from the published literature; these four postulates in turn serve as the basis for our survey. These postulates focus on both short-term and long-term impacts, with short-term impact mostly occurring during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and long-term impact emerging in the aftermath of the pandemic. These postulates appear within the literature—often without significant attention given to counter-arguments—as commonly held beliefs amongst scholars writing about the impact of the pandemic on terrorism, which in itself is important. Our study sought to test to what degree these beliefs were in fact commonly held amongst terrorism scholars at large.

Postulate 1: In the short term, COVID-19 pandemic mitigation/containment measures have restricted the activities of violent non-state actors.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, governments worldwide have adopted various—and at times, highly restrictive and intrusive—non-pharmaceutical interventions to reduce transmission of the disease. These

range from social distancing measures, school closures, and bans on public events, to the use of security services and technologies to assist in contact tracing.[14] As these non-pharmaceutical interventions were introduced, several scholars suggested that these measures would have the unintended effect of constraining the activities of violent non-state actors.[15]

In the short term, some measures such as social distancing and the increased presence of law enforcement were posited as possibly reducing the likelihood of violent non-state actors being able to successfully carry out mass casualty attacks (such as bombing or vehicle ramming attacks) within crowded and public spaces.[16] Similarly, as a result of reductions in cross-border traffic and the introduction of tighter border controls between states, violent non-state actors would ostensibly face even more difficulties and scrutiny when traveling across international boundaries.[17] Experts have also pointed to the application of domestic terrorism and criminal offenses to sanction individuals found to be intentionally spreading the virus or threatening to do so, as a deterrent measure.[18] While some of these constraints might have a limited impact in dissuading those intent on perpetrating small-scale attacks,[19] the notion that measures to contain the pandemic have a dual effect—both curbing the spread of the disease and reducing the likelihood of an attack by violent non-state actors—is widespread in the literature surveyed.

Alongside more general statements assessing the overall impact on the activity of violent non-state actors, the literature also deals with the specific impact of the pandemic on the ability of these actors to conduct attacks. In this context, there was a tendency to focus on discrete case studies, concentrating on a particular group, region, type, and time of attack.[20] With respect to such studies, several intersecting trends emerge. Considering security risks arising in North America and Europe, experts caution that far-right and far-left extremists, single-issue extremists (anti-vaxxers, racially motivated groups, anti-globalization groups, etc.), and lone actors encouraged by terrorists may exploit the overburdened security context to launch attacks against vulnerable targets.[21] Other risks within the region include Salafi-jihadist organized groups, who may initiate plans for future attacks in the West from terrorist hotspots.[22] In addition, experts have put forward hypotheses regarding the type of attacks that may occur during the pandemic. A survey of the literature on this point[23] mentions the following: the risk of a conventional attack against the general public during the pandemic, especially on medical facilities; the risk of an attack using a biological agent; the risk of an attack using emerging technologies; the risk of a cyberattack on critical infrastructure; and the risk of a conventional attack targeting security officials.

Particular assumptions are made with respect to the activity of violent non-state actors in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Sahel. In the short term, the risk of a terrorist attack is frequently tied to existing terrorist groups in the region, where there is a reduction in the ability of security services to combat terrorism as international partners recall troops back home, an issue which has been widely discussed.[24] Long-term risks are tied to the social and economic consequences of the pandemic, which lead to increased recruiting potential of COVID-19 propaganda and of pro-social services offered by terrorist groups in areas of poor governance.[25]

Postulate 2: Violent non-state actors have taken or may take advantage of the uncertainty and confusion caused by the pandemic by adapting their activities to the changing security context.

A considerable body of literature proposes that terrorist groups operate in environments which are inherently hostile to them and must therefore adapt and innovate rapidly to survive.[26] Similarly, observers of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on non-state actors have detailed various ways in which these actors might adapt and take advantage of the uncertainty and confusion caused by this crisis.[27]

Focusing on the threat posed by violent non-state actors outside of North America and Europe, several scenarios have been envisaged by those experts concerned that governments would shift priorities and resources away from counter-terrorism during the pandemic. In particular, experts noted that violent non-state actors operating in the MENA region may seek to establish 'safe havens' by reclaiming land,[28] may perpetrate large-scale attacks domestically,[29] or may plan future attacks against the West.[30]

Experts also noted that violent non-state actors may take advantage of security lapses at important facilities; for example, at prisons housing terrorists, where governments may struggle with reduced manpower as guards become ill and the virus spreads among inmate populations, leading to riots and potentially jailbreaks.[31] In addition, Ackerman proposes that terrorists may attack facilities with reduced security such as "chemical plants, and facilities that store nuclear, radiological or other hazardous materials" in order to steal raw materials that could be used to produce explosive devices, as well as using the time to improve their technical skills such as bomb-making or cyberattack capabilities.[32]

Experts have also warned that violent non-state actors might seek to increase their perceived legitimacy in areas of poor governance by engaging in pro-social activities in place of local governments, such as community-focused COVID-19 services in the social, health care, and humanitarian sectors.[33] These scholars have cautioned that such actions provide an opportunity for extremist groups to highlight the inadequacies of local government, acquire political legitimacy and, ultimately, increase recruitment and funding.[34] For instance, Coleman argued that in the Sahel region, "support for groups such as JNIM [the al-Qaeda umbrella-affiliate] and ISGS [the recognized Islamic State affiliate] is often separated from the groups' ideological outlooks" and instead tied to "factors such as the groups' ability to provide financial or security incentives for membership."[35]

Postulate 3: The dissemination of extremist content/propaganda during the pandemic is a pressing security concern.

Scholars focusing on the digital realm have suggested that violent non-state actors have also adapted their online activities, in terms of both frequency and content. Several experts have reported a noticeable increase in activity on online extremist platforms, which suggests that extremist groups have successfully drawn greater attention to their ideological propaganda during the pandemic.[36] Research also suggests that extremists have repurposed preexisting prejudices and narratives to fit the crisis, which they use to justify violent aims and opposition toward ideological enemies,[37] thus both facilitating recruitment[38] and inspiring followers to commit attacks.[39]

Most of the literature dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violent non-state actors is concerned with the increased presence and reach of extremist content online. In the United States, for example, online engagement with far-right extremist content is believed to have increased by an average of 13% following the introduction of lockdown measures.[40] Similarly, another study found that a particular white supremacist channel on Telegram had experienced an 800% increase in users during the pandemic.[41] Moreover, Davies and colleagues found that the official declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the World Health Organization contributed to significant increases in posting behavior on far-right extremist and incel forums, but had a negligible effect on user behavior on English-language jihadi forums and left-wing forums.[42] When considering the amplified engagement with extremist content, experts allude to the numerous radicalization 'push factors' exacerbated by the pandemic, including distress and uncertainty, increased psychological trauma, increased poverty and school closures, and more (unsupervised) screen time during lockdowns.[43]

Scholars have also pointed to the evolving nature of extremist content, examining the ways extremists and jihadists have used conspiracy theories and misinformation in order to project their belief systems through the lens of COVID-19[44] and to reach new audiences.[45] Research on the impact of COVID-19 on far-right extremist propaganda suggests the existence of three prominent themes. Firstly, ethnic minorities—particularly Muslim, East Asian and Black communities—are commonly blamed for spreading the virus, or accused of doing so intentionally. Examples of this narrative have included the use of the hashtag #corona-jihad on Twitter, which began following the distribution of a fake video showing a Muslim man spitting at police officers. It has been estimated that more than 300,000 people engaged with this hashtag and that it has reached upwards of 135 million users on Twitter.[46] This form of propaganda has also included the dissemination of fake news and disinformation showing Muslims licking fruit or coughing at people. Ironically, this

narrative was, at times, coupled with calls to retaliate, such as encouraging supporters to engage in activities which would in turn facilitate the spread of the virus among these ethnic minorities.[47]

The second prominent theme framed non-pharmaceutical interventions such as lockdowns and strict social distancing rules as proof of government overreach and infringement of civil liberties. This theme was generally coupled with conspiracy theories. While no particular conspiracy theory appears to dominate, scholars have remarked that the most widespread theories include that COVID-19 is a plot to decimate or control the world population (attributed to various actors, including Bill Gates, the United Nations, or George Soros),[48] that the virus was caused by the proliferation of 5G telecommunication masts,[49] or that the pandemic was caused by a Chinese or Israeli bioweapon which was deliberately released for geostrategic or financial reasons.[50]

The third prominent theme relates to the notion of accelerationism: apocalyptic ideas are projected through the lens of the pandemic in order to create a new ideational background for ongoing ideological struggles.[51] Commenting on the proliferation of neo-Nazi propaganda on one far-right extremist platform, Kingdon notes that "the COVID-19 pandemic provides accelerationists with the argument that as conflict resulting from the virus is inevitable, potential recruits should be inspired to seize this as an opportunity for them to make the first move in the fight for a total Aryan victory."[52]

The literature focusing on jihadist propaganda relating to COVID-19 has similarly suggested that groups like Islamic State have sought to co-opt the pandemic as an ally in fighting their enemies, and have encouraged Muslims and non-Muslims alike to adhere to their stricter interpretation of Islam as a form of protection from the virus.[53] Scholars have also remarked that, in addition to calling for ideological adherence, jihadist propaganda has routinely called on followers to take advantage of overburdened security capabilities to launch attacks.[54]

Postulate 4: Counter-Terrorism/Counter Violent Extremism (CT/CVE) sector de-prioritization will produce security gaps with regards to violent non-state actors.

The fourth postulate that can be distilled from the literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violent non-state actors relates to the extent of counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism initiatives, measures, and programs. Indeed, several scholars have raised concerns that the pandemic and efforts to contain it may hamper the ability of states to disrupt emerging plots and tactics.[55] In Europe and North America, in light of the diversion of security forces, law enforcement, and intelligence services to help enforce non-pharmaceutical interventions, some experts have warned that the state may be left underprepared to deal with the threat posed by violent non-state actors.[56] This argument is possibly best articulated by Ackerman and Peterson, who remark that "[the] ongoing situation will reduce capabilities and introduce friction into the counter-terrorism process (e.g., with analysts teleworking or suffering personal stresses), thus making it more likely that a crucial warning indicator or piece of intelligence could fall through the cracks."[57] Similarly, some scholars have expressed concerns that potential substantial cuts in national counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism budgets may result in reduced funding for capacity building and long-term programming.[58]

Experts focusing on counter-terrorism outside of North America and Europe have also raised concerns about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ability of states to counteract and respond to terrorism. Such concerns seem to focus largely on the MENA and Sahel region, where Western states are heavily involved in training initiatives and international security assistance missions, which may be scaled back due to limited resources (including lack of healthy troops due to infection with/quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19) or changing political priorities in the face of the crisis.[59] The potential scaling back of Western involvement is often feared as detrimental to the stability of the MENA and Sahel region (which depends on continuing international cooperation, training of local security forces, and leadership in military contributions) and is therefore often viewed as potentially paving the way for either a resurgence of violent non-state actors or the establishment of safe havens for them to operate in.[60] It is also feared by experts

that this would, in turn, allow terrorist groups operating in the region to "better prepare spectacular terror attacks and escalate campaigns of insurgent battlefields worldwide," and to recruit more adherents to realize their aims.[61]

Methodology

Building upon the four overarching postulates presented above, we set out to examine the degree to which terrorism experts agree with these postulates and to better understand how these viewpoints might shape the wider security field. In order to achieve these aims, we set up a large-scale expert survey. The survey comprised 29 questions, split into four sections: I. General Impact of the Pandemic on the Practices of Violent Non-State Actors (4 questions); II. Security Risks: Europe and North America (13 questions); III. Security Risks: Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel Region (9 questions); IV. Demographic Questions (3 questions).

Dissemination and Participants

Our target population for the survey were individuals who had published between 1997 and 2020 in three leading terrorism journals: *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. Of the 1,691 individual authors who met these criteria, we were able to find the email addresses of 1,497 individuals.[62] We were unable to find the email addresses for 194 individuals; the most common reasons for this were that the individual had retired (and thus no longer had an institutional email address), had passed away, or was now working outside academia and had a minimal digital footprint.

On March 30, 2021, the survey was sent by email to the 1,497 aforementioned individuals. Of these emails, 73 bounced or failed to send due to outdated contact details. In addition, six individuals responded directly to decline participation in the survey. The most common reason given for this was that, although the individual had previously published in a terrorism studies journal, they felt their expertise lay outside this field of study. The survey was open for completion during the period of March 30, 2021–May 7, 2021. During this time, three reminder emails were sent to potential respondents encouraging them to participate.

In total, 218 individuals responded to the survey. Of these, 76 were excluded from the data for one of two reasons. The primary reason for exclusion was that a respondent had begun the survey but failed to complete it. The survey required respondents to answer all substantive questions and did not allow questions to be skipped, with the exception of questions related to respondent demographics (i.e., gender, location, employment). The second reason for exclusion, which accounted for 13 cases, was that the respondent failed an attention check question. The goal of attention check items is to ensure that people who complete a survey are paying attention to the questions when answering them, as a potential danger of survey research is that respondents give random answers to the questions in order to get through the survey, rather than providing genuine answers. By adding an attention check, we sought to quickly gauge whether respondents might have stopped paying attention. The attention check consisted of an item in a matrix question which stated "Please select 'Disagree' on this line." Any participant who did not select "Disagree" was considered to have failed the attention check and was removed from the sample before analysis.

After accounting for incomplete responses and failed attention checks, the data set comprised 142 completed surveys. Of these 142 participants, 99 were male, 40 were female, and 3 did not indicate their gender. In terms of geographic spread, 47.2% were employed in North America, 38.7% in Europe, 7.7% in Australia and Oceania, 2.8% in the Middle East, 2.1% in Africa, and 1.4% in Asia. Given that all participants had authored at least one article in a leading terrorism and violent extremism journal in the last 24 years, it is not surprising that most of the participants selected "academia" as their current place of employment (N=112). However, a small number of participants came from think tanks (10), government (5), law enforcement (3), industry (1), and other organizations (11). The median completion time of the survey was 13 minutes.

Note that, compared to previous surveys that systematically collected expert opinions and assumptions on

other topics within the field of terrorism studies, our survey has a larger sample size. For instance, a similar survey was published by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, which gathered inferences regarding counter-terrorism professionals' views on the usefulness of academic insights for their work; this survey had a total of 59 responses.[63] Another similar inquiry conducted to investigate the state of terrorism research in 2011 gathered 66 responses.[64]

Results

Postulate 1: In the short term, COVID-19 pandemic mitigation/containment measures have restricted the activities of violent non-state actors.

To determine how respondents felt about opportunities for attacks by violent non-state actors during the pandemic, we asked: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Generally speaking, the measures taken to restrict the spread of the virus (for example lockdowns, mandatory quarantines, social distancing) have constrained the activities of violent non-state actors." There was a lack of clear agreement on this statement: only half of experts tended to somewhat agree (N=65, or 45.8%) or strongly agreed (N=6, or 4.2%) that containment measures have had a constraining effect. Those who agreed to any extent (N=71, or 50%) were asked a follow-up question where they had to distribute 100 points among several given measures, allocating more points to those they considered to be more restrictive. This approach allowed respondents to weigh the impact of several different measures taken to restrict the spread of the virus. The most points were awarded to restrictive travel regulations (average 37 points), closely followed by social distancing measures (average 35 points), with smaller effects attributed to the increased presence of law enforcement (average 21 points). The new pandemic-related offenses intended to deter violent non-state actors from mounting attacks were seen as the least restrictive (average 8 points).

When asked which type of violent non-state actor would pose the greatest threat to Europe and North America during the pandemic, the participants responded as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Which of the following violent types of non-state actors pose the greatest threat to Europe and North America during the pandemic?*

Type of violent non-state actor	% of respondents
Violent right-wing organized groups	50.7%
Nonaffiliated right-wing/left-wing extremists	19%
Single-issue extremists (anti-vaxxers, racially motivated crimes, antiabortionist groups, anti-globalization groups,etc.)	13.4%
Salafi-jihadist organized groups	8.5%
Violent left-wing organized groups	3.5%
Nonaffiliated Islamist extremist	3.5%
Other forms of existing violent non-state actor violence	1.4%

Following this question, participants were asked to allocate 100 points between five types of possible attacks in North America and Europe, allocating more points to those they viewed as more likely to happen. The most points were allocated to a conventional attack against the general public (average 35 points) followed by a conventional attack targeting security officials (average 27 points). Substantially fewer points were allocated to a cyberattack (average 20 points), followed by an attack using emerging technologies (average 12 points). Surprisingly, the fewest points were allocated to an attack using a biological agent (average 6 points). Overall, the responses to these questions indicate that most of the experts consider containment measures to have restricted violent right-wing groups the least, as well as having the least impact on those who seek

to conduct conventional attacks. The fact that these two groups are often one and the same reinforces that there is consensus that violent right-wing groups conducting conventional attacks are those least restricted by COVID-19 measures. An alternative interpretation of these results is that experts have generally assessed far-right extremism as posing the greatest security risk at this point in time, and that the COVID-19 crisis may not have had a bearing on this assessment.

In addition, about 43% of participants agreed with the statement **"While ISIS has called on followers in the West to exploit the chaos and conduct attacks, jihadists are likely to wait until after the pandemic ends to do so."** Taking into account that half of the respondents agreed that violent right-wing organized groups are the main security threat to North America and Europe during the pandemic, it appears that participants may consider COVID-19-related measures as impacting the modus operandi of jihadists in the West specifically. As such, the results in this section demonstrate that support for Postulate 1 is found only with regard to the impact of pandemic mitigation and containment measures on jihadists and their ability to conduct attacks in North America and Europe in the short term, perhaps due to the restrictive measures placed on international travel at the time of the survey.

Postulate 2: Violent non-state actors have taken or may take advantage of the uncertainty and confusion caused by the pandemic by adapting their activities to the changing security context.

Postulate 2 suggests violent non-state actors are adapting to the changing security context. To examine this, respondents were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: **"Generally speaking, violent non-state actors have taken advantage of the uncertainty and confusion caused by the pandemic."** Around 60% of participants tended to agree with this statement, while 25% disagreed and 15% did not have an opinion.

As with Postulate 1, those who agreed with the statement (N=85, 59.8%) were asked further clarification questions. These respondents were presented with several extremist activities and were asked to distribute 100 points among them, allocating more points to those they considered more successful. Participants allocated the most points to the ability of violent non-state actors to draw greater attention to their ideological propaganda (average 45 points), then to recruiting more adherents (average 36 points); the fewest points were allocated to mobilizing adherents to commit violent attacks (average 20 points).

Another common theme in the literature are extremist and terrorist tactics which make use of the local and global upheaval in order to achieve certain gains. All participants (N=142) were asked to distribute 100 points among common terrorist tactics which they believe will have the most success in the long term. Table 2 shows the average points allocated per activity.

In line with the previous result, 74% of participants agreed with the proposition that terrorist groups in the MENA region would effectively mobilize followers by conducting pro-social activities. Such legitimacy-building activities are also considered to be somewhat—but considerably less—effective when conducted by extremist groups in North America and Europe: while 43% of participants agree that "**some extremist groups have been effective in mobilizing followers by engaging in pro-social activities (e.g., providing medical or social services) during the COVID-19 pandemic,**" 35% neither agreed nor disagreed and 22% disagreed.

The results in this section demonstrate that there is a higher consensus for Postulate 2 than for Postulate 1. On average, more agreement can be found for the proposition that violent non-state actors have taken advantage of the uncertainty and confusion by the pandemic than for the idea that their activities have been restricted. Results for Postulate 2 also demonstrate that there is support for the idea that extremists and terrorists have adapted to the pandemic by engaging in pro-social activities, with experts perceiving that groups in the MENA region have been more effective than those operating in the West.

Table 2: *Which of the following activities might be undertaken by violent non-state actors within the Sahel and MENA region during the pandemic?*

Type of extremist activity	Average points allocated
Terrorists will try to increase their perceived legitimacy in areas of poor governance by engaging in pro-social activities (i.e., providing medical services).	22
Terrorists will take the time to regroup and learn new skills.	17
Terrorists will take advantage of weakening international coalitions to reclaim land.	16
Terrorists will exploit the disruption caused by the pandemic to perpetrate attacks within the MENA/Sahel region.	16
Terrorists will exploit the disruption caused by the pandemic to launch attacks against the West.	10
Terrorists will use the compromised security of prisons and detention centers to free fighters and followers.	10
Terrorists will use compromised security as an opportunity to loot weapons bases.	9

Postulate 3: The dissemination of extremist content/propaganda during the pandemic is a pressing security concern.

The third postulate relates to the expert consensus regarding the dissemination of extremist content linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this respect, questions were split between narratives likely to prompt change by extremists in North America and Europe on the one hand, and by terrorists in the MENA and Sahel region on the other hand. Of the questions concerning the impact of extremist narratives in North America and Europe, most agreement was found for the statement that **"narratives blaming the spread of COVID-19 on specific minority groups have contributed to a rise in racially motivated hate crimes in North America/Europe"** and the notion that the dissemination of COVID-19 misinformation and conspiracy theories has led to a wider endorsement of violent extremist narratives in the region (for each statement, 84% of experts agreed). Seventy-two percent of experts lean toward agreeing with the statement that **"the high exposure to extremist content during lockdown(s) has contributed to a higher number of people undergoing a process of cognitive radicalization in North America/Europe."** Lastly, there was no agreement as to whether the rise in online extremist content has led to an increased incidence of violent attacks**.**

The survey further prompted participants to distribute 100 points among a set of far-right extremist narratives, allocating more points to those they viewed as having been more effective in motivating individuals to take concrete action. Table 3 displays the average number of points allocated to each far-right narrative. These results are congruent with the current prevailing focus on narratives spread by far-right individuals online. However, it is important to note that while these narratives are frequently espoused by far-right extremists, they are not unique to them.

Table 3: *Which of the following right-wing extremist narratives have been most effective in mobilizing individuals?*

Type of far-right extremist narrative	Average points allocated
The state is using the pandemic as an opportunity to infringe on civil liberties.	43
Migrants and minorities are spreading the virus.	27
The virus is an opportunity to further the demise of the economic and political system through violence, in line with an accelerationist agenda.	18
5G communication technology is to blame for the spread of the virus.	12

In addition, the survey queried participants about their opinion on the effectiveness of various jihadist narratives. Respondents were asked to assess the potential of jihadist narratives by again distributing 100 points, allocating more to those which particularly prompted individuals to plan and/or carry out attacks. The results in Table 4 show the average points that were allocated to each jihadist narrative.

Table 4: *Which of the following jihadist narratives have been most effective in mobilizing individuals?*

Type of jihadist narrative	Average points allocated
Terrorist groups have called on followers to wage global jihad and take advantage of overburdened security capabilities to launch attacks.	31
Terrorist groups have used the pandemic to justify their apocalyptic and end-of-time narratives.	27
Terrorist groups have labeled the virus the 'invisible soldier' of God and called on practicing Muslims to adhere to their stricter interpretation of Islam.	24
Terrorist groups have accused the Western world of angering God and called on non-Muslims to convert to Islam.	18

While most experts would agree that narratives calling for violence are the most effective, there is no consensus on whether there is a connection between the ideological propaganda of jihadi groups and their level of violence. Overall, this contributes to a diluted consensus with regard to jihadist narratives, in contrast to a higher overall agreement on far-right extremist narratives and their impact. Therefore, there is on average more support for Postulate 3 when far-right extremist narratives and the corresponding security concerns are considered.

Postulate 4: Counter-Terrorism/Counter Violent Extremism (CT/CVE) sector de-prioritization will produce security gaps in responses to violent non-state actors.

The fourth and final postulate covers whether the de-prioritization of CT/CVE programs as a result of the focus on COVID-19 containment may produce security gaps which extremists can exploit. Prompted by the literature review, the questions in this section address security gaps in the MENA and Sahel region and their implications for long-term security, both of the region itself and for that of North America and Europe. One potential factor in the creation of security gaps in relation to COVID-19 is the hampered international military cooperation across the MENA and Sahel region**.** About two-thirds (63%) of the experts agree that the pandemic has been a cause for the declining counter-terrorism cooperation across the region. In connection with this statement, the survey explored several implications. First, we queried participants on whether they think the gains made against terrorist groups prior to the pandemic will be lost due to shifting national priorities in the MENA and Sahel regions, respectively. The results indicate a trend toward agreeing that gains will be lost across the region. Furthermore, the survey explored whether the reduction of foreign military presence in the MENA and Sahel region as a result of the pandemic will increase the security threat

to North America and Europe**.** The data suggest that the experts are split into two camps: those who believe that there will be a change, and those who do not. Table 5 demonstrates this segmentation, as well as the view of participants that, if the level of threat does increase, it will only be in the long run.

Table 5: *Expected change in threat level in North America and Europe as a result of the reduction of foreign military presence in the MENA and Sahel region*

Yes, in the short run (pending containment of COVID-19).	5.6%
Yes, in the long run (after all restrictions are lifted in North America and Europe).	46.5%
No, there will be no change in the level of threat.	37.3%
The threat will be reduced, rather than increased.	10.6%

To further understand the factors behind these perceptions, participants were asked to rank several security implications encountered in the MENA and Sahel region according to which of them pose the greatest threat to North America and Europe. The results of this categorization indicate that **the highest threat is posed by the declining international cooperation against foreign terrorist groups in the MENA region**, followed by the shift of law enforcement and intelligence agencies' attention away from threats emerging from the MENA region and toward the domestic COVID-19 situation. Less importance was attributed to the exposure of Western security forces to COVID-19 or their redeployment to undertake auxiliary tasks at home (e.g., assisting law enforcement and/or medical staff).

In conclusion, there is support for the proposition that CT/CVE de-prioritization will pose security threats as far as the response to terrorist actors in the MENA and Sahel region is concerned. It is evident that experts consider the declining international cooperation to represent a security concern for both the West and for regions with terrorist hotspots, with potentially negative consequences for the battle against terrorism in general.

Concluding Remarks

The value of examining the expert consensus on COVID-19 and violent non-state actor activity lies in understanding the ways expert opinions shape future academic research, government policy, and public discussions in this area. In this respect, the results reveal several interesting trends in relation to the impact the pandemic has had on violent non-state actors, which hinge on the particular region in question, the type of actor, and the nature of the risk.

First, the results suggest that there is an emerging consensus that violent right-wing organized groups represent the greatest threat to Europe and North America during the pandemic. In addition, some experts consider the activities of Salafi-jihadist organized groups to be particularly restricted by COVID-19 measures within the region, as indicated by the partial agreement that jihadists are unlikely to stage an attack in the West until after the pandemic ends. In connection with this finding, the results further confirm existing expert claims that travel restrictions will impede terrorist mobility across international boundaries.[65] Along these lines, reports have suggested that terrorists may choose to alter their operational methods and/or increase violent extremist activities in states of origin,[66] suggesting a dual effect of COVID-19 restrictions which depends on the type of actor involved.

Different results emerge when considering terrorist groups across the MENA and Sahel region. When probed about the ways in which terrorists will adapt to the pandemic, experts predominantly agree that terrorists will be most successful in recruiting more followers in the long term by conducting pro-social activities. Support for this hypothesis is present even when experts are asked to compare pro-social activities with other types of terrorist activity, such as attacking the West, reclaiming land, or freeing fighters and followers from prisons in the region. While several authors have cautioned against overestimating this threat, arguing that health care provision is a difficult task even for the best groups,[67] the results highlight the danger of public

health campaigns launched by jihadi groups. As Clarke notes, these activities have been used by terrorists to at least "highlight the ineptitude of Western governments' responses, suggesting deliberate negligence and a lack of concern for their own citizens."[68] In sum, the results of the survey indicate that experts consider health care provision to be one successful pandemic-related activity of Salafi-jihadists in areas which exhibit poor governance and scarce health infrastructure.

In some regards, the results of this survey differ from scholars' assessments in the existing literature on the risks that may arise from violent non-state actor activity in North America and Europe during the pandemic. While the survey respondents have corroborated assessments of the ability of violent non-state actors to draw greater attention to their ideological propaganda,[69] an interesting revelation pertains to the perceived dangers of weaponizing biological agents.[70] Compared to the risk of a conventional attack, a cyberattack, or an attack using emerging technologies, experts continue to consider the risk of an attack using a biological agent to be the lowest.[71]. This reflects previous thinking about the low likelihood of such attacks. This implies that the pandemic has, perhaps surprisingly, given the mayhem caused by the spread of COVID-19, had little impact on experts' fears about biological agents being used by terrorists. Meanwhile, the risk of a conventional attack against the general public was found to be most plausible. This result shows that, despite increased scholarly attention upon the subject, experts continue to consider more traditional means of inflicting physical and psychological damage on societies to represent a higher threat during the pandemic.

Despite the valuable insights highlighted in this study, several limitations must be mentioned, which in turn present opportunities for further research. First, more than 80% of the participants in this survey are employed within North America and Europe. While the study seeks to address this challenge by centering the majority of inferences on this region, further investigation of opinions of experts working in the MENA and Sahel region may highlight a different range of perspectives. Second, in the survey questions, regions and countries are grouped together that may in fact no longer share a common perspective on rising violent non-state actor threats. The latest reports suggest a split between the threat perception of policy-makers in North America versus Europe: while the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in the United States advises that "racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists and militia violent extremists present the most lethal domestic violent extremist threats",[72] the European Union law enforcement agency, Europol, finds that EU Member states "assess that jihadist terrorism [is still] the greatest terrorist threat in the EU."[73] Subsequent studies may therefore choose to treat the pandemic-related violent non-state actor threats separately for each geographical region, and thereby also better understand how this divergence affects international cooperation against terrorism. Related to this, while the survey sought to understand experts' opinions on the consequences of the pandemic for counter-terrorism efforts, including for global coalitions against international terrorism, it did not examine external considerations which may have affected the CT/CVE sector. Further research may therefore probe the implications of pandemic-related political and socioeconomic impacts that will affect violent non-state actor activity both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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About the Authors:

Yannick Veilleux-Lepage *is an assistant professor of terrorism and political violence at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs at Leiden University. Dr. Veilleux-Lepage's research interests include the creation of online narratives and propaganda which fosters or normalizes terrorism; historical antecedents to terrorism; far-right extremism and the transnational links of far-right groups; ideological and technical diffusion, and*

the application of evolutionary approaches to social sciences. Dr Veilleux-Lepage is also an associate fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a senior research associate of the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society.

Tommy van Steen *is an assistant professor in cybersecurity governance at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs. His research interests include: cybersecurity behavior of end-users, behavioral change, cyberpsychology, and organizational cybersecurity behavior. He holds a BSc and MSc in psychology from Radboud University Nijmegen, and a PhD in behavioral change from the University of the West of England.*

Maria-Elena Kisyova *obtained her master's in International Relations and Diplomacy from Leiden University. Previously she worked for women's rights bodies at the United Nations and the Council of Europe. She obtained her English and European law degree from Queen Mary University of London.*

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Resources

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 11 Books on Terrorism & Counter- Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

So many books are published on terrorism- and counterterrorism-related subjects that it is difficult to catch up on a large backlog of monographs and volumes received for review. In order to deal with this backlog, this column consists of capsule reviews and tables of contents of eleven recently published books.

Terrorism – General

Mia Bloom and Sophia Moskalenko, ***Pastels and Pedophiles: Inside the Mind of QAnon*** (Stanford, CA: Redwood Press/An Imprint of Stanford University Press, 2021), 256 pp., US $ 20.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5036-3029-1.

This is an excellently analyzed account of QAnon, the leading Internet-based far-right conspiracy movement which first emerged in the United States in October 2017, but now has extended world-wide. As the authors explain, QAnon is "a baseless conspiracy theory from the darkest underbelly of the Internet" (p 1), which "conceives that former President Trump is fighting a battle against a 'deep-state' cabal of Democratic saboteurs who worship Satan and traffic children for sex or for their blood" (p. 2). It is a dangerous terrorism-linked movement, the authors observe, with "1 out of 10 people arrested at the Capitol [on January 6, 2021 – JS]…connected to the QAnon conspiracy theory" (p. 172). The authors wisely conclude that "Whatever happens to QAnon in the United States, as long as the Republican Party does not disavow it, it will not completely disappear. QAnon has seeped into the religious sphere, the political sphere, and the international sphere; we will be dealing with the challenges associated with QAnon for years to come" (p. 174). Mia Bloom is professor at Georgia State University. Sophia Moskalenko is a psychologist studying mass identity, inter-group conflict, and conspiracy theories.

Table of Contents: Loony Lies and Conspiracies: Making Sense of QAnon; January 6, 2021: Capitol Hill, the Failed Insurrection; Red-Pilling, Right-Wing Conspiracies, and Radicalization; Life After Q; Contagion; FaQs.

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Thomas Joscelyn, ***Enemies Near & Far: How Jihadist Groups Strategize, Plot and Learn*** (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2022), 512 pp., US $ 120.00 [Hardcover], US $ 30.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-2311-9525-6.

Utilizing primary sources from al Qaida and ISIS, the authors argue that jihadist terrorist groups are 'learning organizations' at both strategic and tactical levels of asymmetric warfare against their more powerful adversaries. They are also technologically innovative in their warfare, such as in utilizing the internet to radicalize lone actor adherents into conducting terrorist operations on their own. Much of the book is a comprehensive, and detailed account of terrorist operations by al Qaida and ISIS, which is a major contribution to the literature on these organizations' warfare methods. Regarding future trends, the authors conclude that AQ's and IS' evolution will depend on three factors: where they will operate geographically, how they will "present themselves to the outside world", and how "the competition between al-Qaeda and ISIS" will evolve (p. 385). Technologically, the two organizations are likely to embark on weaponized drones and artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms in their Internet communications and messaging (pp. 390-394). With the rise of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan, its continued closeness to al Qaida, and the internecine conflict between the Taliban and ISIS, it will be interesting to observe how the relationship between these jihadist organizations will play out and affect their capability to continue to exert themselves against their 'near' and 'far' state adversaries. This book is recommended as an excellent resource to understand evolv-

ing terrorist warfare trends. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross is the founder of Valens Global and a senior adviser at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. Thomas Joscelyn is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, where he is also senior editor of the *Long War Journal*.

Table of Contents: The Fire Next Time; Learning to Win; The Far-Enemy Strategy; The Unfriendly Skies: Plots Against Aviation; The Early Adopter: Anwar al-Awlaki in the Digital Space; Strategic Learning: Al-Qaeda and Jihadism in the Arab Spring; The Islamic State's Rise and Rule; The *Fitna*: ISIS versus al-Qaeda; How al-Qaeda Survived the War in Afghanistan; ISIS's External Operations: A Study in Innovation; The Past and Future of Jihadist Organizational Learning.

Mark Juergensmeyer, ***When God Stops Fighting: How Religious Violence Ends*** (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022), 196 pp., US $ 85.00 [Hardcover], US $ 21.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-5203-8473-6.

This is an interesting, although brief, account about the mindsets and ideologies of religiously motivated violent militants associated with the Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq, the Sikh Khalistan movement in India's Punjab, and the Moro movement for a Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines. As the author explains, he is especially interested in understanding the internal and external conditions driving such violent religious movements to "terminate, or [how they – JS] are transformed into more peaceful elements within the broader society" (p. viii). The internal conditions, he argues, "can be clustered around three categories: a loss of faith in the movement's vision; fractures in the communal consensus of the organization, and the awareness of alternative opportunities that provide new hope" (p. 120). The external conditions are driven by "How authorities respond to militant movements.…" (p. 130). The three case studies that form the book's account yield important generalizations that might also apply to other violent religious movements around the world, making this an important contribution to the literature on this subject. The author is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Global Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara and William F. Podlich Distinguished Fellow at Claremont McKenna College.

Table of Contents: Preface; The Trajectory of Imagined Wars; The Apocalyptic War of the Islamic State; The Militant Struggle of Mindanao Muslims; The Fight for Khalistan in India's Punjab; How Imagined Wars End.

Costantino Pischedda, ***Conflict Among Rebels: Why Insurgent Groups Fight Each Other*** (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2020), 264 pp., US $ 140.00 [Hardcover], US $ 35.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-2311-9867-7.

This is a conceptually innovative, empirically-based account of why insurgent groups fighting a common state adversary tend to clash against each other rather than cooperate in their struggle against their common enemy. This phenomenon is examined in the cases of civil wars in Iraq, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Syria. Some of the author's findings are that insurgent groups that consider themselves to be stronger than their rivals decide it might be an opportune time to eliminate their weaker rivals. Some findings can be challenged, such as a conclusion that "when inter-rebel war is ongoing, it is in the interest of counterinsurgents not to increase military pressure on the rebels lest they stop squabbling against each other, due to the threat posed by government forces" (p. 173). Overall, the book's empirically generated evidence presents valuable data for further application and testing of cases where several insurgent groups are fighting each other as well as the. The author is assistant professor of political science at the University of Miami.

Table of Contents: Wars Within Wars; Windows of Opportunity, Windows of Vulnerability, and Inter-rebel War; Inter-rebel War in the Shadow of Genocide: The Kurdish Insurgencies in Iraq; Parallel Paths to Ethnic Hegemony: Insurgencies in Ethiopia's Eritrea and Tigray; Inter-rebel War in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Syria; Are Co-ethnic Rebel Groups More Likely to Fight Each Other? A Statistical Test; Conclusions.

David C. Rapoport, ***Waves of Global Terrorism: From 1879 to the Present*** (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2022), 449 pp., US $ 140.00 [Hardcover], US $ 35.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-2311-3303-6.

When the author's article on the four historical waves of modern terrorism first appeared around 2003, it quickly became one of the preeminent conceptual frameworks in the academic field to understand how distinct historical waves shaped the evolution of terrorism from the 1880s to the early 2000s. In this long-awaited book, the author examines in greater detail the dynamics of each historical wave in terms of their causes, tactics, weapons, targets, and objectives. Readers will appreciate David C. Rapoport's updated timeframe for the fifth historical wave, which he argues emerged around 2020, consisting of far-right-wing white supremacist terrorism. It is also noteworthy, as he had observed earlier, that each historical wave might stretch into its next wave; such is the case with the religious fundamentalist fourth wave, which continues to express itself to this day. The author is distinguished professor emeritus of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles and the founding editor of the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Terrorism Before the Global Form: From the First Century to the Twentieth; The First Wave: Anarchist, 1879–1920s; The Second Wave: Anticolonial, 1919–1960s; The Third Wave: New Left, 1960s–1990s; The Fourth Wave: Religious, 1979–2020s?; Conclusion: The Fifth Wave?

Terrorism – Psychology

Neil Shortland, ***The Psychology of Terrorism*** (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 126 pp., US $ 124.00 [Hardcover], US $ 11.96 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-3673-5331-5.

This short book is a terrific examination of the psychology of terrorism, especially why some individuals might be more susceptible than others to becoming violent militants - whether as members of a terrorist group or as lone actors. As the author explains, "instead of a linear radicalization process governing involvement in terrorism," one needs to examine "processes that govern general behavior," which are "based on the individuals' social and environmental experiences and influences and leads them to believe that terrorist behavior satisfies a psychological need" (p. 54). Also worthy is the author's examination of the factors that might influence individuals to disengage from terrorism, and his discussion of the Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol-18 (TRAP-18) to assess the warning signs that might indicate that a susceptible individual might be transitioning along a pathway to terrorist violence, which is applied to the case of Dylann S. Roof, the lone actor terrorist who killed nine Black people in the Charleston church shooting in South Carolina on June 17, 2015. The author is Director of the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies, University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA.

Table of Contents: What is terrorism?; Who is a terrorist?; Why do people become terrorists?; Can people stop being terrorists?; Can we stop terrorism?; Conclusion.

Terrorism – Root Causes

Christopher Blattman, ***Why We Fight: The Roots of War and the Paths to Peace*** (New York, NY: Viking/An Imprint of Penguin Random House, 2022), 400 pp., US $ 32.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-9848-8157-1.

This is an interesting account of the causes of starting wars, whether between ethnic and religious communities in civil wars, or between states. Applying the principles of game theory – the study of mathematical models of strategic interactions among rational actors – the author, an economist, formulates five reasons for initiating wars: unchecked interests, intangible incentives, the collapse of bargains due to uncertainty about the other side's intentions, a commitment problem in accepting a possible compromise, and misconceptions that lead to demonizing one's adversary (pp. 14-15). While the author is correct in noting that "Things like poverty, scarcity, natural resources, climate change, ethnic fragmentation, polarization,

injustices, and arms" do not "ignite fighting in the first place" (p. 16), at least in the case of the root causes underlying terrorist insurgencies, this view requires some modification since terrorist leaders capitalize on such underlying conditions. The author is the Ramalee E. Pearson Professor of Global Conflict Studies at the University of Chicago, where he co-leads the Development Economics Center and directs the Obama Foundation Scholars program.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Part I: The Roots of War; Why We Don't Fight; Unchecked Interests; Intangible Incentives; Uncertainty; Commitment Problems; Misperceptions; Part II: The Paths to Peace; Interdependence; Checks and Balances; Rules of Enforcement; Interventions; Wayward Paths to War and Peace; Conclusion: The Peacemeal Engineer.

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, ***How Democracies Die*** (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2019), 320 pp, US $ 17.00 [Paperback], 978-1-52476294-0.

This is an important account of how democracies become threatened by internal authoritarian subversions that can potentially cause their decline and collapse. This subject is especially important today in countries such as the United States, where former President Donald Trump's refusal to accept his electoral defeat in the November 2020 elections have led his supporters to challenge the legitimacy of the country's electoral and judicial systems. Other countries that have tried to maintain their democratic political systems, such as Venezuela, Thailand, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, among others, are also discussed in this book. What are some of the indicators of anti-democratic authoritarian behaviors? The authors point to four key indicators: rejection of (or weak commitment to) democratic rules of the game, denial of the legitimacy of political opponents, toleration or encouragement of violence, and readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, including media (pp. 23-24). The authors conclude with two central lesson, namely that when democracy works "it has relied upon two norms that we often take for granted – mutual tolerance and institutional forbearance" (p. 212). This account's indicators of democratic breakdown and the solutions required to fix them are important insights because political breakdowns are generally accompanied by a rise of terrorist insurgencies – which is the case in the United States today – making this book a valuable contribution to the literature on the root causes of terrorism as well. Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt are professors of government at Harvard University.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Fateful Alliances; Gatekeeping in America; The Great Republican Abdication; Subverting Democracy; The Guardrails of Democracy; The Unwritten Rules of American Politics; The Unraveling; Trump Against the Guardrails; Saving Democracy.

Barbara F. Walter, ***How Civil Wars Start – and How to Stop Them*** (New York, NY: Crown/An Imprint of Random House, 2022), 320 pp., US $ 27.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 97-0-5931-3778-9.

This is an empirically-based account of how civil wars start in a variety of political systems, ranging from authoritarian to democratic. Focusing on the subject of civil wars is significant, the author points out, because over the past three decades the number of active civil wars around the world has almost doubled (pp. 10-11). To examine these issues, the author examines "the conditions that give rise to, and define, modern civil war" (p. xviii). One finding is that in democratic systems, the risk of civil war becomes possible "the moment it becomes less democratic," which is marked by "fewer executive restraints, weaker rule of law, diminished voting rights" (p. 22). In the conclusion, the author recommends that, at least in the case of the United States, "The best way to neutralize a budding insurgency is to reform a degraded government, bolster the rule of law, give all citizens equal access to the vote, and improve the quality of government services" (p. 209). The author is Professor of International Relations at the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California, San Diego.

Table of Contents: Introduction; The Danger of Anocracy; The Rise of Factions; The Dark Consequences of Losing Status; When Hope Dies; The Accelerant; How Close Are We?; What a War Would Look Like; Preventing a Civil War.

Terrorism – Canada

Phil Gurski, ***The Peaceable Kingdom: A History of Terrorism in Canada from Confederation to the Present*** (Ottawa, Canada: Borealis Threat and Risk Consulting Ltd., 2021), 262 pp., US $ 20.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 1-7-7748-431-6.

This is the only up-to-date comprehensive and detailed account of Canada's experience with terrorism, which began following the country's independence in 1867. The book's chapters discuss how terrorism is treated in Canadian law, the government agencies tasked with investigating and preventing terrorism, the types of nationalist and ethnic terrorism threatening the country (including the no longer active militant Quebec independence groups), the threats presented by current Islamist and far-right terrorism, and future trends. What makes this book so indispensable is the author's extensive practitioner experience as a retired senior analyst in the Canadian government's intelligence service, which gives the book an insider's perspective on the details of the terrorist threat and how the government's counterterrorism campaigns have been conducted. In the chapter on "Counterterrorism Challenges," Phil Gursky discusses the Canadian counterterrorism agencies' relationships with foreign partners, the use of human sources and agents, how to utilize intelligence, how to handle large data volumes and encryption, how to allocate intelligence resources in investigating and preventing terrorism, and the need to obtain public – and especially local community – support in implementing counterterrorism measures. The author concludes this excellent account with the observation that while terrorism in Canada is "infrequent," the government and the population still need to be vigilant in ensuring that it does not become more severe. The author is President and CEO of Borealis Threat and Risk Consulting. He worked as a senior strategic analyst at CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) from 2001 to 2015, specializing in violent Islamist-inspired homegrown terrorism and radicalization.

Table of Contents: Foreword by Ward Elcock, former Director of CSIS; Introduction; The Canadian Counterterrorism Landscape; Ethno-Nationalist Terrorism in Canada; Islamist Terrorism; Other Forms of Terrorism; Counterterrorism Challenges; Conclusion: Final Thoughts.

Andrew Kirsch, ***I Was Never Here: My True Canadian Spy Story of Coffees, Code Names and Covert Operations in the Age of Terrorism*** (Vancouver, BC, Canada: Page Two, 2022), 240 pp., US $ 26.00 [Hardcover]; ISBN: 978-1-7745-8133-9.

This is a fascinating and dramatic insider's account by a former intelligence operative in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) recalling his career as a counterterrorism operations officer. As a young intelligence officer, he learned how to utilize code names for sources, how to use an alias in public during investigations, and how to deploy special operations teams and surveillance technologies to investigate terrorism-related cases. This is followed by his account of terrorism cases he worked on involving Canadian Islamists who plotted to carry out attacks in Canada or became foreign fighters on behalf of jihadist groups in Syria. After leaving CSIS, the author worked as a Department Security Officer (DSO) in the Ontario Office of the Provincial Security Advisor. Currently he is a security consultant in Toronto.

Table of Contents: Introduction; The World's Second-Oldest Profession; The Long Road of Recruitment; Spy University; Analyst Life; In the Field; New to the Community; My Guy; Back of the Van; Wait, I'm in Charge? The Best Job in the World; A Delicate Imbalance; In from the Cold.

About the Reviewer: **Dr. Joshua Sinai** *is the Book Reviews Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He can be reached at:* Joshua.sinai@comcast.net.

A Resources List for Terrorism Research: Journals, Websites, Bibliographies (2022 Edition)

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

Abstract

This resources list aims to provide the Terrorism Research community with an entry point to important resources in the field of Terrorism Studies. It is subdivided into three sections: The first section lists open-access and subscription-based scholarly and professional journals, most of them peer-reviewed. The second assembles websites run by academic, non-/governmental, or private institutes, organisations, think tanks, companies, groups, and individual experts. The third provides a meta-bibliography of subject bibliographies on a broad spectrum of field-relevant topics. The resource list is based on the bibliographic work which the author has been conducting for "Perspectives on Terrorism" since 2013. Like every hand-searched resource collection, this one reflects subjective choices and does not claim to be exhaustive.

Keywords: Resources list; terrorism research; terrorism studies; journals; websites; bibliographies, meta-bibliography

NB: All websites were last visited on 24.07.2022. For a guide on how to retrieve Terrorism Research literature see: Tinnes, Judith (2013, August): The Art of Searching: How to Find Terrorism Literature in the Digital Age. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *7*(4), 79-111. URL: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2013/issue-4/the-art-of-searching-how-to-find-terrorism-literature-in-the-digital-age--judith-tinnes.pdf

Journals

Open-Access Journals

Combating Terrorism Exchange (CTX)
https://nps.edu/web/ecco/ctx-journal-home

conflict & communication online
https://regener-online.de/journalcco/

Contemporary Voices: The St Andrews Journal of International Relations (CVIR) (formerly: Journal of Terrorism Research [JTR])
https://cvir.st-andrews.ac.uk

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses (CTTA)
https://www.rsis.edu.sg/ctta

CREST Security Review (CSR)
https://crestresearch.ac.uk/magazine

CTC Sentinel
https://ctc.usma.edu/ctc-sentinel

Current Trends in Islamist Ideology
https://www.hudson.org/policycenters/6-current-trends-in-islamist-ideology

CyberOrient

https://cyberorient.net

Defence Against Terrorism Review (DATR)
https://www.coedat.nato.int/datrvolumes.html

Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, The
http://www.fletcherforum.org

Georgetown Security Studies Review (GSSR)
https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org

Harvard National Security Journal (NSJ)
https://harvardnsj.org

Homeland Security Affairs
https://www.hsaj.org

International Counter-Terrorism Review (ICTR)
https://ict.org.il/category/ictr

International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV)
https://www.ijcv.org

International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism/Hospitality (IJSSTH)
https://www.palermo.edu/negocios/cbrs/ijssth.html

Islamophobia Studies Journal (ISJ)
https://www.jstor.org/journal/islastudj

Journal EXIT-Deutschland (JEX): Journal for Deradicalization and Democratic Culture
https://journal-exit.de

Journal for Deradicalization (JD)
https://journals.sfu.ca/jd

Journal of 9/11 Studies
http://www.journalof911studies.com

Journal of Human Security (JoHS)
http://www.librelloph.com/journalofhumansecurity

Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare (JICW), The
https://journals.lib.sfu.ca/index.php/jicw/index

Journal of International Security Affairs, The
https://security-affairs.com

Journal of National Security Law and Policy (JNSLP)
https://jnslp.com

Journal of Social and Political Psychology (JSPP)
https://jspp.psychopen.eu

Journal of Strategic Security (JSS)
https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss

Journal of Terrorism & Cyber Insurance, The (JTCI)
https://www.terrorismcyberinsurance.com

Journal on Terrorism and Security Analysis, The (JTSA)

https://satsa.syr.edu/satsa-archive/journal

Kriminalpolizei, Die
https://www.kriminalpolizei.de

Middle East Quarterly (MEQ)
https://www.meforum.org/meq

Military Review (MR)
https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Military-Review

Pakistan Journal of Criminology (PJC)
http://www.pjcriminology.com

Parameters
https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters

Peace and Security Review
https://bipss.org.bd/bipss-journal

per Concordiam
https://perconcordiam.com

Perspectives on Terrorism (PT)
https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism

PRISM
https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Journals/PRISM

Radices: Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Terrorism and Extremism
https://openjournals.ugent.be/radices

Sicurezza, Terrorismo e Società (Security, Terrorism and Society)
https://www.sicurezzaterrorismosocieta.it

Small Wars Journal (SWJ)
https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl

Stability
https://www.stabilityjournal.org

Syria Studies
https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/syria

Terrorism: An Electronic Journal and Knowledge Base
https://www.terrorismelectronicjournal.org

Terrorism Monitor (TM)
https://jamestown.org/programs/tm

ZRex – Zeitschrift für Rechtsextremismusforschung
https://www.budrich-journals.de/index.php/zrex

Subscription-Based Journals

African Security
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uafs20

Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rirt20

Caucasus Survey
https://brill.com/view/journals/casu/casu-overview.xml

Conflict Management and Peace Science (CMPS)
https://journals.sagepub.com/home/cmp

Counter Terrorist, The
http://www.thecounterterroristmag.com

Critical Studies on Security
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcss20

Critical Studies on Terrorism
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rter20

Democracy and Security
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdas20

Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward terrorism and genocide (DAC)
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rdac20

European Journal of International Security (EJIS)
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-international-security

Foreign Affairs
https://www.foreignaffairs.com

Foreign Policy (FP)
https://foreignpolicy.com

Global Crime
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fglc20

Health Security
https://www.liebertpub.com/loi/hs

Intelligence and National Security
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fint20

International Affairs
https://academic.oup.com/ia

International Interactions
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gini20

International Journal of Cyber Warfare and Terrorism (IJCWT)
https://www.igi-global.com/journal/international-journal-cyber-warfare-terrorism

International Security (IS)
https://direct.mit.edu/isec

Janes Defence and Intelligence Review
https://www.janes.com/publications/janes-defence-intelligence-magazines

Journal for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies (JIPSS)
https://acipss.org/publikationen/#journal

Journal for the Study of Radicalism (JSR)
https://msupress.org/journals/journal-for-the-study-of-radicalism

Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research (JACPR)
https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1759-6599

Journal of Applied Security Research: Prevention and Response in Asset Protection, Terrorism and Violence
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wasr20

Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research (JAMMR)
https://www.intellectbooks.com/journal-of-arab-muslim-media-research

Journal of Conflict Resolution (JCR)
https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jcr

Journal of Contemporary Iraq & the Arab World (JCI&AW)
https://www.intellectbooks.com/journal-of-contemporary-iraq-the-arab-world

Journal of Counter Terrorism & Homeland Security International, The
https://www.iacsp.com/publications.php [Older volumes are open-access and can be retrieved from https://issuu.com/fusteros]

Journal of Democracy
https://www.journalofdemocracy.org

Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (JHSEM)
https://www.degruyter.com/journal/key/jhsem/html

Journal of Military Ethics (JME)
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/smil20

Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjmm20

Journal of Peace Research (JPR)
https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jpr

Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism (JPICT)
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpic20

Journal of Religion and Violence (JRV)
https://www.pdcnet.org/jrv/Journal-of-Religion-and-Violence

Journal of Threat Assessment and Management
https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/tam

Journal on the Use of Force and International Law (JUFIL)
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjuf20

Media, War & Conflict
https://journals.sagepub.com/home/mwc

Middle East Journal, The (MEJ)
https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/459

Middle East Policy
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14754967

Militant Leadership Monitor (MLM)
https://jamestown.org/programs/mlm

Orbis
https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/orbis

Political Psychology
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14679221

Politics, Religion & Ideology
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ftmp21

RUSI Journal, The
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi20

Security Dialogue
https://journals.sagepub.com/home/sdi

Security Journal
https://www.palgrave.com/gp/journal/41284

Security Studies
https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fsst20

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About the Compiler: **Judith Tinnes**, *Ph.D., is a Professional Information Specialist. Since 2011, she works for the Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID). Additionally, she serves as Information Resources Editor to 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. In her editorial role, she regularly compiles bibliographies and other resources for Terrorism Research (for an inventory, visit : https://archive.org/details/terrorism-research-bibliographies). Judith Tinnes also runs the execution monitoring project 'Counting Lives Lost' (CLL). She wrote her doctoral thesis on Internet usage of Islamist terrorists and insurgents (focus: media-oriented hostage takings). E-mail: j.tinnes@gmx.de , Twitter: @CountingLivesPT*

Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects

Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

Most of the clickable items included below became available online between June and August 2022. They are categorized under 13 headings (as well as sub-headings, not listed below).

1. Non-Religious Terrorism
2. Religious Terrorism
3. Terrorist Strategies and Tactics
4. Conflict, Crime and Political Violence other than Terrorism
5. Extremism, Radicalization
6. Counterterrorism - General
7. Counterterrorism: Specific Operations and/or Specific Policy Measures
8. Prevention, Preparedness and Resilience and Rehabilitation Studies
9. State Repression, Civil War and Clandestine Warfare
10. Intelligence Operations
11. Cyber Operations
12. Risk and Threat Assessments, Forecasts and Analytical Studies
13. Also Worth to Read/Listen and Watch

1. Non-Religious Terrorism

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J. Henley. Norway on highest terror alert after two killed in mass shootings. *The Guardian,* June 25, 2022. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/25/mass-shooting-at-oslo-pub-leaves-two-dead?CMP=share_btn_tw

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12.4. Forecasts and Trend Studies

Software developers aspire to forecast who will win a battle. *The Economist,* July 22, 2022. URL: https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2022/07/20/software-developers-aspire-to-forecast-who-will-win-a-battle?

H. McRae. Don't despair! The world will get healthier, wealthier and less dangerous in the next three decades. *Daily Mail Online*, July 20, 2022. URL: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/comment/article-10976289/Dont-despair-world-healthier-three-decades-HAMISH-MCRAE-shares-why.html

13. Also Worth to Read/Listen and Watch

World-class peace education for anyone, anywhere. 100% free. *Institute for Economics & Peace,* 2022. URL: https://www.positivepeace.academy/

***About the Compiler*: Berto Jongman** *is Associate Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He is a former senior Military Intelligence Analyst and currently serves as an International Consultant on CBRN issues. A sociologist by training, he previously worked for Swedish and Dutch civilian 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.*

Announcements

Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (August 2022 and beyond)

Compiled by Olivia Kearney

The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), in its mission to provide a platform for academics and practitioners in the field of terrorism and counter-terrorism, 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 organised between August and October 2022 (with a few shortly thereafter). The listed events are organised by a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions, including several key (counter) terrorism research centres and institutes listed in the February 2021 issue of this journal.

We encourage readers to contact the journal's Associate Editor for Conference Monitoring, Olivia Kearney, and provide her with relevant information, preferably in the same format as the items listed below. Olivia Kearney can be reached at <oliviaj.kearney@gmail.com> or via Twitter: @oliviajkearney.

August 2022

The Emergence of Hybrid Warfare in Afghanistan: Taliban and Islamic State
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Online
11 August, *London, United Kingdom*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_terrorism

Afghanistan One Year Later: Consequences & Responsibilities
Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), Online
15 August, *Washington DC, United States*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CSIS

ICPVTR Webinar Series on Evolving Dynamics and Strategies in the Rehabilitation of Radical Extremists by Dr Zora A. Sukabdi and Dr Nafees Hamid
International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), Online
16 August, *Singapore, Singapore*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RSIS_NTU

TAT & GIFCT E-Learning Webinar Series
Global Internet Forum to Counter-Terrorism, Online
18 August, Washington DC, United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @GIFCT_official

One year later: Reflecting on America's Departure from Afghanistan
Atlantic Council, Online
23 August, *Washington DC, United States*
Website: visit | Twitter: @AtlanticCouncil

Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and the Rule of Law
Asser Institute
29 August – 2 September, *The Hague, Netherlands*
Website: visit | Twitter: @TMCAsser

Lowy Institute Paper Launch: Rise of the Extreme Right by Lydia Khalil
Lowy Institute
31 August, *Sydney, Australia*
Website: visit | Twitter: @LowyInstitute

September 2022

West Africa Workshop: Countering Terrorism & Violent Extremism Online
Global Internet Forum to Counter-Terrorism, Online
7 September, Washington DC, United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @GIFCT_official

World Summit on Counter-Terrorism
International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT),
11 - 15 September, *Herzliya, Israel*
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICT_org

Facing Radicalization and Extremism in Times of Societal Unrest
Security in Open Societies,
14 September, *Utrecht, Netherlands*
Website: visit | Twitter: @UniUtrecht

Shaky Foundations? Problems of Existing Datasets on Far-Right Violence
Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), Online
15 September, *Oslo, Norway*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CrexUiO

City-led Action in Preventing Violent Extremism, Hate and Polarisation: Local-level Approaches, Needs and Priorities
Strong Cities Network, UNGA 77 Side Event
22 September, *New York, United States*
Website: visit | Twitter: @Strong_Cities

Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion
European University Institute
22-23 September, *Brussels, Belgium*
Website: visit | Twitter: @EUI_EU_

Rehabilitation and Reintegration: Good Practices and Key Successes
Hedayah, UNGA 77 Side Event
23 September, *New York, United States*
Website: visit | Twitter: @Hedayah_CVE

Security and Defence 2022
Chatham House, Online
28 – 29 September, *London, United Kingdom*
Website: visit | Twitter: @ChathamHouse

Creating a Guideline for Involving Victims/Survivors of Terrorism in P/CVE
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), Online
29-30 September, *Nice, France*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

October 2022 & Beyond

Dangerous Incentives: Challenges Facing Emerging Scholars of Far-Right
Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), Online
13 October, *Oslo, Norway*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CrexUiO

Cannes International Resilience Forum 2022
Cannes International Resilience Forum
23-26 October, *Cannes, France*
Website: visit | Twitter: @cirforum

Old Threats, New Theatres: Security and Intelligence in the Digital Age
CASIS-ACERS, Hybrid
4 November, *Vancouver, Canada*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CASIS_ACERS

Formers: A Challenge to the Discipline
Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX), Online
10 November, *Oslo, Norway*
Website: visit | Twitter: @CrexUiO

Reassessing the Financing of Terrorism in 2022 (RAFT22)
Project CRAAFT/RUSI Europe, Hybrid
15 November, *Brussels, Belgium*
Website: visit | Twitter: @projectcraaft

Acknowledgment
Special thanks go to Alex Schmid and Berto Jongman for their suggestions and contributions to this conference calendar.

About the Compiler: **Olivia Kearney** *is the Insights and Digital Engagement Manager at Plenitude Consulting, a niche financial crime consulting firm. Prior to joining Plenitude, Olivia worked as the Community Engagement Officer for Project CRAAFT led by RUSI Europe and the Centre for Financial Crime and Security Studies (CFCS) at RUSI, a security and defence think tank based in London.*

Vacancy: Position of Associate Editor for Conference Monitoring

Due to the impending departure of Ms. Olivia Kearney, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has a vacancy for the position of a Conference Monitor.

Her/his task is to compile every two months a list of recent and upcoming academic and (inter-) governmental conferences, symposia, professional expert meetings, seminars and workshops as well as civil society events on terrorism and counter-terrorism that are relevant to the readers of *Perspectives on Terrorism.*

Like all other positions at our free open access journal, this position is unremunerated.

Applications with a motivational letter, a CV and a publication list should be sent before September 30, 2022 to the Editor-in-Chief, Alex P. Schmid [apschmid@terrorismanalysts.com].

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. Now in its 16th year, PoT is published six times annually as a free, independent, scholarly peer-reviewed online journal available at the URL: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/perspectives-on-terrorism.

Perspectives on Terrorism has recently been ranked by Google Scholars again as No. 3 in 'Terrorism Studies" (as well as No. 5 in "Military Studies"). Jouroscope™, a directory of scientific journals, has just listed PoT as one of the top ten journals in the category free open access journals in social sciences, with a Q1 ranking. PoT has almost 8,000 registered subscribers and many more occasional readers.

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

The editors invite researchers and readers to:

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

Perspectives on Terrorism has sometimes been characterised as 'non-traditional' 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 online 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 (double-blind) by members of the Editorial Board and outside academic experts and professionals. Due to the hundreds of submissions we receive every year, only the most promising and original ones can be sent for external peer-review.

While aiming to be policy-relevant, PoT 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.