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Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XIII, Issue 5 (October 2019) of *Perspectives on Terrorism,* available now at: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/PoT.

Our free and independent online journal is a publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) and the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University's Campus The Hague. Now in its thirteenth year, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has over 8,600 regular e-mail subscribers and many more occasional readers and website visitors worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer reviewed by external referees while its Research and Policy Notes, Special Correspondence and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

This issue begins with a research article by James Piazza and Gary LaFree in which analysis of terrorist incidents from 1970 to 2016 reveals that attacks by Islamist groups produce fewer casualties than attacks by non-Islamist religious groups, and that Islamic diaspora communities impose tactical restraints on terrorist organizations with which they are linked. This is followed by Saimum Parvez's analysis of Islamic State's violent activities and narratives in Bangladesh, and an examination of Islamic State's propaganda by Nate Rosenblatt, Charlie Winter and Rajan Basra. In the next article, Sandy Schumann, Isabelle van der Vegt, Paul Gill and Bart Schuurman make a compelling argument in favour of open source and replicable research in terrorism studies. Lorne Dawson follows with an exploration of how terrorists articulate their own motivations behind terrorist attacks, and Veera Singam Kalicharan concludes this section with his analysis of the Islamic State's relationship with the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf.

This issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* also features three Research Notes, beginning with Caitlin Ambrozik's introduction of a new dataset on countering violent extremism efforts worldwide. This is followed by a look at profiles of Islamist militants in Bangladesh by Shafi Md Mostofa and Natalie Doyle, and the section concludes with Anton Weenink's exploration of what police files reveal about mental health issues among jihadists in the Netherlands.

The Resources section includes our regular contributions from Joshua Sinai (book reviews), Judith Tinnes (bibliography), Ryan Scrivens (theses), Berto Jongman (web resources), and Reinier Bergema (conference calendar), as well as book reviews by Anthony Richards, Edward Valla and Christine Boelema Robertus.

The current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* was prepared by Co-Editor James J.F. Forest and Associate Editor Rashmi Singh, with the assistance of Alex P. Schmid, the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, our Associate Editor for IT Christine Boelema Robertus, and Editorial Assistants Jodi Moore and Brody McDonald.

Islamist Terrorism, Diaspora Links and Casualty Rates

by James A. Piazza and Gary LaFree

Abstract

We explore the widespread belief that Islamist groups are especially violent and also consider the possibility that links with transnational diasporas may reduce casualties by Islamist terrorist organizations. Analyzing between 77,000 and 82,000 terrorist incidents from 1970 to 2016, we find that attacks by Islamist groups produce fewer casualties than attacks by non-Islamist religious groups. We also find that Islamist groups with links to diaspora kin abroad commit lower casualty terrorist attacks. We explain these findings by arguing that Islamic diaspora communities impose tactical restraints on terrorist organizations with which they are linked. Diasporas constitute a major political audience and source of support for terrorist organizations and provide an audience outside the homeland that may be negatively affected by extremely violent attacks.

Keywords: Islamist Terrorism, Diasporas, Lethality, Casualties, Quantitative Analysis

Introduction

One of the most consistent conclusions about terrorist attacks over the past half century is that they have grown deadlier.[1] In 1975, terrorism expert Brian Jenkins famously argued that "terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening, and not a lot of people dead."[2] A little more than 25 years later, Jenkins amended his earlier statement to note that "Many of today's terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people dead."[3] Jenkins' shift is largely supported by data on terrorist attacks. For example, using the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) data from 1968 to 2003, Enders and Sandler show that from the late 1970s through the early 1990s, fatal terrorist attacks were about 18% of all attacks. The proportion of fatal attacks in ITERATE jumped to 28% in the mid-1990s.[4] Similarly, based on the RAND Corporation's Terrorism Knowledge Database from 1968 through 2005, Piazza shows that the average number of victims per international terrorist attack increased from 2.1 for the period 1968 to 1979, to 3.8 in the 1980s, 10.3 in the 1990s and 10.9 from 2000 to 2005.[5] Finally, LaFree, Dugan and Miller, using the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), show that on average terrorist attacks during the 1970s claimed one fatality per incident, but more than five fatalities per incident by the late 1990s.[6]

This increase in the deadliness of terrorism is frequently linked to the rise of Islamist-fueled terrorism.[7] In an influential book, Rapoport contends that the world has experienced four waves of terrorism over the past 150 years: anarchist, anti-colonial, new left, and religious. He goes on to argue that the religious wave began in the 1980s, that Islam is the most important religion in this wave, and that attacks by al Qaeda exemplify it.[8] In an analysis of worldwide terrorist attacks between 1970 and 2014, LaFree and Dugan find that six of the ten deadliest attacks involved Islamist perpetrators.[9]

In this article we explore the extent to which Islamist-inspired terrorist organizations have in fact produced a greater number of casualties than terrorist organizations with other ideological motivations, including non-Islamic religious motivations, over the past half century. Despite the common assumption that terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists are deadlier than attacks by groups with other ideological motivations, there are surprisingly few quantitative studies of the relationship. Moreover, among the few studies that exist most exclude data on the huge increase in the number of Islamist-inspired terrorist attacks that have taken place during the past 15 years.[10]

Regardless of whether Islamist terror attacks produce more casualties than attacks by other groups, there is a great deal of variation in the casualty rates of different Islamist organizations. This difference was dramatically displayed in a high-profile contrast between the leadership of al Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.[11] In a letter written in 2005 from Ayman al-Zawahiri—the man who became the head of al Qaeda—to Abu

Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of the group that became ISIS, Zawahiri strongly condemned the practice of beheading captives, filming it and placing it on social media. Vignettes like this raise the possibility that Islamist-inspired terrorist groups may sometimes be concerned about the effects of their use of violence on the perceptions of a larger audience.

Past research has suggested that one of the most important types of audience for politically organized groups operating in specific countries is their diaspora communities in other countries.[12] Following Post and Scheffer, we define diasporas as: "groups of persons of the same ethno-national origin who themselves or whose ancestors migrated from one place to one or more other places, settled in these places, and maintain various kinds of contacts with their places of origin."[13] Rapoport considers diaspora populations to be among the four major international audiences of terrorist groups (the other three are foreign terrorist groups, liberal sympathizers, and foreign governments).[14] Prior research on the impact of diasporas on political violence in the home country have produced mixed results with some research suggesting that diasporas reduce violence in the home country[15], while others have argued instead that diasporas increase violence.[16] Thus far there have been few large-scale quantitative analyses of this issue. Moreover, we were unable to identify a single prior study that has specifically looked at the impact of diasporas on the frequency and lethality of terrorist attacks by Islamist extremist groups. In this article we examine directly the effect of diaspora communities on the frequency and lethality of worldwide Islamist terrorist attacks from 1970 to 2016.

Our article has several core findings. First, Islamist terrorist groups are not the most deadly type of groups. Terrorist attacks by non-Islamist religious groups tend to be higher casualty. Second, in general, terrorists connected to transnational diasporas do tend to commit higher casualty attacks. We suspect that this is due to the capacity-building effects of diasporas on terrorist movements. However, our third finding is that diasporas actually restrain the Islamist groups they are associated with. Diaspora-linked Islamist groups commit lower casualty attacks than Islamist groups without diaspora community associations.

The remainder of the article proceeds in four sections. First, we review prior literature on casualties produced by Islamist and other groups and connections between Islamist terrorism and Muslim diasporas. In particular, we contrast the casualty rates of Islamist groups with and without substantial diaspora communities. Second, we detail the data and methods used to examine the connections between Islamist inspired terrorist attacks, casualties and Islamist diasporas, including a discussion of how each of our independent, dependent, and control variables are measured. Third, we present the results focusing first on the deadliness of Islamist attacks and then examining whether Islamist groups with substantial diaspora communities are less deadly. Finally, we discuss the results of our analysis and the implications of the article for advancing both theory and public policy on countering religiously motivated violent extremism.

Casualty Rates Among Islamist and Non-Islamist Groups

A wide array of recent research has highlighted the importance of radical Islamist ideology for increasing lethality of politically motivated violence.[17] Rapoport[18] argues that the "religious wave" of terrorism began in the 1980s, and while we can find examples of religious terrorism from a number of denominations, in recent years Islamist terrorism has far and away received the most research and policy attention.[19] In a study of suicide attacks, Henne[20] finds that the religious ideology of a group greatly increases the number of deaths per attack, controlling for a wide variety of other factors. Moreover, Henne notes that all of the groups with a religious ideology that he studied were Islamic. Rapoport points out that religious identity was also important in earlier terrorism waves but in the past, it generally overlapped with ethnic identity, as illustrated in the Armenian, Macedonian, Irish, Cypriot, Israeli, and Palestinian conflicts. Moreover, during earlier periods religion was generally put to the service of creating a secular sovereign state, whereas during the current religious wave the goal of many Islamist terrorist organizations has been to establish a new religious state; a state that once existed, and one that would be governed by *Sharia*, Islamic law. Islamist terrorism has been notable for massive attacks against military and government installations and also for the promotion of martyrdom through suicide attacks.

Hoffman details the rise of religious terrorism in the 1990s and like Rapoport points out that while religious motives for terrorist attacks have been common, a unique feature of the most recent form of religious terrorism is that the religious aspect of the movement has become the dominant one. Hoffman argues that compared to terrorism by secular groups, terrorism driven by religious imperatives often leads to more intense violence and higher casualty rates.[21] Hoffman claims that the combination of religion and terrorism is one of the main reasons for the increasing lethality of terrorism in recent years.[22]

Juergensmeyer studied a wide range of religiously inspired terrorist attacks including Christians involved in abortion-clinic bombings, Catholics and Protestants involved in terrorism in Northern Ireland, jihadi-style attacks by Muslim groups, and extremist-religious Jewish Israelis who supported the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. He identified several common elements among these perpetrators of religiously justified terrorism, including conceptualizing terrorism as symbolic rather than strategic, striking out against the humiliating forces of modernity, and seeing themselves as heroic agents of change.[23] Juergensmeyer claims that religion is not the underlying cause of political violence, but when groups are able to co-opt religion's networks and imagery to recruit others for a political cause it weakens norms against violence: "What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless is that its perpetrators have placed such religious images of divine struggle—cosmic war—in the service of worldly political battles."[24]

Although claims for the greater lethality of religiously motivated terrorism are common, there have been few empirical tests of the argument. Piazza provides the most extensive quantitative evidence to date. Based on the RAND Terrorism Knowledge Base from 1998 to 2005, Piazza shows that Islamist terrorist organizations had significantly higher casualty rates than other types of terrorist organizations, controlling for a wide variety of rival explanations. Piazza distinguishes between universal/abstract groups and strategic groups and argues that the former are characterized as "highly ambitious, abstract, complex, and…driven primarily by ideology."[25] He argues that al Qaeda and its network of affiliates are the most prominent Islamist example of a universal/abstract group. Piazza finds that when affiliation with the al Qaeda network is included in quantitative models, Islamist groups were no longer more likely than non-Islamist groups to commit high casualty terrorist attacks. While these results provide solid evidence for the argument that Islamist groups—or at least those affiliated with the al Qaeda network—are associated with higher casualty rates than other groups, the data are limited to seven years, they exclude domestic attacks and the study misses the meteoric rise of several major Islamist groups since 2005, including ISIS, Boko Haram and al Shabaab.

Effect of Diasporas on Islamist Terrorism

The explosion of communications and transportation technology in the past century has greatly eroded the boundaries between countries. It is natural that individuals living in a new country will still take an active interest in the struggles and conflicts in the nation from which they trace their cultural heritage. In many cases there are even family members in regular contact across the homeland and the host country. In situations where the homeland is involved in political conflict, members of the diaspora community may react by voicing their political support, sending funds or even going to fight on the side of one group or another. In the 1940s, terrorist organizations such as Lehi and Irgun recruited extensively from the Jewish diaspora communities in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to stage terrorist attacks against British authorities in Palestine. More recently, al Qaeda and the Islamic State have recruited broadly from Muslim diaspora communities living in North America and Western Europe.

The field of diaspora studies has increased in importance in the past half century along with the tremendous growth in the number and size of diasporic communities themselves.[26] However, with few exceptions[27] most of these studies have not linked diasporas to terrorist attacks.[28] We argue in this article that diasporas constitute a major political audience, and source of support, for terrorist organizations and that on balance, diaspora communities will reduce the casualty rate for Islamist terrorism by providing an audience outside the homeland that may be negatively affected by extremely violent attacks. However, not all the recent research supports this expectation. In the next two sections, we review evidence of diasporas either reducing or

increasing violence by groups in the homeland.

Evidence for the Declining Lethality of Diasporas

Many researchers have pointed out that a major strategy of terrorists is to demonstrate that they have greater legitimacy than the governments they oppose.[29] This strategy may take the form of encouraging government responses to terrorist attacks that energize a base of potential supporters. Perhaps most famously, Benjamin and Simon argue that Osama bin Laden's decision to authorize the September 11 attacks was motivated in part by the belief that American retaliation would inevitably kill innocents and thereby demonstrate the extent of American hatred toward Muslims.[30]

Much prior research confirms that maintaining the support of diaspora communities can be critical to terrorist organizations. Byman[31] and others[32] have pointed out that successful ethnic terrorist groups often receive money and organizational support from their diaspora communities. Although host countries are often motivated to monitor the behavior of diaspora communities, such regulation is likely to be complex and resource intensive. Furthermore, Lyons[33] and others[34] have recognized the role that diasporas play as peacebuilders, who from a safe distance can mediate disputes, pressure parties to engage in non-violent conflict resolution and help fund the reconstruction of war-torn societies. For example, Byman[35] cites the moderating influence of the Basque diaspora on ETA actions in Spain and the Assamese diaspora on attacks in India. Moderate members of the Basque diaspora were generally satisfied with the high level of autonomy the Basques gained from the central administration in Madrid and provided strategic support to the government in its dealing with ETA. Accordingly, terrorist attacks by ETA continued to decline and eventually stopped altogether. Similarly, Byman notes that the Indian government had success in reducing terrorist attacks by Assamese groups by winning over support from the worldwide Assamese diaspora.[36]

While we could identify no large-scale multivariate studies that directly test these arguments, there is empirical support from case studies. By the twenty-first century, the United States hosted the largest overseas Irish community in the world—an estimated seven times greater than the population of the Republic of Ireland.[37] The Irish diaspora's interest in the Northern Ireland conflict fluctuated and depended on the level of tension between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland over time. However, several researchers have argued that the Irish Republican Army could not have sustained its long-term campaigns of violence without financial and political support from U.S. citizens, particularly from the Irish Diaspora.[38]

Dugan and colleagues[39] examined the attack trajectories of two Armenian terrorist groups, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG). The researchers were especially interested in the fact that both groups had been extremely violent in the early 1980s but had largely ceased any attacks by the late 1980s. Why the sudden desistance in terrorist activity? The researchers examined a variety of explanations for the rapid decline but after a quantitative analysis concluded that the most convincing argument was that the groups lost support of their diasporas in the mid-1980s. Both groups depended strongly on the financial and political support of the Armenian diaspora.[40] But as the groups increasingly staged deadlier attacks, especially those that took the lives of non-Turks, the support of the diaspora community rapidly declined. The Armenian case suggests that concerns of the diaspora may not be limited to the country where the diaspora lives.

Feyissa argues that diasporas may also reduce conflict and violence in the homeland by promoting civil engagement.[41] To the extent that members of the diaspora are removed from the frontlines of the conflict, they may be able to provide a more objective perspective on the conflict, guided less by anger and emotion. Moreover, members of the diaspora may have access to more objective, factual news sources than those in the homeland. For example, Rigby points out that members of the Acholi Diaspora were successful in bringing together representatives from the Ugandan government, the Lord's Resistance Army and other stakeholders through a series of conferences with the aim of seeking a negotiated settlement to the ongoing conflict.[42] Similarly, Zunzer reports that members of the Afghan Diaspora played a constructive role in setting up 2001 peace talks that eventually resulted in a transitional government for Afghanistan.[43]

Evidence for the Increasing Lethality of Diasporas

However, support for the argument that terrorist organizations with diasporas will produce fewer casualties is not universal. Byman and colleagues conclude that diasporas have been a key factor in sustaining conflict and violence among insurgencies around the world.[44] Antwi-Boateng argues that the U.S.-based Liberian Diaspora has increased violent insurgency in that country.[45] Similarly, Blitz claims that funding by the Serbian Diaspora lengthened the Balkan wars, Chalk asserts that the active involvement of the Tamil Diaspora prolonged civil war in Sri Lanka, and Lyons argues that the Ethiopian Diaspora contributed to 2005 post-election violence in Ethiopia.[46]

More recently, Piazza found empirical evidence that connection to a diaspora group decreases the likelihood that a terrorist organization will end by engaging in a political process or transitioning into a nonviolent political movement.[47] However, he did not examine the impact of diaspora connections on the violent activity of terrorist groups. More generally, a number of empirical studies of the impact of diasporas on civil wars, rather than terrorism, indicates that diasporas are frequently "peace-wreckers." For example, Collier argues that diaspora members are frequently hardliners and uncompromising and are, therefore, more likely than others to use their influence over rebel movements to eschew peace negotiations to end civil wars with states.[48] Saideman and Ayers discuss the central importance of "identity preservation"—the safeguarding of connection to a homeland and identity while living abroad—to diaspora communities.[49] They argue that diaspora groups frequently engage in efforts to mobilize support for contentious struggles by their kin in the homeland specifically in order to facilitate identity preservation. The reasoning goes that because members of the diaspora do not have to live in the conflict, they can express strong opinions from the sidelines—without directly experiencing the negative consequences. Asal and Ayers argue that for this reason compared to residents of the homeland, members of diaspora communities have fewer incentives to take conciliatory positions on contentious political issues facing the homeland.[50]

Data and Methods

To examine the connections between Islamist-inspired terrorist groups, casualties generated by terrorist attacks and the impact of diaspora communities on the lethality of attacks originating in the homeland, we conduct a series of regression estimations using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), along with data from other sources and original data we collected. The dependent variable for the study is a count of persons wounded or killed per terrorist incident for the period 1970 to 2016.[51] Our two main independent variables, explained in more detail below, are the ideology of the perpetrator of the attack—specifically whether the group is an Islamist terrorist organization—and whether the perpetrator is linked to a transnational ethnic or sectarian diaspora group. To focus our analysis on established perpetrator groups about whom there is more reliable information, we limit our data to incidents committed by perpetrators who orchestrated at least five attacks from 1970 to 2016. Our unit of analysis is the individual attack and with data availability this yields a total number of observations between 77,552 and 82,238 depending on the specific estimation.[52] Over the time period examined, 6.162 individuals were injured or killed per attack. Because our dependent variable is a count measure that is characterized by over-dispersion, we use a negative binomial estimation technique.[53] Moreover to control for secular trends—the casualty rate of terrorist attacks has increased over time[54]—and for unobserved idiosyncrasies across terrorist groups that may affect casualty rates of attacks—some terrorist organizations are more lethal than others due to their capacities or other factors—we apply terrorist group and attack year fixed effects in our estimations. As a further validity check we also conducted standard negative binomial estimations, and these reproduced the core results of the analysis,[55] suggesting that model selection does not drive the results.

Worldwide Terrorism Data

We provide descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis in Table 1. For the main dependent variable, total casualties, we rely on the GTD. Terrorism in the GTD is defined as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by non-state actors to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation."[56] Because the characteristics of the GTD are described in detail elsewhere[57], we offer only a brief explanation here. Limitations of open source data include media reporting biases, incomplete information and the challenge of distinguishing terrorism from other forms of violence, including genocide, insurrection, insurgency and civil war.[58] Early versions of the GTD were based mostly on individual news outlets such as the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, and the BBC. Over time data collection has relied increasingly on existing media aggregators such as Lexis/Nexis, Factiva, and the Open Source Center. At present, the data collection process begins with a universe of two million articles published daily worldwide in order to identify the subset of articles that describe terrorist attacks. The GTD staff use customized search strings to isolate an initial pool of potentially relevant articles and the final database is compiled by a staff of 15-20 analysts and student interns.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Obs.	Mean	St. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Casualties	88,023	6.162458	52.99099	0	8749
Islamist	88,023	.3434216	.4748534	0	1
Diaspora	83,273	.4359396	.4958823	0	1
Religious, Non-Islamist	88,023	.0373198	.1895453	0	1
Left	88,023	.3575997	.4792961	0	1
Right	88,023	.0483396	.2144841	0	1
Nationalist-Separatist	88,023	.2549334	.4358262	0	1
Criminal (reference category)	88,023	.0087477	.0931198	0	1
Civil Conflict Intensity	87,144	3.455292	2.265873	0	10
Ethnic Fractionalization	87,076	.5166323	.2326597	.0039959	1
Nat. Capacity Score	88,023	.0154907	.0291618	3.33e-06	.2181166
Suicide Attack	88,023	.0401486	.1963088	0	1
Government Target	88,023	.1155721	.3197129	0	1
(ln) Population	87,636	17.49331	1.421455	10.296	21.03808
(ln) GDP	87,636	7.646822	1.18445	5.195404	11.51948
Regime Type (Polity)	82,998	4.775633	4.938498	-10	10
Cent Am., Caribbean	88,023	.0733104	.2606468	0	1
South America	88,023	.1501653	.3572354	0	1
East Asia	88,023	.0029765	.0544763	0	1
Southeast Asia	88,023	.0631312	.2432002	0	1
South Asia	88,023	.2317576	.4219574	0	1
Central Asia	88,023	.000693	.0263159	0	1
Western Europe	88,023	.1194574	.3243278	0	1
Eastern Europe	88,023	.0174613	.1309834	0	1
Middle East, N. Africa	88,023	.2073663	.4054224	0	1
Sub-Saharan Africa	88,023	.108324	.3107909	0	1
Australasia, Oceania	88,023	.0007612	.0275789	0	1

Independent Variables

We developed measures for our two major independent variables—perpetrator ideology and perpetrator links to diasporas—using the following steps. First, we extracted from the GTD all incidents with an identified perpetrator (54.1% of all incidents). There are 899 different perpetrators in our data and a majority of them are identified with a specific terrorist group name, such as the Taliban, the Shining Path or the Kurdistan Worker's Party. However, 17.1% of perpetrators who are responsible for 13.3% of incidents where the attacker is identified, are labeled using generic terms such as "animal rights extremists" or "Tamils." For a subset of these, the generic identification was sufficiently clear to assign an ideology as well as an association with a specific ethnic or sectarian group. Some examples include "Dissident Republicans" or "Loyalists" in Northern Ireland, "Basque Separatists," or "Baloch Nationalists." Other generic labels were too vague to permit either ideological or ethnic diaspora classification and they were dropped from the analysis.

Second, for all cases where we could identify an attack perpetrator we also assigned a core ideology: leftist, rightist, nationalist or separatist, Islamist, and religious but not Islamist. For a small number of cases we were unable to assign an ideology and instead designated the cases "criminal." Because the GTD is an event rather than an individual database, cases get included because they are classified as terrorist attacks rather than terrorist perpetrators. Some of the events which meet the technical demands for inclusion in the GTD are perpetrated by groups or individuals that many would regard as ordinary criminals. For example, the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) was a Puerto Rican clandestine paramilitary organization that carried out dozens of bomb attacks in the United States with the goal of independence for Puerto Rico. However, these attacks closely resembled more ordinary crimes and most of the individuals responsible for these attacks were convicted of activities such as robbery and possession of illegal firearms.

We developed dichotomous nominal indicators for each ideology and for the criminal category. To make a determination of a perpetrator's ideology, we consulted an array of sources that describe terrorist and nonstate armed movement attributes: the Jones and Libicki database[59], which contains data on 652 terrorist organization attributes; the Terrorist Organization Profiles (TOPs) database of over 800 terrorist movements created by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism[60]; the Big, Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) database collected by Asal and Rethemeyer[61]; the Stanford Mapping Militant Organizations database[62]; and encyclopedic sources authored by Crenshaw and Pimlott[63] and Chalk[64]. We do not treat perpetrator ideology as a mutually exclusive designation. Nine and one-half percent of the incidents in the data were perpetrated by organizations that fit more than one ideological category. Some examples include attacks perpetrated by Hamas, which is designated as both "Islamist" and "nationalist-separatist;" or the Kurdish Worker's Party, which is designated as both "leftist" and "nationalist-separatist."

As shown in Table 1, based on these procedures the most common ideological category was leftist (mean = .358 or about 35.8 percent of our sample), followed closely by Islamist (mean = .343) and nationalist-separatist (mean = .255). Right-wing ideological groups and non-Islamist religious groups were far less common (means = .048 and .037 respectively). Groups characterized by criminal motivations are the least common in our sample (mean = .008 or .8 percent). In all of our analyses, we use criminal groups as our reference or excluded category.

Finally, we used the same sources to develop our measure for diaspora links to the terrorist organization that perpetrated the attack and employed a multistep process. First, for each terrorist group in our sample, we examined the descriptive and narrative information provided by Jones and Libicki, TOPs, Asal and Rethemeyer, Mapping Militants, Crenshaw and Pimlott and Chalk to determine if the organization was associated with a particular ethnic or ethno-sectarian[65] community or communities. We considered a terrorist organization to be linked to an ethnic or ethno-sectarian community if it met one or more of the following criteria: 1) it makes or made a claim to fight on behalf of a specific community, in terms of advancing that community's political interests, rights, physical integrity, privileges, territorial claims or other political aspirations; 2) it makes or made use of a specific community's collective identity in its ideological appeals or recruitment efforts; and/or 3) it includes a specific community in its name. Second, we investigated the ethnic or ethno-sectarian community

that the terrorist group was associated with had a significant transnational diaspora—meaning co-ethnic kin living in sizeable, permanent communities outside of the homeland while retaining ties with the homeland. To determine this, we consulted Levinson[66] and the Minorities at Risk Databases.[67] We used this information to create a variable coded "1" for all groups that are associated with ethnic or ethno-sectarian groups that have links to a diaspora community abroad and "0" otherwise.[68]

It is important to note that in order to code a terrorist movement as connected to a diaspora we required the association to be between a terrorist group and a specific and discretely defined ethnic or ethno-sectarian community. This excludes terrorists that have made ideological appeals to a more universal, abstractly-defined or multi-ethnic community. So, for example, we coded a terrorist group like Hamas as associated with an ethnic and religious-sectarian community: Palestinian Muslims. However, we coded a terrorist group like al Qaeda as not associated with a specifically-defined ethnic or religious-sectarian community. Both groups are Islamist. However, al Qaeda makes ideological appeals not to a specific ethno-sectarian community but rather to a universal and abstract multi-ethnic Muslim *umma* or global community of believers. We do this because we theoretically expect terrorist groups linked with specific and narrowly defined diasporas like Hamas to be dependent upon, and tactically affected by, their global community of supporters. Such communities are close-knit and have a strong sense of identity and unity. This makes them able to more effectively engage in collective political action and to therefore be able to shape the tactical behaviors of their terrorist allies. In contrast, abstract communities, like the global *umma* claimed by Al Qaeda, lack the necessary cohesive identity needed to exert this level of control over terrorist allies.

A total of 39.7% of perpetrators in the data were associated with local ethnic or sectarian groups that have diaspora kin in other countries while 43.5% of incidents in the data were perpetrated by armed movements without prominent diaspora links. A total of 70 Islamist terrorist organizations in our dataset are associated with ethnic or sectarian communities that have diaspora kin in other countries. We list these groups, along with the diaspora they are associated with, in Appendix Table 1.

Control Variables

We include two sets of control variables in the analyses. The first is a basic set of covariates that are included in all estimates. To hold constant country qualities, we include the natural log-transformed measures of population[69], gross domestic product[70] and the political regime of the country in which the incident occurred.[71] Our assumption is that more populous and poorer countries may have greater difficulty policing terrorism and are therefore more likely to experience high casualty attacks. We assume that compared to democratic regimes, nondemocratic regimes are more likely characterized by governments that are less responsive to their citizens and impose greater media censorship. Perpetrators of terrorist attacks in nondemocratic countries may use high casualty attacks to force governmental responses and to break through media censorship. Finally, recognizing the potential impact of regional effects on terrorist attack casualties, we include dichotomous indicators for the major world region in which the event took place.[72]

Our list of extended controls includes qualities of both the venue of the attack and the attack itself that might affect casualties. We assume that terrorist attacks occurring in the context of a civil conflict are likely to produce higher casualties, particularly where there are deep ethnic divisions and where the state has a lower capacity to project physical force and defend against armed movements. Thus, we control for the presence and intensity of civil conflict[73] and the degree of ethnic fractionalization[74] within the venue country and the national capacity score of the venue country's government.[75] We also control for whether the incident was a suicide attack—an attack mode that generally nets high casualties—and whether the attack was against a government target, which we assume is likely to result in fewer casualties as it is more likely to be a hardened target. Finally, in all estimations we control for time dependency by adding a year cubic polynomial to the model.[76]

Results

The results are presented in Table 2. Models 1 and 2 examine the impact of perpetrating terrorist organization ideology on incident casualties including the sets of basic and extended covariates. Models 3 and 4 run the same estimations while also including the diaspora links variable. Model 5 estimates the interaction between the diaspora linked variable and the Islamist terrorist perpetrator measure. Model 6 is our full estimation where the interaction between diaspora links and Islamist perpetrators are regressed to casualties with the extended covariates included.

Table 2. Effects of Islamist Attacks and Diaspora Links on Casualties

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Y:	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties	Casualties
Islamist[1]	0.080***	0.036	0.056*	0.027	0.386***	0.274***
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.035)	(0.040)
Diaspora[1]			0.134***	0.126***	0.333***	0.352***
			(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.039)	(0.036)
Islamist * Diaspora[1]					-0.398***	-0.357***
					(0.045)	(0.046)
Religious, Non Islamist[1]	0.398***	0.401***	0.345***	0.361***	0.316***	0.330***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Left[1]	-0.133***	-0.085***	-0.090***	-0.053*	0.025	0.049*
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Right[1]	-0.081*	-0.030	-0.018	0.026	0.114**	0.140***
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.043)
Nationalist-Separatist[1]	-0.053**	-0.043*	-0.152***	-0.132***	-0.217***	-0.192***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)
Civil Conflict Intensity[2]		-0.001		-0.007*		-0.006*
		(0.003)		(0.004)		(0.004)
Ethnic Fractionalization[2]		0.114**		0.001		0.027
		(0.040)		(0.043)		(0.043)
Nat. Capacity Score[2]		-5.024***		-3.955***		-3.663***
		(0.565)		(0.620)		(0.622)
Suicide Attack[3]		0.969***		0.974***		0.972***
		(0.018)		(0.018)		(0.018)
Government Target[3]		-0.215***		-0.198***		-0.196***
		(0.015)		(0.016)		(0.016)
(ln) Population[2]	0.051***	0.110***	0.068***	0.115***	0.071***	0.114***
	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.009)
(ln) GDP[2]	-0.047***	-0.065***	-0.069***	-0.086***	-0.046***	-0.066***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Regime Type (Polity)[2]	-0.004**	-0.002	-0.004**	-0.002	-0.005***	-0.003*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
t	0.209	0.496**	0.196	0.491**	0.215	0.514**
	(0.167)	(0.168)	(0.173)	(0.174)	(0.173)	(0.174)

t^2	-0.000	-0.000**	-0.000	-0.000**	-0.000	-0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
t^3	omit	omit	omit	omit	omit	omit
Constant	-204.835	-490.645**	-193.167	-486.270**	-211.344	-508.635**
	(166.843)	(168.115)	(172.974)	(174.165)	(172.774)	(173.978)
Obs.	82,238	82,168	77,613	77,552	77,613	77,552
No. of Terrorist Groups	799	797	746	744	746	744
Wald χ-square	2371.92***	5674.86***	2427.81***	5645.76***	2507.24***	5706.48***

Notes:
All estimations calculated with terrorist group and attack year fixed effects
Unit = terrorist attack, 1970 to 2016
*** p ≤ .000 ** p ≤ .01 * p ≤ .1
Y = count of casualties (deaths + injuries) in the attack
Region dummies included in all models (Central America and Caribbean, South America, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Western Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Australasia/Oceania)
Standard errors, in parentheses
[1] Feature of perpetrator, criminal perpetrator is reference category
[2] Feature of venue country of attack
[3] Feature of event

While both researchers and policy makers have frequently assumed that, ceteris paribus, Islamist terrorist organizations are prone to commit higher casualty attacks than non-Islamist groups[77], our results suggest a more complex pattern. Table 2 shows that Islamist attacks produce significantly more casualties in models 1, 3, 5 and 6, compared to the reference category (criminally motivated terrorist groups). Substantively, terrorist attacks by Islamist perpetrators yield between 5.6 percent (in model 3) and 38.6 percent (in model 5) higher logged casualty counts. Using marginal effects calculations, this translates to between .05 and .09 more persons wounded or killed in Islamist attacks, on average, when compared with criminal groups. However, we find that attacks by non-Islamist religious terrorist groups more consistently produce higher casualties. The religious, non-Islamist variable is significant and positive across all models and such groups yield between 31.6 (model 5) and 40.1 (model 2) percent more logged casualties, or between .273 and .400 persons wounded or killed per attack. In contrast, attacks by left-wing and nationalist-separatist terrorist groups generally yield fewer casualties than the reference category. Attacks by leftists produce between 5.3 (model 4) and 13.3 (model 1) percent fewer logged casualties than attacks by criminal groups while attacks by nationalist-separatist perpetrators result in between 4.3 (model 2) and 21.7 (model 5) percent fewer logged casualties. The impact of right-wing terrorist perpetrators on casualty rates is mixed in our findings. While we do find right-wing groups to commit higher casualty attacks in models 5 and 6—11.4 and 14.0 percent more logged casualties per attack respectively—the right-wing ideology variable is negative and significant in model 1 and is not significant in models 2 through 4.

We find that affiliation with a diaspora community generally is associated with higher casualty attacks. In models 3 through 6, the diaspora variable is significant and positive. Substantively, attacks by generic terrorists with diaspora links produce between 12.6 (model 4) and 35.2 (model 6) percent higher numbers of logged casualties than do attacks by terrorists without diaspora community affiliations. This translates into between .125 and .260 more persons wounded or killed per attack, on average. This finding supports our theoretical contention that in general diaspora community links increase the capacity of terrorist groups to commit higher casualty attacks.

However, in models 5 and 6 we find that the interaction between Islamist group ideology and diaspora community links reduces the number of casualties that a terrorist group produces per attack, on average. The

coefficient for the interaction term is significant and negative in both of these estimations. Islamist groups with diaspora community links conduct attacks that produce 39.8 percent (model 5) and 35.7 percent (model 6) fewer logged casualties than attacks by the reference category, criminal groups. Again using marginal effects, this translates to .096 and .041 fewer persons wounded or killed per attack, on average. To vivify the substance of our findings, we also compared the substantive difference in casualty rates, per attack, between Islamists with and without diaspora community links. Marginal effects calculations show that in the full model (model 6) that attacks by Islamist groups with diasporas result in .124 fewer casualties per attack compared with attacks by Islamists without diasporas. This is a reduction of about 10.6 percent. Raw, unmodeled descriptive statistics help to further illustrate the effect diaspora affiliation has on Islamist attacks. The average attack by an Islamist group without diaspora connections produces about 11.9 casualties. The average attack by diaspora-affiliated Islamist groups produces about 8.7 casualties.

Several of the other control variables are also significant in our estimations. Countries that are more populous experience higher casualty terrorist attacks. Suicide attacks yield higher numbers of casualties. Attacks in wealthier countries, measured by gross domestic product, experience lower casualty attacks as do countries with higher national capacity scores. Attacks launched by terrorists against better-defended, hardened government targets yield fewer casualties. All of these variables are signed in the expected direction. Other controls are inconsistently significant: civil conflict is not significant in model 2 but is significant and negative in models 4 and 6; ethnic fractionalization is significant and positive in model 2, and regime type is significant and negative only in models 1, 3, 5 and 6. This suggests that under some conditions more ethnically divided countries might experience higher casualty rates while civil conflict prone countries and democracies might experience lower casualty attacks.

We conducted several further tests to check the robustness of our findings.[78] First, we reran the analysis without terrorist movement and year fixed effects. These estimations slightly changed the size of the sample, but produced the same substantive results, giving us confidence that our modeling choices do not drive our findings.

Second, we reran the models without the year fixed effects but including dichotomous variables indicating the different eras under which the Global Terrorism Database, the main data source for our study, was collected. From its inception, the GTD has been curated by a research team at the START Center at the University of Maryland, however, primary data collection has been done by different institutions over time.[79] Each different institution was characterized by different personnel and resources. These differences could potentially affect patterns of collection and reporting of terrorist incidents in the data, given that GTD is based upon open source reporting. For example, particularly deadly attacks might be more widely reported by media and therefore more likely to be included in the GTD during data collection periods characterized by fewer coders or resources. Inclusion of the GTD coding era dummy variables, however, does not change the main substantive results. This gives us further assurance that our findings are not overly affected by potential reporting biases in the data over time.

Third, to help clarify causality among the type of terrorist organizations we are interested in, we also reran the analysis on a subsample of the data that included only Islamist terrorist groups. These results, also, conformed to the main findings of the study. Islamist groups with diaspora links launched fewer deadly attacks than Islamist groups without diasporas.

Fourth, to check whether the impact of diasporas is different for different types of terrorism, we separated domestic from transnational attacks in the data[80] and ran the estimations on each separately. We found that Islamist groups with diaspora links committed lower casualty domestic and transnational attacks. The relationship does not seem to depend on the type of terrorism considered.

Fifth, we considered two possibilities that might distort and complicate interpretation of our findings. It is possible that our results are affected by outliers such as extreme casualty events. Also, we considered the possibility that while terrorist organizations may consciously adapt their tactics and targeting to increase or decrease the number of casualties yielded in an attack, they may not be able to precisely control the number

of people killed or wounded. Terrorist perpetrators may opt to launch attacks designed to maximize casualties but likely do not have absolute control over casualty rates of their attacks. To address both of these possibilities, we transformed the dependent variable into a dichotomous measure coded "1" for attacks with 1 or more casualties and "0" for attacks with no casualties and re-estimated the models as a logistical regression analyses. We found that 59.11 percent of attacks in the data yielded one or more casualties. As with all of the other robustness specifications, these models reproduce the main findings in the study.

Finally, we reran our analysis using terrorist-group-year as the unit of analysis. To do this we collapsed our main database into yearly totals of casualties caused by each individual terrorist group in our sample. We then estimated whether Islamist groups with diaspora links were characterized with fewer casualties per year. The results of these estimations, summarized in Appendix Table 2, reproduce our main findings. We find, again, that Islamist terrorist groups connected to diasporas produce fewer casualties on an annual basis than do Islamist groups without diaspora connections. In the most basic model (Appendix Table 2, model 1) we determine that Islamist groups without diasporas commit attacks yielding on average 301.18 casualties per year, Islamists linked to diasporas commit attacks producing on average only 211.37 casualties per year. This suggests that diaspora links reduce casualty rates for Islamist groups by around 89.81 persons hurt or killed per year. In model 2 of Appendix Table 2, we include some other covariates: annual totals of suicide attacks and attacks against government or hard targets by the terrorist group.[81] Addition of these covariates, both of which are significant, does not change the main result. Diaspora affiliation still reduces casualties by Islamist groups.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although many claim that the rise of Islamist terrorism over the past two decades has been especially deadly, there have been few empirical tests of the argument that include the rapid increase of major Islamist groups affiliated with al Qaeda and ISIS since the early 2000s. Our results show that controlling for a wide variety of variables, Islamist terrorist perpetrators committed significantly higher casualty attacks when compared to other terrorist attacks over the past half century. However, we found that religious attacks motivated by non-Islamist groups produced even more casualties. Some of the deadliest of these groups include the Lord's Resistance Army, the various groups associated with "the troubles" in Northern Ireland and a variety of Sikh extremist groups. In general, these findings are in line with researchers who claim that there is nothing inherent in Islam that promotes violent political extremism—indeed terrorism was relatively rare in most of the Middle East and Southeast Asia three decades ago. These results are consistent with Juergensmeyer who claims that when groups (both Islamist and non-Islamist) are able to coopt religion's organization and imagery for political purposes it may weaken norms against violence and elevate conflicts to a "cosmic" level where ordinary rules no longer apply.[82]

Our results also show that the impact of diasporas on levels of violence differs starkly for non-Islamist and Islamist groups. For non-Islamists, having a diaspora is associated with higher casualty attacks. This finding is consistent with some previous case study evidence showing that diasporas are crucial partners and constituents for terrorist movements[83], and that in addition to boosting the capacity of terrorists, diasporas affect the strategic and tactical decisions that terrorists make.[84] However, for Islamist groups, diasporas instead appear to play an important role in inhibiting Islamist perpetrators in the homeland, prompting affiliated terrorist organizations to commit lower casualty attacks. It is especially interesting that this pattern holds for Islamist terrorists, an ideological type that compared to other groups has been less inhibited in terms of the deadliness of their attack behaviors. This finding has important implications for scholars and policymakers in that it suggests that diaspora communities associated with Islamist organizations may be important for moderating the threat posed by Islamist terrorism.

The study leaves some unanswered questions that are fodder for future research. For example, while we find evidence that diasporas play a significant role in affecting casualty rates of attacks, we can only speculate as to how and why this occurs. First, why do diasporas seem to have a moderating effect on violence for Islamist

groups but not for other groups? We have seen that diasporas increase casualties and we have a straightforward story for that: diaspora support boosts group capacity allowing for higher attacks. Now, it is true that Islamist groups, a priori, launch higher casualty attacks. However, many of these Islamist groups are very high capacity anyway (e.g., ISIS, Hezbollah, al Qaeda) so perhaps the boost that other groups seem to get from diasporas in terms of capacity is negligible for them. Without a major advantage in terms of capacity maybe the main effect remaining is the need to keep diaspora communities content and prevent backlash. Also, several of the Islamist groups without diasporas are part of the al Qaeda and ISIS constellations. We know that ISIS and al Qaeda and their affiliates and franchises are famously uninhibited and deadly. So, perhaps it is the case that these groups, as non-diaspora linked Islamist groups in our sample, are helping to drive the results. This would be an ideal area for further investigation.

Second, future research should examine in greater detail how links to transnational diaspora communities affect the specific targeting decisions of affiliated terrorists. Do diaspora links prompt terrorist perpetrators to minimize or maximize casualties by selecting hard versus soft targets? Do they similarly influence the weapon type of the perpetrating group, again as a way to affect the number of casualties? Are diaspora affiliations important for terrorist group decisions to use suicide attacks or other extreme tactics? Is there evidence that diaspora communities maintain, increase or withhold support from terrorist movements in order to shape or respond to terrorist group attack behavior? Future research should further explore these important questions.

Finally, rapid changes in communication through social media are drastically changing the way diasporas are able to make claims and express interests.[85] Diasporas constitute a large and increasing minority in many countries. Social media make it far easier to sustain cultural and political connections across boundaries. These changes have the potential to increase the effects of diasporas on a range of political outcomes, including terrorism-related violence. Future research should examine the impact of social media and other emerging communication changes and their consequences for diaspora communities.

Our results support the argument that religiously motivated terrorist attacks are especially deadly but do not support the conclusion that Islamist attacks are deadlier still. The results also support the conclusion that Islamist groups with diasporas are significantly less deadly. Prior research on the impact of diasporas on the frequency and intensity of terrorist attacks has been strongly divided. Perhaps this is because the relationship between terrorism and diasporas is complex and variable. In the case of Islamist attacks over the past half century it appears that diaspora communities have operated to reduce the violence associated with religiously inspired attacks. We suspect that the Islamist terrorists with pronounced diasporas have been, at least in part, sensitive to the potential backlash produced from indiscriminate violent attacks. Our findings are robust to several different specifications. These results suggest that investing more energy into understanding the complicated relationship between terrorist organizations and their diasporas may be an important avenue for both research and policy.

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Appendix Table 1. List of Islamist Groups with Diaspora Links

Group Name	Affiliated Diaspora
Abu Sayyaf Group	Moros
Afghan Mujahideen	Pashtuns
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade	Palestinians
Al-Ashtar Brigades	Iraqi Shi'is
Al-Khobar	Moros
Al-Mansoorian	Kashmiris
Al-Shuda Brigade	Kashmiris
Al-Umar Mujahideen	Kashmiris
Al-Ummah	Indian Muslims
Ansar al-Dine	Tuaregs
Ansar al-Islam	Kurds
Ansar al-Sunna	Kurds
Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq	Iraqi Shi'is
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement	Moros
Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN)	Patanis
Black Widows	Chechens
Boko Haram	Kanuris
Caucasus Emirate	Chechens
Chechen Rebels	Chechens
Dagestani Shari'ah Jamaat	Chechens
Deccan Mujahideen	Kashmiris, Indian Muslims
Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement	Uighurs
Great Easter Islamic Raiders Front	Uighurs
Hamas	Palestinians
Haqqani Network	Pashtuns
Harkat ul Ansar	Kashmiris
Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-yi Afghanistan	Hazaras
Hezbollah	Lebanese Shi'is
Hizbul Mujahideen	Kashmiris
Iraqi Mujahideen	Iraqi Sunnis
Islambouli Brigades of Al-Qaida	Kashmiris
Islamic Front	Kashmiris
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	Uzbeks
Jaish al-Adl	Baluchis, Iranian Sunnis
Jaish al-Fatah	Syrian Sunnis
Jaish-e Islam	Pashtuns
Jaish-e-Mohammad	Kashmiris
Jamaat-al-Fuqra (Pakistan)	African Americans
Jamaat-ul-Ahrar	Pashtuns
Jamiat ul-Mujahedin	Kashmiris
Jund al-Sham for Tawhid and Jihad	Palestinians
Jundallah	Baluchis, Iranian Sunnis
Kashmiri Extremists	Kashmiris

Lashkar-e-Islam (India)	Pashtuns
Lashkar-e-Islam (Pakistan)	Pashtuns
Lashkar-e-Taiba	Kashmiris
Liwa Ahrar al-Sunna	Lebanese Sunnis
Mahdi Army	Iraqi Shi'is
Maute Group	Moros
Moro Islamic Liberation Front	Moros
Mujahideen-e Khalq	Iranians
Mujahideen Ansar	Pashtuns
Mujahideen Kashmir	Kashmiris
Palestinian Islamic Jihad	Palestinians
Pattani United Liberation Organization	Pattanis
People's United Liberation Front	Indian Muslims
Popular Resistance Committees	Palestinians
Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance	Chechens
Rohingya extremists	Rohingya Muslims
Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK)	Pattanis
Shaykh Subhi Al-Salih Forces	Lebanese Sunnis
Sipah-I-Mohammed	Pakistani Shi'is
Students Islamic Movement of India	Indian Muslims
Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution	Iraqi Shi'is
Taliban	Pashtuns
Taliban (Pakistan)	Pashtuns
Tehrik al-Mojahedin	Kashmiris
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	Pashtuns
Thai Islamic Militants	Pattanis
Turkish Hezbollah	Kurds

Appendix Table 2. Terrorist Group-Year Analysis

	[1]	[2]
Y:	Casualties	Casualties
Islamist[1]	1.798***	1.089***
	(0.124)	(0.110)
Diaspora[1]	0.182*	0.012
	(0.113)	(0.083)
Islamist * Diaspora[1]	-0.490**	-0.669***
	(0.163)	(0.134)
Religious, Non Islamist[1]	-0.300**	0.074
	(0.114)	(0.099)
Left[1]	-0.050	-0.636***
	(0.092)	(0.073)
Right[1]	0.054	-0.006
	(0.130)	(0.109)
Nationalist-Separatist[1]	-0.032	0.106
	(0.101)	(0.074)
Suicide Attack[2]		0.070***
		(0.013)
Government Target[3]		0.042***
		(0.002)
Constant	3.937***	3.332***
	(0.086)	(0.070)
Obs.	5,588	5,588
LR χ-square	654.81***	2310.46***
Pseudo R^2	0.0136	0.0479

Notes:
Data collapsed into terrorist group-year unit of analysis
*** p ≤ .000 ** p ≤ .01 * p ≤ .1
Y = count of casualties (deaths + injuries) in the attack
Standard errors, in parentheses
[1] Feature of perpetrator, criminal perpetrator is reference category
[2] Average number of suicide attacks conducted by group per yea
[3] Average number of government/hard target attacks conducted by group per year

Notes

[1] Hoffman, Bruce (1999) Countering the new terrorism. In: Ian O. Lesser, Bruce Hoffman, John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt & Michele Zanini (eds.) *Terrorism Trends and Prospects*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND 7-38; Enders, Walter & Todd Sandler (2006) Distribution of transnational terrorism among countries by income classes and geography after 9/11. *International Studies Quarterly* 50(2):367–393; Piazza, James A (2009) Is Islamist terrorism more dangerous? An empirical study of group ideology, organization, and goal structure. *Terrorism and Political Violence* (21):62-88.

[2] Jenkins, Brian Michael (1975) *Hostages and Their Captors: Friends and Lovers*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from: https://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P5519.html on June 5th 2018.

[3] Jenkins, Brian Michael (2006) *The New Age of Terrorism*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. Retrieved from: https://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/RP1215.html on June 5th 2018. Pp. 15-16.

[4] See Enders and Sandler (2006), p. 384

[5] See Piazza (2009), p. 62.

[6] LaFree, Gary, Laura Dugan, Erin Miller (2015) *Putting Terrorism in Context: Lessons from the Global Terrorism Database*. London, England: Routledge. p. 132.

[7] See Enders and Sandler (2006), p. 384; Chasdi, R. J (1997) Middle East Terrorism 1968–1993: An Empirical Analysis of Terrorist Group-Type Behavior. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 17(1):1–26; Piazza (2009); Juergensmeyer, Mark (2017) *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

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[9] LaFree, Gary, & Laura Dugan (2017) *Evolution of Global Terrorism – The Growing Lethality of Attacks*. In D. Backer, R. Bhavnani & P. Huth (eds). Peace and Conflict, pp. 33-46, Routledge. Levinson, D (1998) *Ethnic Groups Worldwide: A ready Reference Handbook*. Greenwood International. p. 80.

[10] See Hoffman 1999; Chasdi 1997; Piazza 2009; Enders and Sandler 2006.

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[12] We refer throughout this paper to "the Islamic diaspora" while fully realizing that there is not just one, but rather a variety of Muslim diasporas in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere, each with unique political, social and cultural characteristics. While we agree that research examining these differences would be valuable our approach here is to instead ask whether Muslim diasporas taken as a whole have distinctive characteristics.

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[47] See Piazza 2018

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[49] Saideman, Steven & R. William Ayers (2008) *For Kin or Country*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

[50] Asal, V., & Ayres, R. W (2018) Attention Getters: Diaspora Support for Ethno–Political Organizations in the Middle East. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41(1):24-38.

[51] Data from 1993 were lost by the original data collectors and we treat them here as missing.

[52] An alternative unit of analysis would be terrorist organization-year, rendering the study a terrorist organizational level analysis. This would be advantageous in that terrorist attacks launched by the same group are likely affected by terrorist organization features that make them interdependent as incidents. However, a terrorist organization level analysis would also present significant analytical limitations given that we are interested in explaining terrorist attack casualty rates. In particular, it would preclude us from modeling incident-level factors, such as attack mode and type of target, that are critical for explaining casualty rates. As a consequence, we opt to use an incident/event unit of analysis but to conduct terrorist organization and year-fixed effects to account for cross-sectional (terrorist organization) and temporal (year) dependencies.

[53] Hilbe, J. M (2011) *Negative Binomial Regression*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

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[55] Results available from authors.

[56] See LaFree, Dugan and Miller (2015).

[57] LaFree, Gary, & Laura Dugan (2007) Introducing the Global Terrorism Database. *Terrorism and Political Violence* (19):181–204.

[58] For critiques of open source terrorism data, see LaFree, Dugan, & Miller (2015), pp. 22-25; Enders, Walter, Todd Sandler & Khusrav Gaibulloev (2011) Domestic versus transnational terrorism: data, decomposition, and dynamics. *Journal of Peace Research* 48:319-337. Fearon, J. D (2003) Ethnic and cultural diversity by country. *Journal of Economic Growth* 8(2):195-222; LaFree (2010); Schmid, Alex (2004) Statistics on terrorism: the challenge of measuring trends in global terrorism. *Forum on Crime and Society* 4:49-69; Safer-Lichtenstein, Aaron, Gary LaFree and Thomas Loughran (2017) Studying terrorism empirically: What we know about what we don't know. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 33: 273–291; Safer-Lichtenstein, A., LaFree, G., & Loughran, T. (2017). Studying terrorism empirically: What we know about what we don't know. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *33*(3), 273-291.

[59] Jones, S. G. & M. C. Libicki (2008) *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

[60] The TOPS database, created by the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and archived by the START Center at the University of Maryland, is no longer being updated. However, we used a 2012 preserved version of it curated in spreadsheet form by Christopher Linebarger at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell (http://clinebarger.weebly.com/)

[61] Asal, V. and R. K. Rethemeyer (2008) The nature of the beast: Organizational structures and the lethality of terrorist attacks. *The Journal of Politics 70*(2):437-449.

[62] Accessed fall 2017 from http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/.

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[64] Chalk, P (2013) *Encyclopedia of Terrorism* (Vol. 1). ABC-CLIO.

[65] Our coding includes both ethnic and what we refer to as "ethno-sectarian" community links. Ethnic communities are simply ethno-linguistic groups that might be associated with a particular terrorist organization. "Ethno-sectarian" groups are commu-

nities that are distinguished both by a particular ethnicity as well as a particular religion or religious sect. Examples of ethnic communities with links to terrorist movements are the Kurds, the Basques and the Armenians. Examples of ethno-sectarian communities linked to terrorist movements are the Provisional IRA, which was linked to Catholic Irish communities worldwide; and Hezbollah, which is linked to Lebanese Shi'i Muslims. We expect both types of communities—ethnic and ethno-sectarian —to function similarly. Both have a cohesive community identity and both coordinate political efforts on behalf of that identity.

[66] Levinson (1998) is a reference work on ethnic groups worldwide.

[67] Minorities at Risk Project (2009) *Minorities at Risk Dataset*. College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Retrieved from: www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/data.aspx on May 1, 2017. The Minorities at Risk (MAR) database includes data on major ethnic and sectarian minority communities, measured as comprising at least one percent of the national population in countries. MAR also includes data on whether an ethnic or sectarian community have kin abroad in significant numbers in other countries.

[68] In coding our diaspora indicator, we use some of the same sources that Piazza (2018) used, but our sample of terrorist groups is different.

[69] Source: United Nations Statistics, National Accounts Main Aggregates Database.

[70] Source: United Nations Statistics, National Accounts Main Aggregates Database.

[71] Source: Polity IV Project, Center for Systemic Peace

[72] We use the global regions identified in GTD: North America, Central America and the Caribbean, South America, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Former Soviet Union, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Australasia and Oceania.

[73] Source: Major Episodes of Political Violence database, Center for Systemic Peace. Data and codebook available online at: http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html

[74] Source: Fearon (2003). Note that we interpolated missing years by using the most temporally proximate year.

[75] Source: Composite Indicator of National Material Capabilities (CINC). Data and codebook available online at: http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities

[76] See Carter, D. B., & Signorino, C. S. (2010). Back to the future: Modeling time dependence in binary data. *Political Analysis*, *18*(3), 271-292.

[77] Enders and Sandler (2006), p. 384; Hoffman (1999); Chasdi (1997).

[78] All results available from authors

[79] For a full description of the four data collection periods for GTD, see LaFree, Dugan and Miller (2015). We constructed dichotomous measures to indicate each of the four coding periods.

[80] To separate domestic from transnational terrorist attacks in the GTD, we used the "INT-ANY" variable which identifies attacks in which the perpetrator and victim are different nationalities, attacks where the perpetrator is from a foreign country and attacks that transpire across international borders as international or transnational.

[81] A significant disadvantage of the group-year models in Appendix 2 is that they either compromise the measurement or do not allow the inclusion of crucial covariates. In order to include covariates, like whether the attack was a suicide attack or an attack against a government target in group-year estimations, we had to have total counts of such events for each group for each year. This, of course, makes them highly aggregated and disconnected from the actual event. We were forced to drop venue-country attack factors such as the presence of wider civil conflict, ethnic fractionalization, state capacity, level of economic development or state political regime type altogether. The end result is that the estimations in Appendix Table 2, while reproducing the main results, are not fully specified.

[82] See Juergensmeyer (2017).

[83] See Orjuela (2008); Victoroff, Adelman and Matthews (2012).

[84] See Byman (1998); Lyons (2004); Hoffman (2006).

[85] Brinkerhoff, J (2009) *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Georgiou, M (2013) Diaspora in the digital era: minorities and media representation. Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe 12(4): 80-99.

"The Khilafah's Soldiers in Bengal": Analysing the Islamic State Jihadists and Their Violence Justification Narratives in Bangladesh

by Saimum Parvez

Abstract

The Islamic State (IS) is going through a shift in its strategy and tactics with a major organisational restructuring in the post-Caliphate phase. Instead of controlling a territory with a centralised system, the jihadist organisation is attempting to expand its ideologies via local affiliates, exploiting existing local grievances. Although South Asia receives priority in IS' ambition of expansion, the extant literature on the role of the jihadist outfit in the region, especially in Bangladesh, is scant. To address this lacuna, this study explores the development of IS affiliated groups in Bangladesh and portrays its origin, leadership, target, goals and international connections. It also explains how Bangladeshi foreign fighters were recruited for IS and who the key persons were behind Bangladeshis' IS connections. This study shows that while the Bangladesh government squarely refused to acknowledge the presence of IS in Bangladesh, IS claimed responsibilities of several attacks and indicated their long-term plan to control the region in the future. This study also analyses jihadist content, including IS' flagship magazine Dabiq, Rumiyah, their videos and Telegram channels, and finds their violence justification narrative employed in Bangladesh. It finds that there are mainly three themes in the Bangladeshi jihadist narrative: perceived crisis construct, solution construct, and justification of jihad as the only way to reach the solution from the existing crisis.

Keywords: Islamic State, Bangladesh, Jihadist Narrative, Foreign Fighters, South Asia

Introduction

Bangladesh witnessed a hostage crisis situation, perpetrated by Islamic State-affiliated operatives, on 1 July 2016. The violent extremists stormed into the Holey Artisan Bakery, a restaurant popular among foreigners in an upscale neighbourhood in Dhaka. They hacked and stabbed to death 20 hostages including Indian, Italian, Japanese, and US citizens. A twelve-hour siege ended with the security forces' gunfight with the jihadists. Two law enforcement officers and five attackers were killed in the incident. Although this particularly gruesome attack received global attention, the country has experienced several small-scale attacks and targeted killings in recent years. Jihadists have murdered at least 40 writers, publishers and activists, foreigners and members of minority faiths since 2013. Between 2013 and 2017, there were 50 incidents involving violent extremism resulting in 255 deaths and 942 wounded.[1]

The relative decline of the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq, and deaths or arrests of the key leaderships of the Islamic State affiliated group in Bangladesh, manifest an ebbing of their organisational strength in the country. However, in the post-Caliphate phase, the terrorist group is going through a major change in its strategy and tactics regarding organisational restructuring.[2] The organisation's concentration is now shifting from a centralised and globally coordinated effort towards local and regional struggles, exploiting grievances in various local contexts and conditions.[3] This move towards greater decentralisation of IS has important ramifications for the region of South Asia as evidenced by the recent announcement of an IS province in India in May 2019.[4] The group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, acknowledged (via a video published online in April 2019) the loss in Syria but reminded his followers that the long battle between 'Islam and its people with the crusader and his people'[5] will go on, not only in Iraq and Syria, but also by IS' far-flung franchises and affiliates. Indeed, he claimed that the coordinated bombings in Sri Lanka, which killed at least 250 people, were carried out as a 'revenge' for the group's defeat in Baghuz, the last IS stronghold in Syria.

The recent indication of IS' organisational restructuring and willingness to expand provide more reasons to

explore the dynamics of violent extremism in the region. Indeed, after two years of relative calm,[6] IS operatives are now trying to regroup[7] in Bangladesh, which is manifested first by posting a threatening message on a pro-IS Telegram channel indicating an imminent attack in Bangladesh after the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka,[8] and then claiming responsibilities of three attacks on law enforcement officers in Bangladesh between April and July 2019.[9] Despite these worrying indications, a sheer lack of studies made it difficult for researchers to understand the development of IS in Bangladesh and analyse the role of Bangladeshi foreign fighters in Syria. Notwithstanding the noticeable presence of local jihadist groups, claims of high degrees of support for militancy[10] and evidence of the connections with transnational terrorist organisations, studies on the role of the Islamic State (IS) and its affiliated groups in Bangladesh are almost absent.[11] Bangladesh, in general, has received scant attention from the experts in violent extremism, unlike other countries of South Asia.[12] To fill this gap, this study explores the impact, strategy, and ideology of the IS jihadist movement in Bangladesh by addressing its strands and illustrating its evolution. This study also investigates how content produced by IS jihadists constructs the narrative that justifies violent jihad in Bangladesh.

Violent Extremist Organisations and Their Narratives

A narrative is essentially a story that links elements and sequences together to convey specific meanings for interpreting the world.[13] It is a system of stories that share themes, forms and archetypes.[14] A large number of extant studies analyse the narratives of violent extremists;[15] some of these studies have analysed Islamist propaganda in an attempt to understand how these groups think and behave.[16] One study identifies Islamist master narratives manifested in the rhetoric of violent extremist groups and how the narratives not only provides simplistic explanations and connections between past and present events but also incorporate ideas, texts, and interpretations derived from religious scriptures.[17] In their study, Samantha Mahood and Halim Rane analysed IS' narratives in 10 issues of the *Dabiq,* the group's online magazine, and found direct references to the *crusades/crusaders* (452 times), *jahiliyya* (27 times), *hypocrites* (23 times), and *the battle of Badr* (21 times).[18] In another study, Charlie Winter compiled 1,146 incidents of Islamic State propaganda between 17 July and 15 August 2015 and identified six key narratives, namely: brutality (2.13%), mercy (0.45%), belonging (0.89%), victimhood (6.84%), war (37.12%), and utopia (52.57%).[19] Also, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Nathaniel Barr and Bridget Moreng's work provides a descriptive analysis of the narratives that Islamic State deploys to mobilize aspirant extremists to join its ranks.[20] J.M. Berger, Mohammed Hafez[21] and Haroro Ingram's[22] studies identify arguments that extremist groups employ to construct their narratives. Hafez's study describes three themes. The first theme depicts the crisis; 'Islam is under threat; Muslims are humiliated and suffering all over the world at the hands of Western 'invaders/crusaders.'[23] The second theme shows the limitations and unwillingness of the current regimes in Muslim countries to act against the West. This theme claims that existing regimes are puppets of their Western masters. The third and final theme draws a picture of optimism whereby Muslim saviours will win against their enemies and establish a true and just society based on their interpretations of Islam. Similarly, Ingram also argues that extremists create their messages by constructing crises and solutions, defining in-group and out-group identities, identifying themselves as "champions and protectors of (appropriately aligned) Sunni Muslims," and then using this construction as the ideological argument for why the Muslim community should "support us and our solutions (i.e., the in-group's politico-military agenda)."[24]

Berger's analysis shows that extremists use several common crisis narratives, including conspiracy, impurity, existential threat, dystopia, apocalypse and triumphalism. He argues that violent extremist groups only seek to resolve conflicts through crisis-solution constructs. Also, Alex Schmid presents three structural elements of Al-Qaeda's narrative that include grievances among many Muslims (e.g., discrimination, humiliation, chaos, corrupt rulers, etc.), a vision of a better political system (the Caliphate, and rule by Sharia), and the articulation of a strategy to address those grievances and achieve the vision through violent jihad.[25]

Following these extant theories, I argue that jihadists—and particularly those aligned with IS—employ a grand narrative to justify their violent attacks in Bangladesh. This grand narrative identifies crises, presents solutions and contends that violent armed jihad is the only way to resolve these crises. I also argue that following the

global jihadist narratives and customizing the messages by employing local contexts, Bangladeshi jihadists construct a 'Crisis-Justification-Solution' (CJS) narrative to radicalize and recruit aspiring individuals. Besides the crisis and solution construction, I include the justification presented in the jihadist narratives to 'rationalize' their violent actions.

Data and Method

The data for this study were gathered from two types of sources. First, I have collected jihadist documents, including Islamic States' online magazines, videos, and infographics, which were primarily published targeting a Bangla speaking audience. Two issues of *Dabiq* (12 & 14), and one issue of *Rumiyah* (2), published several articles on Bangladesh. The 12th issue of *Dabiq*, named *Just Terror*, published a five-page article titled *The Revival of Jihad in Bengal with the Spread of the Light of the Khilafah*. This issue also published a selection of Islamic States' attacks all across the world, mentioning four recent attacks in Bangladesh by their operatives. Issue 14 of *Dabiq* gave even larger coverage of Bangladesh; publishing a detailed interview with the Amir of 'the Khilafa's Soldiers in Bengal' (IS Bengal), who goes by the *nom de guerre* Abu Ibrahim al Hanif. The online magazine also published another story on a young Bangladeshi, Abu Jandal al-Bangali, who was killed in a battle in Syria. Among the selection of attacks, the issue mentioned three attacks on the Hindu and Shia communities in Bangladesh. The second issue of *Rumiyah* published a list of IS operations in Bangladesh carried out between Dhulhijjah 1436 –1437 (2015 –2016 AD), produced by Naba Infographic. This issue also published an 'exclusive' story on the five assailants of the Holey Artisan Bakery attack, titled *The Shuhada of the Gulshan Attack,* by IS Bengal's head of military and covert operations Abu Dujanah al-Bengali, *nom de guerre* of Tamim Chowdhury. The two IS videos include one presenting three Bangladeshi foreign fighters in Raqqa, Syria, praising the Holey Artisan attackers and justifying jihad in Bangladesh, and another video produced by the IS' "Bilad al-Bengal media office", featuring the five attackers of the Holey Artisan Bakery attack which is believed to have been recorded in an unknown place sometime before the attack.[26] Second, I have gathered newspaper reports on Bangladeshi jihadists, via a Google search with keywords including 'Islamic State/IS/ISIS/ISIL in Bangladesh', 'Bangladeshi foreign fighters in Syria' and 'Neo-JMB'. Mainly, newspaper reports were collected from *The Daily Star*, *Prothom Alo* and *Dhaka Tribune*. *The Daily Star* and the *Prothom Alo* are the most widely circulated English and Bangla newspapers in Bangladesh. The *Dhaka Tribune* was selected for its extensive reporting on issues of violent extremism in Bangladesh. International news agencies' reports, including reports from the *British Broadcasting Cooperation (*BBC), the *Guardian* and the *Diplomat*, were also used. I have employed a content analysis of these data to analyse the development, leadership and target of the terrorist outfit and their international connections and explore their narratives and messages.

The Islamic State and Its Affiliated Groups in Bangladesh

In recent years, the Bangladeshi government has been maintaining a curious position of denying the presence of IS in Bangladesh, in contrast to several claims made by the terrorist network itself. However, as early as in 2015, law enforcement officers had claimed to have arrested 'coordinators' and 'recruiters' linked to IS, as well as persons attempting to travel to Syria. In the first six months of 2015, 17 people were arrested on suspicion of spreading IS ideology in the country and preparing to go to Syria.[27] After the Holey Artisan Bakery attack in July 2016, several policymakers began to deny the presence of Islamic State in the country. Instead of Islamic State, the government officials coined a new name for the group, 'Neo-JMB', and claimed that it was merely a new faction of Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a local violent extremist organisation. Observers believe that the government makes this claim in order to tarnish the reputation of the political opposition in the name of counterterrorism.[28] Indeed, government officials, including the Prime Minister and Home Minister, have not only denied the presence of IS in Bangladesh but accused the main opposition political party for the attacks and blamed the opposition for conspiring to smear the government's reputation.[29] The opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), rejected the charge.[30]

How does IS react to the Bangladesh government's denial of their presence in Bangladesh? In an article published

in *Dabiq* (Issue 12), the organisation expressed its surprise. They questioned how the government denied the presence of IS in Bangladesh after its law enforcement officers' earlier claims of arresting several IS operatives and 'top IS coordinators'.[31] The article claimed that the law enforcement officers had been repeating this 'lie' of 'No IS in Bangladesh' like a 'broken record' after each attack.[32] The Bangladesh governments' denial irked the IS so much that they called it 'shameless' and 'childish'. The article says: "The murtadd Bengali government will soon realize, by Allah's permission, that shamelessly denying facts on the ground and playing childish blame games with the murtadd opposition will be of no avail to them, as the Islamic State is indeed here to stay…it is here to stay from Tunisia all the way to Bengal even if the murtaddīn despise such..."[33] In contrast to the existing Bangladesh regime's official position, the individuals involved in these attacks, such as the assailants of Holey Artisan Bakery Attack, claimed themselves that they were members of the IS. The confession statements of the returnees and arrested jihadists further indicates the obvious connections between IS and Bangladeshi recruiters.[34] The organisation's flagship magazine *Dabiq* also affirmed IS presence in Bangladesh and published several stories on their involvement in jihadist attacks in Bangladesh.[35]

While the government squarely refuses to acknowledge the presence of IS in Bangladesh, on the contrary, IS claims its vibrant presence in the country. Given such a contradictory stance, a careful analysis of the extent of the organisation's presence in Bangladesh is necessary. Either denying or exaggerating IS' influence in the country will be misleading and, as such, detrimental for the security of the region.[36] An analysis of earlier IS documents reveals that Bangladesh was categorised as an area with the presence of IS' covert units. An *Amaq* agency infographic, found in one of their telegram channels, shows that IS has three types of presence in 19 countries. The infographic, titled "Two years since announcing the caliphate 29th June 2014: Spread of the Islamic State on 29th June 2016," lists three layers of presence: a) areas of major control: Iraq and Syria; b) areas of medium control: Chechnya, Yemen, Egypt, Nigeria, Libya, Somalia, The Philippines, Niger, Afghanistan, and Dagestan;[37] and c) areas containing covert units: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Algeria, France, Tunisia, Lebanon & Bangladesh. However, the major incidents in Bangladesh, including the Holey Artisan Bakery attack, were perpetrated by IS-affiliated operatives after the timeline shown in this infographic. Thus, it is unclear whether the degree of IS influence over Bangladesh has changed after these attacks, although several IS communiqués show that Bangladesh is still considered a 'Bilad' (land or area), versus a 'Wilayat' (province).[38]

The connection between central IS and the organisation's affiliated group in Bangladesh was a win-win situation for both. By establishing a link with a global jihadist organisation, the local groups gained relevance as well as the gratification of being a part of the global jihad. Also, for a faction of Jamaat-ul Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB), this affiliation might provide an opportunity to re-emerge and re-group their operatives after a period of hibernation.[39] On the other hand, an affiliation with the local group aligns with IS' ambition to expand its global jihad, exploit local grievances, and establish new bases in South Asia. Moreover, IS' ambition of establishing a stronghold in South Asia faces a stern challenge by its rival group, Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).[40] A local jihadist group, Ansar al Islam Bangladesh, has already established strong links with AQIS and conducted several attacks, after Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al Zawahiri launched the branch in South Asia in September 2014. These developments provided more reasons for central IS to establish and maintain a connection with interested violent extremist group(s) in Bangladesh.

The IS affiliated group in Bangladesh was formed by a merger between two terrorist outfits; a faction of JMB (led by Sarwar Jahan) and the Jund At-Tawhid wal-Khalifah—a group formed under the leadership of a Canadian-Bangladeshi, Tamim Chowdhury. Together, these two outfits formed a new organisation called Dawlatul Islam Bengal and pledged their allegiance to Islamic State.[41] Evidence shows that Tamim was connected with Canadian foreign fighters, particularly with the 'Calgary cluster', and went to Syria before he found his way to Bangladesh. It is also speculated that he came to Bangladesh on direct orders from IS' central leadership where he adopted the *nom de guerre* Abu Dujanah al-Bengali and was appointed as the head of Military and Covert Operations. According to several IS communiques, an individual with *nom de guerre* Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif, has been nominated as the Amir of IS in Bangladesh. However, the identity of Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif is still unknown. Some observers claim that Saifullah Ozaki, a Bangladeshi origin Japanese University lecturer, was the

Amir of IS' Bangladesh chapter and Sarwar Jahan (*nom de guerre* Asim Ajwad) acted as Ozaki's representative in Bangladesh.[42] The local law enforcement agencies claim that either Tamim Chowdhury[43] or Sarwar Jahan[44] is Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif. However, the propensity of the Bangladeshi law enforcement to name individuals operating in Bangladesh as Abu Ibrahim could be linked to the government's stance that the group responsible for the attacks was homegrown.

In an article published in Islamic State's online magazine *Dabiq*, it has been claimed that after the declaration of IS 'Khilafah' in Iraq and Syria, the Bangladeshi jihadists united together to join the organisation, mainly inspired by the outfit's effective media campaign.[45] IS claimed that although the jihadists were fragmented in Bangladesh before the declaration of 'Khilafah', their online campaigns successfully united various factions of violent extremist groups together. The article asserts "…the soldiers of the Khilāfah in Bengal pledged their allegiance to the Khalīfah Ibrāhīm, unified their ranks, nominated a regional leader, gathered behind him, dissolved their former factions, performed the necessary military preparations, and hastened to answer the order from the Islamic State leadership, by targeting the crusaders and their allies wherever they may be found."[46]

The operation of Islamic State in Bangladesh can be divided into two types: First, the Bangladeshi foreign fighters who travelled to Syria to fight for Islamic State; and second, the individuals of Islamic State's affiliated group, Dawlatul Islam Bengal, who declared their allegiance to the 'Khilafat' and operated inside the territory of Bangladesh on behalf of Islamic State. With the absence of published official documents and denial of the government regarding the presence of Islamic State in Bangladesh, the exact number of Bangladeshi foreign fighters who went to Iraq and Syria to fight for IS is difficult to determine.[47] According to one news report, at least fifty had travelled to Iraq and Syria to fight for IS; however, senior security officials involved in counter-terrorism estimate the number to be as low as twenty.[48] A United Nations report estimates forty.[49] Another news report claims that about one hundred violent extremists, including women, went to Syria from Bangladesh to join IS.[50]

Three Bangladeshi origin foreign nationals, Saifullah Ozaki from Japan, ATM Tazuddin from Australia, and Siful Haque Sujan from the UK acted as the key persons to connect Bangladeshi jihadists to IS.[51] Ozaki and Tazuddin were the primary connection between central IS in Syria and aspiring Bangladeshi jihadist individuals and groups, and Sujan was one of the top IT experts of IS. Internal IS documents indicate that Ozaki, Tazuddin and Sujan reached Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi through IS Shura Council member Abu Ubaydah Abd al-Hakim al-Iraqi, a senior administrator in charge of Wilayas and affiliates of IS.[52] The appointment of the Amir of IS Bengal was also approved through this channel.[53] The Cardiff-based Bangladeshi businessman, Siful Haque Sujan, who took the *nom de guerre* Abu Khaled al-Bengali, was the key IT expert of Islamic State. He supported IS hacking efforts, anti-surveillance technology and weapons development for the group.[54] Sujan left the UK in July 2014 for Syria. He was killed in December 2015 during a U.S. airstrike in Raqqa. Saifullah Ozaki aka Sujit Debnath converted to Islam from Hinduism after he left Bangladesh for Japan.[55] This Japanese-Bangladeshi jihadi and former associate professor of Ritsumeikan University played a key role in recruiting Bangladeshis for IS. At least two arrested violent extremists mentioned Ozaki's name in their court confessions.[56] Some of the individuals who travelled to Syria using Ozaki's connection were Asadullah Galib, Tahmid Rahman Safi, Dr. Arafat Hossain Tushar, Ibrahim Hasan Khan, Nazibullah Ansari, Junayed Hasan Khan, Ashraf Mohammad Islam and ATM Tajuddin.[57] Among several recruiters, Aminul Islam Beg, Sakib Bin Kamal and Ashrar Ahmed Khan Chowdhury played key roles in facilitating or inspiring foreign travel, according to the confessions of the arrested violent extremists.

The Dawlatul Islam Bengal—the organisation that was formed before pledging allegiance to IS in 2015—was led by Tamim Chowdhury, a Canadian citizen of Bangladeshi origin. He came to Bangladesh and started to recruit Bangladeshi foreign fighters for Islamic State in October 2013. Before merging with Dawlatul Islam Bengal, Tamim formed his own outfit, Junud Al Towhid Al Khalifa, which eventually declared its allegiance to IS. According to security officials, besides Tamim, Sarwar Jahan alais Manik, Abdus Samad alias Arif alias Mamu,

Mamunur Rashid Ripon and Shaikh Abul Kashem were the main leaders of Tamim's outfit.[58] This terrorist outfit has two main wings—southern and northern. The northern wing is based in Gazipur, an industrial district adjacent to Dhaka, and the southern wing is in Mirpur, one of the largest vicinities in the capital.[59] The group uses several locations in Mirpur as its training centres. The operational headquarters of the group are located in Savar and Tongi, another two cities near Dhaka.

This IS affiliated group in Bangladesh has claimed at least 30 terrorist attacks in Bangladesh between September 2015 and July 2017.[60] The second issue of *Rumiyah* published a list of IS operations in Bangladesh that occurred between 2015 and 2016. The infographic claimed that IS operatives were responsible for 24 attacks in Bangladesh in only one year; 42% of the targets were Hindus and Buddhists, 27% were Christians, 19% were 'Murtaddin' and Atheists, and the remaining 12% were 'Rafidah' or Shias. Among these attacks, the most terrible and notorious was conducted on 1 July 2016 when armed men stormed into a restaurant in Dhaka. During the 12-hour carnage, they remained in contact with their leaders via digital media and sent pictures of the slain victims to them. A total of 20 hostages were killed in that attack.[61] Islamic State leaders see this operation as a major achievement, as the attack gained considerable worldwide attention due to the killings of several foreigners. The restaurant was located in the diplomatic zone of the capital and provoked significant fear among foreigners living in the area, most of whom are embassy officials. The goal of the attackers was to limit the movement of foreigners, especially diplomats, and compel them to live in a state of fear. According to one article published in *Dabiq*, these attacks were part of IS' global strategy to send the message to the "crusader nations" that their "citizens will never enjoy any peace or security in any part of the Muslims' lands . . . as long as they continue to be at war with the Islamic State."[62]

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of IS recruitment in Bangladesh is their ability to attract well-educated, tech-savvy young members from well-off families. When the identities of IS operatives started to be revealed (following the previously mentioned arrests in 2015), people from the higher middle class and wealthier strata of society became really worried. Previously, Islamic militancy in Bangladesh was thought to be a phenomenon limited to only religious institutions and the poorer strata of society. The new generation of violent extremists emerging in Bangladesh has brought into question this conventional belief. A large number of foreign fighters who left Bangladesh to join IS—as well as many of the operatives who stayed in Bangladesh and were involved in attacks—went to private universities in the country or abroad. Among them are several who went to universities in Malaysia.[63] Thus, the IS-affiliated group in Bangladesh has successfully recruited professionals such as physicians, engineers, technologists, architects and even singers and ramp models.[64] Arrested operatives include sons of a former Supreme Court judge, former military officials, a former bureaucrat, a political leader of the ruling party, and an adviser to a former caretaker government of the country.[65]

The operations of the IS-affiliated group are not limited to conducting large-scale sieges or suicide bombings, rather the outfit has broadened the spectrum of their operations to include small scale attacks, including targeted killings of individuals whom they perceive as threats to their version of Islam. Shaykh Abū Muhammad al-Adnani—the official spokesperson of the Islamic State—explained who their targets are: "You must strike the soldiers, patrons, and troops of the tawāghīt. Strike their police, security, and intelligence members, as well as their treacherous agents. Ruin their sleep. Embitter their lives for them and busy them with themselves. If you can kill a kāfir American or European—especially the spiteful and filthy French—or an Australian, or a Canadian…including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill them in any manner possible, regardless of the method."[66] Following this directive, the IS affiliated group in Bangladesh targets the citizens of the coalition countries who fought against IS and members of law enforcement agencies. The group also targets people from minority sects, such as Shia, Ahmadis and Bahais. Hindus in particular are targeted, based on the belief that Hindus as a community—and India as a country—are the most significant local enemies for IS in this region. Reviewing the contents of IS communiqués reveals that one main goal has been reiterated several times: to fight against democracy and establish a sharia-based state in Bangladesh. IS operatives emphasize that participating in jihad is the only way to reach this lofty goal.

The Violence Justification Narrative of the IS Jihadists in Bangladesh

To explore the grand narrative of the IS jihadists in Bangladesh, this section analyses the jihadist content—including online magazines, video statements, Telegram channels, and infographics—produced by IS media outlets.

The Crisis Construct

In various statements, IS operatives describe the current state of Bangladesh as a *taghut* (tyrannical rulers who arrogate God's absolute power and use it to oppress people[67]), and its government as *anti-Islamic*. They believe that democracy is an ideology of *shirk* (worshiping anyone besides Allah) because the principles of democracy are manmade. The IS views mainstream political parties of Bangladesh—particularly the BNP, Awami League (AL) and Jamaat-e-Islam—as *murtaddins* (apostates from Islam).

In an IS propaganda video filmed in Syria, three Bangladeshi jihadists praised the Holey Artisan Bakery attack in Bangladesh and called for jihad.[68] In his statement, one of the jihadists first blamed democracy (or 'manmade laws') as the problem and presented armed struggle as the solution. In his words: "If we look at the situation of Bangladesh today, [we see how] governments have replaced Allah's [divine] diktats with manmade laws. That is why they have become taghut, they have become kafirs. And jihad—as in armed fight against them—has become *fard-e-ain* (an individual obligation)."[69] Similarly, another IS operative in that video called democracy a shirk ideology and emphasized replacing democracy with Sharia law. He criticized three types of people; the government of Bangladesh, its employees, the general populace and supporters of democracy, questioning how they could 'support this *shirk* ideology called democracy' where people determined the laws of the country in Allah's stead.[70] A similar view is also found in their online magazine *Dabiq*, where it is stated that "Democracy is a religion that believes in giving people the power to legislate and make things halāl and harām, whereas that is the right of Allah alone."[71]

In their online magazines, IS also blamed three political parties—the AL, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI)—for sustaining 'manmade law' or democracy in Bangladesh. Terming the present AL government as 'secular Murtaddin', the outfit severely criticizes it and targets its employees, especially law enforcement. IS leaders reacted angrily against the Bangladeshi government after it denied their presence in the country despite their claiming responsibility for several attacks. Their online magazine *Dabiq* states, "the secular murtaddīn of the present Awami League government continue to twist the facts on the ground and play a blame game in an effort to put political pressure on the murtaddīn of both the nationalist BNP and the parliamentary 'Jamaat-e-Islami."[72] It should be noted here that contrary to the existing AL government's claim of possible connections between the opposition and violent extremist groups, *Dabiq*'s article severely criticized both the BNP and Jamaat, and categorised them as a coalition of murtaddīn. These two political parties were criticized for the trial and executions of the local jihadist group's (JMB's) top leaders, especially Shaikh Abdur Rahman. An article in *Dabiq* also claimed that that the former BNP-JeI coalition of policymakers and security officials were 'punished' for their misdeeds, referencing as examples the killings of many high-ranking officers in a mutiny of Bangladesh Border Guards, as well as court trials resulting in death penalties or life imprisonment for several JeI leaders (and a BNP leader).[73]

In contrast to the allegations of links between JeI and jihadists, IS actually considers the Islamist party as a "political party that has long committed many acts of kufr and shirk."[74] In an interview published in *Dabiq (*14) Abu Ibrahim Al Hanif, the Amir of the so-called "Khilafa's soldiers in Bengal" suggested that although some grassroots level followers and supporters of JeI "repented from their shirk and joined the ranks of the Khilāfah's soldiers in Bengal," the leadership of JeI remains "adamant upon its path of destruction and humiliation and keeps on competing with the tāghūt Hasina government in terms of who can commit more kufr."[75]

On the *societal level*, IS operatives attempt to construct the crisis that Muslims, as a community, are facing humiliation and grievances because of their faith. The outfit's societal crisis construction portrays that Islamic

culture is under threat, both globally and locally. Also, a significant aspect of crisis construction is identifying the global and local enemies or 'others.' In the case of Bangladesh, the global 'others' are Westerners, or 'crusaders' and people from different faiths. On a local level, IS narratives often target Hindus, Buddhists and converted Christians along with law-enforcement officers. In particular, their narratives portray Indian cultural and political 'invasion' as a major threat to Islamic culture in Bangladesh. For example, one of the jihadists, in his video statement, stated that Muslims all over the world should be considered as a single 'oppressed and humiliated' unit.[76] He urged the Muslims of Bangladesh to conduct more attacks like Holey Artisan Bakery to take revenge against the humiliation and torture of the community. He explains the societal bond of Muslim community and the necessity of jihad as follows: "the ummah (Muslim community) is like a body—if one part of this body gets hurt, the pain is felt all over the body. That is why when the international crusader coalition attacks Sham [Syria], Iraq and Libya [with fighter jets], killing hundreds of Muslim women, men and children, that terrible imagery agitate and hurt our mujahidin brothers. And that is why, to avenge the blood of their Muslim brothers and sisters, they will kill the crusaders wherever they find them."[77]

Abu Ibrahim, the Amir of IS Bengal, identified four types of 'crises' Bangladeshi Muslims have been facing from neighbouring India and the Hindus living in Bangladesh.[78] First, he believes that Hindus of both India and Bangladesh have been 'waging war' against Islam and Muslims for a long time. He thinks that Hindus in India openly oppress the Muslim population, however Hindus in Bangladesh "do it in a more deceptive and covert manner due to them being a minority sect here."[79] Second, Abu Ibrahim states that Hindus in Bangladesh support Indian Intelligence (RAW) efforts to destroy Islamic culture in Bangladesh. Third, he opines that Hindus in Bangladesh have been 'creating propaganda' in mass media and social media and 'spreading fahishah (lewdness and indecency)' among the Muslims in Bangladesh. Lastly, Abu Ibrahim warns the Muslims in Bangladesh that the present 'murtadd, secular' government has employed many Hindus and promoted them to high-ranking positions in law enforcement agencies, depriving opportunities to Muslim officers because the government considers Hindus to be die-hard party loyalists.[80]

Interestingly, besides the lack of sharia law or the perceived humiliation of the Muslim community, *individual crises* often lead individuals to join violent extremism. There are ample cases in Bangladesh where events such as divorce, the death of loved ones or a relationship breakup made individuals vulnerable to the recruitment strategies of IS.[81] Quintan Wiktorowicz's study shows that these idiosyncratic experiences can produce a "cognitive opening". He argues that a basic prerequisite for joining in a violent extremist group is an individual's willingness to expose him or herself to extremist messages. Generally, individuals reject the messages outright as "extreme" or "irrational." However, a crisis can create a "cognitive opening" that shakes certainty in previously accepted beliefs. It can make individual more receptive to the possibility of alternative interpretations and perspectives. Researchers also find that a quest for significance, recognition, and reward are important motivational factors behind joining jihadist groups or supporting their cause.[82] Jihadist ideologues or recruiters, in turn, try to depict the lesser value of earthly world and portray the honour and recognition of sacrifice for jihad. In several cases, well established professionals and youths from well-to-do families experienced a personal crisis and joined IS to get 'real' recognition and reward in life. In fact, the participation of one of the attackers in the Holey Artisan Bakery attack is explained in an article published in *Rumiyah* as follows: "Although he was known for his lavish lifestyle among his peers before his return to his religion, he came to realize by the mercy of Allah that faith and guidance from Allah are the most important treasures for a believer in this world and not appearance, wealth, educational background, and other material criteria that people who are attached to this lowly world compete over…."[83] The IS recruiters highlight the perceived personal crisis that no matter how much an individual achieves in his or her life, without embracing the path of jihad, life is meaningless and incomplete.

The Solution Construct

The Islamic State does not only paint a grim picture of the perceived crises that Muslims are confronting in the contemporary world, its narrative also constructs solutions to the crises. At the state level, the narrative identifies democracy, or the rule of the people, as the main problem and suggests ousting the democratic

government and establishing a Caliphate that will adhere to their interpretations of Islam. In several documents, IS' narrative portrays inevitable victory in the fight against crusaders. For Bangladesh, IS operatives have a specific goal which is clearly stated in the interview of Abu Ibrahim, the IS Amir in Bangladesh. He considers Bangladesh as an important region for global jihad due to its geographical location.[84] For IS, Bangladesh is strategically significant as it is located on the eastern side of India, whereas Pakistan and Afghanistan (IS Wilāyat Khurāsān) are located on its western side. They plan to create a strong base for jihad in Bangladesh so they can launch guerrilla attacks inside the territory of India from both its eastern and western fronts. Together with the existing IS affiliated violent extremist groups operating in India, IS wants to create chaos and instability in India. Once a favourable situation has been established in Bangladesh, they will first seek to control the regimes of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and then they will enter Indian territory with a conventional army in order to completely 'liberate' the Indian sub-continent region. They also consider Bangladesh to be an important region as the country could be used as a 'stepping-stone for jihad' in Myanmar.[85]

Thus, IS ideologues and recruiters envisage establishing a sharia-based state stretching from Afghanistan to Myanmar. No matter how impossible and far-fetched this idea may seem to be, IS operatives are not short of dreams. Take the example of Tahmid Shafi, one of IS' operatives who believed that the Caliphate will be established all over the world soon, let alone only in the Indian subcontinent: "this I want to say to the taghut government of Bangladesh. The jihad that has arrived in Bangladesh, the jihad you are witnessing today, you never saw this kind of jihad before…you will never be able to stop this jihad, until we win, and you lose, and the rule of the caliphate is established all over the world—until the rule of sharia is established."[86]

At the *societal* level, the IS narrative assures that the establishment of a Caliphate will end the humiliation and grievances of the Muslim community, establish rule of Allah by replacing man-made law and eliminate injustice from society. This utopia of the 'promised land' plays an important role in the minds of jihadists. The promise of the triumph of 'us' against the 'others' is also a crucial driving force in the motivation process of the jihadists. In Bangladesh, the jihadists construct the local Hindus as the 'other' and the source of 'crises' for the local Muslims. Their prescribed solution is to create a 'state of polarisation' between Hindus and Muslims, so that a situation of chaos, political instability, and a possible state intervention of India in Bangladesh could be prompted. This strategy is reflected in the interview of the Abu Ibrahim. He explains: "…we believe Sharī'ah in Bengal won't be achieved until the local Hindus are targeted in mass numbers and until a state of polarization is created in the region, dividing between the believers and the disbelievers."[87] In another video, which was released after the attack, machete-yielding attackers of Holey Artisan Bakery record their statement. In the 15-minute long video, both in Bangla and Arabic, the IS operatives call on Bangladeshi jihadists to launch attacks on the crusaders, atheists and apostates as revenge for the attacks on Muslims in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere.[88] This video was first released by the IS's Arabic Nashir channel on Telegram. Before the publication of the video, IS' Bangla media At-Tamkin made an announcement on its website that they would release a video produced by the "Bilad al-Bengal media office."[89]

The jihadist narrative also provides *individual solutions* to the crises. The narrative constructs a solution that champions martyrdom, the achievement of ultimate recognition. One of IS' operatives explains: "We are going to fight till the end. Either we will win, or we will get victory, or we will get shahada that is martyrdom. So, there is nothing to lose for us here."[90]

Thus, the jihadist narrative focuses on the 'rewards and significance' one could get by involvement in the global jihad. The individuals who are from affluent families and/or successful in their professions may become vulnerable and frustrated for various personal reasons, or seek more social recognition, meaning or purpose in life.[91] The stories published in jihadist magazines, and statements in videos, carefully tailor the message that participation in jihad brings fulfilment in life, and that jihad provides what is lacking. Also, the relationships that the jihadists develop with their peers create an in-group identity where individuals seek recognition from their peers by sacrificing their lives at the frontline or in suicide operations against the enemies. The rewards in the afterlife, the promise for eternal bliss in heaven, also play a vital role for their jihadi motivations. As the

violent extremists start to believe that they are doing something meaningful for a just cause, they believe their involvement in the jihadi organisation and engagement in the attacks give them a purpose in life. In addition, jihadists (especially youths) often join in violent extremism for 'heroism' or 'adventure'.[92]

The Justification Construct

The construction of the justification of jihad is particularly important because this level works as a significant accelerator in the process of becoming a violent extremist. A conservative Muslim may believe in the crisis construction narrative—i.e., that Islam, Islamic culture and Muslims as a community are under threat from 'Western political and cultural invasion' and that establishing a state based on sharia law is a solution to that crisis. However, believing that the only way to reach from this crisis to solution is jihad (a violent armed struggle that authorises killing civilians) is what often makes a radicalized individual turn into a violent extremist. IS operatives from Bangladesh, in their various communiqués, repeatedly assert the need of violent jihad as the only way to establish a just state based on Sharia. Abu Ibrahim urges: "I advise you to join us and perform jihād with your wealth and your lives, as it is an obligation upon every capable Muslim. There is no way to establish the religion other than the path of qitāl (war). So leave the Dunya (world) behind and hasten to join us on the battlefield."[93]

At the *state level*, IS narratives justify violent attacks in three ways. First, they suggest that jihad is justified because the state is run by an 'anti-Islamic' system although the majority of the population is Muslim. Thus, the regimes are 'corrupt', 'anti-Islamic' and 'promoters of secularism'. Second, the governments, both the current and previous ones, are 'puppets' of the 'crusaders' and the 'enemies of Islam'. As the narratives frame the Bangladeshi government as a 'puppet', it argues that a violent jihad is the only feasible option to oust the government and establish a sharia based Islamic state. The IS affiliated group of Bangladesh has targeted members of the law enforcement agencies in several instances to show strength to their supporters and to convey the message to followers that violent attacks against the state are an essential part of jihad. Three, this jihadi narrative claims that no other Islamist political parties are either willing or capable of establishing a sharia-based state. As such, only IS can provide the 'true' and 'authentic' version of Islam in Bangladesh.

At the *societal level*, the narrative justifies violence by citing religious 'obligations' and portraying it as a duty for every Muslim to protect their community and brotherhood. Thus jihad is framed as a religious obligation to end injustice and humiliation of the Muslim community.[94] The narrative often invokes stories of the past and employs these historical stories to justify a contemporary jihad. The Jihadi contents often cite an instruction from the Prophet that said, "Perform jihād against the mushrikīn with your wealth, your lives, and your tongues."[95] Another significant aspect at the societal level is how violent extremists justify attacks on civilians. In an article published in *Rumiyah*, Abu Dujanah al-Bengali (Tamim Chowdhury), the former head of military and covert operations of the IS operatives in Bengal, justified attacks on civilians by arguing that the cost of the wars against Muslims "don't come from an abstract vacuum; rather, they come into power via the blessings of the constituency of their citizenry, those who partake in their democratic system or accept its results."[96] To him, as the civilians are paying their tax money for the huge costs of the wars and giving legitimacy to the policies formulated by their democratic states, they no longer remain innocent civilians. [97] In another article of *Rumiyah*, it is stated that the blood of "Crusader civilians from democratic nations waging war against Islam and the Muslims is more deserving to be spilled than that of other kafir civilians, whose blood is already mubah (permissible) to spill."[98] Jihadists also employ the reason 'protecting the Muslim brotherhood' in several contents. In a country like Bangladesh—where more than eighty percent of the population is Muslim—wars, images of destruction and deaths in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Kashmir have been often discussed with frustration and fury. Jihadists lure sympathizers and potential recruits by claiming that only they can 'avenge the blood' of their Muslim brothers. One jihadist calls for jihad in following way: O my brothers! [There was a time] we dreamt about waging jihad in Afghanistan, waging jihad in Sham [Syria] and different corners of the world. Now jihad has arrived at your doorsteps. Now is the time for you to join the mujahids who are working for the establishment of sharia in Bangladesh, under the [Islamic State].[99]

At the *individual level*, jihadi narratives depict how only participating in jihad can provide the ultimate rewards in life. This ultimate reward starts from achieving individual recognition, significance, and glory for sacrifice and bravery in the earthly world and eternal happiness and honour in the afterlife. A eulogy of one jihadist, published in *Rumiyah*, is a good example how jihadists appeal to potential recruits and other radicals by justifying the death for IS.[100] All through the article, the deceased jihadi is extolled for his 'selfless bravery'.[101] It is possible that the article mainly targeted young, affluent Bangladeshi youths who may find similarities with the background of the jihadist, who himself came from an affluent family. The eulogy explains why jihadists should abandon "petty pleasures of this worldly life" and embrace the 'true' path of Allah. By 'petty pleasures', they mean education, a job, a business, or marriage. Before joining IS, the jihadist's father wanted to give him the responsibility of their family business and buy him a car, while also telling him to settle down and get married. The article justifies the young jihadist's rejection of these 'temptations' and argues that by embracing jihad he was 'able to choose the eternal gardens' of heaven over the insignificant temptations of this worldly life.[102] This article also argues that the jihadist chose his *nom de guerre* to be "Abu Muharib" because of "his love and admiration" for the Abu Muharib al-Muhajir, also known as "Jihadi John", who became infamous for conducting several gruesome beheadings for Islamic State.[103] Jihadi John, a Briton in his mid-twenties, with his university education and British accent appeals more to the new generation Bangladeshi jihadists because they can connect with his lifestyle and upbringing. Like Jihadi John, these Bangladeshi jihadists went to private schools and universities, where the medium of instruction was English. Although these jihadists live in Bangladesh, they were brought up following western popular culture, some of them are even more comfortable speaking English than Bengali. A large number of foreign fighters who travelled to Syria from western countries, mostly in search of heroism, inspired these new generation Bangladeshi jihadists to join IS.

Also, throughout jihadist contents, the concept of rewards plays an important role in order to motivate violent extremists. These rewards come in various forms: the glory of martyrdom, respect from fellow terrorists, achieving fame, significance and securing heaven. For example, Rohan Imtiaz (*nom de guerre* Abu Rahiq), one of the assailants killed in the Holey Artisan Bakery attack, was praised as a 'one-man army' for his 'bravery'. According to one article of *Rumiyah*, as soon as Imtiaz got the news that he had been selected for the operation, he became excited with joy and thanked Allah for the 'great blessing and asked for acceptance'.[104] This anecdote reflects the value and glory that jihadists place on martyrdom. The way others admire and value the deceased jihadists' actions could function as inspiration for future jihadists. This is evident in one of the jihadist's video statements when he praised the Holey Artisan Bakery attackers: "Brothers! What you have done in Bangladesh has never happened before. You have created history, brothers! May Allah accept your martyrdom, amen! You have done an amazing job."[105] In sum, the jihadist grand narrative can be summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: The Crisis-Justification-Solution Narrative

Levels	The Crisis Construct	Justification	The Solution Construct
State Level	The current state is anti-Islamic, and democracy is *shirk*.	Violent jihad will oust the government and establish a 'just' state and system	Establishing a state that will strictly follow IS approved Islamic interpretations
Societal Level	Muslims are facing humiliation and grievances because of their faith; Islam/Islamic culture is under threat, both globally and locally; The presence and influence of 'others' in society (out-group).	Jihad is a religious obligation to end injustice and humiliation. It is justified to attack enemies and their supporters. Enemies are not human. Civilian killings are justified.	End of humiliation and grievances of the Muslims.
Individual Level	Individuals are lacking recognition, reward, meaning of life.	Jihad provides glory, honour and significance	Find purpose and meaning of life. Attain recognition from jihadist peers.

Conclusion

This study explores the development of the IS affiliated group in Bangladesh and depicts its origin, leadership, target, and goals. It also explains how Bangladeshi foreign fighters were recruited for Islamic State in Syria and who were the key persons behind the Bangladeshi IS connection. After closely analysing the jihadist content, this study finds that there are mainly three themes in the jihadist narrative. First, the Jihadists construct a perceived crisis, a situation where jihadists project that Muslims are oppressed solely for being Muslims; Islamic culture and lifestyle are under threat; states with Muslim majority populations are puppets of Western 'crusaders' and Hindu 'invaders'; and individuals are immersed in an anti-Islamic, depraved, and corrupt system. After depicting a grim picture of the crisis, the jihadists offer solutions to these crises: only an Islamic State based on sharia law can be the panacea of all these crises, and Muslims should take every step possible to establish it. Using this rationale, jihadists justify that armed jihad is necessary and the 'only way' to reach the solution from the existing crisis, even if it needs killings of civilians.

In the Bangladeshi jihadists' narratives, India plays an important role as a regional adversary or a local 'other'; alongside the usual global 'crusader' enemies. The political and cultural dominance of this big and influential neighbour helps to fuel the existing 'anti-Indian' sentiment in some quarters of the Muslim population in Bangladesh. This is an excellent example of how IS and its local affiliates exploit the local context and try to acquire a strong foothold in the region. Also, another worrying trend is IS' ability to attract recruits from both the well-off and poorer stratas of society. A review of profiles of the recently arrested or killed jihadists shows that small teams of operations are comprised of youths both from English medium private universities and religious institutions such as madrassas.[106] This unique levelling of economic classes and social statuses indicates the strength of the Bangladeshi jihadist ideologues' recruitment and motivational strategy.

However, it is not clear how much operational strength of the IS affiliated group in Bangladesh remains, especially after the deaths and arrests of the outfit's main leaders. Most recently, Saifullah Ozaki, reportedly IS' Amir in Bengal, has been traced in a prison in an Iraqi Kurdistan city called Sulaimaniyah. He surrendered to the CTG (Kurdistan Counter Terrorism Group) in March 2019, according to Bangladesh's intelligence agency.[107] Nine other Bangladeshi jihadists either surrendered or were arrested after the fall of the last IS hideout in Baghouz.[108] All of the known key members of the IS affiliated group in Bangladesh, including the head of Military and Covert Operations, Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury and Sarwar Jahan, were either arrested or killed in 'crossfire' with the Bangladeshi law enforcement.[109] Nonetheless, after recent attacks on the police check-posts this year, it has been found that the outfit is trying to regroup under the leadership of an unknown individual with the *nom de guerre* Abu Mohamamd Al Bangali.[110] With the deaths and arrests of the key leaders, the organisational strength of IS affiliated group in Bangladesh has been seemingly diminishing. However, it would be unwise to be complacent, as recent developments show a shift in central IS' strategy and tactics with a major organisational restructuring—one that relies more on locally affiliated groups and considers South Asia as a battlefield of priority.

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Islamic State Propaganda and Attacks: How Are They Connected?

by Nate Rosenblatt, Charlie Winter & Rajan Basra

Abstract

What is the relationship between the words and deeds of a terrorist group? Despite frequent speculation in media and policy circles, few studies have tested this relationship. This study aims to verify a potential correlation between the volume of propaganda produced by Islamic State (IS)—including statements by the group's leadership—and the number of attacks carried out in its name. We examine this issue by comparing two datasets: one of all official propaganda produced by the Islamic State in 2016, and another of the completed, failed, and disrupted plots carried out by the group and its supporters in Europe in the same year. We find no strong and predictable correlation between the volume of propaganda Islamic State produces and the number of attacks the group and its supporters carry out. There is no regular rise in IS propaganda output before or after its attacks. In particular, there is no regular rise in attacks after leadership statements. However, the results may have identified differences in how IS central and regional media offices respond to attacks. The findings suggest that rather than merely looking at the volume *of IS propaganda, it is necessary to also examine its content. As such, the deliberately broad premise of this study is intended as the first in a series of papers examining the potential relationship between IS propaganda and IS attacks.*

Keywords: *Terrorism; Islamic State, propaganda; attacks; plots*

Introduction

On May 21, 2016, then-spokesman for the Islamic State (IS), Abu Mohamed al-Adnani, issued a warning.[1] Stating that civilians were fair game, he encouraged the group's supporters to carry out terrorist attacks and make the upcoming month of Ramadan one of "calamity everywhere."[2] A wave of deadly violence followed. On June 12, a gunman killed 49 people at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, and the next day, there was a fatal stabbing of a police officer and his partner in Magnanville, France. Subsequent attacks saw 49 people die from shootings and suicide bombings at Atatürk airport in Istanbul, Turkey; eight suicide bomb attacks in northern Lebanon; an enormous truck bomb that killed 323 people in Baghdad, Iraq; and a hostage-taking situation that left 24 people dead in Dhaka, Bangladesh.[3]

These examples demonstrate how terrorist groups can signal attacks with propaganda and follow it with catastrophic violence.[4] While much ink has been spilled researching a terrorist group's propaganda or its attacks, few studies have compared the two to determine whether and how they relate to each other. This paper therefore asks a simple question: how are terrorist group propaganda and attacks related? The aim of this study is to determine whether the volume of official Islamic State propaganda correlates with the number of attacks carried out in the group's name, and—if there is a pattern—to understand how regular that pattern is. In particular, it examines whether such a correlation holds when the Islamic State's leadership releases a statement, as well as how propaganda output responds after an attack occurs.

To answer this question, we developed and then compared two datasets: one of official Islamic State propaganda in 2016, and another of the attacks perpetrated by IS supporters in Europe during the same year. The database of attacks includes all known completed, failed, and disrupted attacks in Europe in 2016, thereby avoiding a narrow focus on only those attacks that the perpetrators were able to execute successfully.

We focused on the year 2016 as a period of analysis for two principal reasons. First, it marked the crest of an unprecedented wave of jihadist attacks in Europe, with more attacks in 2016 than in preceding years.[5] Second, it featured a relatively consistent propaganda output by Islamic State, including leadership statements. Although there was a slight decline in IS propaganda output between the first and second half of 2016, the group's subsequent battlefield defeats and territorial losses meant its propaganda declined precipitously starting

in 2017.[6]

Verifying such a correlation can be insightful. It is often expected that IS will carry out attacks after its leaders call for them to occur,[7] and understanding whether a connection exists will show how quickly the group's followers act on the leadership's instructions. The comparison may also reveal whether IS releases a surge of propaganda before an attack, or—as is generally understood—it intensifies propaganda output after an attack to take advantage of the renewed interest in the group among the public, potential recruits, and its existing supporters.[8]

While Islamic State no longer controls territory, it is by no means defeated, and conditions within its former "caliphate" lend themselves to the group's resurgence.[9] Should IS—or a reincarnation of the group—do so, it would be critical to understand how it used its propaganda to support its campaign of violence. We also know that terrorist groups cooperate and learn from one another.[10] The tools that IS deployed in terms of using propaganda to support and broadcast its attacks will therefore likely be used by others in the future, just as was seen with the Islamic State's predecessors.[11]

This paper will first examine the existing literature on the strategic logic of terrorism and costly signaling to develop a set of expectations for how propaganda and violence may relate to one another. It will then explain the construction of the two databases used in the study, before presenting the results of a regression analysis on how propaganda output correlates to the completed, failed, and disrupted plots in Europe in 2016. Our paper concludes with a summary of our main findings, the limitations of our approach, and recommendations for follow-up research.

In short, we find no clear correlation between the amount of propaganda Islamic State produces and the number of attacks it carries out, neither in terms of the group's leadership statements nor its overall output. This belies simple explanations of the effect of the group's propaganda, while suggesting the need for a nuanced analysis of the *content* of propaganda and the *types* of attacks. The authors therefore see this paper as the beginning of a program of further testing, rather than definitive findings, to further understand the influence of terrorist propaganda.

Literature

It has long been understood that terrorist groups are rational and strategic.[12] They use terror to provoke their targets into disproportionate responses that radicalize populations and provide new potential pools of recruits.[13] They also use terrorism to signal to an enemy that they will impose considerable costs unless that enemy changes policy (e.g., withdrawing occupying forces).[14] Other strategic reasons are based on more particular circumstances, such as intimidating local populations, spoiling peace negotiations, or demonstrating greater commitment than other terrorist groups or insurgents in the same conflict.[15] As Kydd and Walter demonstrate, terrorist groups can use multiple strategies at once—the 9/11 attacks, for example, were designed to provoke a response from the United States and also force them to withdraw troops from Muslim countries.[16]

Terrorist group propaganda also has myriad uses. It promotes a culture that helps the group maintain coherence, recruit new members, justify controversial actions, and caricature the enemy.[17] There is also a large corpus of literature that describes how propaganda supports the terrorist attack itself.[18] According to Schmid and McAllister, "each act of terrorism is performed with an eye to sending a specific (set of) message(s)."[19] The attack itself can be a message to adversaries,[20] but it is also supported by propaganda that "rationalizes and contextualizes the act."[21] Terrorist groups and leaders "have exerted considerable effort to construct and convey" that message beyond the act of violence itself.[22] This is the propaganda that our paper considers—that which occurs before or after a terrorist attack.

Kydd and Walter argue that terrorist attacks are costly signaling.[23] This means that propaganda cannot

send a credible enough signal to the adversary. In order to demonstrate their commitment, and thus cause governments and individuals to overreact in ways that might help radicalize new recruits, terrorists need to carry out attacks as well. These attacks are supported by propaganda that calls for them to attack and, afterwards, trumpets their success.

There is no single formula for post-attack propaganda. IS has a multi-step process that involves taking initial credit for the attack, followed by releasing biographical information about the attacker that is broadcast on IS's daily radio bulletin and its weekly newspaper.[24] This demonstrates Holbrook's argument that terrorist attacks are supported by an architecture of carefully crafted propaganda messages.[25] One of the innovations that distinguishes IS from other groups in the transnational jihadist movement is its communications and media infrastructure.[26] In Europe, the attack and the propaganda work together as signals: the attack constitutes the costly signal, and the propaganda amplifies it.

Our work follows the contributions of past studies on terrorist attacks as costly signals and propaganda as necessary support to these attacks in order to develop two different expectations for how propaganda and attacks might relate to each other. Our article's intended contribution is to understand the extent to which IS followed a discernable pattern in its release of propaganda and its execution of attacks.

Given the theory of costly signaling above, we should expect two outcomes from our study. First, that propaganda output increases after an attack occurs. If violence is used to radicalize moderates and draw them into supporting a terrorist group, then that violence would need to be widely publicized in order to provoke a response. Further, as demonstrated above, IS has a detailed process of releasing propaganda after an attack. As a result, we should expect to see the amount of propaganda IS releases rise after an attack occurs.

Our second expectation is that there will be no reliable connection between leadership statements and subsequent attacks. This is because leaders do not *always* need to present a credible threat in order to provoke a response by their adversaries. Furthermore, even attackers who are "inspired" by IS do not respond immediately to a leadership statement by launching an attack, even if these statements are an important part of the propaganda they consume.

Leadership statements are rare remarks made by either the leader of the group or one of its most senior members. In the case of IS, the leadership statements we consider are comments made by its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or its designated spokesman (explained more in the Methodology section). These statements are usually released as audio; very rarely are they video statements. Al-Baghdadi himself has only featured in two video statements: once in July 2014 as he ascended the pulpit of al-Nuri mosque following IS's capture of Mosul and another in April 2019 following the group's loss of the Syrian town of al-Baghuz. In 2016, four leadership statements were released by audio; none by video.

Leadership statements have an outsized impact on a terrorist group's activity.[27] In 2011, a series of authors used linguistic content analysis to help determine whether terrorist groups were planning attacks. One of their most interesting discoveries was that both Al Qaeda (AQ) and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) released leadership speeches whose content exhibited heightened stress levels prior to their attacks, such as a narrowing of creative and cognitive complexity in their speeches.[28] In an extensive recent review of the propaganda material consumed by attackers or would-be attackers in the UK from 2004-17, Holbrook found that speeches by prominent figures constituted the largest component of the material saved on their computers.[29]

But we do not necessarily expect attacks to regularly occur directly after leadership statements. Attacks do not need to follow leadership statements every time in order to fulfill their intention of signaling a commitment to their adversary. They only need to provoke a response, which means they only need to be followed by attacks some of the time. On the whole, however, this means we are unlikely to see any pattern of leadership statements *vis-à-vis* the carrying out of violence.

Moreover, even "lone actor" terrorists are "rarely sudden and impulsive", with their attacks often involving months of planning.[30] Therefore, we expect that these "inspired" attacks—carried out by individuals who claim affinity to IS but are not known to be in contact with the group—will not respond immediately to high-profile calls for violence with regularity. Attackers might be inspired by the words of their group's leader to start *planning* an attack after the statement is released, but not carry it out spontaneously.

Propaganda and violence work together to fulfill IS's mission to provoke extreme reactions from governments in Europe. We therefore ask a simple question: do terrorist attacks and propaganda output work together? If so, in what way? And if not, why not? Due to the dearth of empirical work on this issue, our paper is only exploratory at this stage, constructing deliberately simple tests with a view to using these results to develop leads for future lines of inquiry.

Methodology

This section will explain how we constructed the two databases used—of official IS propaganda, and of IS attacks in Europe—and how we combined and analyzed them.

Propaganda Database

This study's propaganda database contains all the videos, audio statements, and magazines published by IS in 2016. It was manually built by the second author from Telegram, a social media platform favored by IS since 2015.[31] During the data collection period, two networks on Telegram were responsible for distributing all official Islamic State communications: *Nashir* ("Publisher") and *A'maq News Agency*. Operating alongside these channels from midsummer 2016 was a disseminator network calling itself the *Nashir News Agency*.[32] Working autonomously in support of the organization, it aggregated the posts of each, publishing them all in one place.

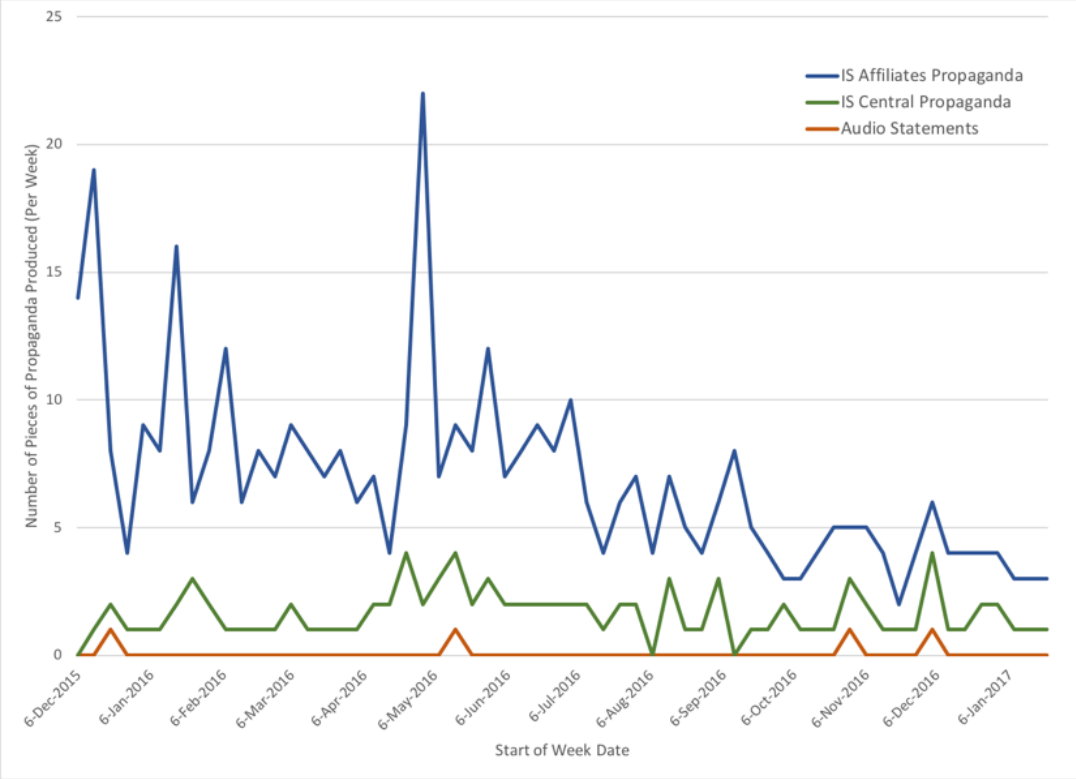
Each piece of propaganda was recorded in a single spreadsheet, and each input was reviewed to remove any duplicate publications. What results is an archive of 412 pieces of Islamic State propaganda in 2016, which were then coded by their origin within Islamic State's "Caliphate" (see *Figure 1* and *Table 1* below). This was possible due to the watermarks used: the "Central Media Office" was branded with an official IS watermark, whereas the regional affiliate media centers, including those in Syria and Iraq, watermarked their propaganda with their regional name (e.g., "Wilayat Halab"—Aleppo Province, Syria).

Table 1: Total Propaganda Produced by Islamic State (2016)

Origin	Amount Published	Percent of Total	Average Output Per Week
Central Media Office	94	23%	1.6
Affiliate/Regional Media Offices	317	77%	5.3
Total IS Propaganda	**412**	**100%**	**6.9**

Note: Table includes propaganda produced in the last four weeks of 2015 and the first four weeks of 2017. One recorded piece of propaganda was "unknown" – not labeled with the regional IS propaganda office or with the central media office.

Figure 1: Propaganda Releases by Islamic State and Its Affiliates (2016)



The database of propaganda used in this paper deliberately excludes all news bulletins, operational claims and photograph reports, which, while important, are not (and, indeed, cannot be) used for direct attack incitement or attack instruction. For that purpose, we deem them to be beyond the scope of this initial study. Future investigations could opt to factor these materials in. We include examples of the propaganda materials considered and not included for reference in Annex I.

Leadership Statements

In particular, IS's Central Media Office released four leadership statements in audio form between the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2017 (see *Table 2*). They include two speeches by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, one speech by the former spokesman of the group Abu Mohamed al-Adnani (who was killed in August 2016), and another by his replacement Abu Hassan al-Muhajir.

Table 2: Audio Statements by Islamic State Leadership (2016)

Date Released	Type	IS Media Outlet	Title of Propaganda Release	Title of Speech
12/26/15	Audio Statement	Central	"Words from the voice of the Emir of the Believers, Sheikh Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Qureishi, May God Keep Him"	"We Too, Will Wait With You"
05/21/16	Audio Statement	Central	"Words from the voice of the Sheikh of the Mujahid, Abu Mohamed al-Adnani the Syrian, May God Keep Him"	"That They Live By Proof"
11/02/16	Audio Statement	Central	"Presenting the words of our master, Emir of the Believers, Abu Bakr al-Husseini al-Qureishi al-Baghdadi, May God Keep Him"	"This is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us"
12/05/16	Audio Statement	Central	"A Word from the Voice of the Official Spokesman of the Islamic State"	"You Will Remember What I Say To You"

Note: As per the time frame of the study, this table includes propaganda produced in the last four weeks of 2015.

The four speeches are long and contain a variety of messages pertaining to IS activities and possible targets for future operations. Two specifically incite violence in Europe, and the other two call for attacks more generally. One example of general incitement was Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's December 2015 speech, where he explains that IS faces a "battle of the disbelievers altogether against the Muslims altogether, and indeed every Muslim is intended by this war." He exhorts IS supporters to "prepare yourselves for your war"; his remarks are general.[33] A more direct incitement to violence was Abu Mohamed al-Adnani's May 2016 speech, which called for IS supporters "make it…a month of suffering for the disbelievers everywhere; and we specifically direct this to soldiers and supports [sic] of the Caliphate in Europe and America."[34]

Attacks in Europe

This study uses an original database of all completed, failed, and disrupted plots carried out by IS militants or supporters in Europe in 2016, compiled by the third author.[35] Potential plots were identified using keyword searches on the international news database ProQuest Factiva, as well as searches on other platforms such as Google. Each individual news item was reviewed to see if it met the threefold inclusion criteria. First, plots must have been executed or disrupted (i.e., the plotters arrested) in Europe in 2016. Second, in order to constitute a "plot," entries required evidence of a developed plan (e.g., selection of a target) or tangible preparations (e.g., purchase of a weapon) made towards executing a terrorist attack. This threshold was important to distinguish legitimate plots from the empty threats routinely seen amidst online discussion groups. Third, plots must have had a demonstrable connection with either IS or the group's ideology. Given that each plot was associated with specific individuals or a certain location, it was possible to guarantee that plots were not double-coded. The resulting database includes 34 plots (see *Annex II*).

While this database relies on open sources, it is possible that other plots from 2016—not yet publicly disclosed—may exist. Authorities could have observed a jihadist planning an attack, for example, only to arrest and charge them for another offense (e.g. for disseminating terrorist propaganda, or for an entirely non-jihadist related offense), without ever publicly disclosing details of the plot. Such scenarios are possible as prosecutors may have decided there was insufficient evidence to secure a successful conviction for attack planning, which in turn is influenced by the strength of a country's counterterrorism legislation or the authorities' risk threshold. A low-risk threshold, for instance, may mean police intervene in the early stages of a plot, even if that would forgo the evidence collection needed for an attack planning conviction, and thus what is publicly revealed during any trial.

We attempted to mitigate against missed examples of IS attack plots in Europe by cross-referencing our data with Europol's 2017 Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, which covers the year 2016 and includes plots disclosed by member states.[36] We also cross-referenced our results with two other open source databases: Petter Nesser's archive of jihadist plots and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).[37]

Plots were disaggregated according to whether they were 1) *centrally directed*, involving attackers dispatched from IS territory, 2) *assisted*, with perpetrators receiving operational guidance from IS jihadists based abroad, or 3) *inspired*, carried out by individuals ideologically motivated by their support for IS or the group's ideology, but without an operational link to the group. The most important distinction for this study was between centrally directed and *non*-centrally directed plots, as IS would certainly know of the former ahead of time, and so could potentially adjust its propaganda output in anticipation of the plot materializing, whereas assisted or inspired plots would not be able to influence propaganda in this way.

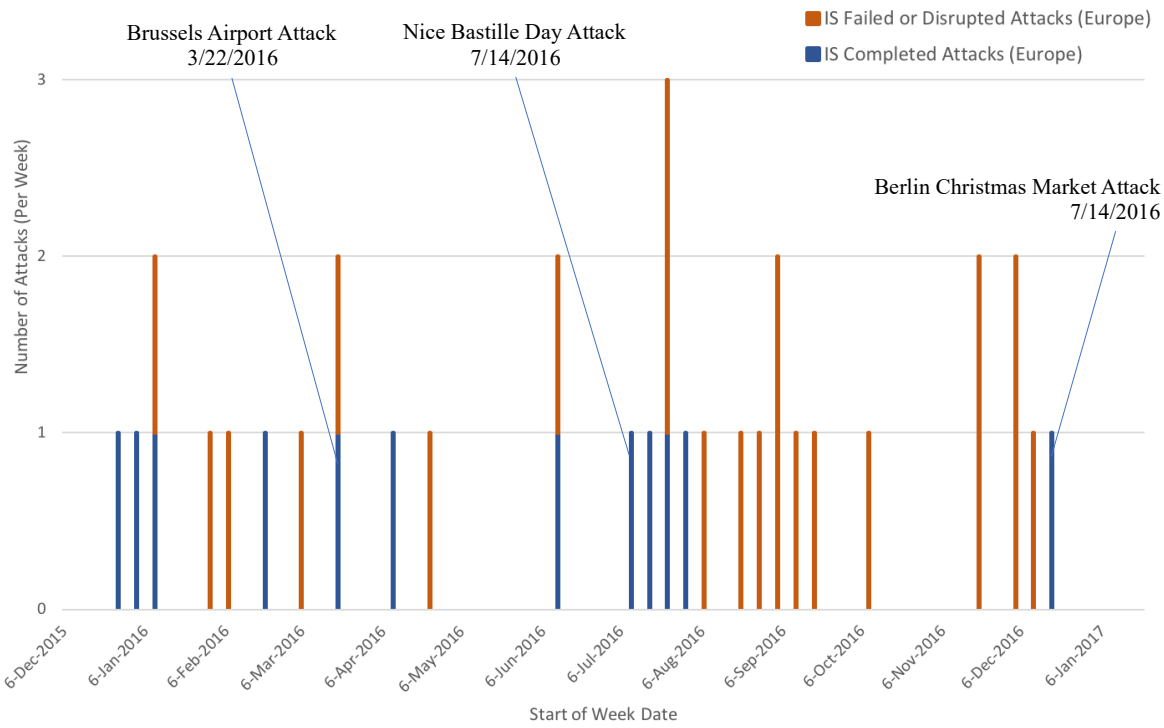
More than half of all attacks were "inspired," that is, perpetrated or attempted in Europe in 2016 with no known direct assistance from IS (see *Table 3*). Inspired attacks constituted the majority of IS attacks in Europe attacks from 2011-2015 as well.[38] The link between "inspired" and "assisted" is very fine, as several attacks involved perpetrators being in contact with IS jihadists based abroad, though the exact content of their messages is often unspecified. Where there is only evidence of contact involving incitement (e.g., "carry out an attack"), it was coded as "inspired," while if there was evidence of individualized and specific operational instructions (e.g., "attack the target from this entrance"), it would be classified as "assisted."

Table 3: Islamic State Plots in Europe (2016)

Outcome of Plots	**Total Number**	**Percent of Total**	**Average Per Week**
Completed	12	35%	0.20
Failed	5	15%	0.08
Disrupted	17	50%	0.28
Category of Plots	**Total Number**	**Percent of Total**	**Average Per Week**
Centrally Planned	3	9%	0.05
Assisted	9	26%	0.15
Inspired	19	56%	0.32
Unknown	3	9%	0.05
Total IS Plots in Europe	**34**	**100%**	**0.57**

Note: All 3 plots whose planners had unknown relationships to Islamic State's central command were disrupted.

Figure 2: Islamic State Plots in Europe by Outcome (2016)



Only one-third of the 34 attacks in Europe in 2016 were completed. This shows how critical it is when assessing the breadth of a terrorist group's efforts to not just include completed attacks but their myriad attempts as well. 17 of the attack plots were disrupted, meaning that law enforcement stopped the plotters before they could carry out the attack. Five attacks "failed," meaning the attack stopped for some reason as it was being carried out (e.g., due to the mechanical failure of the bomb). On average there were between two and three attacks per month (see *Figure 2*).

Attacks Worldwide

To test whether this study's findings were unique to Europe, we compared our database on propaganda output with all IS attacks worldwide as recorded by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The GTD attributed 2,121 attacks to IS and its affiliates worldwide in 2016.[39]

Table 4: Islamic State Attacks Worldwide in 2016 (GTD)

IS Group Responsible	Amount of Attacks	Percent of Total	Average per Week
Islamic State in Egypt/Sinai	175	8%	3.1
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	1578	74%	28.2
Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State	117	6%	2.1
Tripoli Province of the Islamic State	193	9%	3.4
IS "Inspired" attacks	28	1%	0.5
Other IS Affiliates	30	1%	0.5
Total IS Attacks Worldwide	**2121**	**100%**	**35.4**

Note: "IS Inspired" attacks were coded and attributed to IS from a wider set of attacks coded in the GTD as "Jihadi-Inspired Elements." "Other IS Affiliates" included: Islamic State in Bangladesh; Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS); Lahij Province of the Islamic State; and the Najd Province of the Islamic State.

As shown in Table 4, 74% of all attacks were attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (the core IS group). Meanwhile, 25% of all IS attacks were attributed to IS affiliates in other regions, and 1% of attacks recorded in the GTD were "Inspired."[40] We should note that it is critical to include attacks carried out by IS affiliates and not only measure those carried out by IS central. This is because all attacks carried out by either IS or its affiliates are considered IS attacks for propaganda purposes.[41]

Combining Databases for Analysis

We combined the datasets above for analysis by transforming the date column for each attack or unit of recorded propaganda into a week number. Because we wanted to fully capture the effects for all activity during the year of 2016, we extended our counting for propaganda activities to start four weeks before 2016 and four weeks after. This generated 60 weeks of data.

In order to model whether propaganda shifted before an attack, we lagged each variable by four weeks. The reason for testing a four-week timeframe before and after an attack is that, in Europe, IS averaged two to three attacks per month (34 attacks in 12 months). Testing more than four weeks risks capturing propaganda shifts related to other attacks. But testing fewer than four weeks risks missing potentially key trends. Consider the example we introduced at the beginning of this paper: IS spokesman Mohamed al-Adnani called for attacks to occur during Ramadan on May 21, 2016. The attacks in Orlando and Magnanville would have been coded as occurring in the fourth week after the announcement took place (they took place 22 and 23 days after the message was released).

We lagged explanatory variables by four weeks by creating four new columns for each recorded instance (i.e., total IS propaganda) and taking X_{t-1} for that figure. This method allows us to test each week of the data

individually, rather than cumulatively (i.e., week two tests only results from week two, not the results of weeks one and two cumulatively).

Table 5 below shows how we structured the data to test lagged independent variables. Let's consider, for example, that we wanted to measure the relationship between changes in propaganda *before* an attack. In the example below, Y_5 would measure the number of IS attacks in the fifth week of our data. That fifth week of our data is the first full week of 2016 (January 3, 2016), because we lagged our data by four weeks in order to measure the full effects before the beginning of 2016. In this example, where we measure changes in propaganda before an attack, Columns B through F show IS propaganda output in the same week as the number of attacks in the first week of January 2016 (Column B), the week before (Column C), two weeks before (Column D), three weeks before (Column E), and four weeks before (Column F). This method does not group attacks or propaganda by month, but rather tests each week independently in succession

Table 5: Modeling Lagged Independent Variables in Our Study[42]

	Column A	**Column B**	**Column C**	**Column D**	**Column E**	**Column F**
	Y	**X**	**X lagged 1 period**	**X lagged 2 periods**	**X lagged 3 periods**	**X lagged 4 periods**
Row 1	Y_5	X_5	X_4	X_3	X_2	X_1
Row 2	Y_6	X_6	X_5	X_4	X_3	X_2
Row 3	Y_7	X_7	X_6	X_5	X_4	X_3
Row 4	Y_8	X_8	X_7	X_6	X_5	X_4
Row 5	Y_9	X_9	X_8	X_7	X_6	X_5
Row 6	Y_{10}	X_{10}	X_9	X_8	X_7	X_6

Using the data as in Table 5, our regression calculations are derived from the following equation.

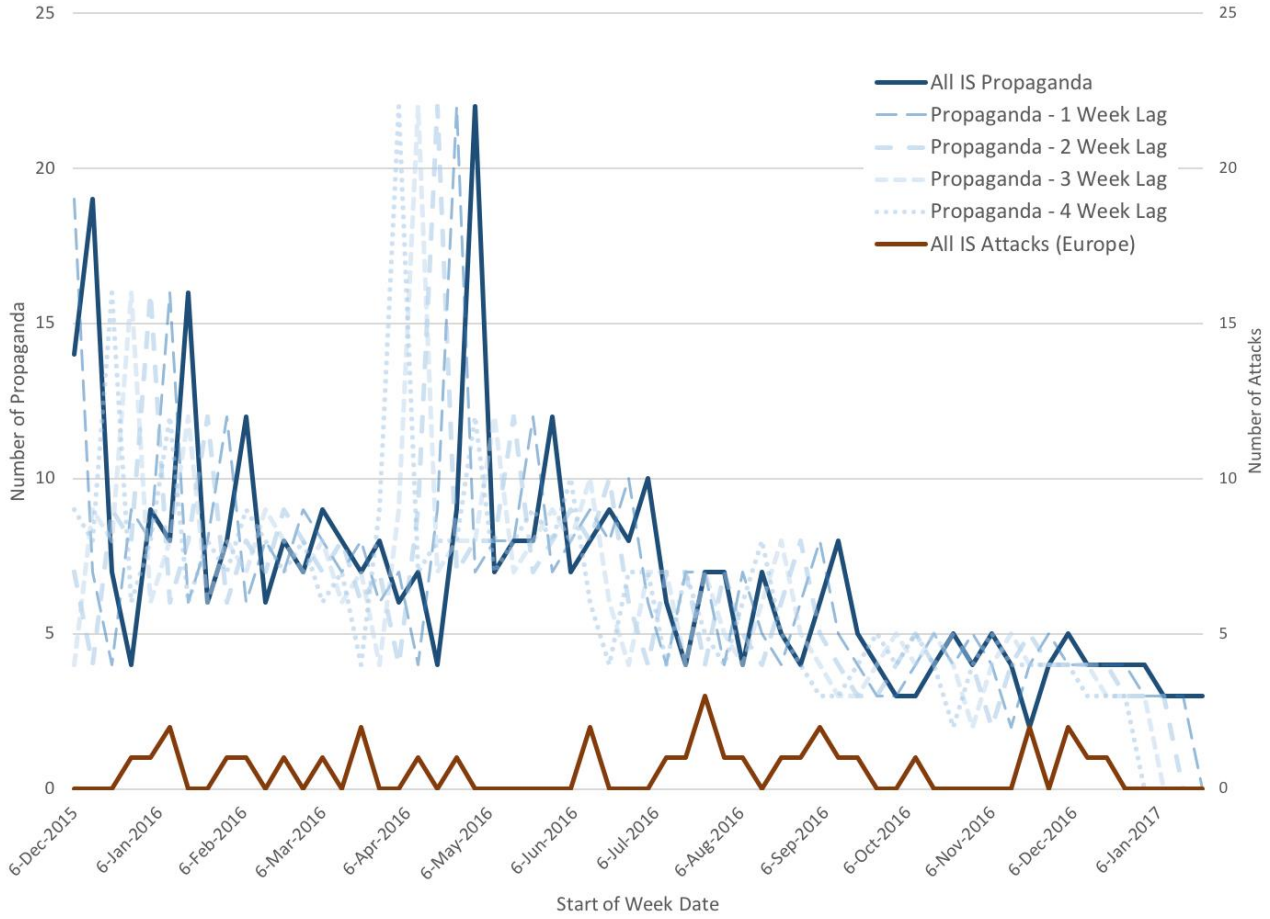
$$Yt = \alpha + \beta 0Xt + \beta 1Xt\text{-}1 + \beta 2Xt\text{-}2 + \beta 3Xt\text{-}3 + \beta 4Xt\text{-}4 + et$$

In order to measure propaganda shifts preceding an attack, we ran regressions where the *propaganda* results are the independent variables and they are lagged back up to four weeks ($X_t \ldots X_{t-4}$) preceding an attack (Y).

To measure shifts in propaganda output *following* an attack, we ran regressions where the *attack* results were the independent variables and they were lagged back up to four weeks preceding a specified week of propaganda output. In effect, this models propaganda shifts after an attack: when we shift the attack each week, it appears as though the propaganda is being released a week later. An example of propaganda lagged behind an attack to measure shifts in propaganda before an attack is modeled visually below (see *Figure 3*).

We analyzed these data using a negative binomial model or a traditional logistic regression in instances where our dependent variable was binary. We used a negative binomial regression in the analysis of the GTD data and when propaganda is the dependent variable. This is because 1) the results of the dependent variable were more than 1 or 0, and both variables (the propaganda and GTD attacks data) violated the requirement in Poisson models that the variance should equal the expected value. The variance for both variables exhibits considerable over-dispersion, meaning that it exceeds the expected number of occurrences. We used a traditional logistic regression to model instances where our dependent variable included attacks in Europe, because these dependent variables were mostly binomial. We transformed the number of attacks in Europe (34) into a binomial variable for the 60 weeks analyzed.

Figure 3: Islamic State Attacks in Europe Compared to IS Propaganda Releases (2016)



The regressions shown in the "Results" section combine the time lags for each independent variable into the same regression (i.e., all propaganda output at t_0, $t\text{-}_1$, $t\text{-}_2$, $t\text{-}_3$, and $t\text{-}_4$). Each variable's time lag was also calculated independently of other time periods, although this is not shown.

Results

This section reviews the results of our regression analysis in two parts: the first covers whether there were discernible shifts in propaganda output *before* an attack in Europe, or if there was a regular increase in violence following a leadership statement. The second part covers whether there were discernible shifts in IS propaganda output *after* an attack in Europe.

Islamic State Propaganda Patterns Before Attacks in Europe

This section examines whether the amount of IS propaganda rises or declines in a systematic way *before* an attack took place in Europe (see *Table 6*). It shows the relationship between propaganda and three different breakdowns of attacks in Europe: 1) all attacks in Europe (combining completed, failed and disrupted); 2) only completed attacks; and 3) only failed or disrupted attacks. We test how four different types of IS propaganda behaved before those three attack types: 1) all IS propaganda (combining central and regional media offices); 2) the Central Media Office of IS; 3) the regional "affiliates" propaganda; and 4) leadership statements.

Table 6: Does Islamic State Propaganda Precede Attacks in Europe (2016)?

		Propaganda released…				
Ind. Variable	Dep. Variable	Same week	1 week before	2 weeks before	3 weeks before	4 weeks before
All IS Propaganda	All attacks	-0.119 (0.09)	-0.188 (0.09)*	-0.018 (0.09)	0.018 (0.08)	0.072 (0.08)
Central IS Propaganda	All attacks	-0.057 (0.15)	-0.089 (0.15)	0.091 (0.14)	-0.096 (0.15)	-0.122 (0.15)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	All attacks	-0.158 (0.11)	-0.218 (0.11)	-0.055 (0.11)	0.049 (0.11)	-0.126 (0.10)
Leadership Statements	All attacks	0.010 (0.78)	-0.420 (0.83)	-0.144 (0.81)	0.714 (0.66)	-0.230 (0.79)
All IS Propaganda	Completed attacks	-0.033 (0.16)	-0.161 (0.16)	0.225 (0.15)	0.163 (0.15)	0.225 (0.15)
Central IS Propaganda	Completed attacks	-0.105 (0.71)	-0.217 (0.29)	0.158 (0.27)	-0.203 (0.29)	0.078 (0.28)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	Completed attacks	-0.020 (0.20)	-0.151 (0.20)	0.245 (0.19)	0.252 (0.19)	0.258 (0.19)
Leadership Statements	Completed attacks	-17.67 (2909)	0.640 (1.33)	1.704 (1.19)	-0.720 (1.68)	0.274 (1.50)
All IS Propaganda	Failed/disrupted attacks	-0.138 (0.11)	-0.230 (0.11)*	-0.138 (0.11)	-0.089 (0.10)	0.030 (0.010)
Central IS Propaganda	Failed/disrupted attacks	0.001 (0.17)	-0.028 (0.18)	0.096 (0.18)	-0.084 (0.18)	-0.176 (0.19)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	Failed/disrupted attacks	-0.210 (0.13)	-0.293 (0.14)*	-0.216 (0.13)	-0.085 (0.13)	0.086 (0.12)
Leadership Statements	Failed/disrupted attacks	1.143 (1.04)	-0.574 (1.04)	-17.93 (3275)	1.18 (0.83)	-0.112 (1.16)

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis. * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Intercepts not shown.

Two key conclusions emerge: the first, following our expectations, is that IS leadership statements have no regular and consistent impact on whether or not attacks occur in Europe within a month before they are released. The second conclusion is that, in general, there are no patterns to the volume of propaganda output before an attack. This means a rise in the volume of IS propaganda of any kind did not signal an increased likelihood in an IS attack in Europe. This suggests that, in general, measuring propaganda simply by its volume will not help us anticipate whether a terrorist attack is more likely.

Islamic State Propaganda Patterns After Attacks in Europe

This section examines whether the amount of IS propaganda rises or declines in a systematic way *after* an attack occurs or is disrupted in Europe (see *Table 7*).

Table 7: Does Islamic State Propaganda Follow Attacks in Europe (2016)?

		Propaganda released				
Ind. Variable	Dep. Variable	Same week	1 week after	2 weeks after	3 weeks after	4 weeks after
All IS Propaganda	*All attacks*	-0.077 (0.08)	0.108 (0.05)*	-0.041 (0.08)	0.071 (0.05)	-0.214 (0.11)
Central IS Propaganda	*All attacks*	-0.023 (0.21)	-0.484 (0.24)*	0.082 (0.21)	0.115 (0.22)	-0.021 (0.21)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	*All attacks*	-0.070 (0.075)	0.100 (0.043)*	-0.049 (0.075)	0.049 (0.048)	-0.173 (0.11)
Leadership Statements	*All attacks*	-0.388 (0.73)	-18.99 (4713)	-0.388 (0.73)	-0.100 (0.73)	-18.99 (5442)
All IS Propaganda	Completed attacks	-0.121 (0.14)	0.071 (0.11)	0.074 (0.11)	0.281 (0.14)*	-0.221 (0.20)
Central IS Propaganda	Completed attacks	-0.532 (0.46)	-0.598 (0.52)	0.886 (0.44)*	0.403 (0.43)	0.099 (0.43)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	Completed attacks	-0.086 (0.13)	0.086 (0.10)	0.041 (0.11)	0.257 (0.13)	-0.172 (0.19)
Leadership Statements	Completed attacks	-18.79 (5377)	-18.79 (5377)	-18.79 (5377)	-18.79 (6209)	-18.79 (6209)
All IS Propaganda	Failed/disrupted attacks	-0.104 (0.14)	0.289 (0.13)*	-0.212 (0.18)	0.030 (0.12)	-0.337 (0.22)
Central IS Propaganda	Failed/disrupted attacks	-0.090 (0.37)	-0.512 (0.40)	-0.215 (0.38)	-0.043 (0.38)	-0.156 (0.38)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	Failed/disrupted attacks	-0.093 (0.14)	0.289 (0.13)*	-0.178 (0.16)	-0.021 (0.12)	-0.302 (.20)
Leadership Statements	Failed/disrupted attacks	-0.539 (0.34)	-17.03 (1978)	-0.056 (1.20)	1.232 (1.27)	-17.03 (2284)

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis. * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Intercepts not shown.

There are few patterns to the output of propaganda following an attack. However, it is clear there is a difference between IS's central and regional media offices. IS's Central Media Office, for example, reduces propaganda output one week after all attacks in Europe, but increases it two weeks after a completed attack. Meanwhile, its affiliates *increased* their propaganda output in the week after all attacks and, in particular, after failed or disrupted attacks. Yet for attacks that were completed in Europe, IS's regional media did not have a clear, statistically significant response. IS's Central Media Office produced an increase in its propaganda two weeks later.

The most likely explanation for these differences is that it is coincidental. IS central and regional media outlets generally focus only on reporting what happens in their specific region. Moreover, the difference between IS's central and regional propaganda output after all attacks in Europe appears at least partially driven by the fact that regional media increases in the week following a failed or disrupted attack in Europe. It could be that regional media increases its output immediately after failed attacks in order to shift attention away from a perceived failure in Europe. Yet it is unclear why the Central Media Office would not do so as well.

Comparing Islamic State Propaganda with Islamic State Attacks Worldwide

As a check on the generalizability of our results, we compare our findings relating IS propaganda and attacks in Europe with a test of how IS propaganda shifts related to IS attacks worldwide as measured by the Global Terrorism Database.[43] We tested propaganda released before and after IS attacks that were attributed to the central group, coded in the GTD database as the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL). We also tested propaganda released before and after all attacks the GTD attributes not just to "ISIL" but also its affiliates.

These results did not contradict the evidence presented above; there were few statistically significant relationships. IS propaganda does not exhibit any considerable shifts before or after increases or declines in

the rate of IS attacks globally. For reference, regression tables showing these results can be found in Annex III.

Discussion

This section will offer two main conclusions and discuss the possible mechanisms involved. The second half of this section will review the limitations of this study and make recommendations for future research.

Before reviewing the two main conclusions, it is important to emphasize two points: first, that our study is seeking patterns in behavior that might be identified by a quantitative analysis of IS attacks and propaganda. Holbrook, for example, examined propaganda consumed by UK attackers to determine what types of propaganda were most influential among those arrested for planning or carrying out an attack in the UK.[44] Our study is not looking at the *influence* of propaganda as much as it is asking whether there are regular, identifiable shifts in the *patterns* of propaganda IS releases before or after an attack. That means, for example, that our findings are not predicated on the idea that if propaganda rises three weeks after an attack, it must somehow relate to that attack. IS could release seemingly unrelated propaganda after a major attack, for example, in order to take advantage of increased attention on the group (i.e., they could release material on what life is like in the Caliphate to attract potential recruits).

Second, our analysis of the relationship between propaganda and attacks is deliberately simple to demonstrate that the relationship between the propaganda terrorist groups release and the attacks they carry out is extremely complex. These preliminary results, therefore, might be more accurately thought of as leads for future research rather than conclusions. The authors plan to publish follow-up research that asks more specific questions about the relationship between propaganda and attacks. This is described in the future research portion of the end of this section. We also hope that others will be inspired (or irritated) by our work to either confirm its findings or disprove them. Either way, we hope to initiate a more informed, evidence-based discussion of how attacks and propaganda output relate to each other.

Result 1: There is no predictable pattern in how much propaganda is released by IS before it carries out terror attacks.

Our results yielded no statistically significant patterns between IS releasing propaganda before an attack. In particular, IS attacks are not more likely to occur after their leaders release rare public statements. With a slight exception explored in Result 2, our findings are set against a broader result: the general lack of statistically significant relationships between attack occurrences and propaganda releases.

One explanation for this apparent lack of significance is that we needed to more carefully disaggregate the data. The data are extremely heterogeneous, even when we disaggregate propaganda sources and attack types. Even a statistically significant trend could therefore lack a real relationship. Moreover, there could be a relationship between propaganda and attacks that we miss due to a lack of statistical significance. More exploration of how to better disaggregate attack and propaganda data might be required.

A second explanation could be that there may not be clear patterns to discover even if we more carefully refine and disaggregate our variables in future research. The general lack of statistically significant relationships may be because there are too many intervening factors that make it hard to uncover a clear and consistent pattern of behavior. Some of the myriad reasons impeding propaganda and attack patterns include a disruption in the medium for propaganda distribution, the death of someone in the media office, loss of records, unexpectedly failed attacks, or shifts in leadership.

A third possible explanation is that IS may be deliberately avoiding propaganda patterns before and after its attacks. For example, in January 2016, IS published a video in which each of the November 2015 Paris attackers were shown executing prisoners while they were still inside Syria—at least six months before they carried out the attack in France.[45] The video was proof of a connection between IS's central media office and those responsible for attack planning (something that has since been further evidenced in recent research by

the second author), yet it was not released until months after the attack.[46] If IS's central media office had foreknowledge of the 2015 Paris attack, then it is conceivable that it had foreknowledge of other such attacks such as the Brussels bombing of March 2016.[47] Thus, it could have prepared pre- and post-attack propaganda campaigns in advance rather than reacting to them.

Fourth and finally, these results might simply demonstrate that larger sample sizes are more likely to yield statistically significant relationships than smaller ones. Therefore, there may be no substantive difference between our general relationships and our more specific ones, and the former may be a case of false positives or statistically significant results without a significant relationship.

Result 2: There may be a difference in how Islamic State's central and regional media offices respond to attacks after they occur.

One surprising result from our paper is the extent to which IS's Central Media Office differs from the behaviors of IS's regional affiliate media offices. This difference manifested itself in slightly divergent responses to IS's attacks carried out in Europe: IS's central media produced more propaganda two weeks after a successful attack in Europe, but its propaganda declined in the week following news of any attack, whether IS carried it out or whether it was disrupted by law enforcement. Meanwhile, IS's regional media offices produced more propaganda one week after a failed or disrupted attack in Europe but did not have a clear response after a completed attack.

That regional and central media offices have different reactions to attacks IS carried out in Europe in 2016 would be a surprising finding. It could be because regional offices produce more content and have less of an obligation for regular reporting (i.e., radio bulletins) than the central media office does. This would allow them to react to news faster, possibly explaining why they had a statistically significant positive response to all attacks (successful or not) carried out in Europe the week after they occurred. Meanwhile, IS Central Media's output declined the week after news of an attack (completed or not) in Europe yet increased two weeks after (completed) attacks in Europe.

But the difference in propaganda output by IS's central and regional media offices as they relate to attacks in Europe is more likely to be coincidental. Each office focuses on its own regional activities. Moreover, IS's central office decides when to publish regional propaganda. The regional media offices (e.g., those in Libya) produce the propaganda material and send it to those operating the IS telegram channel, who then release it. Moreover, by 2016, there was more centralized control over propaganda dissemination, and this has only grown over time.[48] Yet the results show that the publication of IS central media propaganda is not at all related to when IS regional affiliate material gets published, suggesting these materials are for different audiences and focus on different priorities.

One caveat to these results is that the model may be, overall, more conservative in estimating the positive effects of events on propaganda output. There were more attacks in the second half of 2016: 59%, or 20 out of the 34 attacks, occurred in the final 6 months of 2016. But there were fewer pieces of propaganda released in the second half of 2016: on average, IS released 9 pieces of propaganda per week in the first half of 2016, while releasing only 5 per week in the second half of 2016. These changes would matter because the residuals associated with the *beta* estimate would be related to the average dataset as a whole, which would be higher than average in the first half of 2016 and lower than average in the second half. This would 1) increase the variance, potentially resulting in fewer statistically significant results in the regressions. It also might 2) bias the estimates against showing that, for example, increases in propaganda were positively correlated to increases in attacks. Therefore, we would caution that there may exist false negatives or that there may be an effect in the data that is not noticed due to the model. But that these effects are modest in size.

Recommendations for Future Research

This paper underscores the complex relationship between propaganda activity and attack incidence. It is not simply a case of identifying a linear relationship between propaganda and action, as is often expected of

terrorism analysts, particularly those in the media spotlight.

That said, there are three general limitations to this exploratory study. Since this paper should be seen as part of a program of research attempting to uncover patterns between IS propaganda releases and attack occurrences, these limitations are presented as future research opportunities—and not necessarily flaws—that we either plan to explore or encourage others to pursue in our stead.

First, this paper's propaganda and attack variables could be improved through further disaggregation. Variables on propaganda could be divided into certain categories: educational videos are likely to be produced outside of the scope of planned attacks, while explicit calls to arms might be more likely to pre-date attacks. A future study would focus solely on videos, magazines and audio statements that expressly called for terrorist attacks outside the caliphate and determine if they specifically had an impact on the rate of attacks. For attacks, it is critical to separate the different types, their targets, the level of their impact (i.e., number of people killed, level of symbolism, amount of media attention), and compare these results to whether they are inspired, planned, or partially directed by IS. Furthermore, coding the start date of a plot would also be a useful variable, allowing us to reduce our dependence on the disruption date of a plot, which is influenced by myriad other factors such as authorities' risk-threshold or law enforcement competence. The third author intends to expand the database on attacks in Europe to cover adjacent years (i.e., 2015, 2017), thus expanding the sample size. We believe this will be particularly important for leadership statements.

Second, in addition to variable specification, our paper could make a better account of time. Our paper was somewhat time-inflexible: it only measured responses to attacks or propaganda releases no more than three weeks after they had occurred. But, as we have seen with the case of the November 2015 Paris attacks, related propaganda can be released many months after the attack occurs. One way to design a future study to address this would be to review how different types of attacks or propaganda releases relate to each other with regards to their timing. A time series analysis, for example, would help us determine (and control for) whether the occasion of a certain incident makes future incidents more or less likely. Does a stabbing attack, for example, increase the likelihood that future attacks involve stabbings? And, if so, to what degree is that likelihood increased? Such analysis may allow a nuanced examination of what appear to be "copy-cat" attack plots, which mimic the modus operandi of earlier attacks.

Third and finally, we must acknowledge that measuring the *amount* of output (attacks or propaganda) is a poor or at least incomplete proxy for understanding terrorist attacks or the impact of terrorist group messages. The fact that researchers have found that views of a video called the "Black Flags of Khorasan" spike before an attack occurs shows that not all pieces of propaganda are made equal.[49] However, our study, which counts the *number* of attacks or pieces of propaganda, assumes they are equal. To be fair, this is not an uncommon problem: most research on protests, for example, measures them by counting their number rather than their size.[50] Nevertheless, our study would benefit from a more nuanced analysis of the outputs we consider. A follow-up paper might measure not only the output of propaganda but also its reach and popularity. Then, our analysis of the relationship between attacks and propaganda would give greater weight to larger attacks or more popular propaganda material, rather than treating each piece equally.

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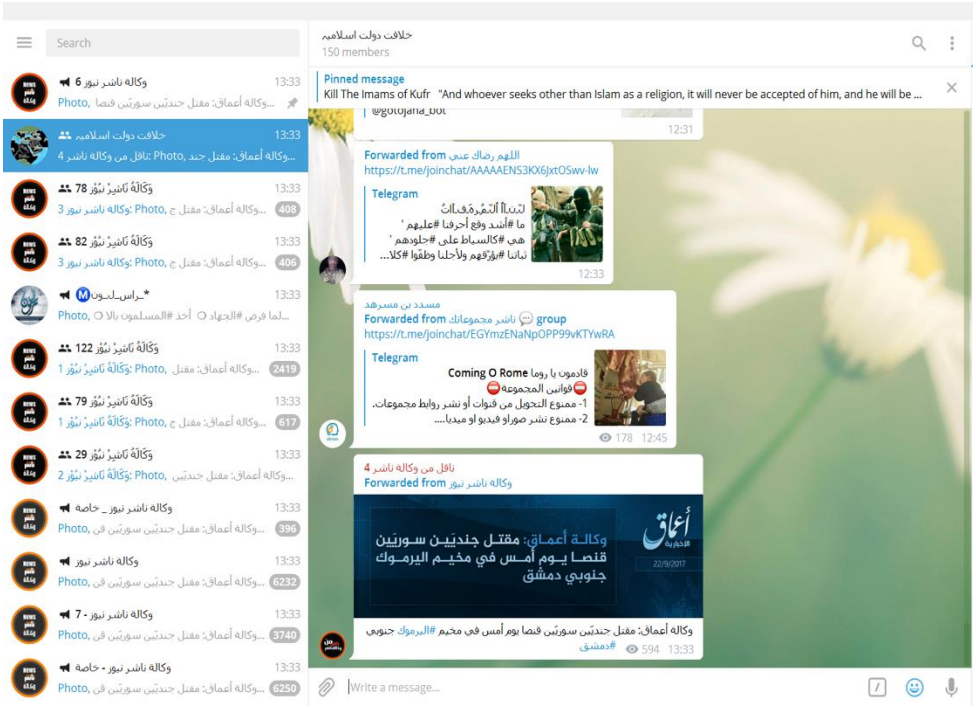
Annex I: Images of IS Propaganda Included and Not Included

Annex I: Figure 1. Telegram feed including official IS propaganda



Annex I: Figure 2. Example of IS Propaganda Included in Coding

Announcement regarding the church attack in Normandy, France on July 25, 2016

Annex I: Figure 3. Example of IS Propaganda Not Included in Coding

Announcement about an attack on Diffa airport in Nigeria (March 15, 2019)

Annex II: Attack Plots Recorded in Europe (2016)

#	Date of attack or disruption	Plot Name	Country	Outcome	Category
1	01/01/16	Valence vehicle ramming	France	Completed	Inspired
2	01/07/16	Paris police station stabbing	France	Completed	Inspired
3	01/11/16	Franco-Hebraic Institute machete attack	France	Completed	Inspired
4	01/13/16	Kundby plot	Denmark	Disrupted	Inspired
5	02/05/16	Hanover attack	Germany	Failed	Inspired
6	02/08/16	Aydin Sevigin arrested	Sweden	Disrupted	Inspired
7	02/26/16	Hanover stabbing	Germany	Completed	Assisted
8	03/09/16	Unnamed 22-year-old arrested	Italy	Disrupted	Inspired
9	03/22/16	Brussels bombings	Belgium	Completed	Centrally Planned
10	03/25/16	Reda Kriket arrested	France	Disrupted	Centrally Planned
11	04/16/16	Essen Gurdwara bombing	Germany	Completed	Inspired
12	04/28/16	Vatican plot	Italy	Disrupted	Assisted
13	06/13/16	Carcassonne plot	France	Disrupted	Inspired
14	06/13/16	Magnanville stabbings	France	Completed	Inspired
15	07/14/16	Nice Bastille Day vehicle ramming	France	Completed	Inspired
16	07/18/16	Würzburg train attack	Germany	Completed	Inspired
17	07/24/16	Ansbach bombing	Germany	Failed	Inspired
18	07/26/16	Normandy church attack	France	Completed	Inspired
19	07/29/16	Casteau plot	Belgium	Disrupted	Assisted
20	08/06/16	Charleroi police stabbings	Belgium	Completed	Inspired
21	08/09/16	Gare du Lyon plot	France	Disrupted	Assisted
22	08/26/16	"Three musketeers" plot	United Kingdom	Disrupted	Inspired
23	09/03/16	Notre-Dame explosives attack	France	Failed	Assisted
24	09/08/16	Haroon Ali Syed plot	United Kingdom	Disrupted	Unknown
25	09/10/16	15-year-old boy arrested	France	Disrupted	Assisted
26	09/13/16	Schleswig-Holstein sleeper cell plot	Germany	Disrupted	Centrally Planned
27	09/22/16	16-year-old Mohamed J. plot	Germany	Disrupted	Assisted
28	10/10/16	Chemnitz plot	Germany	Disrupted	Unknown
29	11/20/16	Copenhagen plot	Denmark	Disrupted	Assisted
30	11/26/16	Ludwigshafen bombing (first attempt)	Germany	Failed	Inspired
31	12/05/16	Ludwigshafen bombing (second attempt)	Germany	Failed	Inspired
32	12/07/16	Jaoud A. arrested	Netherlands	Disrupted	Unknown
33	12/12/16	Munir Mohammed and Rowaida El-Hassan arrested	United Kingdom	Disrupted	Assisted
34	12/19/16	Berlin Christmas market attack	Germany	Completed	Inspired

Annex III: Regression Results for Islamic State Propaganda and Worldwide Attacks (Attacks Recorded by the Global Terrorism Database).

Does Islamic State Propaganda Precede Islamic State Attacks Worldwide (2016)?

	Propaganda released…				
Variable	Same week	1 week before	2 weeks before	3 weeks before	4 weeks before
For all IS attacks and IS affiliates					
All IS Propaganda	0.002 (0.01)	0.010 (0.01)	-0.005 (0.01)	0.003 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)
Central IS Propaganda	0.010 (0.01)	-0.006 (0.01)	0.011 (0.01)	-0.005 (0.01)	0.004 (0.01)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	-0.004 (0.01)	0.014 (0.01)	-0.009 (0.01)	-0.006 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)
Leadership Statements	0.007 (0.06)	-0.0402 (0.07)	0.028 (0.06)	0.033 (0.05)	-0.013 (0.05)
For IS attacks only (coded in GTD as "ISIL")					
All IS Propaganda	0.004 (0.01)	0.005 (0.01)	-0.005 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)
Central IS Propaganda	0.009 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	0.006 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	0.003 (0.01)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	0.002 (0.01)	0.007 (0.01)	-0.007 (0.01)	0.000 (0.01)	-0.005 (0.01)
Leadership Statements	0.009 (0.07)	0.000 (0.07)	0.036 (0.07)	0.072 (0.07)	-0.048 (0.07)

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis. * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Intercepts not shown.

Does Islamic State Propaganda Follow Islamic State Attacks Worldwide (2016)?

	Propaganda released…				
Variable	Same week	1 week after	2 weeks after	3 weeks after	4 weeks after
For all IS attacks and IS affiliates					
All IS Propaganda	0.003 (0.01)	0.007 (0.01)	0.006 (0.01)	0.017 (0.01)	0.008 (0.01)
Central IS Propaganda	0.028 (0.05)	0.043 (0.05)	0.097 (0.05)*	0.072 (0.05)	-0.027 (0.05)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	0.000 (0.01)	0.014 (0.01)	-0.009 (0.01)	0.006 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)
Leadership Statements	0.005 (0.16)	0.245 (0.16)	0.122 (0.16)	-0.005 (0.18)	-0.088 (0.19)
For IS attacks only (coded in GTD as "ISIL")					
All IS Propaganda	-0.001 (0.01)	0.006 (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	0.018 (0.01)	0.007 (0.02)
Central IS Propaganda	0.013 (0.05)	0.052 (0.05)	0.104 (0.05)*	0.101 (0.05)	-0.051 (0.05)
IS Affiliates Propaganda	0.002 (0.01)	0.007 (0.01)	-0.007 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	-0.005 (0.01)
Leadership Statements	0.058 (0.17)	0.217 (0.17)	0.192 (0.17)	0.036 (0.20)	-0.074 (0.20)

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis. * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Intercepts not shown.

Notes

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[41] For example, in a statement released on November 2, 2016, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called attention to the work done in IS's

regional affiliates: "To the soldiers of the Khilafa in Khorasan [Afghanistan-Pakistan], Bengal, Indonesia, Qawqaz [Caucasus, Russia], the Philippines, Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula, Sinai, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Somalia, and West Africa [Nigeria, i.e. Boko Haram]: Know that today, you are the supports of Islam and the pegs of the Khilafa in the earth."

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Towards Open and Reproducible Terrorism Studies: Current Trends and Next Steps

by Sandy Schumann, Isabelle van der Vegt, Paul Gill and Bart Schuurman

Abstract

In recent years, the use of primary data in terrorism research has increased. In order to maximise the benefits of this trend, we want to encourage terrorism scholars to implement open science practices more systematically. This article therefore presents different avenues towards open and reproducible terrorism studies. After introducing the open science movement and advantages of open science, we report an online survey study (N = 75) that shows that terrorism researchers have favourable attitudes towards and are keen to engage in open science activities. Findings, however, also point to key challenges that might prevent the implementation of open science in terrorism studies. Survey respondents were particularly concerned about sharing sensitive data, the risk of malicious practices, publishing in low-impact open access outlets, and indicated that open science seemed mainly targeted at quantitative research. To illustrate how researchers from different backgrounds and with potential resource restrictions can adopt open science practices, we propose practical solutions to address and reflect on these barriers.

Keywords: Open science, reproducibility, meta science, terrorism studies

Introduction

Although terrorism scholarship grew considerably in the last two decades [1], secondary data analyses and literature reviews have long dominated the field.[2] A recent review of papers published in prominent terrorism journals between 2007 and 2016, however, suggests a change in this trend. Notably, the majority of assessed work relied, at least in part, on data collected through interviews, surveys, or experiments.[3] We believe that in order to maximise the benefits of the increased use of primary data, terrorism researchers should consider implementing open science principles more systematically. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to encourage the use of open science practices and emphasise different avenues towards open and reproducible terrorism studies.

To underpin our argument, we first introduce the open science movement and describe four pillars of open science as well as their advantages.[4] We then present results of an online survey study that documents current trends of open science activities in terrorism studies. Terrorism researchers reported open science practices they already engage in as well as perceived barriers to 'doing open science'. Addressing the concerns voiced by survey respondents, we conclude the paper by providing practical suggestions on how to apply open science throughout the research process.

Defining Open Science

Open science refers to a broad range of activities that increase transparency of the research process such that data as well as information about its collection and analysis are freely available, discoverable, and intelligible for evaluation and reuse by different stakeholders.[5] Importantly, open science aims to advance a process of knowledge production that is self-correcting, where falsehoods are rejected and veracity is established by accumulating evidence over time.[6] Open science practices encompass the full research cycle including data collection, analysis, and reporting, and can be summarised in four pillars [7]: (1) Transparent data, analytical methods and material; (2) Open source software; (3) Open access publishing; (4) and Open peer review.

Transparent Data, Analytical Methods and Material

Sharing primary data, methods protocols, and materials (e.g. surveys, interview schedules, experimental stimuli) is a central element of 'doing open science'.[8] Researchers may indicate in publications whether data and material used in a study are available for other stakeholders and if so, how and under what conditions these can be accessed. Access control is especially suitable for pseudo-anonymised personal and sensitive data. Alternatively, data as well as materials and documentation of the procedures used to prepare, clean, and then analyse data can be made publicly available by posting it directly in a trusted repository. Discipline-specific [9] and generic options, such as FigShare [10] or the Open Science Framework (OSF) platform [11] exist. The permanent and citable link to the data is ideally reported in publications.

In addition to sharing analytical methods and materials after data analysis, researchers are increasingly also recording study protocols *beforehand*.[12] This process is referred to as pre-registration.[13] Between 2012 and 2018 the number of pre-registrations on only one platform, the OSF, doubled every year.[14] Pre-registration documents include, for example, information on how many participants will be recruited and through which means, what exclusion criteria will be applied, and what hypotheses or research questions are to be assessed, as well as the kinds of statistical tests or analytical procedures that will be conducted. In research outputs, authors then document where analyses differ from the pre-registration to allow for distinction between confirmatory and exploratory analyses. The pre-registration document is ideally stored in a public repository where a time stamp indicates when it was submitted. Changes to the pre-registration are not possible after its submission. The Open Science Framework, which offers a pre-registration service, provides several templates for pre-registration forms. Pre-registration is traditionally only applied to quantitative and deductive studies that focus on hypotheses testing. In addition to work that is based on primary data, pre-registration is also valuable for analyses that employ existing data sets.[1]

Open Source Software

Sharing data and analytical scripts is especially useful if the files are stored in a format that can be easily accessed and if analyses can be carried out using the original software. In this context, open source software is proposed as another pillar of open science. Open source software refers to unlicensed software that anyone can access, use, and improve. Examples of such software packages for quantitative analysis include JASP [16], R [17] and Python [18]. QDA Miner Lite [19] is an example of an open source software to conduct computer-assisted qualitative data analysis.

Open Access Publishing

Perhaps the most widely known open science practice is open access publishing, understood as publishing research outputs in journals that allow for subscription-free access (usually online). Different forms of open access are available. Gold open access refers to publication in an open access outlet. Green open access describes self-archived versions of an output, not including publisher's formatting, that are publicly available through, for instance, university repositories or a researcher's website. Open access journals may request authors to pay publishing fees. Journals can be discipline-specific, such as *Perspectives on Terrorism* and *Journal for Deradicalisation*, or publish content across disciplines like *PLOS One*. Many publishers of subscription-based journals also allow authors to purchase open access to their paper (i.e., hybrid open access journals). University College London Press publishes open access monographs.

Open Peer Review

Lastly, open peer review—of manuscripts or research proposals—intends to make research evaluation itself more transparent. This practice may involve reviewers signing their reviews with their name, reviewers being known to readers (as is common in the Frontier's journals [20]), or reviews being published alongside an article. The latter, in particular, may not only improve the quality of reviews but also provides credit for reviewers' contributions. In addition, reviewers might choose to commit to the Open Science Peer Review Oath.[21] In

1. Please see [15] for advice on implementation and templates.

practical terms this implies that reviewers add a brief statement to their review in which they confirm that they worked with integrity and will offer constructive critique. Moreover, reviewers would indicate that it is practice for them to sign their reviews and, importantly, advise authors to introduce (additional) steps to increase transparency of the research process. If data and material are made available, reviewers are encouraged to take these into account to validate the claims made by the authors.

The Proliferation of the Open Science Movement

The recent advancement and promotion of the aforementioned open science practices has perhaps been most noticeable in the psychological sciences. In order to appreciate this development, as well as to provide a background for the proposed advantages of implementing open science in terrorism studies, it is necessary to recount a series of events that, taken together, have challenged beliefs in the integrity of seemingly well-established findings in psychology.[22] In their influential paper 'False-Positive Psychology: Undisclosed Flexibility in Data Collection and Analysis Allows Presenting Anything as Significant', published in the prominent journal Psychological Science, Simmons, Nelson, and Simonsohn [23] showed that given researchers' flexibility during data collection, analysis and reporting, it is possible to support just about any hypothesis. The authors conducted two experiments to examine the effects of listening to music on age. Study 2 demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the age of participants who listened to a Beatles song as compared to participants in the control condition, allowing the authors to draw the conclusion that listening to the Beatles makes people younger. In this case, it is of course easy to note that the implication of a statistically significant mean difference is nonsensical and that the identified effect cannot be a *true effect*. In other instances, however, when findings are less counter-intuitive, it may be more difficult to not simply base judgments of the validity of a result on a p-value that is below the significance level.

Simmons and colleagues, unlike what would be reported in 'conventional' published studies, provided full disclosure of the steps they took to achieve statistically significant results. The authors stated that in describing the studies, they did not mention all collected dependent measures but only those for which effects were significant. They further did not indicate results without including covariates that, as it turns out, were responsible for the 'age effect'. Finally, analyses were conducted *during* data collection, and data collection was stopped once significant results were achieved. These are just some examples of so-called questionable research practices (QRPs [24]): decisions made and actions taken in ambiguous situations during the research process, which are not necessarily driven by malicious intent and, in many cases, widely accepted in the research community.[25] As is described below, such QRPs can drastically impair the quality of data and integrity of findings.

Shortly after Simmons and colleagues published their paper, and somewhat facilitated by new publishing formats, a number of failed replication studies was widely publicised. Several researchers and lab collaborations aimed to replicate results of iconic as well as more recent studies with newly collected data, following the methods reported in the original work or (also) asking its authors for input.[26] The 'Reproducibility Project: Psychology', for instance, brought together more than 270 researchers to replicate 100 semi-randomly selected effects.[27] The conclusions from these initiatives were mixed and especially disappointing with regards to the replicability of contemporary studies.[28] The Reproducibility Project showed that only 35 of 97 original 'significant' effects could be replicated. These high rates of failed replications raised concerns about the quality of research outputs in the psychological sciences as well as the procedures and standards applied by its authors. Having said this, the medical sciences [29], economics [30], and the social sciences [31] are confronted with 'replication crises' as well.

The reasons for failed replications can be manifold.[32] Studies might not replicate successfully because the methods sections of published research do not include enough detail to conduct the replication exactly under the same conditions as the original study. Materials, interview schedules, or stimuli may not, or only partially, be available.[33] Analytical procedures might not be fully disclosed: for instance, the statistical procedure may be only broadly described, and control variables perhaps not specified. In qualitative studies, central coding decisions may not be shared or only selective interview questions get reported. Replication is in some cases also

hampered because researchers are not able to access the original work if it is published behind a paywall.[34]

In addition, replications might fail because the original findings are false positive outcomes, that is, instances where the null-hypothesis was rejected although no true effect exists in the population. Applying the null-hypothesis-significance testing approach, the rate of false positives, or the type-I error rate, is determined by the significance level. For instance, in setting a significance level of 0.05, researchers accept that, in the long run, they will reject the null-hypothesis although there is no true effect in the population in 5% of the analyses. Questionable research practices can inflate the likelihood of false positives beyond this set threshold. Simmons and colleagues [35] highlighted in simulation studies that by testing two dependent variables to find at least some effect or by analysing data during collection to continue if the finding is not significant the risk of false positive outcomes is almost doubled. At this point, it becomes evident that failed replications are not simply a matter of vanity but can point to a flawed process of knowledge production. If future research as well as practical implications are based on results that are false positives, valuable resources are wasted and important opportunities for innovation missed.

Advantages of Open Science

Scientific associations, editorial boards, as well as funders increasingly endorse open science, and numerous researchers across disciplines apply open science practices because doing so offers advantages for different stakeholders. First, pre-registering and sharing data or material make it easier to become aware of and reduce instances of questionable (and outright wrong) research practices. Open science thus enhances the reproducibility of findings and the quality of evidence that informs research, policy makers, and practitioners. McAuliff and colleagues state "it is [therefore] important to frame changes in these practices as signs of an evolving, maturing science."[36]

Greater transparency of the research process can also facilitate collaboration.[37] Publishing pre-registrations or sharing research materials and data could encourage others working on similar topics to develop joint research and distribute resources to achieve more ambitious goals. This is a clear advantage for terrorism studies where the number of collaborative projects and research outputs is currently comparatively low.[38] Open science is also a way to bring together scholars from different disciplines who agree on a shared approach to conducting research, which can foster cross-disciplinary work. The Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science, for instance, hosts productive conferences where psychologists from different specialisations meet. The UK Reproducibility Network, which has local networks at more than 40 UK universities, and the Focus on Open Science events, which are hosted across the world, bring together researchers from all fields.

By making manuscripts, data, and results openly available, it is also easier to collaborate with non-academic stakeholders or share outputs with practitioners, which increases the impact of research findings. In addition, it has been shown that articles that are accompanied with accessible data receive more citations even when controlling for journal impact factor, open access status, and author characteristics.[39] Open access publishing also engenders higher citation counts.[40] This effect is observed across various disciplines [41], and holds for publications in fully open access journals, hybrid journals, and online repositories.[42]

Lastly, observing current trends in research funding and governance, open science practices will over time become a required standard. The 'Plan S' initiative that mandates full open access to research outputs and FAIR data principles—which stands for making data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable—is endorsed by several European funding agencies.[43] Early adopters of these practices will benefit from a proven track record and established procedures of open science activities when applying for funding.

Open Science in Terrorism Studies: Current Trends

Terrorism studies has, to date, not engaged in the same level of public reflection on open science as some other disciplines. The central aim of this paper therefore is to initiate this discourse and encourage terrorism researchers to take first steps towards implementing open science activities. In order to develop suggestions for open and reproducible terrorism studies, it is first necessary to understand the extent to which open science is already practiced in the field and, importantly, to identify barriers and restrictions to doing so. In the autumn of 2018, we conducted an online survey study that pursued these questions.[2]

The survey was promoted through three channels. We invited attendants at the 2018 Society for Terrorism Research conference (through Twitter, conference presentations, flyers, and word of mouth) to participate. We also shared the survey link on the authors' personal Twitter accounts. Finally, we searched for openly available email addresses of authors with at least two publications in Schuurman's review of terrorism research and contacted these authors to ask them directly to complete our survey.[44]

A total of $N = 75$ respondents who self-identified as terrorism researchers completed the survey.[3] Relative to those who clicked on the survey link but did not complete all questions, this represents a completion rate of 6.48 percent, which is acceptable given the unincentivised data collection online and the target audience. Importantly, a non-response bias is likely, and the results reported below should not be generalized to all self-identified terrorism researchers but perhaps be seen as an optimistic estimation. Respondents represent early career as well as senior academics. Twenty-three respondents were professors, seven associate professors, 13 assistant professors, 10 post-docs, one respondent was a postgraduate student, and nine indicated 'other' as professional status. The publishing experience of respondents varied as well, with 32 percent reporting one to five publications and 27 percent of respondents having more than 20 publications.

Respondents expressed overall favourable attitudes towards open science ($M = 88.33$, $SD = 16.30$; range: 41 – 100; scale: 0 = *not at all favourable*, 100 = *favourable*). Consistent engagement in different open science practices, however, was low (Table 1).

Table 1. Current engagement in different open science activities in %.

Activity	*Never*	*I tried, but I don't do it systematically*	*I do it when it feels convenient*	*I do it for most research projects/studies*	*I do it for every research project/study*
Pre-register analysis or studies	70	10	10	4	1
Sharing data	30	15	24	24	6
Sharing code	51	8	17	10	10
Open access publishing	24	20	32	20	4
Posting preprints	54	10	18	8	8
Doing open peer reviews	79	6	13	1	0
Using open source software	30	17	24	20	10
Conducting replication studies	79	8	7	4	1
Other	42	3	4	3	0

2. A pre-registration of the study as well as the survey materials, analysis code, and data is available online: https://osf.io/zv3uc/?view_only=9056d91143f444c0883c21434c199c7a

3. One respondent did not complete the consent form and was excluded from the data set.

Having said this, almost one quarter of respondents stated that they shared data for most research; and around 20% published open access and used open software for most research. Respondents further indicated moderate to high intentions to pursue open science activities in the future, with a slight preference for publishing in open access outlets and using open source software (Table 2).

Table 2. Average intentions to pursue different open science activities in the future.

Activity	*M*	*SD*
Pre-register analysis or studies	3.04	1.41
Sharing data	3.83	1.25
Sharing code	3.59	1.34
Open access publishing	4.27	1.10
Posting preprints	3.73	1.36
Doing open peer reviews	3.46	1.39
Using open source software	4.07	1.29
Conducting replication studies	3.58	1.36
Other	2.31	1.55

Note. Scale ranged from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 =*Completely*

It is also noteworthy that respondents were less interested in engaging in open science practices to achieve individual benefits but believed that the activities would benefit the scientific community and society at large. Only 7 percent strongly agreed that they would 'do open science' because it was increasingly emphasized in hiring or promotion criteria, and that 13 percent strongly agreed that open science activities were relevant for obtaining grants. Open science was commonly seen as a way to reach a larger academic audience, to have a larger impact, and that it seemed 'like the right thing to do'. Respondents also acknowledged that open science facilitates cooperation and makes the research process more efficient.

A key goal of our study was to understand the barriers that restrict terrorism researchers from engaging in open science. These were, notably, financial costs (M = 3.31, SD = 1.52), a lack of concrete incentives (M = 3.10, SD = 1.41) and discipline-specific best practices (M = 3.10, SD = 1.28) as well as lack of knowledge (M = 3.06, SD = 1.34).[4] Time constraints seem to be somewhat less of a challenge (M = 2.64, SD = 1.29). These results were based on closed answers. Open-text answers highlighted four additional concerns regarding the implementation of open science in terrorism studies: 1) Sharing sensitive and personal data, 2) The risk of malicious practices, 3) Publishing in low-impact open access outlets, and 4) The dominance of quantitative and deductive methods in the open science discourse.

More precisely, it was not considered viable to share sensitive and personal data publicly. Further, it was suggested that in cases where data is anonymised for sharing purposes, it might lose much of its value. It was also mentioned that Institutional Review Board protocols and data protection laws would not allow researchers to share sensitive and personal data. Survey respondents further voiced concerns that open study materials and data may be intentionally misused, thereby hampering counter-terrorism efforts. With regards to the academic community, respondents were worried that their ideas might be 'scooped' by other researchers if a preprint or dataset is shared before publication.

Respondents also stated that many open access outlets do not (yet) have a high impact factor with the knock-on effect that such journals are regarded as less valuable for promotion or hiring. Subscription-based journals of interest might not offer an open access publication option, and the high costs associated with open access publishing in journals that require author fees were reported as a barrier. Lastly, some respondents thought that open science practices are primarily applicable to research that follows a deductive approach and relies on quantitative methods, in particular inferential statistical analyses. Consequently, open science would appear

4. *Note.* Scale ranged from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 =*Completely*

to be of limited use to those terrorism researchers who use qualitative, inductive methodologies. In fact, promoting open science practices in terrorism studies was regarded as a potential means to further advance quantitative rather than qualitative methods in the field.

Steps Towards Open and Reproducible Terrorism Studies

The aforementioned findings highlight that, despite favourable attitudes towards and intentions to implement certain open science practices, the application of open science in terrorism studies is restricted by a range of barriers. To encourage more terrorism researchers to 'do open science', we aim to provide practical solutions as well as additional reflection that address the various concerns. Doing so, we hope to illustrate first steps that terrorism researchers with different methodological approaches and resources can implement in existing and future projects.

One principle underlies all our suggestions: The degree to which researchers apply open science practices must fit the specific study as well as individual conditions. For instance, if early career researchers do not feel comfortable with signing peer reviews because they fear repercussions from senior colleagues for criticising their work, it is nevertheless still possible to request authors to introduce transparent reporting. In other words, while we want to promote all activities, it is not our intention to stipulate that only those who share data, pre-register, publish open access, *and* sign their peer reviews 'really' engage in open science. Introducing even one of these practices contributes to the development of more open and reproducible terrorism studies.

Sharing Sensitive and Personal Data

Terrorism studies has a tradition of sharing data, and there are several large datasets publicly accessible.[45] At the same time, due to the use of sensitive data as well as the considerable resources that might be involved in its collection (often requiring intense negotiations, long-term professional relationships, and lengthy data collection), it is understandable that researchers are hesitant to share data, especially in public repositories that offer no control over who downloads data for what purpose.

In instances where data can be shared (see below) but researchers want to monitor its re-use, data can be made available through access control protocols that might be automated or require researchers to manually review requests. One prominent recent example is Aaron Zelin's *Jihadology* website. As part of a data sharing agreement, those who aim to access data could be asked to indicate what the data is used for or confirm that it only serves certain, for instance, non-commercial, purposes. Examples of templates for Data Access/Transfer/Processing Agreements, including such for personal data and compliant with data protection regulation, are usually provided by the institutional data protection officer or legal team. Applying licenses, such as Creative Commons licenses [46], offers additional control over data re-use. Access control also allows researchers to encourage collaboration, such that access is provided if the data controller is involved in the resulting research.

Researchers who are concerned that once they shared their data others will publish outputs before they are able to do so should keep in mind that it is possible to implement an embargo on public or access-controlled data. Research outputs can be prepared first, and data is then made available together with the (published) output. Journals such as *Terrorism and Political Violence* or *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* do require data accessibility statements in which access control conditions can be specified or a permanent link to public data can be reported.

Importantly, we recommend that researchers only make participants' personal data available to others if they have included explicit data sharing statements in the participant's consent form.[5] This also implies that data retention and sharing plans must be reported in, and be approved by, institutional review board applications. In addition to asking participants whether they agree with the use and storage of personal information for the respective study, participants should approve data sharing with third parties. Participants should also be informed about the groups of people who might get access, and tiered consent could be implemented to give

5. More specific rules apply for researchers who need to comply with the European General Data Protection Regulation.

the opportunity to confirm sharing with some but not all recipients. Furthermore, the purposes of data use by third parties should be specified, such as replication studies or combined analyses with secondary data.[47]

Finally, if researchers collect personal and sensitive data and choose to share these in an access-controlled manner or publicly, measures must be taken to avoid the (re)identification of participants.[48] In a first instance, information such as names of persons and locations, ought to be suppressed. Data also may be generalised. For example, individuals' age can be presented as age brackets; instead of the full postcodes only the first three digits or a larger region where a participant is resident can be mentioned. Perturbation is a procedure during which (numeric) information is replaced with other values that maintain certain statistical properties, such as a variable's mean and standard deviation. Manual steps for anonymisation can be complemented with automated tools, such as the free web-based tool Netanos.[49]

The Risk of Malicious Practices

Some of the previously mentioned points (e.g. access-control and anonymising data) can also help reduce the risk of malicious practices that, as some fear, might be facilitated by open science activities. If data sharing and open access to a paper, for example, is considered a threat to efficient counter-terrorism measures, we would of course recommend that such research is kept confidential. However, we believe that this applies only to a small number of studies that employ primary research in terrorism studies. For most work the benefits of pre-registration, sharing data and materials, or open access publishing should outweigh the costs.

We are also confident that open science provides a way to undermine rather than foster 'scooping' by fellow researchers. First, in publishing a pre-registration of a study or preprint of a manuscript (discussed in the next section) researchers can present an idea as theirs long before the paper has made its way through lengthy peer review processes. Second, sharing data and material with a published paper, after peer review, can encourage cooperation, reproduction to demonstrate the findings' validity, as well as re-use of methods, which all can accrue citations.

Publishing Open Access

It is no surprise that a journal's impact factor influences the choice of a publication outlet, and several open access journals have not yet been assigned with any or a high (enough) impact factor. Tennant et al.'s [50] Cofactor Journal Selector Tool [51] allows a search for journals based on both open access policy and impact factor. If no designated open access journal is available, researchers have two options that still ensure that an article is openly accessible. First, authors can choose to purchase open access availability to their paper in hybrid open access journals and many publishers provide this possibility. We recommend that authors approach their library services or departments to inquire whether funds are available to cover these costs. Where the necessary resources are not available, authors can self-publish either postprints or preprints of their paper on their own website, the university's repository, or platforms such as the Open Science Framework, Figshare, and the Social Science Research Network.[52] Doing so complies with the criteria of green open access.

To clarify, postprints are author-accepted versions of peer-reviewed papers that do not include any of the publisher's formatting. These can always be shared without restrictions. Preprints, in turn, are versions of the manuscript that have not yet been submitted to a journal or have not yet undergone peer review. Authors can upload multiple preprints of the same article: for example, a first draft and the submitted manuscript. If storing these documents on a platform like the OSF all documents are time-stamped and downloads are recorded such that the researcher can derive a metric of the paper's impact before it is published. Early distribution of a manuscript as a preprint may further encourage valuable feedback. Although this effect has yet to be tested in the realm of terrorism studies, in the field of physics it also has been shown that posting a preprint is associated with higher overall citation rates.[53] Whether a journal supports the publication of a preprint, which remains accessible while an article is undergoing peer review, can be checked before submission using the SHERPA/RoMEO tool.[54] Most journals will also state whether this is allowed in their submission guidelines.

The Dominance of Quantitative and Deductive Methods in the Open Science Discourse

The open science movement is to date perhaps most widely promoted by quantitative researchers. However, open science seeks to enhance the integrity and transparency of all research regardless of its methodology. Notably, qualitative political science has initiated a productive debate on research transparency that highlights that open science is relevant and applicable in qualitative studies as well.[55] Reporting standards in qualitative research, for example, require researchers to reflect on their role, contextual embeddedness, and personal standpoints, in order to improve methodological integrity. It is further suggested that detailed information about the context of the source data, justification of sample size, origins of data collection protocols, as well as how these changed throughout the study, are provided.[56]

Moreover, the Qualitative Data Repository hosted at Syracuse University provides a platform to share and reuse qualitative and multi-method data "to evaluate scholarly claims, answer different research questions, and enhance teaching".[57] Pre-registration appears at first perhaps unsuitable for some qualitative research as it does not seem to support a dynamic adaption of hypotheses based on the interpretation of the data. However, documenting research questions, procedures of data collection and study design before the analyses and combining this pre-registered information with the analytical steps and final results allow researchers to clearly demonstrate their inferential processes. If research questions are adapted after researchers engaged with the data, this can be communicated transparently as well. Kern and Gleditsch provide further practical examples for open qualitative science including a template for pre-registration.[58] These approaches are to some extent still in its infancy and require researchers, including those in terrorism studies, to test them, adapt them, and, in doing so, develop sound practices that are purpose-fit to enhance the research process rather than hinder it.

Conclusion

Terrorism studies has a lengthy history of self-reflective critique over data availability. Now that primary data has become more commonplace and is accompanied with increasingly sophisticated methodologies, it is imperative to ensure the integrity and impact of study results. Introducing open science practices is an opportunity to proactively create an environment in which this can be achieved. This paper documented that a small but not negligible number of terrorism researchers are already engaging in open science and that, overall, attitudes towards the practices are favourable. It is, however, also important to acknowledge barriers and concerns that restrict the application of open science. It is our hope that this paper initiates a debate within the field to develop (further) best-practices that resonate with the interdisciplinary community of terrorism scholars to move over time towards open and reproducible terrorism studies.

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Taking Terrorist Accounts of their Motivations Seriously: An Exploration of the Hermeneutics of Suspicion

by Lorne L. Dawson

Abstract

The field of terrorism has long suffered from a data deficit, particularly when it comes to primary data derived from interviews with violent extremists. This deficit reflects more than the difficulties of securing such data. For a variety of more subtle and complex reasons, researchers have been reluctant to interview terrorists and suspicious of the information derived from such interviews. As part of a larger study, this article explores the nature and foundations of this situation by systematically examining the limited discussion of the problem in terrorism studies and delineating three underlying interpretive concerns that appear to have interfered with securing more such interviews and trusting the data acquired through them.

Keywords: terrorist accounts, interviewing terrorists, motivations of terrorists

Introduction

Terrorism studies has long been caught in the torque of two equally compelling and difficult challenges. On one hand, it is recognized that the field suffers from a lack of primary data—research incorporating "talking with terrorists."[1] On the other hand, there are deep suspicions about what terrorists say, casting doubt on the evidentiary value of such data.[2] Despite some recent progress, the deficit in data and the doubts about the data continue to impede the investigation of many important issues.[3] This is most notable when it comes to discerning the motivations of terrorists. Can we ever really know what someone else is thinking and feeling? We can listen to what they say, but people are inclined to say what is expected or what they think others want to hear, and accounts of past actions are subject to distortion. Without seeking to be deceitful, false information can be conveyed, and in some cases, terrorists have obvious reasons to be deceitful. So, what weight should we give to the accounts that terrorists provide of their motives? This essay seeks to explore several key facets of this methodological tension and consider why and how we should pragmatically prioritize what terrorists say.

This problem is neither particularly new nor unique to the study of terrorism. The tension exists throughout the social sciences, and it has been addressed in myriad ways. Some philosophers and sociologists debate the very concept of motivations, and whether they can be analyzed.[4] Some also investigate the interrelationship of reasons, causes, and actions.[5] Other sociologists, anthropologists, and religious studies scholars address the problem by investigating how to reconcile *emic* and *etic*, or insider and outsider, perspectives on actions.[6] Others dissolve the tension by adopting an episteme of extreme social constructionism, denying any plausible contrast of actual motivations and mere rationalizations in the first place.[7] While others, more prosaically, seek to ameliorate the tension by developing ever more sophisticated ways to enhance the validity and reliability of research interviews.[8] All of these approaches are pertinent, and an awareness of the intersecting, yet distinct, approaches is instructive. It is also daunting and discouraging, since the debates are complex, prolonged, and largely unresolved.

In practice, then, most social scientists simply tend to ignore the problem. Until, that is, they encounter a situation in which the relative veracity of the accounts they are relying on really matters or is challenged. In principle, however, all such data matters in terrorism studies. Hypothetically, the information from interviews with terrorists can help to save lives and preserve the social order. It may influence efforts to prevent people from engaging in the process of radicalization, to interdict those already plotting violent acts, and more effectively encourage violent extremists to disengage. In addition to the intrinsic merits of this research, a great deal of terrorism scholarship is implicated in defeating the phenomenon it is studying.

There is, however, another reason why the methodological tension is particularly acute in the field of terrorism studies. There has long been a reluctance on the part of many researchers to talk to terrorists. This reluctance is only partially explained by the difficulties and risks entailed in finding, accessing, and interacting with such participants.[9] It is also because the crimes involved and hence, by implication, the criminals, are so unpalatable.[10]. As Horgan comments, "apprehension surrounds the belief that interviewing terrorists … is ultimately tantamount to appeasement, and that any kind of understanding is the same as excusing or sympathizing."[11] Morally, if not methodologically, researchers fear that giving serious attention to the accounts of terrorists will lead to accusations that they are lending credence to the deviant views and repugnant actions of the terrorists, and thereby empowering them. This accusation is commonly made by members of the public, politicians, and even some policy officials.[12] Stampnitzky identifies this fear as a formative, and distorting, factor in the emergence of terrorism studies as a field.[13] Consequently, more than other social scientists, terrorism scholars feel compelled to justify why they are willing to talk to the criminals that are the focus of their research. The doubts and qualms associated with collecting such primary data may partially explain why there is so little of this data in hand.

The objective in this essay is to provide a fuller rationale for securing more interviews with terrorists and treating what they say about their motivations as a serious source of insight into how and why people become terrorists. The epistemic point of view is nominally realist, but not naively so, and the analysis is wholly pragmatic. Some of the deeper issues, alluded to above, are broached, but the discussion is more delimited and practical. To be clear, the focus is not on the biases that researchers may bring to bear on interviews and interview data. These can be controlled, to some degree, by implementing more sophisticated coding and analysis techniques.[14] Rather, the focus is on the reasons for placing some real evidentiary value in what terrorists say about their motivations in the first place.[15]

Horgan provides a succinct rationale for undertaking interviews with terrorist, despite concerns about their trustworthiness:

> To understand the development of the terrorist, we must ask questions about how decisions emerged, the meaning of those decisions, and their consequences for the person concerned … Interviews afford keen insight into how individuals involved in terrorism … perceive themselves, their environments and their involvement pathways. Although survey data seemingly allows us to do the same thing, only through in-depth interviews … are we able to understand the meaning associated with each individual's experience and how that meaning affects motivation to act (i.e., mobilization).[16]

The potential relevance of interview data from terrorists, however, extends beyond the research questions raised by Horgan. For example, in surveying the different approaches used to analyze terrorism, the strategic, organizational, psychological, ideological, structural, and critical approaches, Chenoweth and Moore repeatedly stress the role of "qualitative evidence—from memoirs, interviews, or recovered documents" in building support for many of the basic propositions advanced by each perspective. They choose to highlight the challenges posed by the use of such data in their criticisms of the psychological and ideological approaches, where there is a strong reliance on interview data.[17] The interpretive issues are equally pertinent, however, for the other theoretical approaches—whether such data is being used to determine the relative causal significance of strategic thinking, organizational conditions, psychological needs, ideological doctrines, or broader social, economic, political and environmental factors. Even in the latter case, where quantitative measures are dominant, Chenoweth and Moore note that researchers must take into account how terrorists and terrorist groups perceive and interpret situations in order to explain how the correlations detected may be relevant to the behavior in question.[18]

There are two parts to this paper. First, there is a review of the comments on interviewing terrorists made by terrorism scholars, displaying the limitations of the existing discussion. Second, three underlying reasons are delineated for why the field has struggled to come to grips with this methodological problem. These largely implicit background concerns condition much that is said on the subject, and help to explain why so few researchers have addressed the doubts raised about the validity and reliability of the accounts provided by

terrorists. The insights gained do not resolve the complex methodological issues surrounding the acquisition and use of terrorist accounts. Rather they help to lay the foundation for a fuller discussion. That discussion would entail a more exacting examination of the sociology literature on "accounts" and the problems posed by a radical interpretivist (i.e., social constructionist) approach to the issue, as well as the related issue of the relationship of attitudes and behavior. Some of the skepticism directed at terrorist accounts stems from a more generalized doubt of the influence of beliefs on behavior, as expressed by several prominent scholars in the field of terrorism studies. The grounds for this doubt are mistaken and exaggerated, but substantiation of this claim awaits development in an additional analysis, building on this foundation.

Discussions of the Problem in the Terrorism Literature

There is surprisingly little direct discussion of the veracity of interview data obtained from terrorists in the literature of terrorism studies. It is probably safe to say that every study employing such interviews makes some passing comment on this methodological concern. But these comments are hard to find, and as Khalil asserts, "many researchers seemingly accept interviewee responses at face value." In fact, he insists that a "critical caveat" cautioning against straightforwardly relying on interview data from terrorists "is … generally absent from articles that draw from such respondents."[19]

In recent years, for example, a great deal has been written about why thousands of young men and women traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight for various jihadist groups, including the Islamic State. A handful of these studies have called upon interview data, from the fighters, and their families and friends, to support their analyses.[20] Amongst these studies, only Dawson and Amarasingam offer an extended defense of their reliance on such data (discussed below).[21]

Other general discussions of the use of qualitative data in terrorism studies tend to dwell on the technical and practical aspects of securing and conducting such interviews, and various attendant issues, such as the safety of researchers and improving the quality of the data.[22] Horgan, Nilsson, and Khalil do reflect on the trustworthiness of the data obtained from terrorists, but their comments are similar and limited in scope.[23] Before examining their contributions, however, the observations of a few other earlier terrorism researchers are summarized to set the context of the discussion in the field.

In 2000, White published an article arguing the merits of using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to secure better information about "why people engage in small-group political violence." The object, he stresses, is to "*understand* those who engage in the behavior" and not "to condemn, to condone, or find some objective 'truth.'"[24] All that we learn about why people engage in political violence is perspectival, he argues, and this complicates 'understanding.' It does not make it impossible, however, if we take care to place the information acquired in a well-developed contextual grasp of what is happening, and skillfully use a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches to offset the relative weaknesses of each method. Overall, he observes, there is a very real need for more and better qualitative research, since commentators are too often "removed from the violent field", and the "best research … is undertaken by researchers who, on some level, interact with the people being researched."[25] There are risks in doing so, he notes, since "there is the possibility that respondents will tailor what they say, for a number of reasons, including making themselves and/or their political movement look good."[26] In extreme instances there is even the risk of the researcher going native.[27] In both instances, he advises, the only logical corrective is more, and not less, immersion in the field, combined with greater methodological rigor.[28] We will only be able to differentiate between plausible and theoretically informed interpretive options, he insists, by securing more "in-depth information on *why* [individuals] are involved in violence."[29]

This is sound advice, and White illustrates his points well with examples from the study of the conflict in Northern Ireland. His points are in line with the approach still taken by most researchers who "talk to terrorists"—no matter how peripherally. Nilsson, for example, talks about the ways in which jihadist interviewees can have an effect on interviewers, and in turn how researchers can influence these interviewees.[30] Apart from the comment about respondents tailoring their answers, however, White does not address the issue of having

confidence in the evidentiary value of the information terrorists provide. In fact, his analysis more or less assumes the significance of collecting these kinds of accounts.

In this vein, Cordes, adds an important element to this rather conventional approach to the issue.[31] She notes the tendency of terrorists to "characterize their actions as something else," to deny they are terrorists. "This denial," she observes, "may consist not only of semantic denial but of recharacterising themselves as freedom fighters, revolutionaries, etc."[32] "To comprehend the terrorists' mindset", she stresses, "it is crucial to uncover the rationale, motivation and mechanisms for such denial. By listening to what the terrorists say, [we can assess] how they see themselves, what they think they are doing and what they think their actions will accomplish."[33] There is a secondary, and equally important, reason then for listening to terrorists that goes beyond securing information about how and why things happened. It is to gain access to how terrorists conceive of themselves, and to how they think. Insights in this regard are more or less inseparable, Cordes argues, from the propagandistic purposes of much that terrorists say. This is because the purpose of their communications, written and verbal, "are not only to explain their actions to others, but to persuade … themselves that what they have done was justified, was appropriate, and carried sufficient weight in the pursuit of their cause."[34] She calls this secondary aspect of terrorist pronouncements "auto-propaganda." Parallels exist with the witnessing function that sociologists of religion associate with the efforts made by sects and cults to recruit and convert others. The success rates of these efforts are normally dismal, yet the groups persist, it is argued, because the activity serves to reinforce the commitment of the members assigned the task.

Building on these insights, Horgan discusses issues of validity and reliability in "Interviewing Terrorists: A Case for Primary Research," and "Interviewing the Terrorists: Reflections on Fieldwork and Implications for Psychological Research."[35] Citing White, he addresses the need to verify information obtained from interviews through comparative analyses with other sources, respondents, security experts, media personnel and stories. Following White's recommendation, he also encourages researchers to look for patterns in the data and accounts that conflict with, or even negate, the information provided by respondents. Doing so may lead to the discovery, as White further suggests, of information that was "not necessarily apparent" from the interviews.[36] In 2008, Horgan raises the problems of bias and "memory error" as well, but he has in mind the biases and faulty recall of the researchers, and not that of the respondents. He suggests that effective note-taking is a suitable corrective,[37] and in 2012, he encourages researchers to be more forthcoming about the kinds of questions they ask, and how they are guiding the interviews.[38] Finally, he touches on the value of case studies more generally.[39] In other words, most of his discussion assumes that the accounts provided by terrorists are incomplete and problematic in various ways, and his analysis is limited to suggesting some practical ways of getting on with the work and verifying the data better.

Horgan later provides a more penetrating analysis. In 2012, in a few paragraphs he directly addresses the question: How do we know if the terrorists are telling the truth?[40] He immediately questions whether identifying the "truth" in this context is something researchers can realistically do. Summarizing his reflections, he notes that what terrorists say may well change as they move through different stages of their involvement, and later accounts are more likely to be dressed in the "new ideological garb" acquired by recruits with their increased exposure to movements and ideologues. But this need not mean, he counterintuitively suggests, that the later accounts are "less truthful" than earlier ones. We must keep in mind that all accounts are incomplete and biased, and much of what terrorists say is a "post-hoc invention" inspired by ideology.

Finally, Horgan rather provocatively states:

> In some interviews, the issue of truth is really irrelevant. The significance of the interview may be that it gives psychological insight into the person being interviewed. Finding 'reality' may be less important than acknowledging the significance of its meaning for the interviewee … [41]

Horgan extends his thoughts on this issue in a discussion of trigger moments and catalysts for becoming involved in terrorism in the second edition of *The Psychology of Terrorism*.[42] Relying on unsubstantiated retrospective accounts of such trigger moments, he argues, may result in overstating the significance of certain events and experiences. This is because in hindsight, terrorists, like the rest of us, will tend to seek a clarity that was not

present at the moment, and they will more easily recall particular events, than aspects of a gradual process of socialization. What is more, most such accounts are subject to a "simple attribution bias," especially with regard to controversial behavior. Everyone tends, including terrorists, to attach a high degree of responsibility for problematic past actions to the influence of external forces—environmental factors and the actions of others—to avoid blame for past acts and to legitimate ongoing engagement in controversial behavior. Terrorists are inclined to justify their actions as having been provoked by the deeds of others, asserting that under the circumstances, they had no choice but to come to the defense of some victimized group or community with which they identify. It was their duty to take up arms, and external circumstances forced this duty upon them. The role of more amorphous personal factors or the benefits of joining, such as a lack of social status or sense of identity, or increased power and thrills, are rarely articulated as well, or at all. This state of affairs raises the key interpretive issue:

> It is immensely difficult to ascertain … whether these types of verbal explanations would have existed without the acquired effects and qualities of membership, and life as part of a terrorist movement more generally. In other words …, is this type of answer merely a by-product of exposure to in-group "training"?[43]

Horgan further notes that an awareness of the "auto-propagandistic" aspects of espousals of ideology, as proposed by Cordes, increases our suspicions of the veracity of these retrospective accounts.[44]

Horgan goes on, nonetheless, to cast some doubt on the overall argument when he states that only one person in a sample of terrorists from multiple groups he interviewed "suggested they had no alternative but to engage in terrorism. On the contrary, they described exploring the pros and cons of pursuing other avenues before settling on seeking out involvement with a specific violent group."[45] All the same, he concludes: "When couched in ideological terms … it can be exceptionally challenging to ascertain whether the justification preceded involvement or resulted from it."[46]

This is the key consideration: overall, it is extremely difficult to differentiate between motivations and justifications. As Horgan's brief excursus also indicates, however, it is not clear if this distinction actually makes sense or matters.

Nilsson makes a number of similar and new observations in his recent article on interviewing jihadists.[47] Questions of reliability arise, he suggests, for interview data acquired from imprisoned terrorists, but former jihadists "are still in a good position to self-evaluate the reasons for their becoming jihadists and their subsequent experiences."[48] He seems to imply this holds true for "active jihadists" as well, but notes that in this case the real issue is not the intervention of post-hoc justifications as much as an ongoing reflective process justifying future activity. "Gaining access to this reflective process," he states, "can be a rich source of data."[49] In such interviews, the jihadists will make contradictory statements, and this may cause us to distrust the data. "Sometimes," he states, "the interviewer is clearly aware that the interviewee is intentionally giving misleading or false answers."[50] Nevertheless, he argues, this is often because the interviewer has failed to establish sufficient grounds of trust and rapport with the interviewee. Sometimes, however, despite a significant investment of time, little useful data will emerge from even a long interview. In every case, as White and Horgan recommend, the data needs to be compared with other interviews and various forms of open-source material. "However, open-source material is often irrelevant to the topic of interest to the researcher as the point of conducting interviews is to gain access to data beyond open sources."[51]

As others have cautioned, Nilsson also argues that qualitative researchers need to guard against expecting too much coherence and order in the data interviewees provide. Our real lives are far more disjointed and full of contradictory actions, thoughts, and feelings, than even most narratives elicited in interviews indicate. Hence contradictions may be evidence of the "truthfulness" of the accounts offered as much as grounds for distrust. This adds another twist to the interpretive challenges faced by researchers.[52]

Finally, Nilsson suggests that one possible response to the question of whether we can trust what terrorists say is to distinguish between "informants" and "respondents." If the terrorist interviewees are deemed informants, providing information about events or processes, then "ideally" we should approach the obtained data critically and seek confirmation by other independent sources. "If the interviewees are treated as respondents, the aim of the interview is to gain access to their worldviews, thoughts, and feelings rather than to obtain data whose accuracy can be verified. Of course, in some cases, the interviewees are both, and so overall Nilsson falls back on using our "common sense and experience from previous interviews" to sort things out.[53]

In Khalil's guide to interviewing terrorists and violent extremists, he touches briefly on the issue of trusting the information provided. He stresses the importance of cautioning readers to be careful in interpreting the findings,[54] and adding nuance to the worries, he notes:

> Terrorists and violent extremists may provide false or misleading information, for instance, by offering opinions presented as 'facts,' to be viewed favorably by the interviewer, because they are ill-informed, to discredit others, to avoid perceived threats associated with divulging information, to aggrandize their own role in events, through unwitting self-deception, or simply as their memories are flawed.[55]

Calling to mind the attribution bias noted by Horgan, he observes that it is common for interviewees to "overemphasize" the role of either "structural grievances" or coercion in explaining their actions in order to "reduce their own culpability."[56] His recommended response is to "triangulate" the information provided "as much as possible with other sources." He admits, though, that this can be problematic when dealing with "perceptual or motivational information."[57]

In an analysis of the motivations of Western foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, Dawson and Amarasingam provide a more extensive defense of the use of information derived from social media dialogues with terrorists.[58] They use this data to argue that ideology and personal existential reasons are more important in explaining the behavior of the Western foreign fighters than the socio-economic factors highlighted in other studies of such fighters. When an anonymous reviewer of the article challenged the "evidentiary value" of the statements the fighters made, they formulated a more explicit rationale for using such data. The reviewer, they state, raised at least three reasons for doubt: these jihadi fighters normally only had access to their phones after completing some religious education, and this religious training conditioned them, on the one hand, to overlook socioeconomic reasons for their radicalization, and on the other hand, to emphasize their personal religious motivations for travelling to Syria. Consequently, the reviewer argues, it is not surprising that these fighters present their turn to terrorism as "an epiphany of God's will." In other words, echoing Horgan's comments, the anonymous reviewer is arguing that the data is more reflective of the ideological training the fighters underwent than their actual motivations for becoming foreign fighters.[59]

After noting how this kind of data is subject to some distortion and hence interpretive caution is necessary, Dawson and Amarasingam respond to the reviewer's critique with several interesting points. First, they note that the criticism presents a chicken-and-egg conundrum. "Did these individuals end up in jihadi religious education programs because of their prior religiosity, or are their accounts of their past religiosity merely a manifestation of their religious training in Syria? How could we determine which is more the case? Perhaps both possibilities are true?" With the limited data in hand, they argue it is implausible that most of the people who traveled to Syria and Iraq to wage jihad were not driven, at least partially, by their religious commitments. "The commitments may have been theologically flawed and incomplete, but they were probably sincere and obviously consequential. Once in Syria, in other words, they received training in the particulars of Islamic Law (Shari'a), as espoused by the group they joined, but not in the fundamentals of the Salafi-jihadist ideology."[60]

They argue that the reviewer is presumably, "neither proposing that we … should stop collecting primary data from foreign fighters, nor that all the information derived from individuals who have undergone some religious training is categorically non-evidentiary." Doing so would be "methodologically unjustified, and substantively counterproductive."[61] It certainly would pose problems for sociologists of religion, and a wide array of other fields of study, since comparable training is a constituent part of many roles in society, in the military and the

police, and for professors, nurses, computer hackers, athletes, actors, members of organized crime groups, and so on.

They suspect, however, that the reviewer is suggesting that the nature of religious training is somehow more suspect. The approach taken by the reviewer implies that the accounts of the jihadists "might somehow be more credible if they were secured before they became religious, since it is the religious indoctrination that is problematic." However, they ask, "Why would pre-religious, or perhaps post-religious, accounts of their behavior or reasoning be intrinsically less subject to distortion?"[62] As Horgan cautions, there is no good reason for assuming that either later or earlier accounts are intrinsically any more or less "truthful." In fact, in the sample of foreign fighters interviewed by Dawson and Amarasingam it is clear that many had some formal religious education in childhood, and they all claim to have undergone some conversion-like experience in adolescence that set them on the path to jihadism. Consequently, they point out, by the logic of the skeptical reviewer, "almost everything that most jihadists could tell us about their own experience would be significantly discounted, no matter when we interviewed them as they progressed along the path to becoming a foreign fighter."[63]

In fact, Dawson argues, the entire discussion of religious terrorism is permeated by a subtle yet significant conceptual bias against accepting religion as a *sui generis* source of motivation, born perhaps of the secular backgrounds and training of most terrorism scholars. This bias leads many to misunderstand and misrepresent the nature and impact of the religiosity of homegrown jihadists and foreign fighters. Elsewhere he documents the presence and consequences of this bias in some detail. He delineates the presence of problematic assumptions, interpretive inconsistencies, and gaps in knowledge in the arguments of some of the leading scholars of terrorism.[64] His critique is inevitably inferential but developed from a close reading of the texts.[65]

More fundamentally, however, he stresses the need to offset the suspicion of terrorist claims with the "equally strong methodological imperative" to prioritize what subjects say about their lives.[66] He cites the classic formulation of this point of view by Herbert Blumer:

> … if [a] scholar wishes to understand the action of people it is necessary for him to see their objects [i.e., physical, social, and conceptual] as they see them. Failure to see their objects as they see them, or a substitution of his meanings of the objects for their meanings, is the gravest kind of error that the social scientist can commit. It leads to the setting up of a fictitious world. Simply put, people act towards things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them, not on the basis of the meaning that these things have for the outside scholar. Yet we are confronted left and right with studies of human group life and of the behavior of people in which the scholar has made no attempt to find out how the people see what they are acting toward.[67]

Indeed, Dawson argues,[68] the field of terrorism studies tends to succumb to what Bale calls the problem of "mirror imaging." Analysts will "project their own ways of thinking, their own values, their own frames of reference, and their own fantasies onto [terrorists], including those emanating from very different cultures with very different histories and values, instead of trying to view the world from the [terrorists] own perspectives and points of view."[69] This form of parochialism is most conspicuous in the analysis of individuals who profess an "extremist ideology" (i.e., one that deviates dramatically from the social and political norms of the analysts). In this context, Dawson further stipulates, it is irrelevant whether the beliefs and ideas espoused by jihadists, such as the imminent restoration of the Caliphate, are fantastic.[70] A methodological obligation remains to prioritize the claims of those being studied, because when people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.[71]

Six key findings and insights, then, emerge from the existing discussion of this issue in the literature of terrorism studies. First, the question of the reliability and validity of the primary data obtained from interviews with terrorists has received little sustained attention. The issue is mentioned in passing in a handful of more general discussions of the methodological challenges of interviewing terrorists and is largely absent from substantive empirical studies using data from such interviews. Second, two overarching and conflicting tendencies seem to

co-exist in the field at present: either to take much of what terrorists say at face value or be categorically skeptical of most of what they say. Third, amongst those who address the issue there is a consensus that researchers need to deal with the tensions surrounding the evidentiary value of this data by being more rigorous and careful in their methods of interviewing and reporting, and seeking to triangulate their findings with data from other sources. In other words, the dominant approach is a delimited methodological one, which only partially addresses the full set of relevant concerns. Fourth, all data acquired in interviews is perspectival, and in the case of terrorist accounts, much that is said is relative to where individuals are on the path of violent extremism. We need to take this situational aspect of the accounts into consideration when interpreting them. There is no sound reason, however, for assuming that interviews acquired at an earlier point in the process of radicalization, or the career of a terrorist, will necessarily be more reliable than later ones, or vice versa. Fifth, on the basis of existing social psychological studies, it is hypothesized that the terrorists' explanations of their motivations for becoming terrorists will tend to display an "attribution bias" which emphasizes the role of external forces and conditions in making their decisions, thereby limiting their personal culpability. This does seem to be the case in many instances. As several researchers have noted, however, it is not the case with other samples. Sixth, the key issue appears to be determining the role of ideological training in shaping the retrospective accounts provide by terrorists—both in writing (e.g., memoires) and verbally (e.g., interviews). If the fear of the taint of training is carried too far, or the conception of training is too broad (e.g., encompassing all religious activity), then there is the risk that the testimony of those under study will be excluded altogether from the field of study. Such an exclusion is ethically and methodologically problematic, and unless it can be justified with substantive evidence from the cases under consideration, it will perpetuate the counter-productive practice of mirroring.

Three Reasons Why Terrorism Studies Researchers Have Struggled with the Issue

There are at least three different, intertwined, and largely implicit concerns that seem to have stalled efforts to address the methodological issues raised by talking to terrorists. These concerns need to be teased apart and clarified before proceeding to discuss the methodological justification for seeking more interviews with terrorists and taking their motivational claims more seriously. The positions are logically inconsistent, yet they co-exist in the field overall and appear together—implicitly—in specific discussions of the issue.

First, as indicated above, the willingness to credence the claims of perpetrators of crimes exists on a continuum of degrees of deviation from the dominant values and norms of modern Western liberal-democratic societies. For logical, but also emotional and moral reasons, the more deviant the acts in question, the more everyone, including researchers, are inclined to be suspicious of the explanations provided by perpetrators. In part, this is because the abnormality of the acts leads us to believe that the actors must be abnormal as well.[72] Given the heinous nature of the crimes of terrorists, often it is assumed these individuals must, like other kinds of exceptionally violent offenders, be significantly different from the rest of us.

Most terrorism scholars know that this common interpretive proclivity runs counter to decades of relevant research. No one has documented a clear relationship between definable forms of psychopathology and acts of terrorism, and efforts to develop a distinct terrorist profile, modelled on those developed for serial killers, for example, have failed.[73] Leading scholars of terrorism have insisted on the normalcy of most terrorists.[74] Silke's conclusion continues to hold true: "the research supporting terrorist abnormality has been sparse and of questionable validity. In contrast, the research suggesting terrorist normality has been more plentiful, and in general, of much greater scientific validity."[75] This does not mean that some terrorists are not suffering from diagnosable or other less definitive forms of mental illness. Rather, as Victoroff concludes, the research literature shows that terrorists "are psychologically extremely heterogeneous. Whatever [their] stated goals and group of identity, every terrorist, like every person, is motivated by [their] own complex of psychosocial experiences and traits."[76] Recent empirical work is starting to delineate how this might be the case, disaggregating the data on the behaviors of terrorists, types of terrorists, different kinds terrorist acts, and forms of participation in terrorism, in order to delineate more specific correlations.[77] The details of this work, however, are not our concern in this context. Rather the point is simply that categorical suspicion of the testimony of terrorists on these grounds, explicitly or implicitly, is not warranted and this fact needs to be stressed in justifying giving

credence to what terrorists say.

Second, we also tend to assume, understandably, that the perpetrators of terrorism, like most criminals, feel guilty about their actions. Reversing the onus of the first assumption, in attempting to understand terrorists it is common for people to assume there are important parallels with their own experience. Even though most terrorists are thought to be monsters, we still tend to expect them to be cognizant they have broken the law, and what is more, grievously violated the norms and values of the societies in which they live. Consequently, it is assumed, they will seek to obfuscate why they acted in order to escape or minimize blame and punishment. There is an intrinsic motivation, in other words to be deceitful, in both premediated and more off-handed ways. In some cases, perhaps, it is assumed additionally that there may be a deeper psychological urge to rationalize the acts in order to relieve the burden of guilt experienced by the terrorists. We do seek, after all, to have such offenders confess to their crimes in court and express remorse. This is seen as an essential part of achieving true justice in these cases.

It remains an open question, however, whether these perpetrators do feel guilt for their actions. This is something that must be determined on a case-by-case basis, and probably never in a definitive way. On the one hand, there are reasonable grounds for being suspicious of the statements made by terrorists under investigation, on trial, or seeking release from incarceration. Such individuals are motivated, in multiple ways, to provide the kinds of explanations that either they think their captors want or that will disguise their real motivations. On the other hand, it is questionable whether grounds exist for being equally suspicious of the statements of terrorists who are either still active or long-since retired and perhaps free from further legal repercussions for their actions. Some grounds for distortion will exist, such as the desire to present a more acceptable public image or alternatively exaggerate the importance of their role. These individuals, however, are operating in a context that favours a freedom of expression unlike that experienced by those facing legal penalties, so there is a difference. Dawson and Amarasingam, for example, had the rare opportunity to interview active jihadist foreign fighters in the zone of conflict, and long before the demise of ISIS and other jihadist groups.[78] They think this adds to the veracity of the accounts they collected—though the accounts are still retrospective. The interviewees often expressed little concern for what others thought of their actions if they were not committed jihadists as well.

Given what we know about the re-socialization and self-transformation characteristic of many instances of radicalization, is it reasonable to assume that these individuals think about their crimes in ways analogous to how others would? Or is it more likely they will sincerely explain their actions in ways that are consonant with the new worldview, if not an alternate reality, undergirding their identity as terrorists? Most theorizing about the process of radicalization points to some kind of significant shift in identity. This shift is thought to be profound, and reminiscent of religious conversions.[79] If this is the case, are we warranted in doubting or dismissing the explanatory value of the statements they provide simply because they are embedded in an ideology or worldview we reject or find implausible, or even fantastic? The statements made can be an authentic expression of their motivations, no matter how alien to our sensibilities. This holds true both at the time they are made, and in some respects, with regard to actions taken earlier in their lives. Memory and distortion issues arise with all retrospective accounts of behavior, but if the acts the terrorists are accused of did not lie so far outside the spectrum of normal behavior, would we not extend to them the same credibility and interpretive license we do to other people in our lives and legal systems?

As Horgan cautions, we must keep in mind that all accounts are incomplete and biased, and much of what terrorists say is a "post-hoc invention" inspired by ideology. Learning the ideology, however, may involve finding the right words and concepts to express what were real but inchoate feelings and thoughts. In other words, the ideology has the potential to reveal "the truth," as the ideologues themselves believe, as well as cloak it. This is why, presumably, individuals are drawn to the ideology in the first place. It resonates with their experience and thoughts.

Third, concern about the veracity and value of the testimony of terrorists comes to the foremost forcefully in the case of religious terrorism. As Dawson argues, many terrorism scholars, who are often secular and have little or no training in the study of religion, struggle to be consistent and fair in their assessment of the role

of religion in motivating terrorism.[80] It is not that they have rushed to judgement and condemned religion as a source of terrorism, as other kinds of public commentators commonly do. On the contrary, most of the leading researchers in the field have been inclined to see religion as a secondary factor in instigating terrorist activity, relative to an array of social, economic, political, and psychological considerations. Religion is rarely taken seriously as a prime motivator, despite the ample contrary testimony of religious terrorists (primarily jihadists) themselves. Without reiterating why Dawson thinks this interpretive proclivity is misguided, poorly justified, and counterproductive,[81] an additional related argument is introduced. This particular argument is consonant with the first two criticisms raised above, and a special instance of the general fear, discussed in the introduction to this article, that in seeking to understand terrorists we are somehow engaging in appeasement.

Like the sociologists and psychologists studying new religious movements in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, scholars of religious terrorism have consistently turned to the identification of latent social and psychological factors to explain the behavior they are examining. In part, this is because the beliefs and practices are so unusual and threatening. In both cases, in seeking to bring the subject more within the orbit of other "normal" phenomena, that is, understandable phenomena, social scientists revert to reductive lines of reasoning. The emphasis placed on more primary social and psychological factors is used to discount the inherent religiosity of the groups and their members—both in the case of members of new religions and terrorists—because any recognition of the religiosity of followers is strongly associated with the legitimation of their goals and actions. Even in today's highly secularized societies, religion is residually accorded a special status and legitimacy. Religious freedoms are protected by the constitutions of most liberal-democratic societies, and religious institutions are generally deemed to be beneficial. If the motivations of the terrorists are acknowledged to be genuinely religious (however that is construed), then it is feared, implicitly, that some of the legitimacy accorded religion may bleed over to the terrorists and their causes, complicating the condemnation of these kinds of political action. Such, however need not be the case. If we are more careful in sorting out the normative and descriptive components of our arguments, we can offer more accurate explanations of why people become involved in jihadi terrorism, by recognizing their religious motivations (the ones the jihadists themselves fervently espouse) in conjunction with other social, psychological, and political ones, without legitimating the religious terrorists. We need to differentiate between recognizing their religiosity and the legitimacy of their beliefs. Accepting the former need not entail, in this case, accepting the latter.

Combining aspects of all three of these concerns, it is important to further recognize that when someone has replaced the norms and values that they are violating with an entirely new normative system and worldview, then the justifications they offer for their actions, present and past, can no longer be treated simply as self-serving excuses for deviant behavior, and we cannot be entirely critical and dismissive without calling into question one of the key processes by which social change happens. This is how Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam, for example, spread and transformed the world.[82] The personal and collective objections of analysts to the new norms do not provide sufficient grounds for overriding this social scientific insight, or supporting the categorical rejection of the accuracy or legitimacy of the motivational claims of the individuals and groups holding the new oppositional worldviews. Contemporary Western societies accept—and in fact actively promote—the possibility of persons undergoing these kinds of radical changes when it suits their purposes: for example, in the case of criminals and addicts, or even whole societies doing something similar regarding shifts in cultural norms such as the adoption of gender equality, legal formalism or democracy. In the past, the language of 'redemption' was used to characterize and encourage these kinds of changes, at both the societal and individual levels. In fact Western societies were centrally constructed around such notions for centuries, and we would do well to respectfully take this fact into consideration when addressing the professed beliefs and observed behaviors of others, whether we agree with their alternate worldviews or not. Either the kinds of radical shifts in beliefs and practices captured by notions like redemption are possible or they are not, and if they are, then social scientific observers cannot pick and choose which ones are legitimate and hence an authentic and perhaps primary source of motivations, based on whether they agree or disagree with the belief systems in question. Saying this neither entails advocacy for an unrealistic absolute moral relativism nor a mythological absolute value-neutrality in the social sciences. Rather, as Brannan et al., Jackson et al., Stampnitzky, and others have indicated,[83] it involves recognizing that the failure to construct adequate firewalls between normative

and empirical considerations in terrorism studies has damaged the integrity of the field from the beginning, and in this instance needlessly interfered with efforts to discern the motivations of terrorists.[84]

Conclusion

With these new and more systematic insights into the nature and complexity of the issues raised by using evidence from talking to terrorists, we are returned to the hermeneutic circle, and the initial suspicion of the motivational claims of terrorists is complemented by a further suspicion of the grounds for being skeptical of these claims. A hermeneutic of suspicion is operative at two levels: with regard to the data itself, and the explicit and implicit interpretative frameworks used in assessing this data. In seeking to be more rigorous in the treatment of the data terrorism scholars need to keep this bigger picture in mind.

In the end, however, it is fair to say that most terrorists do recognize that they have broken with the dominant norms and values of the societies in which they have lived. Therefore, the explanations they offer for their behavior, no matter how they are formulated, will conform to the classic sociological definition of "accounts." They are verbal explanations for socially undesirable or problematic behavior.[85] In seeking to bring additional resources to bear on the evidentiary value of data from interviews with terrorists then the logical next step would be to utilize insights from the considerable broader sociological literature on the problem of "accounts."

A satisfactory resolution of the problem of accounts in terrorism studies also depends, however, on addressing a related point, the relationship of attitudes to behavior or beliefs to actions. Citing the results of experimental social psychology, namely that attitudes or beliefs are weak predictors of behavior and actions, some terrorism scholars call into question the causal significance of ideology, and hence by implication the veracity of the motivational claims made by terrorists in ideologically informed accounts.[86] The situation, however, is more complex than terrorism researchers have acknowledged. Certain kinds of attitudes do not align well with certain kinds of behaviors, but meta-analyses of the relationship reveal that under discernable conditions "attitudes significantly and substantially predict future behavior."[87] Much depends on how the attitudes were formed, the specificity of the object of the attitude, and how readily and often the attitude is recalled and enacted. If the circumstances surrounding the radicalization of an individual match the conditions under which people typically act in accordance with their attitudes, then the accounts they offer of their behavior may be more reliable and potentially valuable than the critics think.

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Notes

[1] For example, David W. Brannan, Philip F. Esler, and N.T. Anders Strandberg (2001). "Talking to 'Terrorists': Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (2001); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence.* Third edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); John Horgan, "Interviewing Terrorists: A Case for Primary Research," in H. Sinchun Chen, Edna Reid, Joshua Sinai, and Andrew Silke, eds., *Knowledge Management and Data Mining for Homeland Security* (New York: Springer, 2008) and John Horgan, "Interviewing the Terrorists: Reflections on Fieldwork and Implications for Psychological Research," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 4, 3 (2012); Andrew Silke, "Research on Terrorism: A Review of the Impact of 9/11 on the Global War on Terrorism," in Hsinchun Chen, Edna Reid, Joshua Sinai, Andrew Silke, and Boaz Ganor, eds., *Terrorism Informatics Knowledge Management and Data Mining for Homeland Security* (Boston: Springer, 2008).; Todd C. Helmus, "Why and How Some People Become Terrorists," in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin, eds., *Social Science for Counterterrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2009); and Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja, "Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, 2010.

[2] For example, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and US* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); James Khalil, "Radical Beliefs and Violent Actions Are Not Synonymous: How to Place the Key Disjuncture Between Attitudes and Behaviors at the Heart of Our Research into Political Violence," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37 (2014) and James Khalil, "A Guide to Interviewing Terrorists and Violent Extremists," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 42, 4, (2019); Jytte Klausen, "Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Ira,." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, 1, (2015); Marc Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); Erica Chenoweth, Erica and Pauline Moore, *The Politics of Terror*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[3] In 2001 Silke reported that only ten percent of the research in terrorism studies utilized interviews, and in 2008 he documented that only one percent of research on terrorism has been based on systematic interviews with terrorists (Andrew Silke, op.cit., 101). Reviewing the research literature from 2007 to 2016, Schuurman discovered that almost sixteen percent of studies employed interviews. He does not break down his data further, however, to determine the percentage of studies based on interviews with terrorists—Bart Schuurman, "Research on Terrorism, 2007-2016: A Review of Data, Methods, and Authorship," *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Online version, Mar. 1, 2018, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546553.2018.1439023. It is fair to say that the number of studies involving interviews with terrorists remains small and uncertain, for example: Mark Jeurgensmeyer, op. cit.; Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003); Jerrold M. Post, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita M. Denny. "The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, 2003; John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements* (London: Routledge, 2009); Ariel Merari, Jonathan Fighel, Boaz Ganor, Ephraim Lavie, Yohanan Tzoreff, and Arie Livne, "Making Palestinian 'Martyrdom Operations'/'Suicide Attacks': Interviews with Would-Be Perpetrators and Organizers," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, 2010; Alessandro Orsini, "Interview with a Terrorist by Vocation: A Day among the Diehard Terrorists, Part II." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 36, 2013; Daan Weggemans, Edwin Bakker, and Peter Grol, "Who are They and Why do They Go? The Radicalisation and Preparatory Processes of Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, 4 (2014); Kate Barrelle, "Pro-integration: Disengagement from and Life after Extremism," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 7, 2 (2015); Julie Chernov Hwang, "The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding the Pathways," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29 (2017); Lorne L. Dawson, and Amarnath Amarasingam, "Talking to Foreign Fighters: Insights into the Motivations for Hijrah to Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 40, 3 (2017); Susan Fahey and Pete Simi, "Pathways to Violent Extremism: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of the US Far-Right," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* (initial online version, Dec. 5, 2018).

[4] For example, C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive," *American Sociological Review* 5, 6, (1940; R.S. Peters, *The Concept of Motivation* (London: Routledge, 1960); (1940). Jonathan H. Turner, "Towards a Sociological Theory of Motivation," *American Sociological Review* 52, 1, (1987).

[5] For example, Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes," *Journal of Philosophy* 60, 1963; Martin Hollis, *Models of Man: Philosophical Thoughts on Social Action*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Jerald Hage and Babara Foley Meeker, *Social Causality* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988); and Mark Risjord, "Reasons, Causes, and Action Explanation," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 35, 3, (2004).

[6] For example, James Clifford and George Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986); Margery Wolf, *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Kim Knott, "Insider/Outsider Perspectives," in John Hinnells, ed., *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[7] For example, John Heritage, "Ethnomethodology," in Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner, eds., *Social Theory Today* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Kieran Bonner, "Hermeneutics and Symbolic Interactionism: The Problem of Solipsism," *Human Studies* 17, 1994; Vivian Burr, *Social Constructionism*. Third edition (London: Routledge, 2015).

[8] For example, Charles C. Ragin, Joane Nagel, Patrica White, eds. *Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research* (Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation, 2004); John Levi Martin, *Thinking through Methods: A Social Science Primer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[9] For example, Adam Dolnik, "Conducting Field Research on Terrorism: A Brief Primer," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, 2, 2011; John Horgan, 2012, op. cit.; Marco Nilsson, "Interviewing Jihadists: On the Importance of Drinking Tea and Other Methodological Considerations," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 41, 6, 2018; James Khalil, 2019, op. cit.

[10] David Brannan, et al., op. cit.; John Horgan, 2012, op. cit.

[11] John Horgan, 2012, op. cit., 202.

[12] Quite characteristically, after the arrest of two Canadians involved in a terrorist plot in 2013, the Conservative Prime Minister of Canada, Steven Harper, took an oppositional leader (the current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau) to task for calling for more investigation of the "root causes" of terrorism. He did so by saying: "I think, … this is not a time to commit sociology … I don't

think we want to convey any view to the Canadian public other than our utter condemnation of this kind of violence … and our utter determination through our laws and our activities to do everything we can to prevent it and counter it" (CBC, 2013, at https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harper-on-terror-arrests-not-a-time-for-sociology-1.1413502).

[13] Lisa Stampnitzky, Lisa, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented "Terrorism."* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and "The Emergence of Terrorism Studies as a Field," in Richard Jackson, ed., *The Routledge Handbook on Critical Terrorism Studies* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[14] Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Third edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2015); Matthew B Miles, A. Michael Huberman, Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Fourth edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2019).

[15] In this limited context, I have not included additional insights from the literature on investigative interviewing (e.g., Gisli H. Gudjonsson, "Investigative Interviewing," in Tim Newburn, Tom Williamson, and Alan Wright, eds., *Handbook of Criminal Investigation* (New York: Willan Publishing, 2007); Tom Williamson, ed., *Investigative Interviewing: Rights, Research, Regulation*. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[16] John Horgan, 2012, op. cit., 198-199.

[17] Erica Chenoweth and Pauline Moore, 2018, op. cit., 119 and 158.

[18] Idem, 167.

[19] James Khalil, 2019, op. cit., 7 and 11.

[20] For example, Daan Weggemans et al., 2014; Edwin Bakker and Peter Grol, "Motives and Considerations of Potential Foreign Fighters from the Netherlands," International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT) Policy Brief (July 2015); Marco Nilsson, 2018, op. cit.; Jacob Sheikh, "'I Just Said It. The State'—Examining the Motivations for Danish Foreign Fighters in Syria," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, 6, 2016; Dawson and Amarasingam, 2017, op. cit.; El-Said, Hamed and Richard Barrett, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*. United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (July 2017), at: http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/assets/img/Report_Final_20170727.pdf; Marion Van San, "Belgian and Dutch Young Men and Women Who Joined ISIS: Ethnographic Research among the Families Left Behind," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 41, 1, 2018; Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Seamus Hughes, Bennett Clifford, "The Travelers: American Jihadists in Syria and Iraq," Program on Extremism, George Washington University (February 2018), at: https://extremism.gwu.edu/travelers.

[21] Dawson and Amarasingam, 2017, op. cit., 202-205.

[22] John Horgan, 2008 and 2012, op. cit.; Adam Dolnik, 2011, op. cit.; Mark Juergensmeyer, "Entering the Mindset of Violent Religious Activists," *Religions* 6, 2015; Marco Nilsson, 2018, op. cit.; James Khalil, 2019, op. cit.

[23] John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2005); John Horgan, 2012, op. cit.; John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*. Second edition (New York: Routledge, 2014); Marco Nilsson, 2018, op. cit.; James Khalil, 2019, op. cit.

[24] Robert W. White, "Issues in the Study of Political Violence: Understanding the Motives of Participants in Small Group Political Violence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 12, 1, 2000, pp. 95-96.

[25] Robert White, 2000, op. cit., 100.

[26] Idem, 101.

[27] Idem, 103.

[28] Idem, 101-103.

[29] Idem, 104.

[30] Marco Nilsson, 2018, op. cit., 5-7.

[31] Bonnie Cordes, "Euroterrorists Talk about Themselves: A Look at the Literature," in Paul Wilkinson and Alasdair M. Stewart, eds., *Contemporary Research on Terrorism* (Aberdeen, Scotland: Aberdeen University Press, 1987).

[32] Idem, 318.

[33] Idem, pp. 318-319.

[34] Idem, p. 319.

[35] Horgan, 2008, op. cit. and Horgan, 2012, op. cit.

[36] Horgan, 2008, op. cit. 94-95.

[37] Idem, p. 95.

[38] Horgan, 2012, op. cit., p. 201.

[39] Horgan, 2008, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

[40] Horgan, 2012, op. cit., pp. 200-201.

[41] Idem, p. 201.

[42] Horgan, 2014, op. cit., pp. 88-91; building on the comments made in the first edition, 2005, pp. 80-90.

[43] Idem, p. 89.

[44] Idem, p. 90.

[45] Idem, pp. 90-91.

[46] Idem, p. 91.

[47] Nilsson, 2018, op. cit.

[48] Idem, p. 10.

[49] Idem, p. 10.

[50] Idem, p. 11.

[51] Idem, p. 11.

[52] Michele Lamount and Ann Swidler, "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing," *Qualitative Sociology* 37, 2, 2014, pp. 162-163.

[53] Nilsson, 2018, op. cit., p. 11.

[54] Khalil, 2019, op. cit., pp. 7-8, 11.

[55] Idem, p. 7.

[56] Idem, p. 7.

[57] Idem, p. 8.

[58] Dawson and Amarasingam, 2017, op. cit., pp. 202-205.

[59] Idem, pp. 202-203.

[60] Idem, p. 203.

[61] Idem, p. 203.

[62] Idem, p. 204.

[63] Idem, p. 204.

[64] Lorne L. Dawson, "Trying to Make Sense of Homegrown Terrorist Radicalization: The Case of the Toronto 18," in Paul Bramadat and Lorne Dawson, eds., *Religious Radicalization and Securitization in Canada and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014); Lorne L. Dawson, "Discounting Religion in the Explanation of Homegrown Terrorism: A Critique," in James R. Lewis, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Religion and Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Lorne L. Dawson, "Challenging the Curious Erasure of Religion from the Study of Religious Terrorism," *Numen* 65, 2-3, 2018; Lorne L. Dawson, "Debating the Role of Religion in the Motivation of Religious Terrorism," *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 31, 2, 2018.

[65] A reviewer of this article objected that "researchers whom believe religion is not the main motivating factor of terrorists should not be subjected to speculation about their backgrounds in order to dismiss the views they propound in their academic output," and I fully concur. Dawson's position rests on a multifaceted analysis of the specific arguments, statements, and language used by several influential terrorism scholars (e.g., Clark McCauley, Marc Sageman, Rik Coolsaet, Bart Schuurman, and John Horgan) when they discount the primary role of religion. The analyses are too precise and extensive to be summarized here. The critical reviewer goes on argue that there is a significant body of research that suggests religion does not play a major role, and they cite Schuurman and Horgan, "Rationales for Violence in Homegrown Jihadist Groups: A Case Study from the Netherlands,"

as a prime example. If such research "has been carried out in ways that led the authors to the wrong conclusions," the reviewer states, then "it is, of course, perfectly legitimate to point that out." In fact that is what Dawson has done multiple times, and most specifically with an extended critique of the Schuurman and Horgan article in his article "Challenging the Curious Erasure of Religion from the Study of Religious Terrorism" (reference provided in [64]).

[66] Dawson and Amarasingam, 2017, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

[67] Herbert Blumer, "The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism." In Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969, pp. 50-51.

[68] Lorne L. Dawson, "Clarifying the Explanatory Context for Developing Theories of Radicalization: Five Basic Considerations." *Journal for Deradicalization* 18 (Spring, 2019), p. 66.

[69] Jeffrey M. Bale, "Denying the Link between Islamist Ideology and Jihadist Terrorism: 'Political Correctness' and the Undermining of Counterterrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, 5, 2013, p. 6; Jeffrey M. Bale, "Introduction: Ideologies, Extremist Ideologies, and Terrorist Violence," in Jeffry M. Bale, *The Darkest Sides of Politics*, I, (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 12-13.

[70] Lorne L. Dawson, 2018, op. cit., pp. 111-113.

[71] William I. Thomas, and Dorothy S. Thomas, *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs*. (New York: Knopf, 1928), pp. 571-572.

[72] Andrew Silke, "Cheshire-Cat Logic: The Recurring Theme of Terrorist Abnormality in Psychological Research," *Psychology, Crime and Law* 4, 1, 1998; Horgan, 2014, op. cit., pp. 47-61; Lisa Stampnitzky, 2016, op. cit.

[73] Silke, 1998, op. cit.; Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, 1, 2005; Horgan, 2005, op. cit. and 2014, op. cit.; Arie W. Kruglanski and Shira Fishman, "The Psychology of Terrorism: 'Syndrome' Versus 'Tool' Perspectives," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, 2006.

[74] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, 1981, p. 390.

[75] Silke, 1998, op. cit., p. 62.

[76] Victoroff, 2005, op. cit., p. 35.

[77] Paul Gill, John Horgan and Paige Deckert, "Bombing Alone: Tracing the Motivations and Antecedent Behaviors of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 59, 2, 2014; Emily Corner and Paul Gill, "A false dichotomy? Mental illness and Lone-actor terrorism," *Law and Human Behavior* 39, 1, 2015; Emily Corner, Paul Gill and Oliver Mason, "Mental Health Disorders and the Terrorist: A Research Note Probing Selection Effects and Disorder Prevalence," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 39, 6: 560-568.

[78] Dawson and Amarasingam, 2017, op. cit.

[79] Brannan et al., 2001, op. cit; Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Seth J. Schwartz, Curtis S. Dunkel and Alan S. Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 32, 2009; Michael A. Hogg and J. Adelman, "Uncertainty-Identity Theory: Extreme Groups, Radical Behavior, and Authoritarian Leadership," *Journal of Social Issues* 69, 3, 2013; Scott Atran, "The Devoted Actor: Unconditional Commitment and Intractable Conflict across Cultures," *Current Anthropology* 57 (Supplement 13), 2016; Marc Sageman, 2017, op. cit.; Lorne L. Dawson, "Sketch of a Social Ecology Model for Explaining Homegrown Terrorist Radicalisation," The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism—The Hague, Research Note 8 No. 1, 2017, at: https://icct.nl/publication/sketch-of-a-social-ecology-model-for-explaining-homegrown-terrorist-radicalisation/; Arie Kruglanski, David Webber, Katarzyna Jasko, Marina Chernikova and Erica Molinario, "The Making of Violent Extremists," *Review of General Psychology* 22, 1, 2018.

[80] Dawson, 2014, op. cit.; Dawson, 2017, "Discounting Religion in the Explanation of Homegrown Terrorism: A Critique," op. cit.; Dawson, 2018, "Challenging the Curious Erasure of Religion from the Study of Religious Terrorism," op. cit.

[81] Dawson, 2017, "Discounting Religion in the Explanation of Homegrown Terrorism: A Critique," op. cit.; Dawson, 2018, op. cit.

[82] Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946 [1922-23]); Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*. Trans. Ephraim Fischoff. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963 [1920]).

[83] Brannan et al., 2001, op. cit.; Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth, and Jeroen Gunning, eds. *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Stampnitzky, 2016, op. cit.

[84] In the case of religious terrorism, this failure applies equally to the practitioners of mainstream terrorism studies and critical terrorism studies (e.g., Jeroen Gunning and Richard Jackson, "What's so "Religious" about 'Religious Terrorism'? *Critical Studies*

on Terrorism 4, 3, 2011 and Ioannis Tellidis, "Religion and Terrorism," in Richard Jackson, ed., *The Routledge Handbook on Critical Terrorism Studies* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[85] Marvin B. Scott. and Stanford M. Lyman, "Accounts." *American Sociological Review* 33, 1, 1968; Terri L. Orbuch, "People's Accounts Count: The Sociology of Accounts," *Annual Review of Sociology* 23, 1997.

[86] McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011, op. cit.; Sageman, 2017, op. cit.

[87] Stephen J Kraus, "Attitudes and the Prediction of Behavior: A Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Literature," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21, 1, 1995; Laura R. Glasman and Dolores Albarracin, "Forming Attitudes that Predict Future Behavior: A Meta-Analysis of the Attitude-Behavior Relation," *Psychological Bulletin* 132, 5, 2006.

An Evaluation of the Islamic State's Influence over the Abu Sayyaf

by Veera Singam Kalicharan

Abstract

The Abu Sayyaf has engaged, at different moments in time in its long existence, sometimes more in criminal activities and sometimes more in acts of terrorism. After declaring its allegiance to the Islamic State in mid-2014, there has been a sharp rise in the group's terrorist activities. This article uses empirical data to evaluate the influence that the Islamic State had on the Abu Sayyaf. Using data from the Global Terrorism Database, over 350 attacks carried out by the Abu Sayyaf during the pre-allegiance and post-allegiance periods are analysed. A Chi-Squared analysis shows that the relationship between the Abu Sayyaf's allegiance to the Islamic State and the increase in terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf are statistically significant. The pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State influenced the targeting policies of the Abu Sayyaf: the odds that the group engaged in a terrorist attack in the post-allegiance period was approximately 1.75 times higher compared to the pre-allegiance period. Such fluctuations rather than a crime-terror nexus explain the extensive criminality displayed by the Abu Sayyaf at particular points in its history.

Keywords: Abu Sayyaf, Crime-Terror links, Islamic State, Marawi, Philippines

Introduction

The capability and strength of the Abu Sayyaf, which had been sidelined as a criminal syndicate or a group of bandits, has grown. Following the declaration of a Caliphate by the Islamic State and its demand of allegiance from Islamic extremist groups around the world, the Abu Sayyaf was one of the militant groups from South East Asia that pledged its loyalty. The Abu Sayyaf was also a key player during the Marawi siege in Southern Philippines in early 2017. At that time, the group mounted sustained attacks on government forces and proclaimed the territories it captured as a *wilayat* (province) of the Islamic State. Although the Abu Sayyaf has been a notorious and violent organization since its inception, its recent activities and goals signal a significant departure from the past. It will be argued here that crime-terror fluctuations rather than a nexus explain the Abu Sayyaf's transitions between two phases, namely an "extensive criminality" phase and a "terrorist leaning" phase, with the group displaying a relatively and proportionately lesser level of criminal activity in the latter.

Prior to the Marawi siege, the Abu Sayyaf was popularly perceived as an amateurish militant group that was devoid of an ideology or a clear set of goals. The Philippines' media depicted the Abu Sayyaf as both a loose network of criminal gangs that were involved in hijacking, kidnapping-for-ransom and piracy, as well as a religiously motivated terrorist organization. A minority of the academic literature questioned if the Abu Sayyaf could even be considered an organization in the conventional sense. In Ugarte's work, *'In A Wilderness of Mirrors': The Use and Abuse of the 'Abu Sayyaf' Label in the Philippines,* the author argues that the Philippines media has been susceptible to distortion of facts by the Philippines government which has affected its reporting and contributed to a skewed depiction and appreciation of the group.[1] In *What is the 'Abu Sayyaf'? How Labels Shape Reality,* Ugarte and Turner further problematize the characterisation of the Abu Sayyaf as a terrorist outfit using organization theory and network analysis. The authors object to the attribution of the label 'Abu Sayyaf,' which takes on an "organic or structural mode of organizational representation" and argue that the "phenomenon" is best understood in alternative ways.[2] One alternative way of understanding the organization that was suggested is using the "flux and transformation" model that show organizations as highly complex structures whose actions are essentially unpredictable for they lack semblance of a coherent body.[3]

While there were some scholarly disagreements on how the entity should be labelled, after the group's allegiance to the Islamic State, the Abu Sayyaf underwent a remarkable transformation, redeeming itself as an indisputable

terrorist organization. As an Islamic State affiliate, it possessed a semblance of a coherent organization with a functioning hierarchical structure, sub-units and the ability to forge alliances with other groups such as the Maute group and the Ansarul Khilafah to fight the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). In other words, the Abu Sayyaf's activities in the period after its allegiance to the Islamic State indicate that it acted very much like a terrorist organization rather than a criminal syndicate or a group of bandits as it was perceived before its allegiance to the Islamic State. The group's new avatar as a capable terrorist fighting force, gained within a short span of time, warrants an in-depth analysis, which this article provides. The article seeks to answer the following two inter-related questions:

(i) Are the increased terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf a result of the influence of the Islamic State?

(ii) What can be inferred from the changes in Abu Sayyaf's activities after its allegiance to the Islamic State?

The article is organised as follows. First, it establishes the Abu Sayyaf as an organization that has been involved in a disproportionate level of criminal activities for a self-proclaimed terrorist organization. In particular, the Abu Sayyaf as a corrupted terrorist organization whose members were in pursuit of financial goals, sometimes at the cost of the group's political ideology, will be discussed with reference to the literature on the crime-terror nexus. Second, the article discusses the Islamic State's tactics, methods, and motives in influencing regional terrorist organizations such as the Abu Sayyaf. Third, the methodology and the rationale for employing the Chi-Squared test to demonstrate the relationship between the Islamic State and the Abu Sayyaf are discussed. Fourth, the results of the Chi-Squared test are analysed and the findings discussed. Finally, recommendations for further research are offered.

The Abu Sayyaf and the Crime-Terror Nexus

From the literature on the crime-terror nexus it could be surmised that it would be a fallacy to assume criminality and terrorism to be mutually exclusive of each other. In fact, the literature shows considerable overlaps between the two.[4] Criminal activities form an important aspect in the political economy of terrorist organizations and determines a group's ability to finance itself. Terrorist financing plays an important role in determining whether the terrorist organization is able to sustain itself. The scholarship on the crime-terror nexus elucidates terrorist organizations' costly transactions which involve, among other things, the promotion and protection of the organization, training, compensation to families of martyrs, attracting new members, and the maintenance of bases.[5] In fact, contrary to popular belief, the price tag from the aforementioned payments (and not the terrorist attacks themselves) form the bulk of terrorist organizations' expenditures.[6]

With there being a great demand for finances and with access to lawful channels to finance the movements unavailable, criminal activities become the primary mode through which terrorist organizations have been able to finance themselves. There is a growing scholarly consensus suggesting that terrorist organizations engage in criminal activities such as drug trafficking, money laundering, kidnapping for ransom, illegal goods trafficking, among others, to finance their political campaigns.[7] In this light, the Abu Sayyaf's extensive criminal activities may seem more like a norm than an aberration. However, there are certain characteristics of the Abu Sayyaf that cannot be explained using the crime-terror nexus. An examination of the Abu Sayyaf's history would reveal that although the crime-terror nexus discourse can be helpful in understanding certain aspects of the group's activities, there are some ways in which the Abu Sayyaf deviates from this model.

One such notable deviation of the Abu Sayyaf is in its extensive involvement in criminal activities during particular phases. Based on the crime-terror nexus, one would expect to see consistencies in the extent of criminal and terrorist activities carried out by the Abu Sayyaf throughout its existence. However, the group was involved in proportionately greater levels of criminal activity at particular time periods. Although the group was involved in both terrorist and criminal activities throughout its existence, as the study shows, there were

significant variations in the extent of criminality during particular phases. From 2006 to 2014 for instance, 48% of all attack types of the Abu Sayyaf were criminal in nature. This is substantially higher when compared to the Abu Sayyaf's criminal activities in the post-allegiance period studied in this article from 2014 to 2017, during which the Abu Sayyaf's criminal attack types constituted 33% of all its attack types. There is a significant change in the pattern of attack types which problematise the use of a traditional crime-terror nexus model to explain the case and call for a context-specific analysis on the criminal and terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf.

In fact, the variations observed could be characterised as fluctuations between "extensive criminality" and "terrorist leaning" phases rather than a crime-terror nexus. Understanding them as fluctuations enables the identification of factors that render the group to be in either of the phases at any point in time. One factor, which this article deems central to the fluctuations observed, is the presence or absence of influence from international terrorist organizations. In other words, it is argued here that influence from external actors served as an impetus for the Abu Sayyaf to transit between the two phases and contributed to whether the Abu Sayyaf was in an "extensive criminality" or "terrorist leaning" phase. Table 1 shows the Abu Sayyaf's fluctuations between the two phases.

Abu Sayyaf's Fluctuations between Criminality and Terrorism

The Abu Sayyaf, founded in 1989 by Abdurajak Janjalani who had ties with the Al-Qaeda Core, started off as an ideologically driven terrorist organization.[8] The Abu Sayyaf's activities and attacks were primarily undertaken to support its political campaign of seceding from the Philippines to establish an Islamic State for the Muslims of the region.[9] During this period, the Al-Qaeda trained and infused the Abu Sayyaf with its ideology of radical Wahhabism, an ultraconservative Islamic doctrine. Due to its close ties with Al-Qaeda, the Abu Sayyaf received funding through a network of Islamic charities created and operated by individuals and organizations linked to Al-Qaeda.[10] Following the death of Abdurajak during an encounter with the Philippines army in 1998, the Abu Sayyaf's ties to the Al-Qaeda were severed and the latter's influence over the Abu Sayyaf was effectively lost.[11] Without external support and lacking a strong leader, a shift to criminality was the logical trajectory for the Abu Sayyaf. This ensured the continuity of the movement and provided a means for its members to sustain themselves.

Table 1: Abu Sayyaf's Fluctuations between Criminality and Terrorism

Sources: The time periods and the associated phases were obtained from the CNA (https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/DIM-2017-U-016122-2Rev.pdf) and from studying the activities of the group from the data obtained from the Global Terrorism Database. The affiliation, leadership and the number of factions were counter verified from newspaper articles, the Philippines government's official records and academic sources.

Time period	1989 – 1998	1998 – 2002	2002 – 2006	2006 – 2014	2014 - Present
Phase	Terrorist	Extensive Criminality	Terrorist Leaning	Extensive Criminality	Terrorist Leaning
Affiliation/ External Influence	Al-Qaeda	•	Jemaah Islamiyah (Al-Qaeda's regional affiliate)	•	Islamic State
Leader	Founded by Abdurajak Janjalani	•	Khadaffy Janjalani	Raddulan Sahiron	Isnilon Hapilon
Factions	Factions absent	2 major factions (Basilan and Sulu Factions)	Factions consolidated	Multiple factions	2 major factions (Basilan and Jolo factions)

During this period in which the Abu Sayyaf displayed extensive criminality, the ideological foundations of the group were side-lined and the group's activities were carried out for the "express purpose of meeting the group's basic financial needs, as opposed to progressing a Jihadist agenda."[12]

It was only in the period after the 9/11 attacks in the United States that the Abu Sayyaf, under the leadership of Khadaffy Janjalani, the brother of Abdurajak Janjalani, shifted its attention back to engaging in large scale terrorist activities. The 9/11 attacks and the renewed international terrorist movement at the behest of Al-Qaeda and its southeast Asian affiliate the Jemaah Islamiyah had the effect of motivating the Abu Sayyaf back into the path of Islamic extremism. This period was marked by some of Abu Sayyaf's most prolific terrorist attacks, such as the sinking of the Superferry 14 in 2004 and the Valentine's day bombing in 2005.[13] However, after the international terrorist movement subsided and with the lack of effective leadership, the group once again descended into near-anarchy and began to predominantly engage in criminal activities. This remained the case till the group proclaimed its allegiance to the Islamic State in mid-2014, following which the group fluctuated back into a "terrorist leaning" phase during which it engaged in relatively and proportionately more terrorist and politically motivated attacks than in the previous phase.

The Abu Sayyaf's history shows that it had fluctuated in and out of phases during which it engaged in proportionately more terrorist activities than criminal activities and vice versa. During the phases in which it displayed greater proclivities towards terrorist activities, it was led by individuals who had direct links with international terrorist organizations and who sought to align the Abu Sayyaf with the ideology of those organizations. A study of the group's history shows that strong leadership within the Abu Sayyaf could have contributed to the fluctuations. However, as will be explained later, the leaders' capabilities in forging unity among cadres and ideologically disciplining the movement, was dependent on Abu Sayyaf's association and links with international terrorist organizations. This is evident from the periods where the Abu Sayyaf had strong leadership but was still engaged in extensive criminal activities. It was only during the periods where there was affiliation with more influential terrorist organizations such as the Al-Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Islamic State that the Abu Sayyaf engaged in proportionately lesser criminal activities and more terrorist attacks. One of the objectives of this study is to demonstrate the connection between the Islamic State's influence and the fluctuation in the Abu Sayyaf's attack types following its allegiance to the Islamic State. In other words, the study seeks to show that the level of criminal or terrorist activities engaged in by the Abu Sayyaf could be attributed to the presence or absence of influence from international terrorist organizations.

The Islamic State's Influence over Regional Islamist Movements

The Islamic State's quest to influence regional militant groups is somewhat different from its predecessor, Al-Qaeda, and goes beyond arms training and funding. The terrorist attacks by the Abu Sayyaf in the post-allegiance period, particularly its role during the Marawi siege, were undertaken in support of the global jihadist movement that was promulgated by the Islamic State. The Islamic State supplanted Islamist militant groups that erstwhile had divergent goals with the idea that establishing and safeguarding the Caliphate was the primary duty of being a Muslim fighting force. By invoking the Caliphate, it inspired and attracted Islamists toward an Islamic utopia centred around the Caliphate. To streamline the goals of regional Islamist militant groups with its own, the Islamic State adopted two main strategies.

First, the Islamic State provided an overarching narrative of a global jihad that incorporated the aspirations of various regional Islamic movements. This is unlike Al-Qaeda, which, while sharing aspects of the ideology of regional movements and rendering them support in the form of funding and training, did not closely align itself with the immediate goals of those movements which in most cases was state formation through secessionism. The Islamic State's broad appeal of a global jihad was one which regional Islamist movements of different constitutions and goals were able to orientate themselves towards and was compatible with the militant activities that they were already engaged in their home regions. As part of its global jihad, the Islamic

State hijacked secessionist movements that had an Islamic character to fight for its global Caliphate. As with its mission in the Middle East which was one of dismantling states created by the West and in their place building a pristine Islamic Caliphate, the Islamic State proclaimed Muslim secessionist states around the world as its provinces.[14]

Second, the Islamic State, by proclaiming itself to be the sole Islamic political authority, was uncompromising in demanding allegiance and loyalty from all Muslim militant groups. It encouraged allegiance by providing funds, training, and protection, which turned out to be attractive to weak and disorganised militant groups such as the Abu Sayyaf. To prevent fratricides among its affiliates, the Islamic State, as a prerequisite to accepting a group's allegiance, required a group to "unify with other jihadist groups in the territory".[15] While unifying groups that were affiliated with it, the Islamic State delegitimised other Muslim militant groups that were opposed to it by labelling them as apostates and as enemies of Islam.[16] The coalition of Islamist groups helmed by the Islamic State ensured that its authority was not questioned, buttressing its position as the ultimate Islamic political authority.

Methodology

An evaluation on the extent to which the Islamic State influenced the Abu Sayyaf is made difficult by factionalism and the seemingly amorphous nature of the group. However, there are certain characteristics of the Abu Sayyaf that also render it ideal for this research.

One characteristic that makes the Abu Sayyaf a suitable case for this study is, as was shown earlier, its disproportionate level of involvement in criminal activities for a group that projects itself as an ideologically driven terrorist organization. The group's activities had fluctuated between "extensive criminality" and "terrorist leaning" phases, that appear to correspond with whether there had been external ideological support for the group from international terrorist organizations. These fluctuations make it a suitable case to test whether the group is under external influence at any particular point in time.

The quantitative data for the study was obtained from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). The GTD provides data on terrorist attacks in conflict zones across the world and is assembled and made accessible by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).[17] As the variables used in the study, the "Timeframe" variable and the "Attack type" variable are both categorical variables, a Chi-Squared test was adopted. The Chi-Squared test was used to test the relationship between the two categorical variables and determine the likelihood of the distribution observed resulting from chance. The following are the null hypothesis, H_0, and the alternative hypothesis, H_1, of the study.

H_0: Allegiance to the Islamic State and Abu Sayyaf's terrorist attacks are not associated

H_1: Allegiance to the Islamic State and Abu Sayyaf's terrorist attacks are associated

Timeframe Variable

The timeframe variable is an independent variable that separates the attacks of the Abu Sayyaf into two equal time periods, before and after the Abu Sayyaf's allegiance to the Islamic State. Attacks by the Abu Sayyaf that took place for around three and a half years before and after its allegiance were studied. The timeframes are separated before and after 23/07/14, the date Abu Sayyaf pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State[18] which was subsequently accepted by the Islamic State.[19]

The pre-allegiance and post-allegiance time periods, from 11/02/11 to 22/07/14 and 23/07/14 to 31/12/17 respectively, were chosen for two reasons. First, these enable the study to incorporate the most recent data

available on the group. The data from the Global Terrorism Database at the time of this study was available until 31/12/17, which was chosen as the last date for the post-allegiance time period which is 1,258 days from the date of allegiance. The days prior to the date of allegiance forms the pre-allegiance time period. Second, the duration of each period spans around three and a half years, providing a sufficiently large window that captures a sizeable number of attacks by the group that gives the statistical analysis true premises. A value of "0" is assigned for every attack during the pre-allegiance period and a value of "1" was assigned for every attack during the post-allegiance period in the dataset.

Attack Type Variable

The attack type variable is the dependent variable. The data was analysed to determine if an attack carried out by the group was criminal or terrorist in nature. To ensure that the data used was sound, eight attack types that were "unknown," in other words, the mode of attack could not be determined, were omitted from the Chi-Squared test.

Abu Sayyaf's Criminal Activities

The following attack types of the Abu Sayyaf in the Global Terrorism Database's dataset were determined to be criminal in nature: Kidnapping, Hostage Taking and Hijacking. These acts were deemed as criminal in nature as they were carried out primarily for financial gains of the group's members as opposed to advancing political goals.[20] Some of the more commonly engaged in criminal activities of the group, namely Kidnap-for-ransom, piracy, and hijacking, are discussed below. Criminal activities were assigned a value of "0" in the dataset.

Kidnap-for-ransom: Similar to its other criminal activities, the ideological motives are weak in the Abu Sayyaf's kidnap-for-ransom activities. The Abu Sayyaf has engaged in kidnappings primarily for financial gains as opposed to other terrorist groups that have kidnapped individuals in which there was a strong ideological motive. This is apparent when the kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf are compared with that of the Islamic State. The Islamic State was notorious for its gruesome beheading of captured Western hostages. Unlike the Abu Sayyaf, the Islamic State's kidnapping and execution of hostages were considered as a "terrorist attack" and as a "declaration of war"[21] against the United States and its allies for several reasons. First, the Islamic State though demanding ransom to release hostages had also engaged in kidnappings and executions as a form of retaliation to military actions of Western countries.[22] Second, the Islamic State kidnapped nationalities whose governments adhered to a well-established and consistent policy of not paying ransom to free their citizens kidnapped overseas.[23] Third, even on those occasions where a demand for ransom had been made, it was too large an amount that could not realistically be raised by the families of the victims. The Islamic State's kidnappings were fundamentally political in nature and "had a substantial impact on American and British foreign policy."[24] In the case of the Abu Sayyaf, however, kidnap-for-ransom did not serve an ideological or political purpose. As O'Brien writes, "Abu Sayyaf kidnaps mostly for financial reasons, as opposed to political reasons,"[25] and unlike its counterparts the group has demonstrated that it is negotiable in its ransom demands and has only resorted to executing its victims when it is apparent that there is no financial incentive to be gained.

Piracy and Hijacking: Other criminal activities that the Abu Sayyaf is notorious for are piracy and hijacking of vessels in the Celebes and the Sulu seas. These activities involve the Abu Sayyaf taking over commercial vessels with criminal threat of force, ransacking the cargo and robbing the sailors.[26] The frequently hijacked vessels are soft targets such as fishing boats and cargo barges. These acts have no political significance and are solely for the purposes of financial gain of Abu Sayyaf's cadres.

Abu Sayyaf's Terrorist Activities

The following attack types of the Abu Sayyaf were determined to be terrorist in nature: Bombing, Armed Assault, Assassination, Facility/ Infrastructure Attack. The attacks were identified as terrorist as they were carried out primarily for political and ideological purposes. In these attacks the Abu Sayyaf had demonstrated that it is guided by the Islamist ideology that it shared with the Islamic State and other ideologically driven terrorist organizations.

In its terrorist attacks, the Abu Sayyaf has used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), grenades and other forms of explosive devices to bomb civilian and military targets in Southern Philippines. The Abu Sayyaf's bombing of a crowded market in Davao City on September 2, 2016, that killed 14 people and injured 70, is an example of a terrorist attack by bombing by the group.[27] In an incident that involved armed assault, 21 soldiers were killed after they were ambushed by Abu Sayyaf militants.[28] These attacks were aimed at civilians and the Philippines military, targets which are compatible with the ideology of the Islamic State. They were directed at inflicting damage and casualties with no possibility of financial gain; these were therefore treated as "terrorist" attack types in the study. In fact, these attacks imposed a financial cost on the group. Attacks that were terrorist in nature, were assigned a value of "1" in the dataset.

The Chi-Squared Test Results

Table 2 summarizes the data for the two variables. A Chi-Squared test was subsequently carried out, the results of which informed the main findings of this article. The test includes 356 of the 364 attacks carried out by the Abu Sayyaf during the time period studied. Eight attack types that were "unknown" in the dataset were assigned the label "NA" and omitted from the study.

Table 2: Time Frame and Attack Type Distribution Table

	Time Frame			
Attack Type		Pre-allegiance[a] "0" value	Post-allegiance[b] "1" value	Total
	Criminal "0" value	48	83	131
	Terrorist "1" value	56	169	225
	Total	104	252	356

[a] 2 cases where the attack type was an "unknown" were excluded from the pre-allegiance period

[b] 6 cases where the attack type was an "unknown" were excluded from the post-allegiance period

From the data given in the table above, the Chi-Squared statistic can be calculated as:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=0}^{n} \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} = 4.976$$

The Chi-Squared test shows that the relationship between Abu Sayyaf's allegiance to the Islamic State and the terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf is statistically significant (Chi-Squared = 4.98, df = 1, p-value = 0.0257).

The Chi-Square test determines the likelihood that the observed distribution in attack types across the two periods results from chance and whether the two variables studied are independent. The Chi-Squared test results indicate that there is an association that the patterns of responses are significantly different, where the pledge of allegiance to Islamic State does influence the intent of attacks that the Abu Sayyaf carried out post-allegiance.

Using the table above, the Odds Ratio can be calculated as:

$$Odds\ Ratio = \frac{\frac{Terrorist\ Attack\ Type, Post - allegiance}{Criminal\ Attack\ Type, Post - allegiance}}{\frac{Terrorist\ Attack\ Type, Pre - allegiance}{Criminal\ Attack\ Type, Pre - allegiance}} = 1.754$$

The Odds Ratio provides the ratio of the odds that the Abu Sayyaf engages in a terrorist attack after its allegiance to the Islamic State to the odds of it engaging in a terrorist attack pre-allegiance. The Odds Ratio enables a determination on the degree to which the possibility of an attack by the Abu Sayyaf has increased or decreased during the post-allegiance period. The Odds Ratio of 1.75 indicates that the odds that the Abu Sayyaf engages in a terrorist attack in the post-allegiance period is approximately 1.75 times higher when compared to the pre-allegiance period.

Interpretation of Results

The study, based on empirical data, establishes conclusively that allegiance to the Islamic State is strongly associated with the increase in terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf. What follows is a discussion on how the results could be interpreted.

Refurbishing the Abu Sayyaf with an Ideology

The significant change in the intent of attacks by the Abu Sayyaf during the post-allegiance period could be interpreted as an expression of the shift in the ideology of the group as a result of its allegiance to the Islamic State. The Islamic State, like its predecessor Al-Qaeda, could have rekindled the ideological sentiments of segments of the Abu Sayyaf, providing the group a grander purpose of fighting to establish a province of a global Islamic Caliphate. Although the Abu Sayyaf already possessed a rudimentary form of Islamist ideology from the *Jumaah Abu Sayyaf,* a passage written by its founder Abdurajak Janjalani [29] and the group's initial ties to Al-Qaeda and Jemmah Islamiyah, this was often superseded by its proclivity to engage in criminal activities for short-term financial gains. In the absence of an external stimulus, the Abu Sayyaf became undisciplined and effectively lost its direction.

In this regard, the proclamation of an international jihad helmed by the Islamic State revitalised the erstwhile dormant ideological elements within the Abu Sayyaf. Becoming an affiliate of the Islamic State meant that the Abu Sayyaf had to abide by certain conditions such as cooperating with the other affiliates of the Islamic State in Mindanao and prioritising the political campaign of setting up a Wilayat. As such, the ideological influence from the Islamic State was critical in disciplining the group and nudging it more firmly towards becoming a

more ideologically disciplined terrorist organization. As was mentioned earlier, the Abu Sayyaf's affiliation to international terrorist organizations also coincided with the group being led by ideologically oriented leaders with connections to international terrorist organizations. The Abu Sayyaf's leaders, by declaring allegiance to the Islamic State were able to legitimise their own leadership and overcome the fragmentation within the Abu Sayyaf to some extent. Fragmentation within the Abu Sayyaf was a serious issue that ensued during most of the group's existence, particularly during the "extensive criminality" phases, undermining its capabilities as a terrorist organization. As segments of the Abu Sayyaf were sympathetic to the Islamic State even before the group became affiliated,[30] the declaration of allegiance by Isnilon Hapilon could have had the effect of patching up the fragments of the group. The increased inner-group coherence could have facilitated its transition to a phase where its terrorist activities were relatively and proportionately higher when compared to the pre-allegiance period.

Having said that strong leadership in the Abu Sayyaf was a contributing factor, leadership on its own does not explain the group's transition between the "terrorist leaning" and "extensive criminality" phases. Even during certain points in its history, when the Abu Sayyaf had strong and ideologically oriented leaders, the group remained extensively criminal. Raddulan Sahiron for instance helmed the Abu Sayyaf after Khaddaffy Janjalani's death in 2006 and at various other points figured as the group's leader or one of its major factions.[31] However, without external support, the group's terrorist activities were relatively and proportionately lower compared with its other phases. Regardless of the leadership in the Abu Sayyaf, an external stimulus, in the form of ideological influence from international terrorist movements, was necessary to motivate the ideologically inclined elements in the Abu Sayyaf to launch concerted terrorist campaigns.

Also, it is notable that the concept of a Wilayat, though broadly compatible with the Abu Sayyaf's campaign to create a separate homeland for Muslims of Southern Philippines, is qualitatively different from the group's original goal. Secessionism was a foundational ideology and a non-negotiable doctrine of the Abu Sayyaf. In fact, the group's splintering from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was due to the latter's compromise with the Philippines government on the secessionist demand in exchange for regional autonomy for the Muslim region in South Philippines. As such, the Abu Sayyaf's campaign to establish a Wilayat of the Islamic State's global Caliphate in the Philippines signals a departure from its earlier campaign to form a theocratic yet Westphalian styled independent nation state for the Muslims of the region. The 1.75 times increase in the odds that Abu Sayyaf's attack types are terrorist in nature following the group's allegiance to the Islamic State could be due to the group in effect fighting to set up a province of the Islamic State. Based on the Chi-Squared statistic and the Odds Ratio of 1.75, it could be interpreted that the Caliphate and the Wilayat were more attractive to Abu Sayyaf's militants as a rallying call to engage in terrorist attacks than the previous goal of seceding to create a nation-state for the Muslims of the region.

Not a Puritan Islamist Movement

Another observation to be made in the Abu Sayyaf's fluctuations is that during the post-allegiance "terrorist leaning" phase, the group continued to engage in a proportionately reduced but still considerable level of criminal activity. Compared to the pre-allegiance period, there is an overall increase in the number of attacks carried out by the Abu Sayyaf with the criminal and terrorist attack types increasing by 73% and 104% respectively. In other words, even while accruing characteristics of a conventional terrorist group and ideologically aligning itself with the Islamic State, the Abu Sayyaf had concurrently engaged in a considerable level of criminal activity for a self-proclaimed terrorist organization. A proportion of the finances accrued from these criminal activities could have been used to support its political campaign. However, given the nature of most of its criminal activities such as kidnapping and piracy which the group's members had traditionally engaged in for their personal financial gains and as the Abu Sayyaf's Jolo faction had continued to function as a criminal entity in the post-allegiance period, there is reason to believe that allegiance to the Islamic State has not had the effect of making the Abu Sayyaf a puritan Islamist movement. That is, the Abu Sayyaf, in spite of accruing and displaying tactics of conventional terrorist organizations which was evident during the Marawi

siege, the group continued with its criminal activities that had little to do with the terrorist campaign it was involved in. There are two explanations for this observation:

First, it shows a strong culture of criminality that has become entrenched in the membership of the Abu Sayyaf; it continued even in periods where the Abu Sayyaf became largely ideologically driven. The strong culture of criminality also explains why the Abu Sayyaf had not been able to establish itself as an ideologically driven terrorist organization in its own right as the criminal proclivities of the group supersede its ideology as soon as allegiance to an international terrorist organization ends. Based on the findings, it could be expected that after the external ideological influence the Abu Sayyaf receives from the Islamic State ends, the group is likely to transit back to an "extensive criminality" phase just as it was prior to its allegiance to the Islamic State.

Second, the retention of high levels of criminality could also be due to widening factionalism within the Abu Sayyaf, with some factions finding it lucrative to continue with criminal activities rather than orientate themselves toward political terrorism. The faction led by Isnilon Hapilon, also known as the Basilon faction, has mainly been engaging in terrorist activities while the Jolo faction had been involved primarily in criminal activities.[32] The increased terrorist attacks amidst the unabated criminal activities could imply that the rift among the factions have widened further.

Conclusion

Based on the Chi-Squared test and an analysis of the activities of the Abu Sayyaf from the literature, it has been shown that allegiance to the Islamic State has led to important changes in terms of the group's ideology, target types and inner-group dynamics. The Abu Sayyaf, due to the disproportionate level of criminal activity it was involved in and its fluctuations, serves as a good test case to show how allegiance to the Islamic State can affect a regional terrorist organization's attack types. It was found, as was mentioned earlier, that the Abu Sayyaf's criminal and terrorist activities, particularly its fluctuations, cannot be explained using the crime-terror nexus alone as the group was involved in relatively and proportionately greater level of criminal activity at particular time periods. The present text provided a context-specific examination of Abu Sayyaf's activities that accounted for the fluctuations in the group's terrorist and criminal attack types. The current evaluation of the Islamic State's influence over the Abu Sayyaf can be helpful in identifying how the latter's activities could change in the future depending on whether or not it is affiliated to international terrorist organizations.

The findings can also be helpful to policymakers in the Philippines government and strategists in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to broadly anticipate the nature of the activities of the group, particularly its attack types. The findings could also be extrapolated to explain other regional terrorist organizations' patterns of behaviour and attack types before and after their allegiance to international terrorist organizations. The Al-Qaeda in Maghreb (AQIM), for instance, has also been engaged in a mix of criminal and terrorist attacks that varied over time and with the context it found itself in.[33] Future research on cases such as the Abu Sayyaf and the AQIM could lead to a more refined understanding of the crime-terror nexus and fluctuations observed among regional terrorist organizations.

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Research Notes

Countering Violent Extremism Globally: A New Global CVE Dataset

by Caitlin Ambrozik

Abstract

Following 9/11, the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan reiterated the realization that terrorism could not be defeated solely by a military response. Instead, countries began to expand their counterterrorism toolkits by including "soft approaches" to counterterrorism also known as countering violent extremism or CVE programming. However, a global approach to CVE does not currently exist. Rather, countries have either chosen to pursue different CVE strategies or none at all. This paper asks, what CVE approaches are countries pursuing and how robust are domestic CVE programs? To answer these questions, this paper presents a new global CVE dataset that analyzes global CVE strategies across time. This Research Note finds that CVE programming is still in its infancy and more robust CVE strategies are needed to mitigate the various terrorist threats that countries face.

Keywords: Countering violent extremism, preventing violent extremism, counterterrorism, terrorism

Introduction

The rise of ISIS helped transform state responses to terrorism. Instead of primarily relying on military tactics to counter terrorism, states started to expand their counter terrorism repertoires to include non-violent and preventive responses to terrorism. Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) refers to a set of non-punitive policies and programs that aim to prevent violent extremism by addressing its root causes.[1] The term applies to a wide range of programming most often associated with five types of programs: prevention, intervention, disengagement, deradicalization and reintegration programming. Prevention programming attempts to prevent violent extremism from surfacing. Intervention programs seek to provide assistance to individuals on the path towards radicalization. Deradicalization, disengagement, and reintegration (DDR) programs target individuals who already are engaged in violent extremism by providing these individuals with assistance in leaving violent extremism behind and reintegrating back into society. Consequently, CVE provides governments with options to tackle violent extremism besides solely relying on reactive strategies.

The United Kingdom was one of the first movers on the concept of CVE. The United Kingdom announced its broader counterterrorism strategy, known as *CONTEST,* following the 2005 London bombings.[2] The UK incorporated CVE, formally known as *Prevent*, into its broader counterterrorism strategy. In doing so, the UK uses a variety of programing to prevent individuals from joining or supporting terrorist organizations.[3] Since the beginning years of *Prevent*, other countries have followed suit.

A conglomeration of efforts at the international level accelerated the trend towards implementing CVE efforts in various countries. The United Nations issued a series of resolutions starting in 2014 that outlined the importance of CVE and encouraged Member States to engage in CVE efforts at the local level.[4] These resolutions culminated in 2016 with the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism presented to the General Assembly. The Plan of Action called on Member States to develop comprehensive approaches to counter violent extremism. In response, the Assembly adopted a resolution that formalized the Secretary-General's call for Member States to develop national and regional plans of action to prevent violent extremism.[5] The efforts of the United Nations were coupled with guidance from regional governing bodies such as the European Union. The European Agenda on Security followed the UN's call to action with guidance issued in 2016 that outlined EU priorities for the prevention of radicalization.[6] To assist European countries

on developing approaches to counter violent extremism, the EU developed tools such as the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) to provide Member States a platform to share best practices on countering violent extremism.

Despite these efforts, a global approach to CVE does not exist. Moreover, a dataset to track global trends in CVE and the different approaches that states take also does not yet exist. In an effort to fill this void, in this paper I present a new global CVE dataset that serves as a first effort to outline global efforts to prevent terrorism. In the first part of this article, I provide an overview of the global CVE database, including the types of information I benchmark and the measurement procedures I use to do so. Next, I provide a broad overview of global trends in CVE to analyze how governments have responded to the push for CVE. The paper concludes with policy implications.

Overview of the Global CVE Dataset

The Global CVE Dataset provides researchers and policymakers with an overview of CVE efforts in countries across the globe. The dataset covers the CVE practices of 84 countries across seven years (2010-2017).

Scope:

The Dataset includes eight indicators to track global CVE efforts, including:

1. *CVE National Strategy*: An indicator of whether a country has a national CVE strategy in place as either a separate strategy or part of a larger counter-terrorism strategy.

2. *CVE Programming*: An indicator of whether a country has implemented any CVE programming.

3. *Type of CVE Programming*: The type of CVE programming implemented within a country is disaggregated amongst four sub-categories. This measure captures whether a country has prevention, intervention, counter-messaging or deradicalization/disengagement/reintegration programming.

4. *Role of Religion:* An indicator for whether the CVE programming is religiously focused.

5. *Civil Society Participation*: An indicator for whether the civil society within a country is active in implementing CVE programming.

6. *Government Participation*: An indicator for whether the government within a country is active in implementing CVE programming.

7. *Relevance/Specific CVE Programming*: An indicator for whether the CVE programming is CVE-relevant or CVE-specific.

8. *Concern About CVE Efforts*: An indicator for whether the CVE programming threatens religious freedom.

Given the variety of information captured in this dataset, the data allows for the exploration of a variety of different research questions, such as what countries have national CVE strategies? What types of CVE programming do countries implement and why? What types of actors are active in the CVE environment within a country? How has CVE changed over time? Does CVE programming threaten civil and social human rights? Why do countries implement CVE programming? How does the type of government impact a country's CVE strategy? And how does guidance from international organizations impact state CVE strategies?

Data Sources

To create the dataset, I employ content analysis of qualitative material that describes state CVE practices. Measuring global efforts to counter violent extremism requires systematic qualitative information over time. Thus, I utilize the only data source that provides such information, the annual *US State Department Country Reports on Terrorism*.[7] When coding the national strategies of European countries, I crosscheck the information with

the European Union's repository of national CVE strategies for Member States.[8]

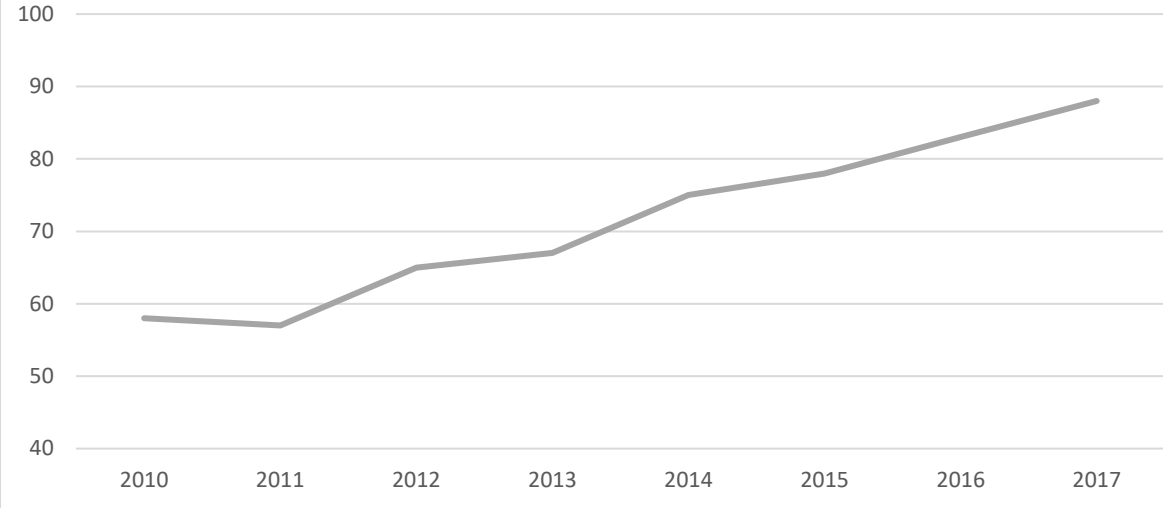
Variables are categorical to complement the extent of the source information.[9] Due to national security sensitivities, many countries are reluctant to expose the true scope of CVE efforts. Additionally, multiple actors are involved in implementing CVE programming ranging from state and local actors to international development organizations. Thus, information on the exact numbers of programs is rare.

As an initial dataset, there are limitations to the data. First, given that the data source is from the US State Department, there is potential bias in the data to favor US allies. To account for this bias, I crosscheck the information with other data sources when possible. However, at this time, an additional systematic overview of global CVE efforts does not exist, which limits the ability to fully crosscheck all the information. Second, given the limited information that states provide on domestic CVE efforts, the full scope of CVE programming for all countries is unknown. Third, since the source of information is the US State Department, the dataset excludes information on domestic CVE practices in the United States given that this information is not collected by the State Department. Finally, this dataset only captures domestic CVE efforts and consequently excludes international CVE efforts pursued by states and international organizations. Despite these limitations, the database is a first step effort to outline global CVE efforts and provides information to track global CVE trends.

Global CVE Trends

The number of countries with reported CVE programming has grown since 2010. In 2010, only 58% of the reported countries in the State Department's Country Reports had some type of CVE programming. The number of countries with reported CVE programming has grown steadily over time culminating to 88% of the reported countries with programming in 2017. Figure 1 below displays this trend from 2010 to 2017.[10]

Figure 1: Percentage of Reported Countries with CVE Programming 2010-2017



However, the percentage of countries with CVE programming can be deceiving given the broad scope of CVE and varying country definitions of what programs qualify as CVE programming. For example, a growing debate within the CVE field is whether CVE programming is or should be distinct from development projects. Some may argue that development programs can indirectly mitigate violent extremism by addressing social and economic grievances within a country.[11] The difficulty associated with determining what programs count as CVE led many to start distinguishing between CVE-specific and CVE-relevant programming.[12] As Romaniuk (2015) outlines, CVE-specific programming refers to "measures that prevent or suppress violent extremism in a direct, targeted fashion," while CVE-relevant measures are broader in scope and attempt to in-

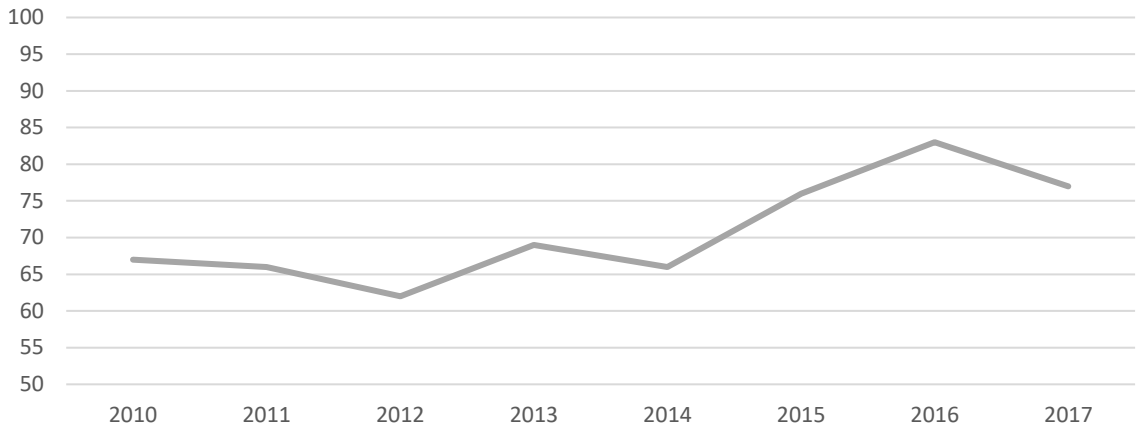
directly reduce vulnerability to extremism.[13] Consequently, I also coded for whether the reported programming can be considered CVE-specific or CVE-relevant based on Romaniuk's definitions. Since 2010, countries are reportedly expanding their CVE repertoires to include both CVE-specific and CVE-relevant programming. In 2010, 33% of reported countries had what I deemed as CVE-relevant programming, 33% of countries had CVE-specific programming, and 34% of countries had both CVE-specific and CVE-relevant programming. In 2017, 33% of reported countries continued to only have CVE-relevant programs and 15% of countries only had CVE-specific programs. However, 47% of reported countries incorporated both CVE-relevant and CVE-specific programming in their efforts to counter violent extremism. These findings suggest that CVE programming is still in its nascent stages. Despite the increase of countries with reported CVE programming, many countries still have programs that only indirectly attempt to prevent or counter violent extremism.

The dataset is further categorized by the type of CVE programming implemented within a country. I distinguish between prevention, intervention, counter-messaging, and DDR programming. Below is an overview of the types of programs and examples of common programs found across the globe.

Prevention

As mentioned, prevention programming aims to address the root causes or grievances that lead to violent extremism. However, there is not a consensus on what factors "cause" violent extremism. In fact, studies have found that often times it is a multitude of different factors that leads an individual to support or join a violent extremist group.[14] Given this, prevention programs are broad in scope and vary across countries and even within countries. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, prevention programs are consistently popular across countries. Figure 2 below displays the percentage of countries with reported CVE programs that have prevention programming.

Figure 2: Percentage of Countries with Prevention Programs



Depending on the preferences of the program developer, prevention programs can range from focusing on economic or social grievances that align with development objectives to training programs that aim to raise awareness of violent extremism. For example, in Burundi, the State Department reported that international organizations in Burundi implemented vocational training and economic development programs as a means to counter violent extremism.[15] Other countries, such as France, reportedly use integration policies as a means to counter violent extremism. According to the State Department, "France considers its integration programs for all French citizens and residents a major tool in countering radicalization and extremism." [16] Other countries take a more direct approach to countering extremism by offering training programs to frontline workers and the public in an effort to inform the public on the dangers of violent extremism. For instance, using funds from the European Union, the Hellenic Police—Greece's national police service—organized training on radicalization to violence for frontline workers including police, prison guards, and customs and immigration officials in 2016.[17]

Intervention

Unlike prevention programs that can be both CVE-specific and CVE-relevant, intervention programs almost always are CVE-specific programs. Intervention programming attempts to prevent individuals from joining a violent extremist group by offering an individual an "off-ramp" from the path towards radicalization.[18] Despite the direct link between intervention programs in countering violent extremism, intervention programming is rare at the global level given that only a handful of countries have implemented intervention programs. Even in 2017, the State Department only reported six countries with intervention programs: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.[19]

The limited number of countries with reported intervention programs can be due to a number of reasons. For instance, intervention programs may be difficult to develop and implement due to the sensitivity of working with individuals who may show signs of radicalization. It is also possible that intervention programs are informally implemented within a country rather than institutionalized, which can make the identification of these programs difficult to capture. Nonetheless, intervention programming is still an option that countries can use to counter violent extremism.

Counter-Messaging

The dataset also captures any reported counter-messaging programs or campaigns within a country. As argued by others, messaging campaigns are needed to counter terrorist propaganda.[20] Following the rise of ISIS, governments increasingly pursued counter-messaging campaigns against the group in an effort to condemn the group's actions and prevent individuals from traveling to Iraq and Syria to become foreign fighters. In the height of ISIS's reign of terror in 2015, 72% of reported countries with CVE programming had an institutionalized counter-messaging campaign. However, global counter-messaging efforts have dropped since then. In 2017, only 60% of reported countries with CVE programming had counter-messaging programs.

Countries also took different approaches to countering terrorist propaganda. Counter-messaging efforts range from efforts that directly confront terrorist propaganda to efforts that aim to promote a specific narrative. One notable program that directly confronts terrorist propaganda includes a joint initiative between the United States and United Arab Emirates known as the Sawab Center.[21] Additionally, in Pakistan, the government through its Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the military's Inter-Services Public Relations, used strategic communities to build support for counterterrorism initiatives and to counter radicalization.[22] Rather than creating counter-messaging centers or directly confronting terrorist propaganda, some countries monitored sermons and formed their own religious narratives by promoting religious moderation to mitigate extremist content from reaching the public. For example, the Moroccan government promoted the teaching of moderate Islam and developed educational curriculum to foster religious moderation.[23] Despite the variations in approaches, all of these efforts attempt to counter violent extremism through the use of strategic messaging.

DDR

Finally, the dataset also captures deradicalization, disengagement, and reintegration/rehabilitation programming, known broadly as DDR. Although these programs are distinct, DDR programming targets individuals who already support or have joined violent extremist groups. One of the most well-known program in this category is Saudi Arabia's deradicalization program that is part of the Kingdom's prison system.[24] Other DDR programs are also implemented within government prison systems including programs in European countries such as Italy.

DDR programs have become slightly more popular over time. In 2010, 41% of countries with reported CVE programs had DDR programming and this increased to 46% in 2017. Although slight, the increased popularity of DDR programming can possibly be attributed to the return of foreign fighters from conflicts in Iraq and Syria. However, as with intervention programs, DDR programming is complex and requires proper resources and professionals to implement. This could also explain why DDR programming is less popular compared to

other types of programs such as prevention and counter-messaging efforts.

Mixed Programming

Although there are some countries with only one type of CVE program, other countries do have mixed approaches to CVE. Governments and non-governmental actors are increasingly diversifying the types of CVE programs that are implemented within their countries. In 2010, only approximately 40% of countries with CVE programming had more than one type of CVE program. However, by 2017, 64% of countries with CVE programming had implemented more than one type of program. These statistics suggest that countries are utilizing the multitude of programs associated with CVE including programs to prevent and intervene in the radicalization process by either offering individuals an off-ramp or helping those already radicalized with a way out.

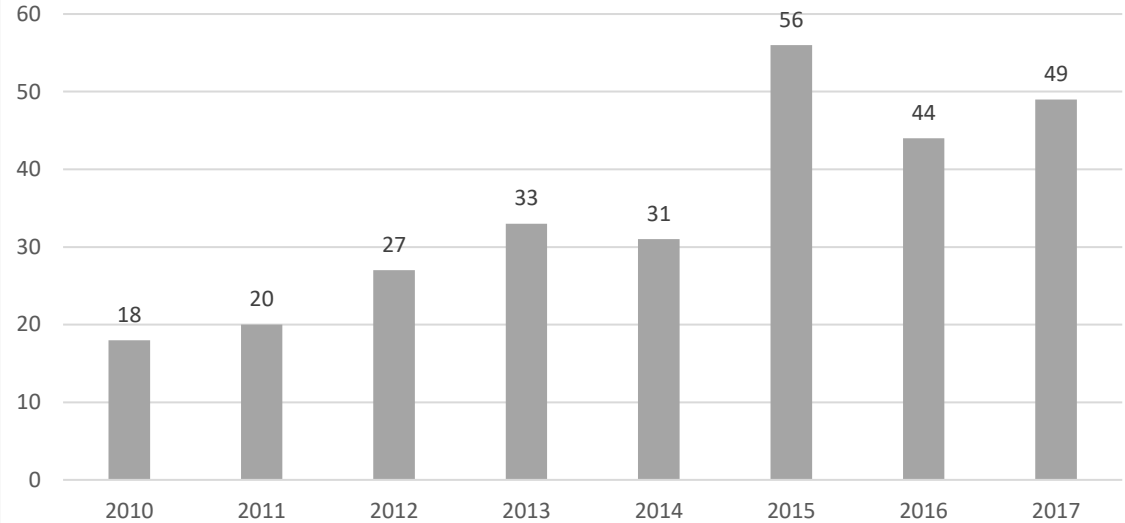
Actors Involved

Given the multitude of programs associated with CVE, CVE programming can be implemented by a variety of actors. The most obvious actor is the government, but non-governmental actors such as organizations, religious institutions, or even private citizens can develop and implement CVE programming. The dataset includes a measure to outline what actors are actively involved in developing and implementing CVE programming within a given country. According to the State Department's Annual Terrorism Reports, governments were the most active in developing and implementing CVE programming across time. In 2017, all of the governments in countries with reported CVE programming were active in developing and implementing the programs. As depicted in Figure 3 below, the involvement of non-governmental actors in CVE has fluctuated over time. Although CVE programming is likely to remain dominated by government involvement, community involvement will likely continue to increase given efforts by international organizations and governments to encourage community-led CVE initiatives.

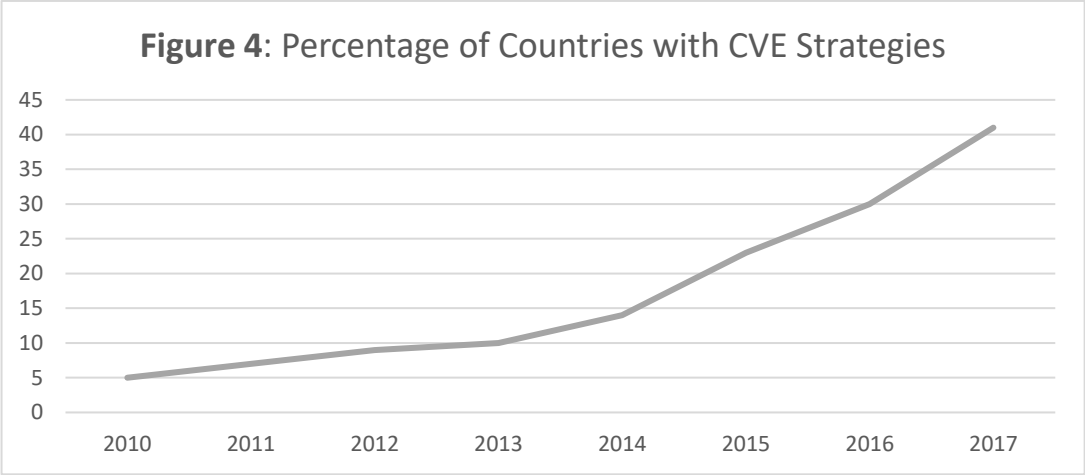
Global CVE Strategies

As mentioned in the introduction, in 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action called on Member States to develop comprehensive national and regional strategies to counter violent extremism. However, formalized national CVE strategies remain rare. As depicted in Figure 4 below, in 2017, the State Department only reported 41% of all countries within the report had a national CVE strategy in place. Although this number has slowly increased since 2014, the majority of countries do not have a national strategy in place. This statistic suggests that CVE remains in its nascent stages when comparing CVE efforts globally.

Figure 3: Percentage of Countries with Active Non-Governmental Actors



Of the countries that do have national CVE strategies, governments develop different strategies to tackle the problem. Some countries, such as the Netherlands, work closely with community stakeholders to counter violent extremism. The Netherlands' CVE approach falls under Prevent, one of the five areas of intervention associated with its National Counterstrategy for 2016-2020.[25] Prevent actions attempt to "prevent and disrupt extremism and to foil terrorist attacks." [26] Although the strategy is centralized under the national government, the strategy calls on national authorities to work closely with civil society organizations and the private sector to take preventive actions. The strategy also outlines the need to take early and tailored actions against violent extremism because each case of radicalization is complex, unique, and dynamic. The Netherlands is not the only European country that pursues a multifaceted strategy and works with civil society; others include the United Kingdom [27] and Sweden, [28] to name a few.



Other countries pursue strategies that are primarily government-led. For instance, Serbia's CVE strategy outlines the responsibilities for all government agencies in implementing the strategy.[29] Although the strategy includes funding for the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society to strengthen communication and cooperation between the state and civil society, the majority of the strategy consists of government-led initiatives to counter violent extremism. This strategy is in stark contrast to many European strategies that place a greater emphasis on the involvement of civil society in the design and implementation of programs.

A country's strategy is not just dependent on the primary actors responsible for developing and implementing policy, but also the root causes a country decides to tackle. However, countries with formalized CVE strategies are increasingly developing multifaceted strategies that tackle a bevy of root causes. This approach corresponds to academic findings that individuals radicalize for a variety of different reasons.[30] Kosovo is one such country that takes this approach and in its National Counterterrorism Strategy, the government outlined the need for a diversified strategy that addresses multiple push-and-pull factors.[31]

Concerns with CVE

Although CVE programming is becoming an increasingly popular policy tool, CVE programming is not without controversy. Studies have identified various potential negative consequences associated with CVE programming including the potential for such programming to stigmatize certain communities.[32] The potential for CVE programming to be used by governments as a surveillance program is another common concern associated with CVE programs.[32] Consequently, it is important to note any misuse of CVE programming that can negatively influence or threaten human rights. Although the State Department's reports do not comprehensively outline all the possible negative consequences associated with CVE in each country and researchers should cautiously use this indicator, the reports do indicate when a country's CVE programs threaten religious freedom. For example, in 2012, Uzbekistan's efforts to curb violent extremism consisted of monitoring religion and published religious content. Consequently, the State Department flagged the government's monopoly over religious publications as potentially problematic. However, these cases remain in the minority amongst all countries involved in CVE efforts. In 2017, the State Department implied CVE programming was potentially problematic in only five countries.

Conclusion

This article presented a new dataset on global CVE practices. The dataset is the first step in understanding global CVE trends in a systematic way. With eight variables, the dataset provides researchers a broad overview of CVE by country for the period of 2010 to 2017. The main data source, the State Department's Annual Country Reports on Terrorism, provides a consistent data source to track trends over time. However, the dataset is meant to be supplemented with more detailed analyses on country-level efforts to provide a more comprehensive overview of CVE efforts. Moreover, future efforts can crosscheck this information and expand the scope of the data.

Nonetheless, the dataset reveals several important CVE trends. First, CVE is growing in popularity with more countries developing and implementing CVE programming. Prevention programming remains the most popular type of CVE programming and intervention programs the least popular. Despite the upward trends of CVE programming, many of the programs only indirectly prevent or counter violent extremism. Further, countries with CVE strategies remain the minority. These factors suggest that despite the progress, CVE still remains in its infancy.

These trends yield several policy implications. First, more effort is needed to encourage governments to develop diverse CVE strategies with CVE-specific programming. The data also suggest that countries need additional assistance in developing and implementing intervention programs. Finally, since some countries continue to use CVE as a means to restrict religious tolerance, there is a continued need to ensure that CVE practitioners share best practices and dissuade governments from misusing the programs for ulterior motives.

Besides expanding the dataset, future research can use this data to help explain the trends found in this article. Understanding why some governments develop strategies and programs while others do not will help policymakers understand how to further expand CVE. Likewise, future research can explore why certain types of CVE programs are more popular than others. Altogether, this dataset provides researchers with a multitude of research avenues to pursue.

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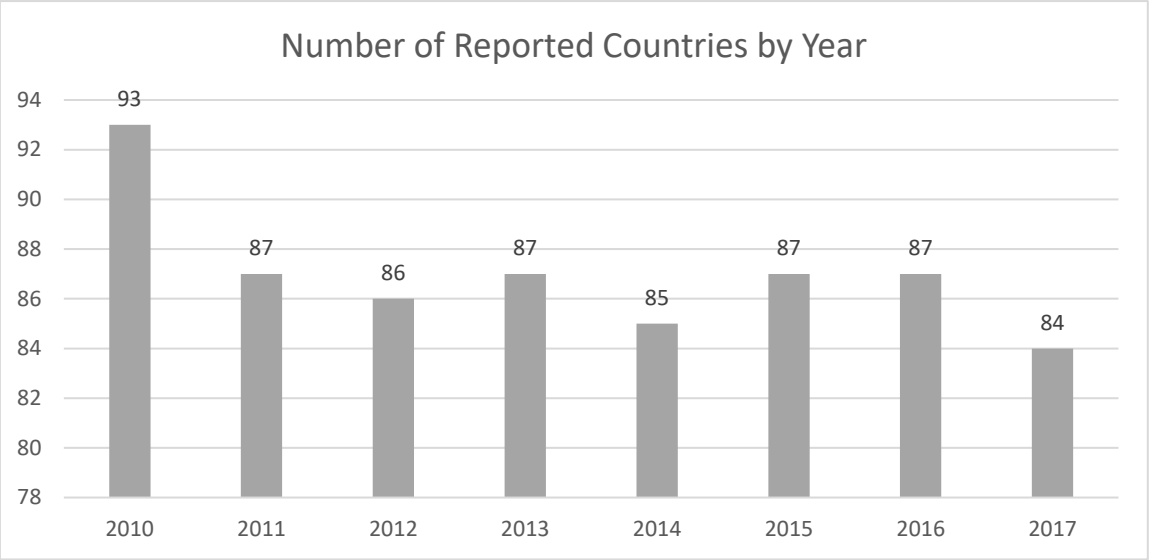
Appendix



Notes

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[9] For a detailed outline of the coding of the variables, please see the codebook.

[10] The number of countries reported in the State Department's reports vary from year to year. Consequently, the charts are reported as percentages rather than actual numbers. Please see the appendix for a breakdown of the number of countries reported each year.

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Profiles of Islamist Militants in Bangladesh

by Shafi Md Mostofa and Natalie J. Doyle

Abstract

Since the early 1980s, Bangladeshi militants have joined wars in Libya, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria to fight for what they defined as the Ummah. Foreign cases of perceived Muslim suffering have always played a significant role in the escalation of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh. Originally, violent Islamists emerged principally in the Madrassas and came from poor families with rural backgrounds. The recent wave of Islamist militancy associated with the arrival in 2013 of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State has dramatically altered the character of Islamist militancy. Online radicalization is playing a much larger role and militant organizations are increasingly recruiting urban youths attending secular educational institutions, from both the upper and the middle classes. This Research Note explores the new profile of Islamist militants in Bangladesh by examining the biographies of the deceased Islamist militants who were killed by security forces in different operations and gunfights during the period between June 2016 and December 2018. The authors use data acquired from three newspapers renowned for covering Islamist militancy issues as well as information provided by Bangladeshi security forces. Data have been limited to deceased militants because their militancy was proven by their violent actions, at least in a number of cases.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Islamist, Militant, Radicalization, and Terrorism

Introduction

The problem of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh first came to the public's attention in the early 1980s and its rise has been inextricably linked with global phenomena. This first became evident when some Bangladeshis joined Palestinians to fight for an autonomous Palestine state in the early 1980s with some being sent to Libya for training.[1] The Muslim Millat Bahini (MMB), the first militant organization in Bangladesh, surfaced in 1986 under the leadership of Major Matiur Rahman. Its members had connections to transnational groups, something which became apparent when 27 passports with visas were recovered from their camp.[2] In this respect, the Afghan war can be said to have opened the Pandora's Box of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh. It is claimed that around 3400 Bangladeshis joined the struggle in Afghanistan and then returned to their country with both a more radical ideology and tactical experience of violent activism.[3] Since then, through the creation of almost 133 militant organizations, [4] these veterans from Afghanistan have tried to transform Bangladesh to emulate a Talibanized Afghanistan.[5] Among the organization created for that new objective, the Harkat-ul-Jihad Al Islami Bangladesh (HuJIB) formed in 1989, the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in 1998, and the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) in 1998 are best known because of their countrywide network, the ferocity of their terrorist attacks and the number of their activists. JMB received attention from the world media in 2005 when it exploded 459 bombs simultaneously in 63 of Bangladesh's 64 districts.[6] However, it faced an initial setback because its leadership was arrested and sentenced to capital punishment due to their connection with the killing of civilians in 2006.

These organizations drew inspiration from the Taliban's ideology but also from Al Qaeda's (AQ) whose objectives were global, with the ultimate goal of establishing a neo-Caliphate.[7] As is well known, a chain of events took place during the 1980s, triggered by the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 in support of their local agent, the Afghanistan Communists. The national Afghan resistance eventually led to the creation of AQ which still continues to inspire Jihadism around the globe, including in Bangladesh.[8] Bin Laden's Al Qaeda focused mainly on the Middle East, Pakistan and Africa. After Bin Laden's death in 2011, however, his deputy, Ayman Al Zawahiri was set in charge of the organization and started broadening its field of operation to include the Indian Subcontinent. In September 2014, through an online video message, AQ declared the existence of 'Qaedat al-Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)', with Asim Omar as its Emir, and stated its

objective of imposing sharia rule also in that region.[9]

Even before the formation of AQIS and the declaration of a Global Caliphate by the Islamic State in June 2014, both IS and AQIS established contact with Bangladesh. AQIS and IS are contemporaneous in terms of starting secret operations. According to Riaz, these two militant organizations created the current wave of Islamist militants.[10] AQ was deemed by analysts to have had a connection with the Jama'atul Muslemin (JM) since 2007. It finally launched its secret operations in Bangladesh in 2013, under the name of Ansar al-Islam (AAI) or the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). AAI claimed responsibility for the murders of four self-proclaimed atheist bloggers and the publisher of a book penned by one of these.[11] As a result, violent militant activities have been on the rise in Bangladesh since 2013. Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani was considered to be the spiritual figure of AQIS in Bangladesh. Rahmani was found guilty of killing the blogger Rajib Haider and was consequently sentenced to five years in jail whilst two other students of North South University were sentenced to death for taking part in the direct killing mission.[12] On the other hand, in 2013, Bangladesh also came under the influence of IS or *Daesh* even before it declared in June 2014 its ambition of establishing its own 'global Caliphate'.[13] The Bangladeshi diaspora community played a key role in introducing *Daesh* in Bangladesh. Different cells worked simultaneously to bring other militant outfits together under its banner. These cells include a Facebook group the 'Ex-cadet Islamic Learning Forum' supervised by Japanese Bangladeshi, Saifullah Ozaki [14], and the Jund At Tawhid wal Khalifa (JTK, 'Soldiers of Monotheism and the Caliphate') led by the Canadian-Bangladeshi, Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury.[15] Both of these cells started operations in 2013.

While taking about the current upsurge of Islamist militancy, it must first be noted that the country has witnessed several waves of radicalization. The Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) advanced with two waves of militancy in Bangladesh. The first wave constituted by Afghan veterans which ranged from 1999-2005. The second wave consists of technologically advanced militant radical groups such as the Hizbut Tahrir (HT), the Hizbut Tawhid and the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT).[16] In the same line of argument, Rahman (2016) also concluded his analysis by focusing on two waves—pre-2006 and post-2013 militant outfits.[17] Ali Riaz (2016) divided these two waves into five generations of militants in Bangladesh on the basis of their transformation when it came to tactics and objectives. According to him, the returnees (around 3000) of the Afghan war (1979 to 1992) formed the first generation of Islamists militants. The emergence of JMB marked the second generation of Islamists militants. Under the leadership of Asadullah Galib, Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Siddiqur Rahman (Bangla Bhai), JMB established a strong foothold in northwestern part of Bangladesh. Riaz's third generation is qualitatively different from previous outfits as they have international connections and a global agenda. The Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) falls under this category.

As HuJIB and JMB were struggling due to the measures adopted by security forces they renewed a group named the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). ABT was inspired by Anwar al Awlaki and led by local Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani. ABT started recruiting members from 2012 onwards. The group represents a new, younger generation of jihadists in Bangladesh, who use the cyberspace extensively to propagate Jihadist ideology and to publish training manuals to guide terror attacks. Although ABT is inspired by AQIS, Riaz described members and followers of the AQIS (Ansar Al Islam) and the IS (Neo JMB) as the fifth generation of militants in Bangladesh. The defining feature of the new generation is that they are inspired by, and connected to, transnational terrorist groups, and they intend to pursue not only their objective of establishing an Islamic state in Bangladesh but also participate in the global militant Islamist movements.[18] While BEI, Rahman and Riaz focused on types or forms of militancy, Barkat distinguishes a total of four phases of militancy. Barkat contends that the country has been going through the 4th phase of Islamist militancy. Every time a silent phase was followed by a violent phase. The first phase (1992-1996) started with the induction of the Harkatul Jihad Bangladesh (HuJIB) in 1992, which, as noted above, was influenced by the Taliban's ideology. Their involvement in the bombing and killing were not reported at that time. Barkat has described this phase of Islamist militancy as 'militancy in dormant form'. By contrast, the second phase (2000-2006) can be characterized as 'militancy in active form'. Barkat indeed argues that by the late 1990s Mujaheedins began arriving in Bangladesh with Jihadi arms training, Jihadi motivation, relevant connections and organizations, and sources of funding. This phase of Islamist militancy was essentially violent and involved many killings and bombings. The third phase (2007-

2013) saw a relative lull in terms of active militancy. During that time, Jihadists organized and reorganized for future operations. The final phase (2013 onwards) has again been an active phase and one more forceful than the 2nd phase. During this latest phase, an attempt has been made to bring together all militant outfits to establish Al Qaeda's master plan: instituting the Caliphate in all Muslim majority countries by 2024.[19]

Perhaps, though, it can be argued that Bangladesh is going through *a fifth stage* since July 2016, one that has been silent and has gone unnoticed because of a major military crackdown. The latest wave of militancy associated with the arrival of IS and AQIS is qualitatively different from the previous waves due to its massive use of online information technology. In earlier times, militant Islamist groups in Bangladesh did not really use much IT. JMB's history shows that JMB was primarily using traditional methods of communications like handbills, leaflets and books. Their technological prowess was very limited. But now we have reached a stage where as soon as an attack is taking place, pictures of the scene are being posted live. The cyber aspect has really added a whole new dimension. It has also transformed the way new militants are recruited. In the past, recruiters were essentially going to Madrassas, to schools, and to mosques to find new members. It was a very traditional form of recruitment. They were trying to recruit people who were unemployed, giving them some money and hope for a better future. Now the major part of recruitment is done through the internet and the people who have the most access to the internet are urban youths. A survey conducted by the police on 250 extremists thus shows that 82 percent of them were originally inspired by social media propaganda and 80 percent of them used Thrima, Wechat, Messenger, as well as other communication apps.[20] It was also reported that recruitment efforts have been conducted by IS-linked militants among the Bangladeshi diaspora communities that can be found in different countries of the world.[21] According to one intelligence report, at least 38 Bangladeshis have travelled through various countries to reach Syria and join *Daesh*.[22] With the arrival of IS and AQIS in Bangladesh the paradigm has clearly shifted from offline to online radicalization.

This brings up a new question for researchers to examine: what is the profile of those successfully targeted for radicalization online? From the start it must be noted how sparse the literature on contemporary Bangladeshi militancy actually is. Bangladesh, the third-largest Muslim country in the world, is a densely populated country in terms of people living per square kilometer and has been facing the challenges of unemployment, deprivation, political unrest, corruption and socio-economic traumas. Momen and Begum (2005) put emphasis on a lack of good governance, corruption, unemployment, oppression, repression, injustice, illiteracy, lack of law and order, and poverty as possible reasons for the growth of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh.[23] Ganguly (2006) in his study argued that the political use or abuse of Islam by the ruling elites had created a social and political space for Islamist militancy to thrive.[24] In the same line, Mia (2017) has also blamed socio-economic disparity and political unrest as the key factors behind the growth of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh.[25] While these scholars have focused on internal factors, Barkat contends that external causes in fact override internal causes. According to him, the crisis of dollar economics, the sharp growth of the petro-dollar in the world economy and its volatility, the Soviet attack on Afghanistan, the attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent overreaction by the United States in the form of the so-called Global War on Terror, then the war against Iraq, the interventions in Libya and Syria, the doubts and mistrust towards people of Muslim identity in the developed world, the unjust form assumed by globalization and the spread of alien culture through electronic media are deemed to be the main external reasons that have encouraged Bangladeshi youths to join Islamist militancy.[26] Although attempts have been made to understand the causes of Islamist militancy in Bangladesh, what has not yet been sufficiently investigated is the alignment of Bangladeshi militants with IS and AQ, which saw the pattern of recruitment shift towards the middle class and even upper class urban youths, a phenomenon which this Research Note seeks to highlight.

Although Islamist militancy is growing in Bangladesh, it has not received enough attention from terrorist researchers and in particular not with respect to the latest changes in the profiles of those recruited. By using systematic search engines such as EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Cambridge Core, and Google Scholar, one can only identify two publications exploring the elusive profiles of contemporary Bangladeshi militants and these two works were written by the same author, Ali Riaz [27], using newspaper reports about militants that were arrested. However, suspected militants cannot be counted as militants until their connection with militancy

has been proven. By contrast with Riaz' study, this Research Note explores the socio-demographic profile of proven Bangladeshi Islamist militants, based on information about deceased terrorists found in three renowned newspapers.

Profiling Islamist Militants

Cesare Lombroso, a forensic physician and criminologist, first shifted the focus from crime to criminal in his groundbreaking work the 'Criminal Man' published in 1876. His theory contends that an individual commits crimes due to the biological and environmental causes, which do not come from free will. So, he treats criminals as abnormal.[28] In this tradition, some scholars have focused on some personality characteristics that are said to lead to the adoption of terrorism. For example, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford [29] have put emphasis on the 'authoritarian personality'; Post [30] and Crayton [31] on 'narcissism'; Awan [32] on 'anomie'; Pearce and Macmillan [33], Taylor and Ryan [34], Cooper [35] , and Hacker and Hacker [36] on some variations of 'insanity'; Lezak [37], Gazzaniga [38] , and Mesulam [39] on lack of "cognitive capacity"; Pettit [40] on "aggressive temperament"; Hacker [41] and Kellen [42] on "novelty seeking"; and Juergensmeyer [43] on "thrill" and "revenge-seeking" due to humiliation.

These psycho-pathological schools treat the individual terrorist "in isolation, searching for deviant character traits."[44] Sprinzak argues that psycho-pathological traits cannot be ruled out entirely but that socio-political factors need to be considered as well.[45] The work of Sageman [46] points out that no research has confirmed that radicals indeed have strikingly different psychological traits, [47] while other scholars contend that "terrorists are normal people [exposed] to an abnormal situation."[48] Terrorism scholars such as Crenshaw [49], Bjørgo [50], Veldhuis and Staun [51], Borum [52], and Victoroff [53] focus on socio-politico-psychological factors that together with the environment influence individual behaviour. Therefore, it is hard to find distinctive features of terrorists for extrapolative purposes.[54]

However, Charles A. Russell and Bowman H. Miller analyzed profiles of over 350 urban terrorists of diverse nationals for a period of 10 years and concluded that they were mostly unmarried males of 22 to 24 years of age with some university education.[55] In the South Asian context, Basit argued that most of Jihadists drew from urban areas with middle class and upper class backgrounds and they mostly belong to 18-30 age group. [56] While some researchers such as Bux, [57] and Horgan [58] came to the conclusion that most terrorists were 'demographically unremarkable', other scholars such as Krueger, [59] Krueger and Laitin, [60] Laitin and Shapiro, [61] Richardson, [62] Kepel, [63] found some similarities among terrorists. Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter examined ample data on profiles of militants and suggested following traits as summarized here by Ali Riaz:

> A. There is no single "terrorist personality."
>
> B. Until recently at least, most terrorists have shared some basic attributes in terms of socioeconomic background and educational achievement. These similarities have tended to cut across cultures, regions of the world, and time periods.
>
> C. The socioeconomic and educational profile of that particular subset of violent extremists represented by Salafi jihadists has experienced significant changes since 2003. The trend toward increasing diversity in the socioeconomic background of global jihadists is likely to intensify in the years ahead.
>
> D. While violent extremists do not share a single profile across countries and time periods, they may do so within a specific country and at a particular historical juncture.

Therefore, Riaz recommends that "there is no catch-all 'profiling' of terrorists for global use, but [that] one can be found in a specific country at a specific time, and that profile has analytical value."[64] This recommendation has driven our present Research Note to examine the socio-demographic profile of Bangladeshi militants.

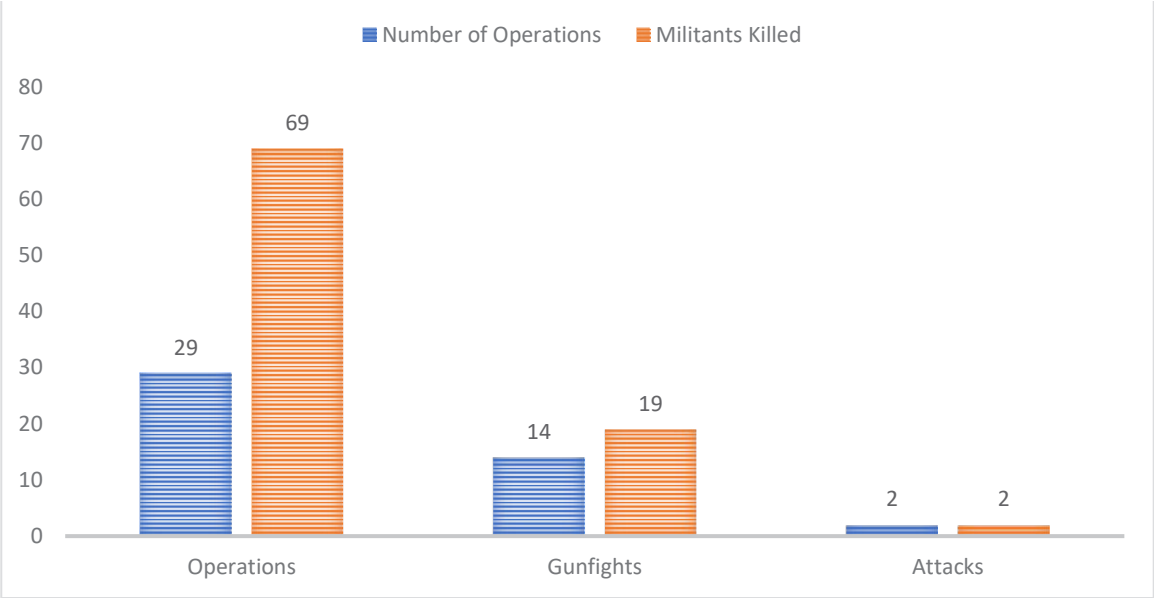
Methodology

A quantitative research approach has been used for data analysis in this Research Note. It employs tabular analysis techniques to understand the profiles of Islamist militants in Bangladesh. Data on Islamist militants killed in operations, gunfights and attacks with security forces in Bangladesh have been collected from three daily newspapers—two English language ones and one published in Bengali, for a period of two and a half years, between June 2016 and December 2018.[65] It must of course be noted that the individuals discussed can only be described as "alleged" militants and that concerns have been expressed in a number of cases about the veracity of these allegations of militancy. Some international human rights organizations claim that operations carried out by the Bangladeshi security forces, often violated fundamental human rights and some could thus be considered to be 'extrajudicial' killing. The lack of transparency and of accountability on the part of law enforcement agencies has been highlighted, [66] making it difficult for researchers to make very strong claims based on the information they provide to the media. At the same time, one can be confident that a significant proportion of the alleged militants were indeed involved in violent militancy and that the figures gathered in this study indicate trends which subsequent research ought to examine more closely.

This Research Note drew on the printed version of the *Daily Prothom Alo* and the *Daily Star* and the information they provided was triangulated with the *Dhaka Tribune* reports available online. For online triangulation using the Google search engine, readers can use the additional information provided in an appendix at the end of this Research Note. The rationale behind choosing the newspapers listed above is the fact that these newspapers are available online in both Bengali and English. As they are in English these papers can be consulted by the wider research community working on Islamist terrorism. The *Daily Prothom Alo* and the *Daily Star* are the largest in terms of both online and print circulation; these are also considered to be the most influential newspapers in Bangladesh. In 2005, they were first to bring to public attention the issue of militancy and since then have monitored it closely. The *Dhaka Tribune* has also earned a national reputation for its crime reporting and for several investigative reports on Islamist militancy in Bangladesh, focusing on IS and AQIS. Prompted of the Holy Artisan Café attack of 1 July 2016, the first author of this Research Note also started collecting data published from June 1, 2016 and thus, started examining the trend as it already appeared one month before the attack took place and subsequently for a period covering roughly two and a half years.

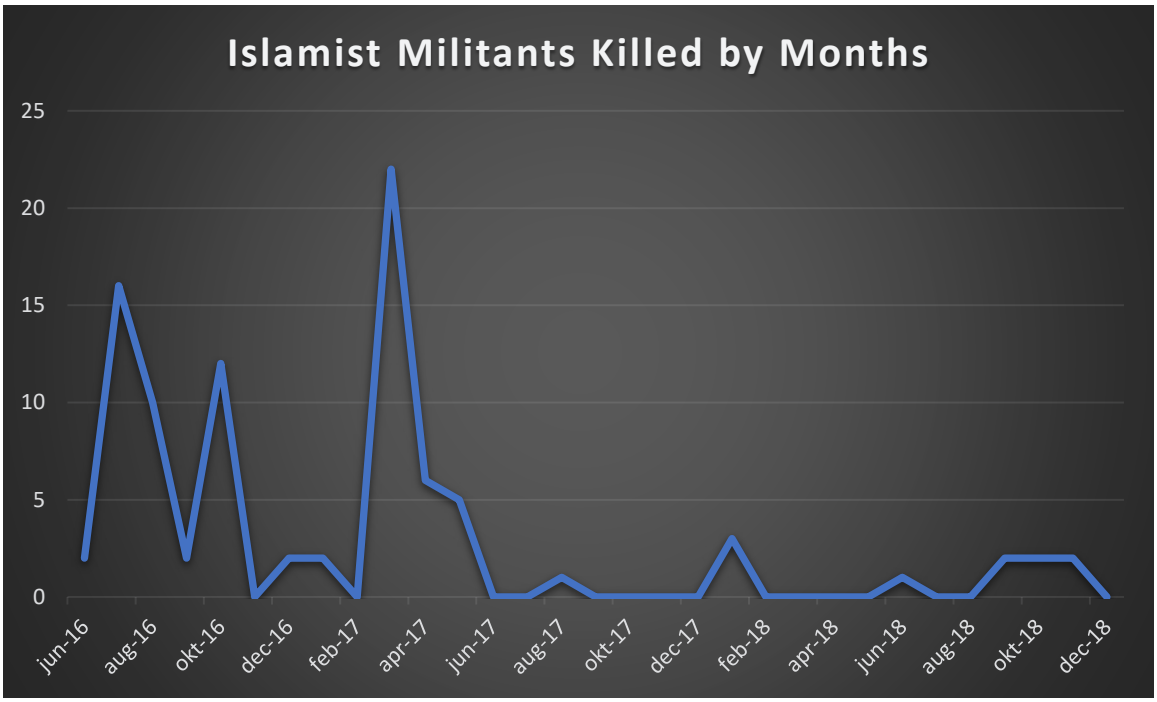
As stated above, the objective of this Research Note being to uncover the profiles of 'alleged' Islamist militants in Bangladesh, it was decided to collect information only about those militants killed by security forces during the above-mentioned span of time. The Research Note could not focus on arrested militants and those traveled to Syria because very few lawsuits were resolved and not enough information was available on those who had traveled to Iraq and Syria. As a result, only the newspaper reports that described the details of Islamist militants were identified. For ensuring the consistency of information, the three newspapers were cross-checked and in any case of discrepancy, some information was verified through consulting the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit (CTTC). Attempts were made to avoid double count. The researchers have identified that during this time security forces carried 29 operations and 14 gunfights; and another 2 attacks were carried out by militants in Dhaka and Kishorganj. In total, 90 Islamist militants were killed by the security forces during this period. The following figure shows how Islamist militants were killed.

Figure 1: How Militants Were Killed



69 Islamist militants were killed in 19 of 29 operations carried out by the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, the Detective Branch (DB) of Bangladesh Police and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) while 19 were killed in 14 gunfights and the rest of 2 got killed when Islamists militants attacked security forces in Dhaka on 24 March 2017 and on 7 July 2016 in Kishoreganj. Operations, gunfights and attacks were not centralized in any particular area of the country but Dhaka division, Sylhet division, Chittagong division and Rajshahi division were noteworthy for operations. The following figure shows when militants were killed, month by month.

Figure 2: Killed by Months from June 2016 to December 2018



The line graph shows that most of the militants were killed between July 2016 and April 2017. Numbers reached a peak in April 2016 but the process is still continuing. Since the Holy Artisan Café attack the security forces have taken the militant challenge very seriously and have tried to find their hideouts, although from the later part of 2017, they have, to a certain extent, shifted their focus from the militancy issue to drug criminals. This is indicative of the absence of any systematic counter terrorism strategy in Bangladesh.

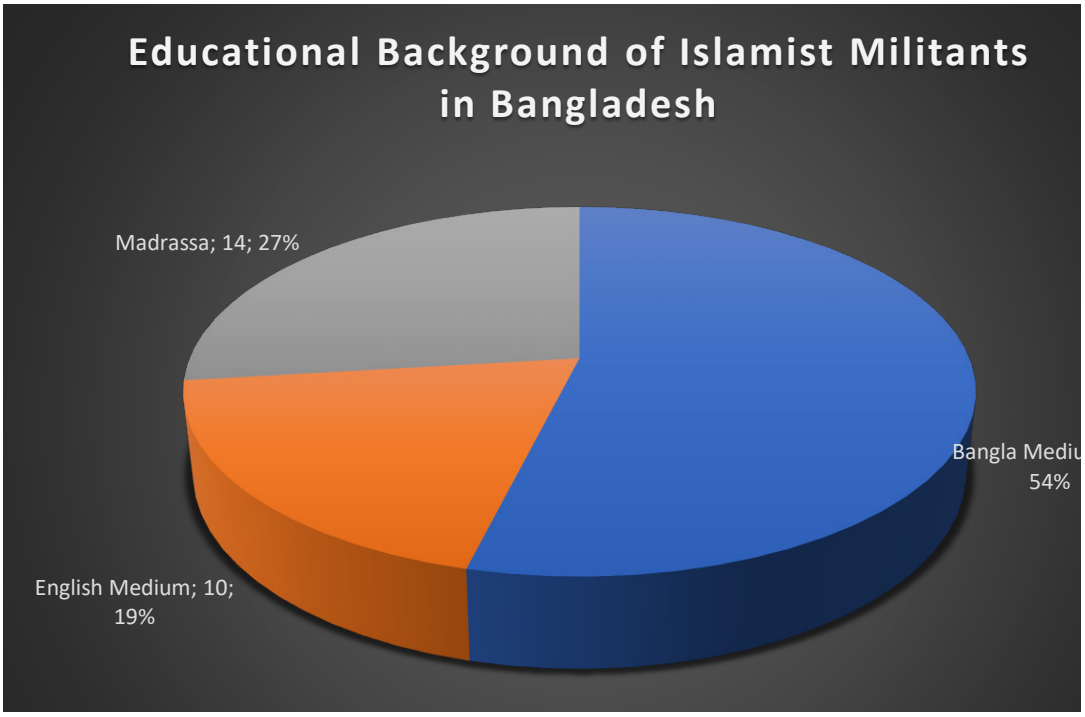
Findings

The findings of our Research Note are discussed in seven broad categories: educational background, occupation, gender, age, economic status, organizational affiliation, and residential location.

Educational Background (52 Islamist Militants)

It was possible to collect from newspaper reports information on the educational background of 52 Islamist militants'; the education of the other deceased militant was, however, not divulged. This information yields startling findings: 73 percent (38) of these Islamist militants came from secular educational institutions while only 27 (14) percent came from religious institutions or madrassas. This result differs from that of two previous studies on this subject (Riaz 2016 and Riaz 2018) based on 21 samples, which contend that almost 50 percent of Bangladeshi militants come from religious institutions. But, it agrees with these on the issue of the involvement in acts of violent militancy in Bangladesh of students in Western-oriented institutions where English is the language of instruction. Our study found that only around 20 percent of militants comes from Western-oriented institutions. Out of 14 madrassa students, two students received education both from Bangla and Madrassa medium level institutions. Out of 10 students taught in English two had foreign passports from Canada and America. Two of the students educated in English were radicalized while studying on the Malaysian campus of Monash University whereas five militants were radicalized while pursuing their graduation at the BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) University (one fighter), and the North South University (four militants). And, of the remaining, three were radicalized while they were studying A Level. All "English medium" students were from different renowned schools such as, Scholastica (2), Turkish Hope (3), Sanidel (1), Academia (1), Mastermind (1), American International (1) and BIT (1). Students from different sections of art, science and business joined the militancy. They were pursuing a range of degrees: BBA (Bachelor in Business Administration), MBA (Masters in Business Administration) and studied a variety of disciplines, Computer Science, Engineering at Honours and Masters Level. This Research Note, therefore, confirms Mark Sageman's claim that over 50 percent of Islamist militants have had higher education, which clearly undermines the popular belief that it is illiteracy that tends to produce most militancy.[67]

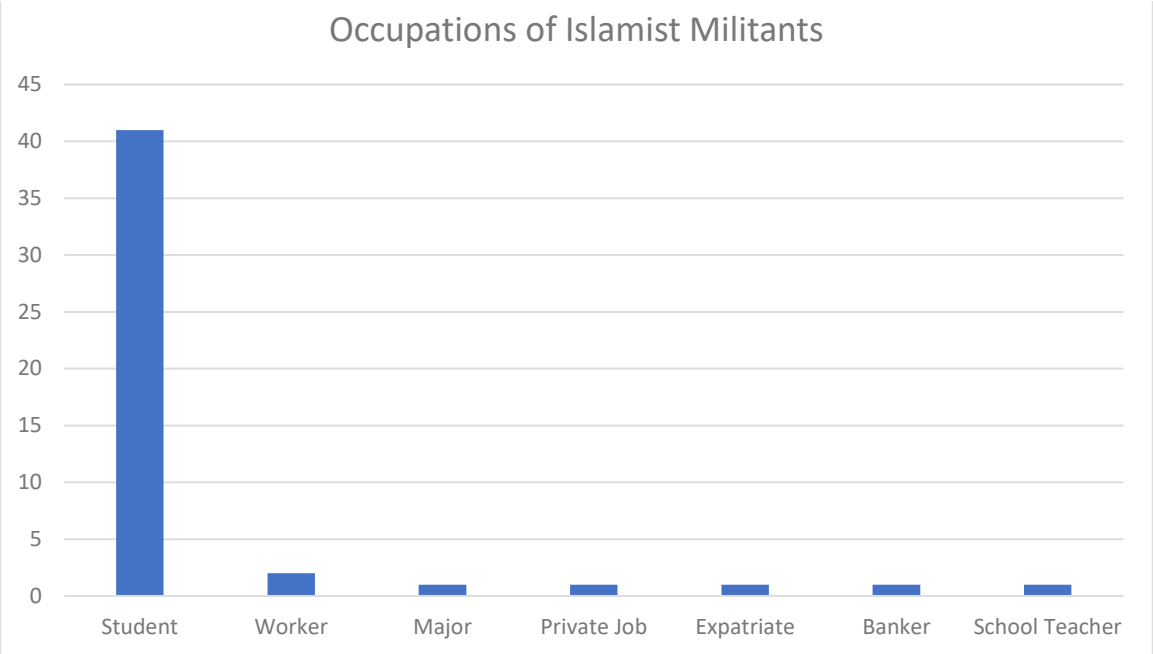
Figure 3: Educational Background (n=52)



Occupation (48 Islamist Militants)

Information about the occupations of Islamist militants was not available for all individuals, only for 48 of them. Among them 90 percent (41) were students, which differs from Riaz's findings that only around 35 percent were students and most of them were from diverse backgrounds. Our research found that only seven militants were recruited from different professional groups: they were an army major, workers, a school teacher, non-governmental job, an expatriate and banker. Among these militants was Tamim Choudhury, as stated above a Canadian citizen. He is regarded as a charismatic leader of IS in Bangladesh and has been identified by the IS journal Rumiyah [68] as the head of the military wing of IS in Bangladesh. Major Murad, a retired major of Bangladesh army, was a military trainer of the 'Neo JMB'.[69] Tanvir Kaderi alias Abdul Karim, a banker provided shelter to other operatives of the radical group, and sold his Toyota Axio-2009 car on April 20, 2016; the money he obtained from the sale was later used to fund the Holy Artisan Café attack on July 1, 2016.[70]

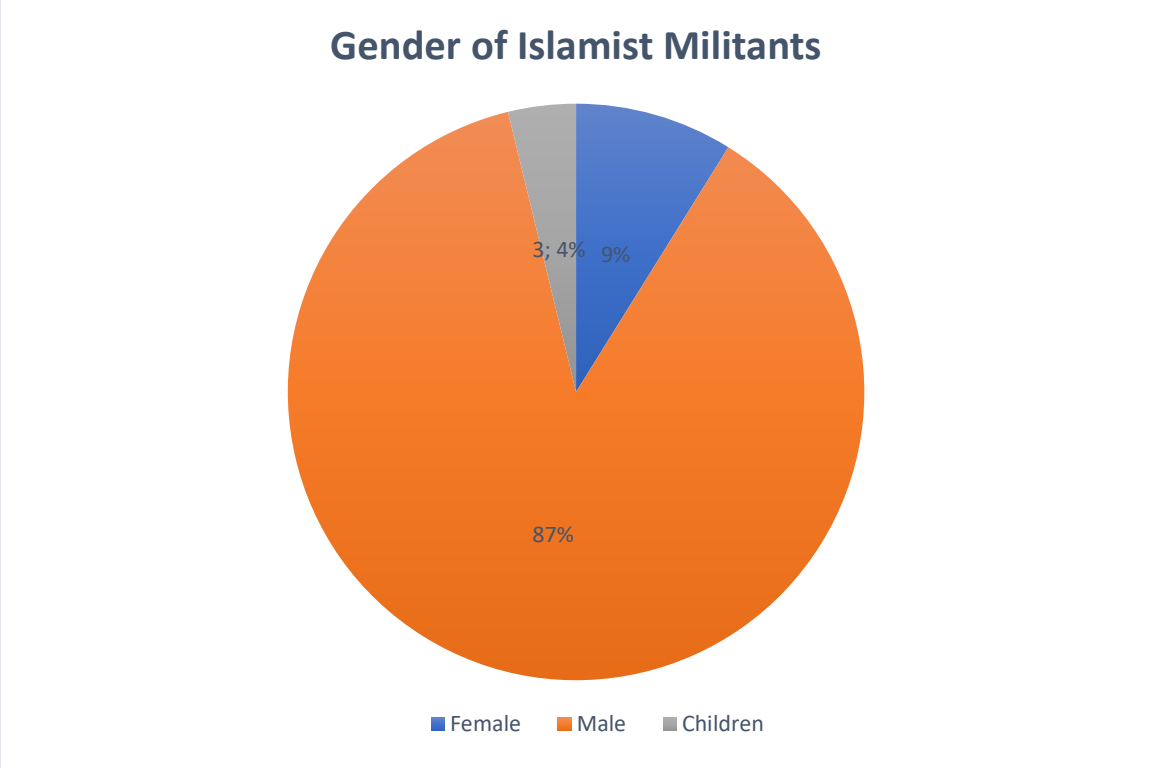
Figure 4: Occupations of Islamist Militants (n=48)



Gender (79 Islamist Militants)

Most of the Islamist militants were identified as male (69 out of 79) but in Bangladesh some females (9 percent) are also involved with the Islamist militancy. However, it must be noted that female involvement with extremism has been rising. Riaz' (2016 and 2018) findings show that out of 112 militants, there were only two females. These research findings concur with Baker's study, in which out of 242 Jihadists only five were identified as women.[71] In most cases in Bangladesh, female members had been influenced by their husbands. In this way, a marital relationship is a major factor in female radicalization. Islamist militants such as Sumon, Kamal Hossen of Bandarban, Musa of Sylhet, Lokman of Dinajpur and Sazzad of Rajshahi played a significant role in the radicalization of their wives. Lokman of Rajshahi and Kamal of Bandarban even radicalized their full family including children and women. In these cases, the families were acting as units of militancy.[72]

Figure 5: Gender of Islamist Militants (n=79)

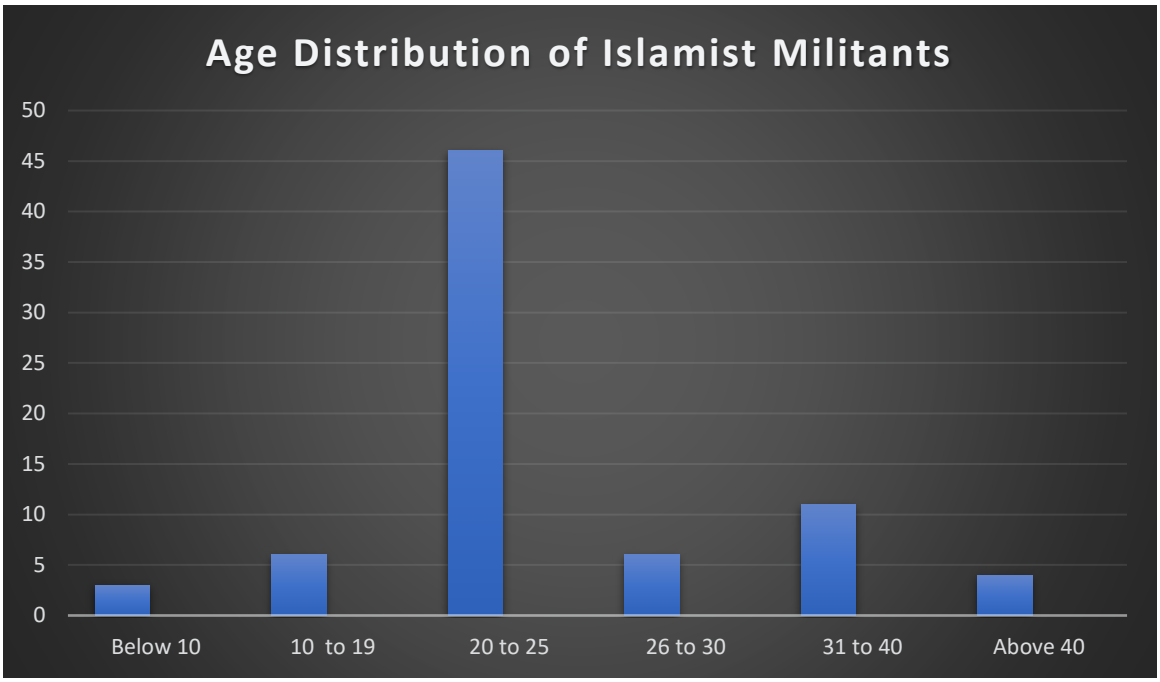


Age Group (78 Islamist Militants)

One of the most important factors of engagement in terrorism is age. Farrington contends that youths participate in "dangerous and high-risk activities." Statistics show that youths of the 15-25 age group is more prone to criminal activities. With terrorism, Bakker points to the same age group vulnerable to militancy.[73] Of the 90 killed Islamist militants, information about the age of 78 militants was collected from three different newspapers. Data show that most of the Islamist militants (46 out of 78) belonged to the 20-25 age group and they were mainly university students, at both graduate and post-graduate level. A substantial portion of Islamist militants also came from the 31-40 age group. This Research Note's result concurs with the findings of Riaz (2016 and 2018) that nearly 94 percent of militants were between 18 and 40 years of age. Teens and unemployed youths of the 26-30 age group are also vulnerable to online radicalization. Some children are also being directed towards militancy by their parents. The oldest man found was about 50 years of age and belonged to the Jamaatul Mujaheedin Bangladesh (JMB). He was responsible for the radicalization of his family and, when the security forces were trying to capture him, [74] he committed suicide, using self-made explosives together with his wife (aged 45), son (aged 18), daughter (aged 17), and a follower (aged 22). Most of the IS

like-minded 'Neo-JMB' militants appear as being under 40 years of age. This tends to confirm the appearance of a new wave of violent militancy, distinct in character from previous manifestations.

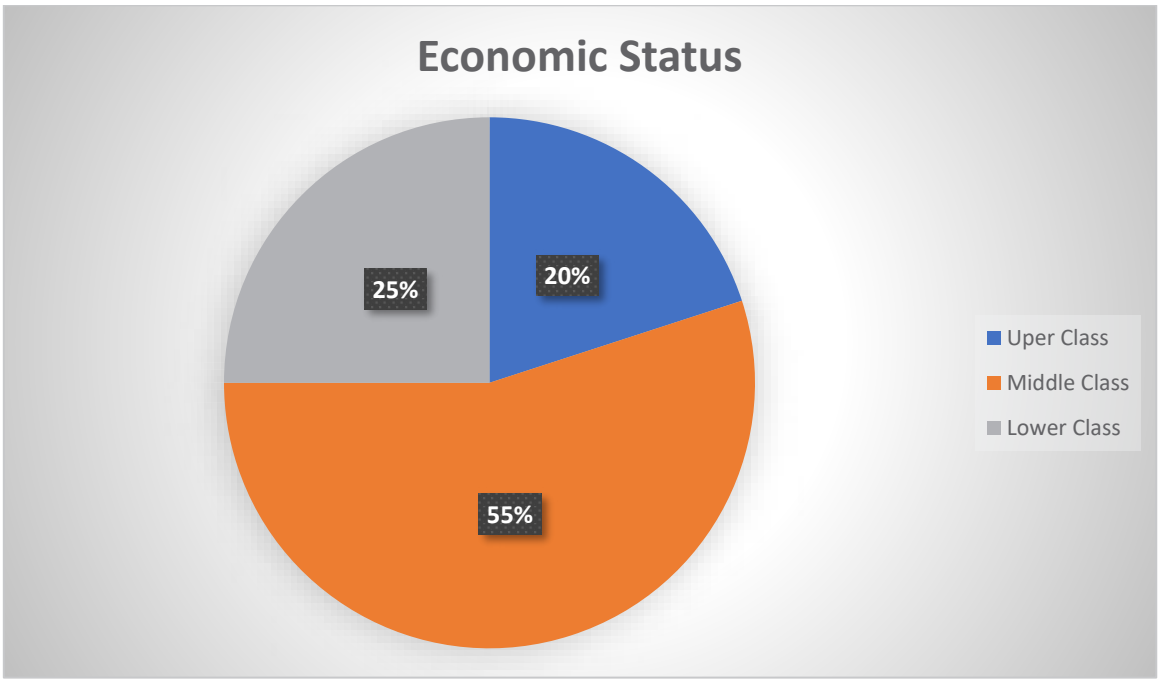
Figure 6: Age Distribution of Islamist Militants (n=78)



Economic Status (60 Islamist Militants)

It has been a difficult task to determine the economic status of Islamist militants in Bangladesh. Very few newspaper reports deal with the economic status of militants because Islamist militants of this wave of IS and Al Qaeda are mainly students. However, unsurprisingly, we have found that those militants from English-medium educational institutions are from upper class backgrounds, those from Bangla-medium institutions are mainly from middle class backgrounds, and those from madrassas are mainly from the lower class backgrounds. Considering this fact and the information received from newspapers, it seems that the middle class is increasingly being targeted for radicalization; 55 percent (33 out of 60 militants) were from this social background. A significant number of youths (20 percent) from the upper class was also targeted for radicalization. Nevertheless, lower class youths remain vulnerable to violent radicalization.[75] In this regard, the studies of Riaz and Sageman, based on 53 and 172 samples in Bangladesh and the Middle East respectively, contend that about 75 percent of Islamist militants belonged to the upper class and middle class.[76] This startling finding undermines the hypothesis that poverty breeds extremism. When it comes to the higher echelons of society, reports show a variety of profiles. Doctors, teachers and engineers have joined the militancy. Students from internationally renowned universities like the campus of Monash University in Malaysia have also succumbed to the ideology of Jihadism. The government minister's nephew and teacher's son, Saad al Nahid, was accused of attempting to kill blogger Asif Mohiuddin. Later, Rohan Ibn Imtiaz, the son of a leader of the ruling party, was killed in the Gulshan Holy Artisan Café attack in July 2016. Asif Adnan, the son of a Justice, and Wadud Jummon, the son of a doctor couple, were arrested on charges of engaging with violent extremism. The son of the former army officer, Azwaj and the star of the Close-Up TV show [77], Tahmid Rahman Safi, son of former Election Commissioner were also engaged with Islamist militancy.[78] These varied profiles show that the elites have also been touched by radicalization. A high level of education, a degree of Westernization or close links to government or military elites are no obstacles to radicalization and to some extent may in fact promote it.

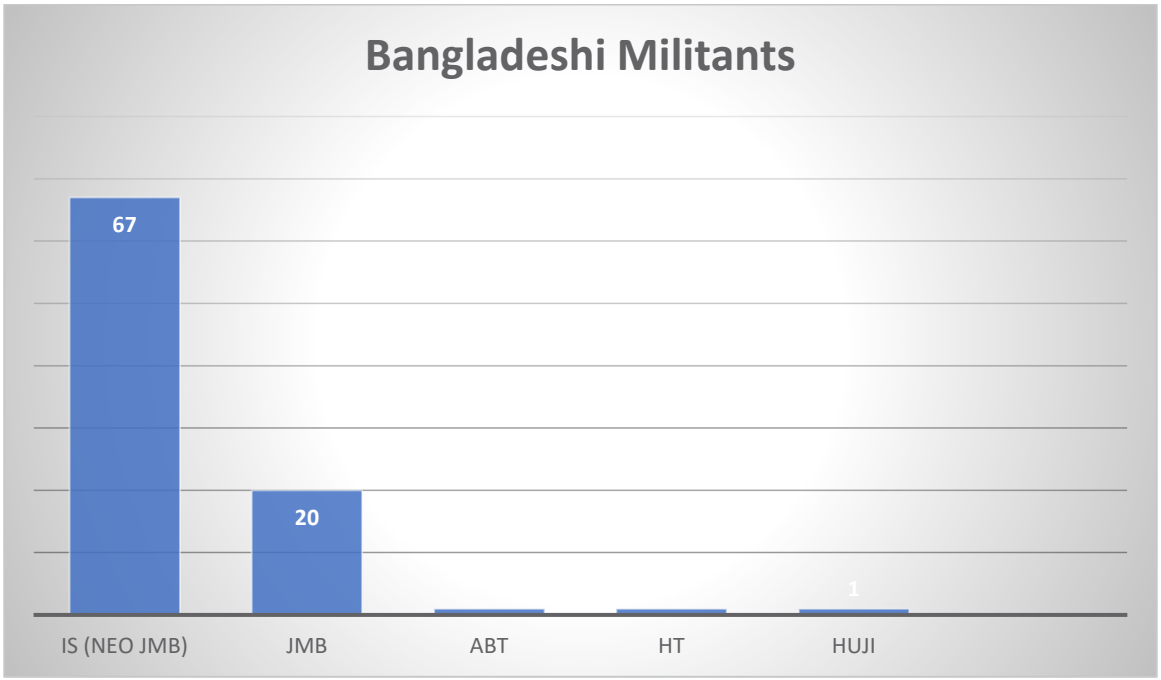
Figure 7: Economic Status of Islamist Militants (n=60)



Organizations of Islamist Militants (90 Islamist Militants)

The bar graph shows that a number of Islamist militant organizations such as the IS like-minded 'Neo-JMB', Al Qaeda like-minded 'ABT', old JMB, HT and Pakistan based HuJI are still functional in Bangladesh. But the striking fact is that 75 percent (67 out of 90 militants) of Islamist militants were primarily influenced by IS. IS has clearly overtaken other Islamist militant organizations in Bangladesh. Riaz, in his study profiling Bangladeshi militants, noticed a trend in 2016 showing the growth of IS but noted also that JMB remained the dominant militant group in Bangladesh.[79]

Figure 8: Organizations of Islamist Militants (n=90)



One of the possible reasons is that the ideological momentum was shifting to IS because it acquired a territorial basis (Raqqa and Mosul) and in mid-2014 proclaimed a global Caliphate, invoking Islamic apocalyptic ideas.[80] The posting of a video message in English with Bengali sub-titles by a Bangladeshi IS soldier fighting in Syria explains the apocalyptic ideas.

> "Subhan Allah, know the hereafter is near, know the *kiyamat* (doomsday) is near, know that you will be questioned and know you will be asked what did you do for your deen (religion)? Remember the end time is very near. Soon the time will come when we will insaAllah fight with Isa Ibne Mariam (Jesus Christ). You will be biggest loser if you sitting at home and doing nothing."[81]

As a result, *Daesh* appointed a Khalifa for Bangladesh on 18 June 2015, a Bangladeshi it named as Shaykh Abu Ibrahim Al Hanif.[82] These two factors probably inspired more Bangladeshi youths to join IS. This might be because IS' declaration of a 'Global Caliphate' with a concrete territorial basis in Iraq and Syria seemed to support the Prophet's prophecies. On the other hand, although Al Qaeda-oriented AAI, ABT and AAI2 were involved in a number of killings of secular bloggers, LGBT workers, Sufis and secular publishers, only one AQ follower was killed by security forces [83] but many of them had been arrested. The old JMB whose ideology as derived from the Taliban has struggled to survive in the era of IS and AQIS with 22 percent of Islamist militants in our sample being JMB followers. Moreover, JMB has been trying to become an international organization with the creation of the Jamaatul Mujaheedin India (JMI) in 2018.[84]

Residential Location (73 Islamist Militants)

It has been widely assumed that Islamist militants mainly come from the northern part of Bangladesh as this area is the one most affected by poverty [85]. Riaz's two studies did not shed any light on the subject of which area the militants came from. However, recent demographic data indicate that no particular area is less vulnerable. Rather, it is becoming more obvious that Islamist militants are mainly drawn from urban areas with an upper or middle class character.

The largest number of Islamist militants in Bangladesh (12 out of 67) have come from Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Rajshahi and Dinajpur, two important administrative cities of Bangladesh, stand second with nine militants from each city. Another two cities, Comilla and Norshindi, located very close to Dhaka, have so far supplied eight militants. Other militants come from other cities of Bangladesh.[86]

Conclusion

This study reveals some worrying trends in contemporary Islamist militancy in Bangladesh. Even if this Research Note cannot offer a definite socio-demographic profile of Islamist militants in Bangladesh due to its explorative nature (and also due to the limitations of the data based on militants killed in encounters with security forces over a period of 31 months). However, from the data it is quite evident that the IS like-minded 'Neo JMB', the AQIS like-minded AAI and ABT and the old JMB are today very active in Bangladesh. IS has obviously overtaken all other organizations because of the appeal of its 'Global Caliphate', based on Islamic apocalyptic ideas. Militant organizations have mainly targeted students in their recruiting efforts and those recruited, mostly males, belong to the 15-25 age group.[87] A majority of Islamist militants has been drawn from mainstream educational institutions (college and university students), very often coming from educated and relatively wealthy families from upper and middle class urban backgrounds.

A growing number of students from English medium-level institutions have also been joining Islamist militancy in Bangladesh. This finding is in line with what Sageman found already in 2004 [88]; his study examined 172 militants and concluded that around 70 percent of Islamist militants were well educated and came from upper and middle class backgrounds. But this Research Note diverges from Sageman's on the issue of marriage.[89] At the beginning of the 21st century, Sageman contended that 73 percent of Islamist militants were married

and had children. However, the present research found that in the case of contemporary Bangladesh very few militants were actually married.

More generally, this study casts serious doubt about the widely held views about Bangladeshi Islamist militants—as summarized by Riaz [90]—that 'poverty breeds extremism', 'deprivation encourages individuals to join militancy' and 'Madrassas are the incubators of terrorism'. Finally, this study identifies four worrying trends of Bangladesh's Islamist militancy: (i) women increasingly being used for violent radicalization, (ii) families acting as terrorist cells, (iii) the increasing use of self-made weapons, and (iv) a home-grown ambition for engaging in internationalism. If Bangladesh becomes a new hub of Islamist terrorism, [91] all the questions raised by this Research Note warrant closer attention, in particular that of knowing why the apocalyptic ideology of IS has had such resonance among the very young—and this despite their high level of education.

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Appendix

Operations Carried by the Security Forces

1. Operation 'Thunder Bolt' in Dhaka on 2 July 2016, which killed 5 Neo JMB Militants.
2. Operation in Zhinaidah on 14 July 2016, which arrested 4 Neo JMB Militants.
3. Operation in Bogra on 19 July 2016, no arrest and no killing happened.
4. Operation 'Storm 26' in Dhaka on 25 July 2016, which killed 9 Neo JMB Militants.
5. Operation 'Hit Strong' in Narayanganj on 27 August 2016, which killed 3 Neo JMB Militants.
6. Operation at Rupnagar, Dhaka on 2 September 2016, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
7. Operation at Azimpur, Dhaka on 10 September 2016, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
8. Operation in Tangail on 8 October 2016, which killed 2 Neo JMB militants.
9. Operation in Gazipur on 8 October 2016, which killed 9 Neo JMB militants.
10. Operation in Dhaka on 8 October 2016, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
11. Operation at Ashkona, Dhaka on 24 December 2016, which killed 2 Neo JMB militants.
12. Operation at Sitakunda on 15 March 2017, which killed 5 Neo JMB militants.
13. Operation 'Twalight' in Sylhet on 24 March 2017, which killed 4 Neo JMB militants.
14. Operation 'Hit Back' at Nasirpur, Mauluvibazar on 29 March 2017, which killed 7 Neo JMB militants.
15. Operation 'Maximus' at Borohat, Mauluvibazar on 31 March 2017, which killed 3 Neo JMB militants.
16. Operation 'Strickout' at Katbari, Comilla on 31 March 2017, no killing or arrest.
17. Operation at Kalibari, Mymensing on 3 April 2017, which arrested 7 Neo JMB militants.
18. Operation Moheshpur Upazela, Zhinaidah on 7 April 2017, which killed 2 Neo JMB militants.
19. Operation in Zhinaidah on 22 April 2017, no killing or arrest.
20. Operation 'Eagle Hunt' in Chapainababganj on 27 April 2017, which killed 4 JMB militants.
21. Operation 'Sun Devil' in Rajshahi on 12 May 2017, which killed 5 JMB militants.
22. Operation at Chuadanga, Jhenaidah on 16 May 2017, which arrested 2 Neo JMB militants.
23. Operation in Jhenaidah on 16 May 2017, no killing or arrest.
24. Operation in Norshingdi on 21 May 2017, which arrested 5 Neo JMB militants.
25. Operation in Chapainababganj on 24 May 2017, which arrested 3 JMB militants.
26. Operation at Ashulia, Dhaka on 17 July 2017, which arrested 4 Neo JMB militants.

27. Operation 'August Bite' in Dhaka on 15 August 2017, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
28. Operation at Nakhal Para, Dhaka on 12 January 2018, which killed 3 JMB militants.
29. Operation in Norshingdi on 16 October 2018, which killed 2 Neo JMB militants.

Gunfights

1. Gunfight with security forces in Madaripur on 18 June 2016, which killed 1 HT fighter.
2. Gunfight with security forces in Dhaka on 19 June 2016, which killed 1 ABT fighter.
3. Gunfight with security forces in Kishorganj on 7 July 2016, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
4. Gunfight with security forces in Rajshahi on 3 August 2016, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
5. Gunfight with security forces in Mymensing on 4 August 2016, which killed 2 Neo JMB militants.
6. Gunfight with security forces in Tangail on 21 August 2016, which killed 2 JMB militants.
7. Gunfight with security forces in Bogura on 29 August 2016, which killed 2 JMB militants.
8. Gunfight with security forces in Dhaka on 7 January 2017, which killed 2 Neo JMB militants.
9. Gunfight with security forces in Rajshahi on 2 March 2017, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
10. Gunfight with security forces in Brahmanbaria on 16 March 2017, which killed 1 HUJI fighter.
11. Gunfight with security forces in Jashore on 24 June 2018, which killed 1 JMB fighter.
12. Gunfight with security forces in Munshiganj on 8 September 2018, which killed 2 JMB militants.
13. Gunfight with security forces in Mymensing on 4 November 2018, which killed 1 JMB fighter.
14. Gunfight with security forces in Bogura on 6 November 2018, which killed 1 JMB fighter.

Attacks

1. Attack to security forces in Kishorganj on 7 July 2016, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.
2. Attack to security forces in Dhaka on 24 March 2017, which killed 1 Neo JMB fighter.

Adversity, Criminality, and Mental Health Problems in Jihadis in Dutch Police Files

by Anton W. Weenink

Abstract

This Research Note addresses the backgrounds in terms of demography, adversity, criminality, and mental health of 319 jihadist travelers and at-risk travelers from the Netherlands. It is a follow-up on a 2015 paper describing behavioral problems and disorders in 140 jihadi travelers. The study is informed by life course criminology and the distinction made in Situational Action Theory between an individual's 'susceptibility' to radicalization to violent extremism, and 'exposure' to a radicalizing environment. Individual backgrounds are typically thought to affect such susceptibility. Data are from police files on the subjects. Results indicate heightened 'susceptibility' in all categories, and cast doubts on the often-presumed 'normality' of this specific group of 'terrorists'.

Keywords: jihadi travelers, foreign terrorist fighters, criminality, mental health

Introduction

This paper is based on results from a report of the Netherlands Police on the personal backgrounds of jihadi travelers from the Netherlands.[1] The report ('Study 2') proceeds from Weenink (2015) ('Study 1') that highlighted behavioral problems and disorders among the current generation of jihadists.[2] Findings from Study 1 seemed to be at odds with views in terrorism research, that terrorists are "surprisingly normal" in terms of mental health, and that they overall do not have problematic socioeconomic backgrounds.[3] This 'normality hypothesis' (author's term) seemed to find support in the profiles of leftist revolutionaries of the seventies and eighties, and al-Qaida's 9/11 attackers. Researchers considered these terrorists to be relatively well educated, to come from middle or even upper class families, and not to have more mental health problems as on average. Homegrown jihadists of the 2000s, however, seem not to fit this socioeconomic picture, but some maintain that the image overall remains one of diversity: Beyond most homegrown jihadists being young males from immigrant families, these researchers find little that sets them apart as a group from their peers. [4] [5]

The normality hypothesis affects research and practice. For one thing, supposing normality led some researchers to dismiss life course criminology (LCC) as a means to understand pathways to terrorism. The interaction between adverse childhood experiences and innate vulnerabilities that induces ordinary criminal violence in LCC, some consider to be absent in the lives of terrorists.[6] Another corollary was that mental health problems, that are a standard item in clinical risk assessment for ordinary criminal violence, dropped out of risk assessment instruments for terrorist violence, like the VERA (Violent Extremism Risk Assessment) and IVP (Identifying Vulnerable People). Instead, risk factors related to "ideology, grievances, affiliations, and moral emotions" were included.[7] Similarly, Dawson et al proposed to pay more attention to the role of ideology as a 'pull factor' for jihadi travel; they think that research on socioeconomic 'push factors' fails to address the problem of specificity.[8]

In recent years, however, doubts resurfaced as to whether 'normality' properly describes the current generation of jihadist travelers, and some other types of violent extremists as well. Study 1 referred to research that did find behavioral problems and temperamental issues in violent extremists of different backgrounds.[9] Several studies based on large samples of Dutch jihadists since the early 2000s consistently show them to be overrepresented in crime.[10] Basra et al (2016, 2017) found this 'crime-terror nexus' in several other European countries.[11] As for mental health, Corner & Gill (2015, 2016), Gill & Corner (2017) and Hamm & Spaaij (2017) found Lone Actor Terrorists (LATs), in contrast to group actors, to more often have mental disorders than people on average.[12] A history of mental illness was a statistically significant predictor of violent extremism, as was having an unstable career, radical peers, and a criminal record, in a study by LaFree et al (2017).[13]

Many American white supremacists appear to have troubled backgrounds.[14] Bubolz and Simi think the idea of terrorist normality is a case of 'overgeneralization'.[15] Others question whether older descriptions of the backgrounds of terrorists were correct in the first place.[16]

A corollary is renewed attention for non-ideological, that is psychological and criminological, risk factors for terrorism.[17] Furthermore, mental health problems have been reintroduced in terrorism risk assessment instruments (e.g. in VERA 2R). Here though, the focus still is on major mental disorders. Some call for more nuance, because mental health is not a black-or-white issue.[18]

The consensus on 'normality' being questioned again does not imply that adversity, mental health issues, or a criminal record help us identify who will become a violent extremist and who will not. The specificity problem is still there, as by far most people with mental disorders or a criminal record will never become violent extremists. Bouhana and Wikström (2008, 2011) point out though, that insight in backgrounds remains important. They propose not to

> (…) confuse the failure of a "profile" or "risk factor" approach to the explanation of terrorist actions with the irrelevance of individual-level differences. (…) To be of value, variables included in statistical models or "profiles" should be variables that we have good reason to believe to be causes, markers or symptoms. What the identification of non-random regularities (i.e. stronger correlations of acts of terrorism among those with particular attributes) can do is to help us identify causes.[19]

Their Situational Action Theory distinguishes the background variables that may enhance or reduce this individual 'susceptibility' or 'vulnerability', from variables related to 'exposure' to radicalizing settings. To come to terms with the specificity problem, research needs to address the interaction between individual and context. Risk factors for criminality and susceptibility to violent extremism overlap.[20] People who are vulnerable to radicalization may be found almost anywhere, but actual radicalization remains rather rare and local, because 'exposure' is needed as well. The idea finds support in research indicating that European radical networks arise around one or a few inspiring figures, and not necessarily in areas with the largest concentration of young Muslims who are the target of choice of al-Qaida and ISIL propaganda.[21]

In Study 2, Bouhana and Wikström's distinction between susceptibility and exposure is the point of departure: problematic backgrounds may heighten susceptibility. Exposure is not part of the study, so the study will not solve the problem of specificity. It may show however, which items beyond the obvious ones of age, gender and migration background set travelers apart.

Research Focus

The central question in study 2 is: *What are the backgrounds of jihadist travelers from the Netherlands?* The aim of the study is to provide suggestions for the kind of interactions that police and partners of police could pursue in preventing or diminishing extremist engagement. The focus is on areas of interventions, and not on specific policy prescriptions, mainly due to the fact that policy could not be readily evaluated. The aim in the study is to establish where the background characteristics of a specific group lie vis-à-vis their peers—especially for those characteristics that law enforcement and scholars consider as susceptibility factors to extremism. The assumption of extremism is based on the fact that those individuals answered the call to join violent extremist, salafi-jihadist militias in the Middle East. Although the study is descriptive and does not provide a causal model, current LCC and SAT models informed its choice of variables.

Background variables highlight what preceded travel for jihadist purposes. In Study 2 they are similar to those in Study 1. They loosely follow its three categories of 'historical variables' from a tool forensic psychiatrists use to assess the risk of re-offending in violent criminals, 'HCR20-v.3' ('HCR': Historical Clinical Risk Assessment):[22] Adaptive and Life problems ('adversity' as in 'Adverse Childhood Experiences', or 'distress');[23] Anti-social behavior ('criminality'); and mental health problems. Additionally, this paper discusses scores on demography (in SAT, demography affects the likelihood that someone will be exposed to a radicalizing setting). Each category contains several historical variables and underlying items, of which those with relatively few missing values will be presented. HCR is not used here as a risk assessment tool. Where possible, outcomes are compared to base

rates. Scores on descriptive variables are correlates of jihad travel, but not necessarily causes. [24]

'Jihadi travelers from the Netherlands' refers to all individuals on the 'List of jihadi travelers', which was compiled by the counterterrorism team in the Central Unit of the Netherlands Police. All regional and national police units provide the information; they decide who will be on the list, and provide their status (e.g. 'returned', 'at risk', 'presumed dead'). In Study 1, the author used the list from February 2014 (List 1), which contained the personal details of all 140 travelers known to Dutch police at that moment. Study 2 uses the list from March 2016 (List 2) (n=319); 108 individuals from List 1 are also on List 2.

If one were to construct a model, the variable of most interest would be 'joining the jihad', with levels referring to whether people 'accomplished travel', 'tried but failed to join', or merely 'expressed intent to join'. Dutch criminal law considers joining a jihadist organization a terrorist crime, so in a legal sense, those who joined are 'terrorists'. Whether subjects were 'radicalized' in the ideological sense is a different matter. We cannot rule out that at least a few on the list had more mundane reasons to join. The caliphate claimed to offer a 'second chance' in life, if not 'stardom', to those who may feel like they did not do well in the first one.[25]

Sources, data and method

Data were mined from databases the author has routine access to as a researcher in the police. The list of travelers contains personal details (name, date and place of birth, citizenship), and residential information. Additional demographic backgrounds are found in the citizen's registration system ('GBA'). Data on adversity, criminality and mental health come from a nationwide police registration system Blue Spot Monitor (BSM). BSM shows all police contacts of a subject and the reports these contacts led to, up to five years back from the date of consulting. BSM also shows whether a subject has crime antecedents ('yes' or 'no') and, on a separate page, which antecedents. An online facility, JD-Online, contains criminal records. Demographic and crime data comprise relatively 'hard' facts, but BSM also is a reservoir of 'soft' information, as it contains all documents in which community police officers report their contacts with subjects and their acquaintances. Contacts may consist of interrogations, interviews, or just social talk. Interrogations often start with a 'social introduction', in which a suspect is asked to tell about his or her personal situation. Depending on how forthcoming they are, answers in the 'social introduction' section give a general impression of a subject's family situation, education, employment, financial situation, substance use, physical and mental health, and radicalization.

While demographic and criminality data can be determined straightforwardly, many other fields are more frequently missing. For example, information on educational achievement and employment is harder to come by. Studies by other authors provide some of this information. Finding data on mental health problems poses a particular challenge. While this paper does not diagnose mental health conditions, it uses information on such diagnoses as reported in police files. The files contain this information because community police often collaborate with providers of mental health services. Court rulings may also contain information on mental health.

Limitations and strengths

The research has a number of limitations. First, the police databases used are inaccessible to non-authorized outsiders. Second, police reports have a number of flaws, ranging from simple mistakes, to inconsistent follow-up in specific cases. Third, when a subject does not have a criminal record, there is less information on other items as well. Fourth, several other potential sources of information have not been consulted—social media in particular.

The study also has some strengths, related to the use of police data. First, the databases used in this study contain the most authoritative information available, at least for several key items across all subjects. Second, the 'soft' information mentioned is unique, in particular where it reveals the circumstances before an individual became a jihadist. Third, the study covers a complete research population, whereas many terrorism studies are based on small non-random samples.[26] A complete research population allows for computing reliable estimates of the population means, and thus for making statements about the 'normality' or 'abnormality' of scores on

specific variables.

Results

Status of jihad travel

Of the group of 319 jihadis on the 2016 Dutch police list, 217 (68%) accomplished their travel to the war zone. Of the 102 who did not travel, 41 (13%) tried but failed, 59 (18%) were considered 'at risk travelers', and 2 were 'facilitators'. The 217 accomplished travelers account for 79% of all accomplished travelers in July 2018. By mid-2019, 65 have been reported dead (30%).

As a proxy to the length of possible radicalization trajectories, the number of subjects that had entries in the database of the counterterrorism team before 2012 was tallied. It turned out that the team knew 31 of them before 2012 (10%). After travel took off in earnest, 100 individuals (31%) became known as at-risk individuals, another 117 (37%) only after they had left. In any case, 90% of travelers had not been active enough to raise red flags with the police prior to their ambition to travel.[27]

Demography

Age and gender

The mean age of those who accomplished their travel was 24 at the date of departure. For those who did not leave the mean age at the date of inclusion on the list was 23. Among travelers, for males the mean age is 24.1 and for females 23.6. The age distribution was similar to that in 2014; at 4%, the share of underage travelers remained the same. The share of women among all subjects doubled from 16% in 2014 to 31% in 2016. Of those who actually left women accounted for 28%.

Religious background

Judging by their names, family country of origin, and information in police reports 47 subjects are converts, or 15%, up from 12% in 2014. This means converts are overrepresented, considering that Schuurman et al estimate the share of converts in the approximately 1 million Muslims in the Netherlands, at around 1.7%.[28] The numbers also show that both converts and born-again Muslims represent small fractions of the Dutch Muslim population.[29] Of born-again Muslims 26% are women, the number for converts is 60%. By implication, of all 98 women on the list, 29% is a convert, and of all 221 men, 9%.

Immigration background

Of all subjects, 92 (29%) were born abroad and 227 (71%) were born in the Netherlands. Definitions of the Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics give the following result for the distribution of 'migration generations':[30]

Table 1 Migration generations (n=319)

Immigration Generation	N	Distribution
No migration background	21	7%
First	92	29%
Second	206	65%
Third	0	0%
Total	319	101%

If we take account of the place of birth of their parents, 93% of travelers have a migration background, with 65% belonging to the 'second generation'. Of converts, more than half (55%) have a family background of immigration. There were no subjects on the list from the so-called 'third generation'. As of yet, the third generation in the Netherlands is too small and too young to conclude that their absence is a result of their greater resilience to extremism (as Roy observed in France). [31] [32]

At 55%, subjects of whom one (5%) or both (50%) parents come from Morocco are the largest group by background country. The result is similar to Weenink (2015). The share of subjects with Turkish roots is 8% (was 9%). The communities of Moroccan and Turkish descent account each for about 2% in the Dutch population of 17 million, so subjects of Moroccan descent are clearly overrepresented. As mentioned, of 21 subjects (7%) both parents were born in the Netherlands. Smaller numbers have roots in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan, and several other countries.

Adversity

Under 'life problems and trauma' or 'adversity', HCR distinguishes three groups of historical variables with underlying items: Problems with Relationships, Problems with Work (financial and educational problems will be discussed here as well), and Traumatic Experiences. This paper only discusses the items for which there was sufficient information: 'single-parent families', homelessness, and problems with education, employment and finances.[33]

Single-parent families

Citizens' registration data of subjects and their parents allows for establishing how many subjects come from single-parent families. The outcome will be compared to base rates as found in work of others.

Table 2 Subjects from single-parent families

	Share of subjects from single-parent families
List 2 (n=319)	49.2%
Netherlands[34]	
Dutch background	19.7%
Turkish background	20.9%
Moroccan background	21.4%
International[35]	
England	24%
Wales	20%
Eastern Europe	14%

At 49%, travelers come from single-parent families over twice as often as their peers do. In 132 cases, divorce accounted for 41% of cases of parental separation, the death of a parent for 8% (25 cases); in 11 cases, a parent died after divorce. Converts very often come from single-parent families: 79%, against 48% for born-again Muslims.

Homelessness

In Weenink (2015), at least 6 out of 140 subjects had been homeless (4%), but these data are anecdotal. In the 2016 list, data on residential histories indicate that 30 subjects (9%) had been homeless for longer or shorter periods. Nationwide, homelessness in the age group 18-30 was 0.3% in 2015.[36] Comparison of homelessness rates of jihadi travelers with their age-matched nationwide group in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013, shows them

to be eight to ten times more likely to have a history of homelessness: 2.4% (n=6) both in 2011 and 2012, and 4.0% (n=10) in 2013.

Education

Although police data on education are by nature spotty, enrollment in higher education is likely to be more reliable, since subjects or relatives will be more inclined to mention such facts in interviews. In all, at least nine subjects attended university (3%), with only one graduating (0.3%); 23 others attended other institutes of higher education, of whom also one graduated. Therefore, of the 32 individuals (10%) who enrolled in an institute for higher education, two (0.6%) graduated. Actual numbers may be somewhat higher, but most probably will remain far from national and European averages for graduating from institutes of higher education, which are typically over 35%.[37] Thijs et al (2018) supports the impression of academic underperformance. Using data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of 279 suspects of a terrorist crime since 2005, they found 62% never completed secondary education, and 4% completed higher education. [38] The earlier generation of jihadists fared no better. Ljujic et al found that 63% of 209 jihadis and sympathizers in the years 2001-2013, never completed secondary education.[39]

Employment

Consistent with the literature on immigration burden, distress, educational setbacks and homelessness, terrorism suspects and jihadis seem to be under-integrated into the labor market. Of the jihadis in Ljujic's sample, 64% had been unemployed. Unemployment was 56% in the sample of Thijs et al, which was higher than that in ordinary criminals. Studies by Bakker and De Bont (2016), and Bergema and Van San (2017), based on smaller samples and open sources, found unemployment rates for travelers of 41% and 46% respectively.[40] In 2015 overall unemployment among second generation migrants was 22%; in the age group 18-25, it was 23%, and in the age group 25-45 it was 18%.[41] In sum, unemployment seems to be consistently and significantly higher among jihadis than among their peers.

Financial situation

Soudijn, a researcher from the financial crime unit in the Netherlands Police, published findings on the financial situation of travelers. He used bank data from 60,000 bank transactions of 131 accomplished travelers in the year before their date of departure. The transactions offer insight in the type of income and employment travelers had, and allow for assessing financial independence in terms of being able to provide for oneself, without government support or significant debt. Only 5% of all travelers were financially independent. Discounting young adults and/or students, who may by nature be financially dependent still showed that only 9% of the sample were financially independent.[42] Like De Poot et al (2011) and De Bie (2016), Soudijn found that, with few exceptions, when subjects worked, it was in irregular jobs and at lower wages than average of the labor market.

Criminality

Crime antecedents

Crime registration data from different police sources may not always be consistent, and the causes of discrepancies could be varied. Looking at criminal antecedents, namely reported criminal activities that preceded their travel or jihadi criminal activity, the proportion of individuals with at least one criminal antecedent ranges from 46% to 67%, depending on the source. Considering the extent to which scores have underlying data specifying the antecedents, the BSM estimate of 64% seems to best approximate the actual criminality rate.[43] This estimate is also close to the 62% that Thijs et al found in their sample of all terrorism suspects since 2005. Criminal histories may be diverse, but generally 147 individuals had one antecedent, while 30 individuals (9%) had 10 or more antecedents.

Comparing these numbers to the national average, in 2010 14% of individuals had criminal antecedents at

the age of 22 (23% for men and 5% for women).[44] At 64%, the absolute majority of travelers have criminal antecedents, with women even further over-represented than men: In our sample, 160 of 221 male travelers (72%) and 44 of 98 female travelers (45%) had criminal antecedents.[45]

Types of crime

The antecedents refer to 'ordinary' crime, not organized crime in the sense of subjects being active on illegal markets or racketeering. Ordinary crime, however, should not connote 'petty crime', as 40% of all subjects had been involved in violent crime in one way or another (40%). Violence in those cases mainly entails domestic violence, street and bar fights, and threats. There was no evidence for systematic organized violence related to drug trafficking or racketeering. When subjects were involved in the narcotics trade, it was on the lowest rungs of the supply chain. There were female victims of trafficking, but no traffickers or pimps. Overall, travelers appear to be disorganized and unskilled in their criminal endeavors.

Mental Health Problems

Overall outcome

A three-point scale was used for gauging mental health problems in travelers. In 230 subjects (72%), no mental health problems were reported, in 48 cases (15%) there was some indication for mental health problems, and in 41 cases (13%) they were clearly present. Out of the 89 individuals with reported mental health problems 56 had received some form of professional treatment (34 in the group where mental health problems were clearly present, and 22 in the group with some indication of mental health problems).

At first sight, a total score of 28% appears not to deviate substantially from national averages, considering the European base rate of 27%, as provided by the World Health Organization.[46] Prevalence rates differ per country, and for the Netherlands, a report by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM, 2017) puts the number at 22%. However, this number refers to five categories, only one of which, 'Disorders', covers the three mental health items used in HCR20-v.3 and this study: serious disorders, personality disorders, and substance abuse.[47] For Disorders, RIVM puts prevalence at 1.9 million (11%; data from general practitioners), and for the age group 20-39 it is approximately 8% (data from mental health institutions). Therefore, a base rate of 8 to 11% seems to be more relevant to our data than the 27% published by the WHO. Keeping in mind the limitations of police sources, our findings indicate that mental health problems are likely overrepresented among travelers.

Types of mental disorders

This section presents some aggregate statistics of the general types of mental disorders found in the dataset. The reader is referred to the original report for Study 2 for more details on all 89 cases where a mental health issue seemed to be present, as they are outside the scope of this research note. Due to the diversity of the mental health problems in the dataset, the absolute number of cases is low for any particular mental disorder. As such, contrasting these cases to the national base rates poses significance issues stemming from the limited statistical power of each category, and a handful of cases in either way may lead to an impression of over- or underrepresentation. The result was contrasted to the national base rates for the age group 20-39, and to data on the 'Top 600' of persistent serious offenders, as published by the Amsterdam city public health service GGD.[48] [49] Overall, both psychotic disorders (4.7%) and PTSD (3.4%) seem to be overrepresented among travelers, compared to national averages of 0.5 and 0.6% respectively. Interestingly, the rates of these disorders among jihadi travelers are comparable to those of persistent offenders (4.0% and 7.0% respectively). In contrast, mood disorders (2.8%), autism spectrum disorders (1.5%) and ADHD (2.5%) do not seem to differ significantly from national averages, and to be significantly lower than the scores of persistent offenders.

Variation of mental health issues across demographic determinants

As mentioned before, it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a comprehensive descriptive statistic for the various mental health issues in each demographic subgroup in the dataset. However, overall mental health problems were relatively more prevalent across demographic categories. Using a rule of thumb of a 20-percentage point difference from the sample average of 28%, mental health problems are relatively more common in converts (53%), in jihadis with a history of homelessness (67%), in persistent offenders (63%) and in clearly violent offenders (52%). Relatively low levels of mental health problems were found in subjects who came from refugee families (16%) and in subjects without crime antecedents (18%). Additionally, people who joined after the proclamation of the caliphate had mental health problems slightly less often than those who joined earlier. No sex difference was found between male and female subjects, and they both had 28% prevalence of mental health issues.

Findings from practitioners

Weenink (2015) included information from a mental health care provider in the Netherlands, who indicated that 60% of a caseload of 51 individuals of concern for radicalization in a multiparty policy platform (known as the 'safety house'), had already had a record in the mental health service. By 2017, the number of clients had grown to 300, and the share of those with a record still was 60%, with 25% suffering from serious disorders.[50] Clinical research established disorders in 27% of 26 detained terrorism suspects.[51] In an evaluation report of the Action Program Counter-radicalization, the Ministry of Justice (2017) found that "many subjects discussed in safety houses have mental health issues." In the Arnhem safety house, 52% of 42 clients had mental health issues.[52]

Conclusion

The 319 jihadi travelers from the Netherlands have on average relatively high levels of adversity, distress, trauma, criminality and mental health problems, as compared to their age-matched peers. With adversity and criminality affecting more than half of the subjects, and mental health problems present in a substantial proportion of travelers, the overall picture is that of a group that resembles other youth at-risk of delinquency. Conversely, it is clear that jihadist travelers from the Netherlands cannot be considered 'normal' as suggested in earlier terrorism studies.

Discussion

This final section discusses in broad outline what the conclusion can mean for research and policy, keeping in mind that this is not a policy evaluation study.

1. The main takeaway from this study is that people may differ in the level of susceptibility to violent extremist ideologies. Those who experienced distress, or had mental health issues or with criminal pasts, seem to have been relatively more susceptible. Therefore, the findings do not support the idea that violent extremists tend to be indistinguishable from their 'normal' peers in terms of mental health and socioeconomic characteristics.

2. The claim that terrorists are very 'diverse' and 'normal' often is based on anecdotal evidence or non-random small samples. To establish regularities like overall normality or diversity, or the absence thereof, researchers need datasets large enough to allow for statements about the distribution of characteristics in the population. Therefore, Hegghammer calls on researchers to build such datasets and to "stop saying there is no single terrorist profile"— "of course there isn't a single profile, but populations can still be described. Not all terrorists are the same, but for any given variable, there is a median terrorist."[53]

3. This said, the study concerns a specific group of violent extremists, namely jihadist travelers from the Netherlands. Generalizations to other groups of violent extremists or even travelers from other

countries should take into account differences between populations and contexts. For example, on the European continent, many travelers have roots in North Africa, whereas British travelers more often have South Asian backgrounds. In North America, the proportion of converts is higher than in Europe.[54] North African societal norms and influences might be very different from those of their 'brothers and sisters' in Europe. Furthermore, jihad travel in itself is a specific manifestation of 'terrorism' activity, certainly from the legal perspective in most Western countries.[55] One conspicuous case-specific outcome is that a substantial number of travelers were quite new to the jihadi scene. This could indicate that situational factors—the relative proximity of the Syrian conflict and the accessibility of grassroots extremist groups—might have facilitated the 'radicalization' of some individuals who otherwise might never have thought of joining a terrorist organization.

4. Identifying socioeconomic push factors will not solve the problem of specificity, but neither will analyzing the 'pull' of ideology.[56] Jihadis remain an extremely small minority, also in the Muslim communities in the West, who are exposed to jihadist propaganda. Several jihadis will have gone through some process of religious 'reorientation'—but it is hard to avoid the impression that their extremism often is not so much the logical endpoint after 'studying Islam', as where they wanted to end up in the first place. Perhaps there are limits to the level of ideological conviction that could be expected from young adults with poor educational achievements. Although salafi- jihadism undoubtedly is a rallying point for travelers, how they speak may sometimes better reveal their drivers than what they say.[57]

5. Radicalization is just as much an emotional process as it is a cognitive one. Counter-radicalization then might be more about diminishing susceptibility by strengthening resilience to life's challenges, than about offering 'counter-narratives'.[58] Both salafi-jihadis and white supremacists seem to have experienced 'adversity' and this probably is not a coincidence (and it goes for many criminals as well). Therefore, several authors have advocated a public health approach to defusing extremist states-of-mind across ideological or ethnic lines; diminishing exposure would suggest helping people disengage from extremist networks.[59] The findings from Study 2 support this perspective. In public health approaches, the primary focus is early intervention that prevents people from further radicalization by offering pragmatic solutions for dealing with the psychosocial problems that may have set them on the path to extremism. Practical solutions will have to come from other parties than law enforcement, but some hesitate to get involved. For mental health experts and practitioners, professional ethics and medical secrecy may seem at stake.[60] Regardless, the industry could think about the role it can play.[61] Where individuals are involved in terrorist attack planning, or can be considered ringleaders encouraging such planning, law enforcement has to step in. Here, identifying hot spots is essential. However, criminal investigation need not be the default response at the first signal of radicalization, as long as there is no indication of attack planning. Recognizing trouble at an early stage is key, as is proportionality in responses. In this, community policing can make an important contribution by building the trust needed, if people are to share early warning signals about their loved ones.

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[5] Cf. Bakker, Edwin & Peter Grol. (2017). *Nederlandse jihadisten. Van naïeve idealisten tot geharde terroristen*. Amsterdam: Overamstel Uitgevers / Hollands Diep. See also Buijs, Frank J., Froukje Demant & Atef Hamdy. (2006). *Strijders van eigen bodem. Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (p.242); and Dawson, Lorne L., Amarnath Amarasingam & Alexandra Bain. (2016). *Talking to Foreign Fighters: Socio-Economic Push versus Existential Pull Factors*. TSAS Working Paper Series no. 16-14 (p.2).

[6] Silke, Andrew. (2008). "Holy Warriors. Exploring the Psychological Processes of Jihadi Radicalization," *European Journal of Criminology* 5/1. DOI: 10.1177/1477370807084226 (p.119). Cf. Pressman, D. Elaine & John Flockton. (2012). "Calibrating risks for violent political extremists and terrorists: the VERA-2 structured assessment," *The British Journal of Forensic Practice*, 14/4, p.237-252; and Monahan, John, 2012, "The Individual Risk Assessment of Terrorism," *American Psychological Association* (in press version) (p.14).

[7] Pressman & Flockton (2012). For a discussion of several terrorism risk-assessment tools, see: Lloyd, Monica. (2019). *Extremism Risk Assessment: A Directory*. CREST Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats. See also Duits, N., T. Rinne & M. van Leyenhorst, 2017, "De risicoanalyse van gewelddadig extremisme in het strafrecht," *Sancties* 2017/28.

[8] Dawson et al (2016, p.2, p.27).

[9] Lützinger, Saskia. (2012). *The Other Side of the Story. A qualitative study of the biographies of extremists and terrorists*. Wiesbaden: Bundeskriminalamt. Merari, Ariel. (2010). *Driven to Death: Psychological and Social Aspects of Suicide Terrorism*. New York: Oxford University Press. Venhaus, John M. (2010). *Why Youth Join al-Qaeda*, Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

[10] De Bie, Jasper L. (2016). *How Jihadist networks operate. A grounded understanding of changing organizational structures, activities, and involvement mechanisms of jihadist networks in the Netherlands*. Leiden: Leiden University & The Hague: Ministry of Security and Justice / WODC; www.wodc.nl. De Poot, C.J., A. Sonnenschein, M.R.J. Soudijn, J.G.M. Bijen & M.W. Verkuylen. (2011). *Jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands. A description based on closed criminal investigations*. The Hague: Ministry of Justice / WODC. Thijs, Fabienne, Elanie Rodermond & Frank Weerman. (2018). *Verdachten van terrorisme in beeld: achtergrondkenmerken, 'triggers' en eerdere politiecontacten*. Apeldoorn: Politie & Wetenschap en Amsterdam: NSCR.

[11] Basra, Rajan, Peter R. Neumann & Claudia Brunner. (2016). *Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus*. London: King's College / ICSR. Basra, Rajan & Peter R. Neumann. (2017). "Crime as Jihad: Developments in the Crime-Terror Nexus in Europe," *CTC Sentinel* 10/9, p.1-6.

[12] Corner, Emily & Paul Gill. (2015; 2017). "A False Dichotomy? Mental Illness and Lone-Actor Terrorism," *Law and Human Behavior*, 39/1, p.23–34. Hamm, Mark S. & Ramon Spaaij. (2017). *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*. New York NY: Columbia University Press.

[13] LaFree, Gary. (2017). "Correlates of Violent Political Extremism in the United States," presentation based on work with Michael Jensen, Patrick James and Aaron Safer-Lichtenstein (University of Maryland/START), at the workshop on The Terror-Crime

Nexus: merging Criminological and Psychological Perspectives, Amsterdam, 11-12 September 2017, at The Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement, Amsterdam.

[14] Bubolz, Bryan F. & Pete Simi. (2015). "Leaving the World of Hate: Life-Course Transitions and Self-Change," *American Behavioral Scientist* I-21, DOI: 10.1177/0002764215588814. Simi, Pete, Karyn Sporer & Bryan F. Bubolz. (2016a). "Narratives of Childhood Adversity and Adolescent Misconduct as Precursors to Violent Extremism: A Life-Course Criminological Approach," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. p.1-28, DOI: 10.1177/0022427815627312. Simi, Pete, Steven Windisch & Karyn Sporer. (2016b). *Recruitment and Radicalization among US Far-Right Terrorists*. Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, College Park, MD: START. Simi, Pete & Steven Windisch, 2017, "Why Radicalization Fails: Barriers to Mass Casualty Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1409212

[15] Bubolz, Bryan F. & Pete Simi. (2019). "The Problem of Overgeneralization: The Case of Mental Health Problems and U.S. Violent White Supremacists," *American Behavioral Scientist*, DOI: 10.1177/0002764219831746.

[16] Hegghammer, Thomas. (2016). "Revisiting the poverty-terrorism link in European jihadism," *Society for Terrorism Research Annual Conference*, Leiden, 8 November 2016 (p.5). Lankford discusses new evidence suggesting the 9/11 attackers had more mental health problems than previously accepted: Lankford, Adam. (2017). "A Psychological Re-Examination of Mental Health Problems among the 9/11 Terrorists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2017.1348742.

[17] Simi et al (2016b, p.3).

[18] Gill & Corner (2017). Criminologists from Simon Fraser University take issue with the "dichotomization of mental illness as a single variable in order to better understand the complex relationship between terrorism, psychological state, as well as other individual-level risk factors (…)" (SFU & RCMP. (2019). Introduction to the conference "A Review of the Utility of Existing Terrorism Risk Assessment Instruments and Policies in NATO Countries: A Canadian Perspective." Vancouver: Simon Fraser University & Royal Canadian Mountain Police, 21 May 2019.). Similarly, Corrado et al found many criminals to have some but not all traits associated with psychopathy (Corrado, R.R., M. DeLisi, M., S.D. Hart & E.C. McCuish. (2015). "Can the causal mechanisms underlying chronic, serious, and violent offending trajectories be elucidated using the psychopathy construct?" *Journal of Criminal Justice* 43(4), 251-261). Reid Meloy and Gill propose not to focus on 'static' backgrounds, but to apply a dynamic approach to risk assessment in which warning behaviors are clue (Reid Meloy, J. & Paul Gill. (2016). "The lone-actor terrorist and the TRAP-18." *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 3/1, p.37-52.

[19] Bouhana, Noémie & Per-Olof H. Wikström. (2008). *Theorizing Terrorism: Terrorism As Moral Action. A Scoping Study*. London: University College London / Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science (p.19). Cf. Bouhana, Noémie & Per-Olof H. Wikström. (2011). *Al Qa'ida influenced radicalisation: A rapid evidence assessment guided by Situational Action Theory*. London: Home Office / Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism OSCT.

[20] Bouhana, Noémie. (2019). *The Moral Ecology of Extremism. A Systemic Perspective, paper prepared for the UK Commission for Countering Extremism* (p.9; p.13); cf. Dhumad, Sale, Philip J. Candilis, Sean D. Cleary, Allen R. Dyer, and Najat Khalifa. (2019). "Risk factors for terrorism: a comparison of family, childhood, and personality risk factors among Iraqi terrorists, murderers, and controls," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*. DOI: 10.1080/19434472.2019.1591481.

[21] Coolsaet, Rik. (2016). *All radicalisation is local. The genesis and drawbacks of an elusive concept*, Egmont Paper 84, Brussel: Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations. Neve, Rudie, Suzan Eris, Frank Weerman, Jan-Willem van Prooijen, Vanja Ljujic & Inge Versteegt. (2019). *Radicalisering in problematische jeugdgroepen*. Amsterdam: NWO/NSCR. Reinares, Fernando, Carola García-Calvo & Álvaro Vicente. (2017). "Differential Association Explaining Jihadi Radicalization in Spain: A Quantitative Study," *CTC-Sentinel* 10/6, June/July 2017, p.29-34. Schuurman, Bart. (2017). *Becoming a European homegrown jihadist. A multilevel analysis of involvement in the Dutch Hofstadgroup, 2002-2005*. Leiden: Leiden University. Van Ostaeyen, Pieter. (2016). "Belgian Radical Networks and the Road to the Brussels Attacks," *CTC Sentinel*, 9/16, p.7-12. Vidino, Lorenzo, Francesco Marone & Eva Entenmann. (20170. *Fear Thy Neighbor. Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West*. ICCT & ISPI, Milan: Ledizioni.

[22] Douglas, Kevin, Stephen Hart, Christopher Webster & Henrik Belfrage. (2013). *HCR-20V3. Risicotaxatie van geweld / Historical Clinical Risk Management-20 Versie 3*. Van der Hoeven Kliniek; Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers.

[23] On Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), see Hahn Fox, Bryanna, Nicholas Perez, Elizabeth Cassa, Michael T. Baglivio & Nathan Epps. (2015). "Trauma changes everything: Examining the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 46, p.163–173.

[24] Shuki J. Cohen from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, Melvin Soudijn, a researcher at the Dutch National Police, and the author have been working on a statistical model that will address the underlying factors in the background of our sample, as they relate to jihadi travel or risk thereof.

[25] Cf. Venhaus (2010), Kenning, David. (2016). *Spinoza—The Philosopher of Counter-Radicalization. Spinoza Lecture 2016*. Amsterdam, 26 November 2016, Amsterdamse Spinoza Kring: http://www.amsterdamsespinozakring.nl/. Cf. Basra et al (2016).

Extremism can be a form of escapism (Bubolz & Simi 2019). Cf. the classical study *The True Believer*, in which Hoffer observes that totalitarianism typically attracts the 'frustrated', those who fail to be successful in a free society, and find new purpose in totalitarian mass movements (Hoffer, Eric. (1951). *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*. Perennial Classics. 2010 Kindle ed.).

[26] Paucity of data in both quantitative and qualitative terms is the scourge of much terrorism research (Victoroff 2005; Sageman 2014; see also Schuurman, Bart. (2018). "Research on Terrorism, 2007–2016: A Review of Data, Methods, and Authorship," *Terrorism and Political Violence*. DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2018.1439023.

[27] Caveats are that police may have missed cases, and local police may have known some radicals before 2012 without informing the counterterrorism team.

[28] Schuurman, Bart, Peter Grol & Scott Flower. (2016). "Converts and Islamist Terrorism: An Introduction," ICCT Policy Brief, Den Haag: ICCT, DOI: 10.19165/2016.2.03. (p.6); cf. Vidino et al (2017, p.55).

[29] Jihadists may have gone through a process of religious revival similar to that of 'born-again Christians' (cf. Buijs et al, 2006, p.244; Dawson et al, 2016, p.31).

[30] 'First generation' immigrants are those who were born abroad and immigrated to the Netherlands (regardless of age at immigration); 'second generation' migrants are native to the Netherlands but have at least one parent who was born abroad. The 'third generation' consists of those who have at least one parent who is a second generation migrant (CBS. 2016. *Jaarrapport Integratie 2016*. Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek; p.159-163).

[31] Of 385,000 Dutch citizens with a Moroccan background, 4% (15,000) belong to the third generation, with 90% younger than 12 (in December 2015; CBS 2016).

[32] http://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/olivier-roy-terrorisme-beperkt-zich-tot-de-tweede-generatie-enbekeerlingen/article-normal-629509.html. 27 November 2015; cf. Roy, Olivier, 2017, "Who are the new jihadis?" *The Guardian*, 13 April 2017.

[33] Sudden events in these spheres could act as 'triggers' for radicalization, as perceived in Feddes, Allard R., Lars Nickolson & Bertjan Doosje. (2015). *Triggerfactoren in het radicaliseringsproces*. Amsterdam: Expertise-unit Sociale Stabiliteit, Universiteit van Amsterdam.

[34] Bucx, Freek & Simone de Roos (redn.). (2015). *Opvoeden in niet-westerse migrantengezinnen. Een terugblik en verkenning*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau; & Bijlagen A-D.

[35] Bellis, Mark A., 2016, "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Alcohol. Addressing the roots of ill health and anti-social behaviour," presentation, Third International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health, Amsterdam, 2-5 oktober 2016.

[36] http://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/09/aantal-daklozen-in-zes-jaar-met-driekwart-toegenomen.

[37] Eurostat, 2015, *Onderwijs en opleidingsstatistieken op regionaal niveau*, p.6-7.

[38] The sample consists mainly of Jihadist suspects, but also includes some right-wing extremists, and members of the PKK and LTTE (Thijs et al 2018, p.89).

[39] Ljujic, V., Prooijen, J.W. & Weerman, F. (2017). "Beyond the crime terror nexus: socio-economic status, violent crime and terrorism." *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice* 3/3. They use the sample collected by De Bie (2017), who extended the dataset from De Poot et al (2011).

[40] Bakker, Edwin & Roel de Bont. (2016). "Belgian and Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters (2012–2015): Characteristics, Motivations, and Roles in the War in Syria and Iraq," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* Vol. 27, No. 5, 837–857. Bergema, Reinier & Marion van San. (2017). "Waves of the Black Banner: An Exploratory Study on the Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighter Contingent in Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X2017.1404004.

[41] CBS (2016, p.57).

[42] Soudijn, Melvin R.J. (2019). "The Hand that Feeds the Salafist: an Exploration of the Financial Independence of 131 Dutch Jihadi Travellers," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13/2, p.39-53 (p.39).

[43] The score of 46% is from another but similar database, BVI-IB, used in Weenink (2015); then the score was 47% in BVI-IB.

[44] Blokland, Arjan, Kim Grimbergen, Wim Bernasco & Paul Nieuwbeerta, 2010, "Criminaliteit en etniciteit. Criminele carrières van autochtone en allochtone jongeren uit het geboortecohort 1984," *Tijdschrift voor Criminologie*, 52/2, p.122-152.

[45] The score is an upper limit because the national average is determined at age 22, and the average age for travelers is 24, so the actual discrepancy will be somewhat smaller.

[46] Corner, Emily & Paul Gill. (2017). "Is There a Nexus Between Terrorist Involvement and Mental Health in the Age of the Islamic State?" *CTC Sentinel*, 10/1 (p.1-2); De Roy van Zuijdewijn, Jeanine & Edwin Bakker. (2016). "Lone-Actor Terrorism. Policy Paper 1: Personal Characteristics of Lone-Actor Terrorists." The Hague: ICCT (p.8).

[47] RIVM gives numbers of all people affected per category (in a population of around 17 million): 1. Disorders (1.9 million); 2. Chronic brain conditions: dementia, Parkinson's (1.3 mln); 3. Brain trauma: stroke, injury (0.65 mln); 4. Sleeping disorders (0.5 mln); 5. Brain conditions that appear in the 1st year: mental impairment, conditions of the central nervous system (0.1 mln). RIVM. (2017). *Hersenaandoeningen*. 17 november 2017, Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiëne. https://www.volksgezondheidenzorg.info/onderwerp/hersenaandoeningen/.

[48] RIVM. (2017).

[49] GGD Amsterdam. (2014). *In de nesten. Analyse van de voorgeschiedenis van een groep jongvolwassen gewelddadige veelplegers uit Amsterdam*. Amsterdam: GGD Amsterdam / Epidemiologie, Documentatie en Gezondheidsbevordering (EDG) (p.36-37).

[50] Paulussen, Christophe, Janne Nijman & Karlien Lismont. (2017). *Mental Health and the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: A Case Study from the Netherlands*, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague (ICCT), (p.7-8).

[51] Van Leyenhorst, Maarten & Ada Andreas. (2017). "Dutch Suspects of Terrorist Activity: A Study of Their Biographical Backgrounds Based on Primary Sources," *Journal for Deradicalization* 2017/12, ISSN: 2363-9849.

[52] Van Ham, Tom, Liselot Scholten & Anton van Wijk. (2016). *Radicalisering in de gemeente Arnhem. Resultaten van onderzoek onder mentoren, welzijnswerkers en jongeren*, Arnhem: Bureau Beke.

[53] Hegghammer (2016, p.12).

[54] Vidino et al (2017, p.55).

[55] Conceptual issues need to be taken account of in defining context as well; see Schmid, Alex P. (2010). "Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16/2, p.197-221, DOI: 10.1080/09546550490483134.

[56] Cf. Dawson et al (2016).

[57] This suggests analyzing ideological texts, and perhaps online content, by using techniques from neurolinguistic text analysis (cf. Cohen, Shuki J. (2016). "Mapping the Minds of Suicide Bombers using Linguistic Methods: The Corpus of Palestinian Suicide Bombers' Farewell Letters (CoPSBFL)," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Published online: 06 Apr 2016, p.749-780, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2016.1141005. Cohen, Shuki J., Arie Kruglanski, Michele J. Gelfand & Rohan Gunaratna. (2016). "Al-Qaeda's propaganda decoded: A psycholinguistic system for detecting variations in terrorism ideology," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 9 May 2016, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2016.1165214).

[58] Cf. Bell, Paul. (2018). "A gentler Rain: CVE and the road to resilience," https://www.statesofmind.eu/beyond-appearances/2018/11/9/resilience-beats-the-counter-narrative-hands-down-paul-bell-veteran-of-counter-radicalisation-campaigns-speaks-out; cf. Kenning (2016).

[59] Cf. Weine, Stevan, David P. Eisenman, Janni Kinsler, Deborah C. Glik & Chloe Polutnik. (2016). "Addressing violent extremism as public health policy and practice," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, DOI: 10.1080/19434472.2016.1198413. Bjørgo, Tore. (2011). "Dreams and disillusionment: Engagement in and disengagement from militant extremist groups," *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 55/4, p.277-285.

[60] Yakeley, Jessica & Richard Taylor. (2017). "Terrorism and mental disorder, and the role of psychiatrists in counter-terrorism in the UK," *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* 31/4, DOI: 10.1080/02668734.2017.136894.

[61] Harmsen, Hamp. (2015). "Potentieel Gewelddadige Eenlingen en de rol van de geestelijke gezondheidszorg," *Magazine nationale veiligheid en crisisbeheersing*, 2015-nr.4.

Resources

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 12 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

Compiled and selected 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 edited volumes received for review. In order to reduce this backlog, this column consists of capsule Tables of Contents of 12 books, including also several books published less recently but still meriting attention. Some of these volumes will be reviewed in future issues of 'Perspectives on Terrorism' as stand-alone reviews.

Neil Krishan Aggarwal, *Media Persuasion in the Islamic State* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019), 264 pp., US $ 65.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-2311-8238-6.

Table of Contents: Chapter 1. Studying Islamic State Discourse as Mediated Disorder; Chapter 2, The Organization of Monotheism and Jihad: Constructing a Militant Cultural Identity; Chapter 3. Al Qaeda in Iraq: OMJ, Al Qaeda, and Militant Acculturation; Chapter 4. The Assembly of the Mujahideen Council: Common Group Identity Formation; Chapter 5. The Islamic State of Iraq 2006-2013: A Shift in Militant Identity; Chapter 6. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria: Militant Cultural Diffusion; Chapter 7. The Islamic State: The Transmission of Militancy in Families; Chapter 8. Toward a Science, Policy, and Practice of Militant Counter-Messaging.

Elizabeth Grimm Arsenault, *How the Gloves Came Off: Lawyers, Policy Makers, and Norms in the Debate on Torture* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017), 280 pp., US $ 35.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-2311-8078-8.

Table of Contents: Part I. Background; Chapter 1. Introduction; Chapter 2. History of POW Treatment in the United States: From the Revolutionary War to the Korean War; Chapter
3. Modern POW Treatment in the United States: The Vietnam War, the Geneva Conventions, and the Pre-9/11 Era; Part II. Evolution of Norms Around POW Treatment; Chapter 4. POW Treatment and Lawyers; Chapter 5. POW Treatment and Policy Makers; Chapter 6. POW Treatment and Interrogators; Part III. Conclusion; Chapter 7. Implications and Recommendations; Appendix A: Who's Who; Appendix B: Timeline of Major Events; Appendix C: Acronyms.

Morten *Bøås* and Kevin C. Dunn (Eds.), *Africa's Insurgents: Navigating an Evolving Landscape* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2017), 285 pp., US $ 29.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6263-7624-3.

Table of Contents: Chapter 1. The Evolving Landscape of African Insurgencies; Chapter 2. Radicalized Youth: Oppositional Poses and Positions; Chapter 3. Gendered Dynamics of Armed Insurgencies; Chapter 4. Secessionist Conflicts and New States; Chapter 5. Central African Republic: Rebellion and International Intervention; Chapter 6. Democratic Republic of Congo: The Democratization of Militarized Politics; Chapter 7. Kenya: Al Shabaab's Regional Campaign; Chapter 8. Mali: Islam, Arms, and Money; Chapter 9. Nigeria: The Adaptability of the Boko Haram Rebellion; Chapter 10. Somalia: Al Shabaab and the Accidental Jihadists; Chapter 11. South Sudan: Violence as Politics; Chapter 12. Uganda: The Longevity of the Lord's Resistance Army; Chapter 13. Africa's Insurgents in Comparative Perspective.

Robert J. Bunker and Pamela Ligouri Bunker (Eds.), *Plutocratic Insurgency Reader* [A Small Wars Journal Book] (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2019), 376 pp., US $ 19.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7960-4674-8.

Table of Contents: Preface; Introduction: Plutocratic Insurgency Reader; 27 Chapters; Four Appendices.

Pamela Ligouri Bunker and Robert J. Bunker, *Rising Inequality in the United States: Armed Forces Implications and Government Policy Response* [A Small Wars Journal Pocket Book] (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2019), 144 pp., US $ 19.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7960-5486-6.

Table of Contents: Foreword; Chapter 1. Introduction; Chapter 2. Global Inequality; Chapter 3. Inequality Within the United States; Chapter 4. The Winners and the Losers; Chapter 5. Theoretical Constructs Related to Rising Inequality; Chapter 6. Armed Forces Implications and Governmental Policy Response.

Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson, *Genealogies of Terrorism: Revolution, State Violence, Empire* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 296 pp., US $ 90.00 [Hardcover], US $ 30.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-2311-8727-5.

Table of Contents: Chapter 1. The Trouble with Terrorism; Chapter 2. The Emergence of Terrorism; Chapter 3. State Terrorism Revisited; Chapter 4. Terrorism and Colonialism; Chapter 5. Reimagining Terrorism at the End of History; Chapter 6. Towards a Critical Theory of Terrorism: Genealogy and Normativity.

Steve Hewitt, *The British War on Terror: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism on the Home Front Since 9/11* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2008), 184 pp., US $ 98.86 [Hardcover], US $ 22.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-8264-9900-4.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Chapter 1. The Historical Context; Chapter 2. 'The Rules of the Game are Changing': From 9/11 to 7/7; Chapter 3. Terrorism in the UK; Chapter 4. 'It Turned Out Wrongly': Counter-Terrorism, Part 1; Chapter 5. Losing 'Hearts and Minds': Counter-Terrorism, Part 2; Conclusion.

Nkwazi Nkuzi Mhango, *Is It 'Global War on Terrorism' Or Global War over Terra Africana?: The Ruse Imperial Powers Use to Occupy Africa Militarily for Economic Gains* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2018), 264 pp., US $ 80.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-7618-6972-6.

Table of Contents: Chapter 1. Introduction; Chapter 2. Is It the GWOT or the GWOTA?; Chapter 3. Terrorism, the Concept sans Definition; Chapter 4. Causes of Terrorism; Chapter 5. Types of Terrorism; Chapter 6. Genesis of Terrorism in Africa. Chapter 7. Is there Security or Insecurity Global War on Terror Guarantees?; Chapter 8. Is it the GWOT or Ruse to Military Occupation?; Chapter 9. Call It Gimmicks for Western Occupying Troops (GWOT II)?; Chapter 10. Terrorist Attacks on East Africa; Chapter 11. Kenya's Counterterrorism Response (Case Study); Chapter 12. Africa's Viable Ways of Fighting Terrorism; Chapter 13. The Roles of Islamic Clerics and Scholars; Chapter 14. Conclusion.

Philip Mudd, *Black Site: The CIA in the Post-9/11 World* (New York, NY:W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 272 pp., US $ 27.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6314-9197-9.

Table of Contents: Preface; Chapter 1. The Lean Years; Chapter 2. Risk Avoidance; Chapter 3. The Prelude to the Program; Chapter 4. The CIA Revolutionizes; Chapter 5. The Problem with Prisoners; Chapter 6. Salt Pit; Chapter 7. The First Program Prisoner; Chapter 8. The Definition of Pain; Chapter 9. The Second Wave; Chapter 10. The Fateful Decision; Chapter 11. Expansion and Training; Chapter 12. Maturation; Chapter 13. The Program Goes Public; Chapter 14. Endgame; Chapter 15. Ethics and Reflections.

James W. Peterson, *NATO and Terrorism: Organizational Expansion and Mission Transformation* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2011), 224 pp., US $ 110.95 [Hardcover], US $ 35.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-4411-

2976-5.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Chapter 1. The Battle against Terrorism Reshapes the NATO Organization; Chapter 2. Partners for Peace after the Cold War; Chapter 3. From Partnership to Membership in 1999; Chapter 4. The Class of 2004 and the Post-9/11 World; Chapter 5. Further Class Memberships and the Traps of Southeast Europe; Chapter 6. Bosnia in the Lengthened Shadow of the Cold War; Chapter 7. Kosovo in the Shadow of Bosnia's Lessons; Chapter 8. NATO Applies its Capabilities in Afghanistan; Chapter 9. The War in Iraq shakes NATO Capabilities; Chapter 10. European Security, East and West; Chapter 11. The Coasts of NATO, North and South; Chapter 12. NATO Missions reshape the Battle against Terrorism.

Maria Ryan, *Full Spectrum Dominance: Irregular Warfare and the War on Terror* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), 328 pp., US $ 60.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5036-0999-0.

Table of Contents: Introduction; Chapter 1. 9/11 and the Early Seeds of Irregular Warfare; Chapter 2. The Philippines and the War on Terror in Southeast Asia; Chapter 3. The War on Terror in Sub-Saharan Africa; Chapter 4. Terrorism and the 'Great Game' in Georgia and the Caspian Basin; Chapter 5. Irregular Warfare at the Pentagon, 2004-2008; Chapter 6. State, USAID and the Interagency Mobilization; Chapter 7. Irregular Warfare with Restraint: The Obama Years; Conclusion.

Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn, *Islamism: Religion, Radicalization, and Resistance* (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2011), 224 pp., US $ 72.75 [Hardcover], US $ 28.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-7456-4062-4.

Table of Contents: Chapter 1. Introduction: The Islamist Challenge; Chapter 2. Definitions and Representations: The Legacy of Orientalism; Chapter 3. 'The Fanonian Impulse': Islamism as Identity and Ideology; Chapter 4. Roots and Branches: From the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas; Chapter 5. Islamists Without Borders: Al-Qa'ida and its Affiliates; Chapter 6. Hezbollah: Islamism as Obligation to Resistance; Chapter 7. Bitter Harvest: Algerian Islamism; Chapter 8. Western Europe: Islamism as Mirror Image; Chapter 9. Conclusion: Islamism and a Fragmented Quest for Dignity; References.

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

Joan Smith, *Home Grown: How Domestic Violence Turns Men Into Terrorists.*

London, UK: Riverrun, 2019. 310 pp., ISBN: 978-1-7874-7604-2. £12,05 [Paperback].

Reviewed by Christine Boelema Robertus

Charity, the proverb says, begins at home. So does terrorism, according to a new, thought-provoking study by Joan Smith. To cite one of her many examples from the eight chapters of this book: on Sunday, 12 June 2016, a twenty-nine-year-old man called Omar Mateen walked into a gay nightclub in Orlando. Inside the nightclub, Mateen opened fire and killed forty-nine people and wounded fifty-three others before being killed by the police in a shootout. While investigating his motives, it became clear that Mateen had displayed aggressive behavior to both his ex-wife and his second wife. His ex-wife stated that, in one instance, he had tried to choke her after she had not finished the laundry. In addition, family members stated that his second wife had no say in her life whatsoever. Smith describes Mateen as "a domestic tyrant who tried to compensate for gnawing feelings of inadequacy by beating up women in his own home" (p. 84).

Smith, a London-based human rights activist, novelist and feminist, contends that there is a striking connection between perpetrators of terrorist attacks and a history of domestic abuse, amounting to a catalogue of verbal and physical attacks on female relatives. While there is no definitive list of terrorists who had a pre-history of domestic abuse to fully support this claim, Smith argues that this is "only because no one has ever tried to produce one" (p. 9). The author argues that domestic violence should be considered as one of the highest risk factors of violence in the public space and that past downplaying or denying of violence against women and children that happened behind closed doors has had severe and unforeseen consequences for society.

Among the examples discussed by the author are the Kouachi brothers, who carried out the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* (2015)in Paris; Salman Abedi, who detonated a homemade bomb in the Manchester Arena (2017) during an Ariana Grande concert; and Kahlid Monsoon, who drove across Westminster Bridge (2017) hitting pedestrians and stabbing to death PC Keith Palmer. All men had previously experienced or engaged in domestic violence. According to their sister, the Kouachi brothers became a united front after years of domestic violence, neglect, and humiliation. During their childhood, the brothers were beaten by their father and neglected by their mother, who after their father died could no longer take care of the brothers herself. The author writes "It is likely that the two eldest boys, growing up in a patriarchal family, would have borne the brunt of their father's violence and felt humiliated by it" (p. 28). Smith uses the Kouachi brothers to substantiate her claim that this type of destructive male rage is infantile in origin and that "psychological damage comes first and *enables* the ideology" (p. 37). Abedi had previously physically hit a female student on her head after telling her that her skirt was too short - however he was left unpunished. Monsoon, according to Smith, had been a violent abuser at home for most of his adult life which had resulted in several convictions. But as Smith says, "as he got older he got smarter and learned to conceal his violence in the private sphere" (p. 73).

In her book, Smith explains that some perpetrators became so dangerous because they grew up in families where extremist ideas and the use of violence had become normal. In one chapter, Smith suggests that ISIS is comparable to a criminal organization. She uses four London gang members dubbed 'The Beatles' and joined the Islamic State as an example. In Chapter 7 she discusses 'angry white men' who are not motivated by religion but rather blame the women as the root cause of their problems. Examples are Adam Lanza, who is responsible for the Sandy Hook massacre (2012); Elliot Rodger, who killed six women at Isla Vista (2014); and Kevin Neal, who murdered four people in a killing spree (2017)]. According to Smith, "the link between misogyny and public acts of slaughter is astonishing" (p. 255). Two of these men, Lanza and Neal killed female relatives (mother and wife) before killing strangers.

In her final chapter, Smith describes terrorism as the "most spectacular form of violence afflicting Western democracies" (p. 267). Nevertheless, according to the author, it remains heavily disputed whether terrorism [in itself] is a form of male violence. Yet, as Smith points out in the examples used for her book, the female relatives of extremists are often their first victims. She recognizes the fact that ideology plays a role in recruiting terrorists but that it is striking that most terrorists, mass murderers and suspects she uses as examples had a record of

abusing women. However, as she points out in Chapter 7, most of these records of domestic homicide, rape and stalking did not result in criminal convictions. Smith sees this as the failure of police and prosecutors to understand the risks of not prosecuting these men, thereby underestimating the seriousness of male violence.

To sum up, this book offers a new and original lens through which security services can monitor individuals who are at risk of radicalizing. Smith makes a strong case for considering a history of domestic violence as a risk factor and early warning sign. While the author deserves credit for identifying a new root cause of (some acts of) terrorism, the volume is not without shortcomings. There is a certain lack of coherence between the chapters of the book. Whereas some chapters focus on radicalised men and the attraction of ISIS to women and gang members, other chapters discuss mass murderers who are also referred to as angry white men. Nonetheless, her book is a very welcome addition on the etiology and psychology of terrorism.

About the Reviewer: **Christine Boelema Robertus** *is Associate Editor for IT of 'Perspectives on Terrorism' and a junior researcher at the Institute for Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University.*

Marc Sageman, *The London Bombings.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 312 pp., ISBN: 978-0-8122-5118-0. US $ 49.95 [Hardcover].

Reviewed by Anthony Richards

In one sense the title of Marc Sageman's latest book, *The London Bombings*, is rather broad as it somewhat belies what is effectively an account written from an intelligence perspective. In another, however, it is too narrow as it doesn't reflect the content of the book, which dedicates chapters to three other terrorist plots. Four of the six chapters, then, cover Operation Crevice (in relation to the fertiliser bomb plot), Operation Theseus (which investigated the July 7 2005 attacks), Operation Vivace (which investigated the failed July 21 2005 plot) and Operation Overt (in relation to the liquid bomb airline plot).

That the book is written from an intelligence perspective comes as no surprise as the author has extensive experience in this field. One also cannot help but consider this work in the context of his previous claim of 'The Stagnation of Terrorism Research' (*Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 26, 2014, no. 4) where he argued that the 'unbridgeable gap between academia and the intelligence community' had 'led to an explosion of speculations with little grounding in academia'. As one reads through the text one is, nevertheless, given the impression that this work is an attempt to demonstrate how empirical research can and should be carried out, and how, in particular, 'to get the story straight' (this is later confirmed in the final chapter when he critiques both the methods and findings of other well-known terrorism scholars and commentators). The author has gone to great lengths (largely through studying numerous court transcripts) in providing an impressively detailed narrative account of the events and individual interactions that took place between the conspirators in the run up to their particular terrorist plots. The case studies, therefore, largely read as a diary of the movements and interactions of the plotters, culminating in their arrest and conviction or, in the case of 7/7, the attack itself.

The importance of this book lies in its empirical approach that provides a valuable insight, as far as it can, into the minds, motivations and planning behind each of the plots. In doing so the author has sought to debunk what he sees as some myths – for example, that Al Qaeda was not trying to recruit the London bombers Sidique Khan and Shehzad Tanweer but that they were seeking to join Al Qaeda. Nor does the author shy away from criticising the UK's intelligence agencies (or 'the British authorities' as he terms them) – that, for example, the fertiliser bomb plot wasn't the plot that they believed it to be (and that they had 'panicked' when the original plot, he argues, had actually been abandoned).

Sageman also writes that the 'authorities' did not focus on 'two or three' of the London bombers sufficiently and that this 'neglect' resulted in the deaths of 52 innocent victims. Perhaps some balance would have been useful here – yes, of course, with hindsight, two of the London bombers could have been investigated further but some appreciation of the findings from the parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee report into the London attacks (2006), for example, might have led to a more circumspect approach. Although Khan and Tanweer were on the periphery of other investigations at the time, the report concluded 'that, in light of the other priority investigations being conducted and the limitations on Security Service resources, the decisions not to give greater investigative priority to these two individuals were understandable' (p.16).

There is also an occasional penchant for uncorroborated and inaccurate sweeping statements, such as on p. 10: 'At first, native Britons lumped together all non-white newcomers to the British Isles and generally called them "blacks"' and on p. 103: 'Although in the perception of non-Spaniards the bombings were seen as causing the government to fall, the defeat of the conservative government was really due to its lies and cover-up so close to the elections rather than the bombings themselves.' This writer knows of many non-Spaniards (including himself!) who did not attribute the election defeat to the bombings but rather to the erroneous and premature Spanish government assessment of ETA's culpability for the attack. Presentationally, it was also a little disappointing to find over a dozen typos in the text (ie. Clarke and Clark used to refer to the same individual on p. 240, and likewise Saleem and Salem used on p. 138).

This is nevertheless an impressive empirical account, following which the conclusion turns to an assessment

of the government's version of Crevice and of four other accounts of this and the other plots (those of Peter Neumann and Ryan Evans, Raffaello Pantucci, Bruce Hoffman and Paul Cruickshank). In many ways the conclusion is the most striking chapter, largely because of its quite scathing criticism of the work of these other authors. For Operation Crevice Sageman contrasts 'the facts with its [the government's] feverish imagination and interpretation of them', before he goes on to critique Neumann and Evans's account for relying on the government's interpretation of Crevice and for referring to it as an Al Qaeda plot (he states that the latter 'did not approve it, train the conspirators, direct it or guide it'). He suggests that they got it 'so wrong' because 'they relied on secondhand evidence, namely government claims and journalistic reports', and that the 'authors' postulated al Qaeda guidance for the plot …was just the authors' own fantasies projected onto the case. Their chapter is an example of baseless speculations, reaching conclusions contrary to the evidence.'

Pantucci's account of Crevice is criticised for its reliance on secondary sources and on newspaper articles and Sageman concludes that 'many of Pantucci's claims are taken out of context, lack nuance, or do not reflect the facts emerging from primary sources'. He then turns to Hoffman's account of Theseus and states that his 'very short narrative of Theseus is marred by dozens of factual errors'. He goes on to observe that much of Hoffman's chapter is polemical and that 'his heavy reliance on sensationalistic and long discredited newspaper articles …leads him astray' and that he 'compounds his reliance on sensational accounts with misattribution of his information'. He refers to Hoffman's 'cavalier sourcing, fondness for unsubstantiated leaks and tabloid reporting, and failure to cross-check his information' that 'add up to poor scholarship.' Finally, in considering Cruickshank's account of Overt, Sageman disputes the so-called South African connection and that, while he states that the former's account is 'the best of the lot', he 'still makes errors because of his additional use of unreliable sources.'

I cannot comment on the veracity or otherwise of all of the above claims. What I would suggest, however, is that the author's call for more '*healthy* disagreement' (italics added) within terrorism research does not at times appear to be matched by his tone or choice of vocabulary (i.e. 'authors' own fantasies', 'cavalier sourcing' etc.). In short, if 'healthy disagreement' is the goal then I am sure there are slightly less adversarial ways of doing this.

The conclusion then returns to the theme at the beginning of this review where he blames 'the stagnation in terrorism research on Western governments' refusal to share information with trained scholars.' As such, he argues, 'sensationalistic speculations and theories devoid of facts filled this gap, and their traces can still be seen in most scholars' narratives of global neojihadi attacks.' Notwithstanding the tone in some of his critique (and perhaps the need for a rather more temperate approach in places) this book is nevertheless an excellent empirical contribution in providing detailed accounts in the run up to the four plots that the author has investigated.

About the Reviewer: **Dr Anthony Richards,** *Senior Lecturer in Criminology, School of Law and Social Sciences, Director of Postgraduate Taught Programmes, Royal Holloway, University of London, England, UK.*

James J.F. Forest, *The Terrorism Lectures: A Comprehensive Collection for the Student of Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and National Security* [3rd Edition] (Santa Ana, CA: Nortia Press, 2019) 442 pp., US $ $49.99, ISBN: 978-1-9405-0316-5.

Reviewed by Edward J. Valla

James J. F. Forest, Professor in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies at the University of Massachusetts/ Lowell, is a veteran expert on terrorism, counterterrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and homeland security. In his newest edition of *The Terrorism Lectures*, Forest provides updates to two previous editions. This comprehensive textbook consists of nineteen chapters divided into five parts. Part One provides definitions, a history of terrorism, and conceptual frameworks. Part Two examines terrorism's facilitators, with chapters that delve into politics and governance, terrorism's economic contexts, how terrorists finance their activities, and terrorist communication. Part Three details terrorist group ideologies and strategies. The chapters in this section center upon terrorism emanating from ethno-nationalist and separatist groups, Left-Wing terrorism, Right-Wing terrorism, Religious Terrorism, and terrorist group decision-making. In Part Four, Forest turns his attention to terrorism's contemporary challenges, covering terrorist engagement, recruitment, and radicalization, "Do-it-Yourself" terrorism, suicide terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). He concludes in Part Five with a discussion of likely future trends in terrorism. Each chapter begins with a "BLUF" (Bottom Line Up Front"), followed by numerous examples to support the main themes.

The author begins with a definition of terrorism as a combination of strategies and violent tactics in which the victims (such as ordinary citizens) are a sub-element of a broader target. "These strategies and tactics are used by individuals or groups in pursuit of some type of objectives - typically of a political, social, criminal, economic and/or religious nature - and they perceive terrorism to be the most effective way to obtain the power needed to achieve those objectives." (p.8)

This is followed by an application of David Rapoport's "four waves" of terrorism to describe terrorism's history and evolution. This historical narrative provides a useful backdrop for a discussion of the context in which terrorism occurs. Here, Forest focuses on terrorism's pre-conditions and triggers to explain the conditions that "generate or give legitimacy to a core set of grievances articulated in a terrorist group's ideology."

The discussion of the context in which terrorism emerges regarding "Potential Triggers for Terrorist Activity" (pp. 51-56) is particularly insightful. Environmental triggers are defined as "those actions, policies, and events that enhance the perceived need for action within a particular environment." (p.51) Such triggers are dynamic, may take many forms, and may include changes in government policy, the erosion of a security environment, and censorship. (p.51)

In chapters 4-7 Forest discusses terrorism's facilitators, beginning with politics and governance, and continuing with economic and financial aspects of terrorism, and rounding up the discussion with terrorist communication. Notable in chapter 4, Forest introduces the term/phrase "zone of competing governance," which he uses to describe an environment which enables a terrorist group to operate. Here, he argues that groups prefer such spaces because unlike completely ungoverned space, zones of competing governance provide at least some order and infrastructure which a terrorist group would find useful (p.73).

In his discussion of economics and terrorism, Forest examines three main dimensions of the relationship between them: motivations, facilitators, and impacts. The chapter on terrorist financing illustrates the ways in which terrorist organizations have attempted to fund their operations by various means, e.g. through drug trafficking. Forest raises an important point about some of the most sophisticated terrorist groups transforming into "hybrid terror-crime networked organizations that will pose increasingly difficult challenges for law

enforcement and security professionals throughout the international community (p.110).

In Part 2, Forest discusses the activities of terrorists in the media and the Internet, which he describes as two powerful arenas in which "influencers" communicate and try to spread violent ideologies to a broad audience (p.117). By using the media and the Internet, terrorists can spread disinformation, and threaten their enemies as part of a broader psychological warfare effort. Forest's discussion of "media amplification" is particularly important, as he explains that "Massive media coverage of terrorist attacks reaches a vast audience, creating an impact far beyond that which the incident, in the absence of this media, could be expected to generate." (p.119)

In Part 3, Forest provides an overview of the main characteristics, activities, and objectives of ethno-nationalist/ Separatist groups, Left-Wing and Right Wing Groups, including religious terrorism. In Forest's two chapters on religious terrorism he points out that there are "religious terrorist groups that have nothing to do with Islamist extremism," (p.208) such as the Army of God, Kahane Chai, Aum Shinrikyo, and the Lord's Resistance Army. He then turns his attention to "Islamist terror groups with a local or regional orientation." (p.213) This is followed by examples of Islamist terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hizballah, Boko Haram, and Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Forest also devotes attention to "the history, evolution, and ideology of he global Salafi-jihadist movement." (p.231) The section on "Key Ideological Influences" identifies many of the most relevant influencers, including Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Abul ala Maududi, Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini, and Abu Musab al-Suri. (pps. 235-241). Also discussed are topics such as terrorist group decision-making, with particular emphasis on groups that have succeeded in remaining operational despite facing significant challenges. Here, Forest argues that each day terrorist groups "make a variety of decisions about strategy, tactics, personnel, finances, and much more. These decisions impact the likelihood of their success or failure." (270) The section on terrorist group learning and innovation is particularly helpful for understanding how terrorist groups acquire and transmit knowledge, and how they adapt in attempting to ensure their long term success.

In Part Four's Contemporary Challenges, Forest examines terrorist recruitment and radicalization, including the difficult problem of "Do-It-Yourself" terrorism where, regardless of ideology, individuals commit attacks "autonomously, independent of any operational support from a formal organization." (p. 317) Such individuals, whether operating as lone actors, or as part of "self-starter" terrorist teams present significant challenges for law enforcement and intelligence services. He writes: "In many cases, the perpetrators had clean police records, and no detectable affiliation with an extremist movement or group. There were no indications they might be planning a lethal terrorist attack." (p.335)

The chapters on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) provide readers with an overview of the four main categories of WMD: chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, and how these can affect their human victims. After outlining the types of weapons, Forest assesses the WMD terrorist threat, noting specifically that terrorists have used or attempted to use such weapons. He cites the well-known cases of the 1995 Aum Shinrikyo attack on the Tokyo subway system, and the 2001 attack using anthrax delivered via the U.S. mail. For those interested in additional information regarding WMD, there is an excellent list of websites at the end of Chapter 17.

Prof. Forest concludes by describing recent trends in terrorist activity, counterterrorism, and also explores the likely future of terrorism with a focus on how it pertains to the United States. With respect to future trends, Forest notes the competition between the Islamic State and al-Qa'ida regarding which should be "considered the true vanguard of the global jihadist movement." (p. 410) A second trend is the rise of right-wing extremist attacks in Europe and North America. Lastly, Forest suggests that "perhaps the most important trend…is the increasing frequency of do-it-yourself (DIY) attacks," where terrorists use "weapons of opportunity," such as vehicles, knives, guns and basic explosives. Also insightful is Forest's observation about the crucial importance

of intelligence in the success or failure of counterterrorism…" because "accurate, high quality intelligence is absolutely critical for determining where, when, and how to apply other instruments of national power" (p. 416).

In this excellent textbook, instructors, in particular, will find questions for discussion, recommended readings, and websites listed at the end of each chapter. This is most useful for crafting assignments and for directing students to excellent scholarly resources. It also serves as a highly useful reference resource with an extensive bibliography.

About the Reviewer: *Edward J. Valla is a former FBI counterterrorism analyst, and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Massachusetts Maritime Academy's Emergency Management Department.*

Bibliography: Terrorism by Region – Indian Subcontinent

Compiled and selected by Judith Tinnes

[Bibliographic Series of Perspectives on Terrorism – BSPT-JT-2019-8]

Abstract

This bibliography contains journal articles, book chapters, books, edited volumes, theses, grey literature, bibliographies and other resources on terrorism affecting the Indian subcontinent (excluding Pakistan). It covers both terrorist activity within the region's territory (regardless of the perpetrators' nationality) and terrorist acts by nationals from this region abroad. While focusing on recent literature, the bibliography is not restricted to a particular time period and covers publications up to September 2019. The literature has been retrieved by manually browsing more than 200 core and periphery sources in the field of Terrorism Studies. Additionally, full-text and reference retrieval systems have been employed to broaden the search.

Keywords: bibliography, resources, literature, terrorism, Indian Subcontinent, South Asia, India, Bangladesh, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE

NB: Literature on Pakistan was excluded because it has been covered in a separate bibliography (published in Issue 13(4) of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'). All websites were last visited on 23.09.2019. - See also Note for the Reader at the end of this literature list.

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60+ Academic Theses (Ph.D. and MA) on Victims of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Political Violence, written in English between 2003 and 2019

Compiled and selected by Ryan Scrivens

Abstract

This bibliography contains doctoral dissertations (Ph.D.) and Master (MA) Theses on issues relating to victims of violent extremism and terrorism. Titles were retrieved manually by browsing the Open Access Theses and Dissertations (OATD) database using various combinations of search terms, including – but indeed not limited to – 'victims of terrorism', 'victims of violent extremism', 'survivors of terrorism' and 'survivors of violent extremism'. More than 1,100 entries were evaluated, of which 64 were ultimately selected for this list. All theses are open source. However, readers should observe possible copyright restrictions. The title entries are 'clickable', allowing access to full texts.

Keywords: bibliography, theses, victims, terrorism, violent extremism, political violence

Bibliographic entries are divided into the following sub-sections:

1. *Victims of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Political Violence*
2. *Representations of Victims of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Political Violence*

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Recent Online Resources for the Analysis of Terrorism and Related Subjects

Compiled and selected by Berto Jongman

Most of the items included below became available online between August and October 2019. They are categorised under the following headings (some of these also have sub-headings, not listed here):

1. *Non-Religious Terrorism*
2. *Religious Terrorism, Other Groups and Organisations*
3. *Terrorist Strategies and Tactics*
4. *Conflict, Crime and Political Violence other than Terrorism*
5. *Counterterrorism: Strategies, Tactics and Operations*
6. *Prevention, Preparedness, and Resilience Studies*
7. *State Repression, Civil War and Clandestine Warfare*
8. *Intelligence*
9. *Cyber Operations*
10. *Risk and Threat Assessments, Forecasts and Analytic Studies*
11. *Also Worth Reading*

1. Non-Religious Terrorism

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2. Religious Terrorism, Other Types of Terrorism

2.1. AQ and Affiliates

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Conference Monitor/Calendar of Events (October 2019 – January 2020)

Compiled by Reinier Bergema

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

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

October 2019

Preventing Online Radicalisation – A State of Play at EU-Level
VOX Pol
1 October, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @VOX_Pol

Communications After an Attack and the Role of the Media
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) C&N
1-2 October, Lisbon, Portugal
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Troubled Refugee Children in the Classroom
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) EDU-H&SC
3-4 October, Zagreb, Croatia
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

International Conference on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Crisis Situations
Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
7-8 October, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @MinBZ

The Radical Right, Extremism, and Disinformation in Europe and North America
VOX Pol
8 October, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @VOX_Pol

7th Europol-INTERPOL Cybercrime Conference
EUROPOL
9-11 October, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @EUROPOL

"The ISIS Files Project" with Rukmini Callimachi and Lorenzo Vidino
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) & George Washington University Program on Extremism (GWUPOE)
10 October, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICCT_TheHague; @gwupoe

Leergang Terrorisme, Recht en Veiligheid [in Dutch]
Leiden University
10-11 October; 31 October-1 November; 14-15 November; 28-29 November, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @UniLeiden

Annual Conference on Countering Terrorism in the EU 2019
Academy for European Law
10-11 October, Trier, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: @ERATrier

What Territory Means for African Jihadists: Finance, Control, and Recruitment
International Institute for Security Studies (IISS)
11 October, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @IISS_org

European Counterterrorism Intelligence Cooperation: Origins, Benefits, and Risks
Leiden University Institute for Security & Global Affairs (ISGA)
11 October, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @ISGA_Hague

Bluster: Donald Trump's War on Terror with Professor Peter Neumann
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
15 October, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

Book Talk: "From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists"
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
15 October, College Park (MD), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @START_UMD

An Overview of EU Action on Tackling Disinformation; Views on Belgian Action Against Disinformation and Insights on Alt-Right Disinformation Networks in France and Belgium
VOX Pol
15 October, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @VOX_Pol

Conference: Terrorism Experts Conference (TEC)
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
15-16 October, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Congress: Glocal Islamism 2019: Phenomena, Interdependencies, Prevention
German Prevention Congress
15-17 October, Berlin, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: @bpb_de

Assessing South Asian Security: Challenges, Opportunities, and Prospects
International Institute for Security Studies (IISS)
16 October, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @IISS_org

Iraq: Past, Present, Future
Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC)
16 October, Stanford (CA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @FSIStanford

Conversation on Iraq and American Grand Strategy
Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC)
16 October, Stanford (CA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @FSIStanford

Illicit Financial Flows 2019:
Accurately Mapping the Problem and Designing an Effective Response
Chatham House
17 October, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @ChathamHouse

Playing with Fire: Provocation, Signaling, and Unwanted Crisis Escalation
Harvard Belfer Center
17 October, Cambridge (MA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @BelferCenter

Hateful Extremism: Insights from Australia and South East Asia
Egmont Institute
21 October, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @Egmonstinstitute

RAN Young Academy Session 4: How to Professionalise your Initiative
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) YOUNG
21-22 October, Berlin, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

International Symposium on Radicalization & Extremism
Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM); icare4all
21-23 October, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: @orsamtr; @icareforall

A Snapshot of the Contemporary Syrian Jihadi Online Ecology: Differential Disruption, Community Strength, and Out-linking Practices
VOX Pol
22 October, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @VOX_Pol

Cranfield University's Symposium on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)
Cranfield University
22-23 October, Swindon, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @CranfieldUni

RAN EXIT: Gender Issues in Exit Strategies
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) EXit
22-23 October, Rome, Italy
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Tech Against Terrorism & GIFCT Webinar: Drafting Terms of Service & Community Guidelines
Tech Against Terrorism; Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)
23 October, *Online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @techvsterrorism

Alienation vs. Integration
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) H&SC
23-24 October, Helsinki, Finland
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

What Do ISIS and Al Qaeda Do Now?
Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)
24 October, Philadelphia (PA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @fpri

ICCT Seminar Series: Right-Wing Extremism: Current Threats and Emerging Trends
International Center for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT)
24 October, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @ICCT_TheHague

Book Talk: Why Alliances Fail: Islamist and Leftist Coalitions in North Africa
Harvard Belfer Center
24 October, Cambridge (MA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @BelferCenter

Member States' Workshop on Islamist Extremism
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) H&SC
24-25 October, Berlin, Germany
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

State Surveillance in the Digital Age: China's Use of Information Technology
Institute of International & European Affairs
25 October, Dublin, Ireland
Website: visit | Twitter: @iiea

Why Terrorists Quit: The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists
John Jay College Center on Terrorism
25 October, New York (NY), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @JohnJayCollege

Bellingcat OSINT Workshop
Bellingcat
28 October – 1 November, Copenhagen, Denmark
Website: visit | Twitter: @bellingcat

The Rise of Information Warfare: In-Conversation with Peter W. Singer
Australian Strategic Policy Institute
29 October, Canberra, Australia
Website: visit | Twitter: @ASPI_org

A Tale of Two Caliphates
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
29 October, College Park (MD), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @START_UMD

Assad or We Burn the Country: How One Family's Lust for Power Destroyed Syria
The Institute of World Politics
29 October, Washington (DC), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @theIWP

Africa in Transition: The Role of Women in Peace and Security
Wilson Center
29 October, Washington (DC), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @thewilsoncenter

The Security Implications of Transnational Migration
International Institute for Security Studies (IISS)
30 October, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @IISS_org

The Regional Fallout of the Syrian Civil War
Harvard Belfer Center
31 October, Cambridge (MA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @BelferCenter

Syria in the Grey Zone
Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)
31 October, Washington (DC), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @csis

November 2019

Book Launch: After ISIS ,by Seth J. Frantzman
Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies
3 November, Ramat Gan, Israel
Website: visit | Twitter: @BESA_Center

RAN High Level Conference
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
4 November, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Engaging with Online Extremist Material: Experimental Evidence
VOX Pol
5 November, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @VOX_Pol

Tech Against Terrorism and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism
Tech Against Terrorism; Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)
6 November, New Delhi, India
Website: visit | Twitter: @techvsterrorism

Policy & Practice Event: Evaluating Impact of Disengagement, Deradicalisation and Resocialisation Efforts
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
7 November, Madrid, Spain
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism: Regional Policy Responses and Risk Mitigation
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
7-8 November, Budapest, Hungary
Website: visit | Twitter: @un

CSTPV 25th Anniversary Symposium
The Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence
7-8 November, St. Andrews, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @CSTPV

Security Days: A Human Rights-Centred Approach to Technology and Security
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
8 November, Vienna, Austria
Website: visit | Twitter: @OSCE

How Civil Society Can Help Prevent Violence and Extremism
John Jay College Center on Terrorism
8 November, New York (NY), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @JohnJayCollege

The Figure of the Terrorist in Literature, Film and Media
University of Zurich
8-9 November, Zurich, Switzerland
Website: visit | Twitter: @uzh_en

How Extreme is the Far Right in Europe?
VOX Pol
12 November, Brussels, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @VOX_Pol

Hezbollah, from the Iranian Revolution to the Syrian War
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
12 November, College Park (MD), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @START_UMD

Modern Deterrence Autumn 2019 Conference
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
13 November, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

RAN LOCAL: When and How to Intervene – Specific Case Management
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) LOCAL
13-14 November, Milan, Italy
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

RAN C&N: How to Make an Effective Campaign that is Reaching the Target Audience and Selling the Message
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) C&N
14-15 November, Budapest, Hungary
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

RAN EDU: Challenges in Islamist Extremist Ideology in Schools
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) EDU
14-15 November, Antwerp, Belgium
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

International Symposium on Iraq after 2011
ORSAM
18-20 November, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: @orsamtr

Course: Border Security, Refugees and CT
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
18-22 November, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

India, Pakistan and the Dispute over Kashmir
Foreign Policy Research Insitute
19 November, Haverford (PA), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @fpri

The War for Muddy Waters: Pirates, Terrorists, Traffickers, and Maritime Insecurity
The Institute of World Politics
19 November, Washington (DC), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @theIWP

Tech Against Terrorism & GIFCT Webinar: Mental Health and Content Moderation
Tech Against Terrorism; Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT)
20 November, *Online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @techvsterrorism

VIII International Congress for the Victims of Terrorism
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
20-21 November, Nice, France
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

14th Homeland Security Week
Institute for Defense and Government Advancement
20-22 November, Washington (DC), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @DefenseInsights

NISA Conference 2019: Old Wine, New Bottles?
The Transforming Discipline of Intelligence Collection
Netherlands Intelligence Studies Association
21 November, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @NISAssociation

Webinar on Homeland Security, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Bruce Hoffman
DeSales University
21 November, Center Valley (PA), United States; *Online*
Website: visit | Twitter: @desales

Verdiepingsleergang Terrorisme, Recht en Veiligheid [in Dutch]
Leiden University
21-22 November, 12-13 December, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @UniLeiden

RAN P&P: What Can we Learn from Experiences with Different Prison Regimes for Radicalised/ Terrorist Offenders so far?
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) P&P
21-22 November, Lisbon, Portugal
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

X Blvd and W116th St: At the Intersection(s) of Blackness(es), Islam(s) and the NYPD's National Security Project
John Jay College Center on Terrorism
22 November, New York (NY), United States
Website: visit | Twitter: @JohnJayCollege

Seminar: Defence Against Terrorism (Executive Level) Seminar
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
25-26 November, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

CSTPV Symposium: The Weaponisation of Everyday Life
The Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence
26 November, St. Andrews, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @CSTPV

European Intelligence and Security Informatics Conference (EISIC) 2019
University of Oulu
26-27 November, Oulu, Finland
Website: visit | Twitter: @unioulu

Need to Know IX: Intelligence and Major Political Change
International Centre for Defence and Security
28-29 November, Talinn, Estonia
Website: visit | Twitter" *n/a*

RAN YF&C: Academy on 'Youth(work) online'
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) YF&C
28-29 November, Copenhagen, Denmark
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

RAN POL: Information Sharing
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) POL
28-29 November, *to be confirmed*
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

December 2019

COE-DAT CT Lessons Learned
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
3-4 December, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Global Counter Terrorism Summit: Evolving Security Through Innovation
International Security Expo
3-4 December, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @ISE_Expo

Multi-Agency Meeting RAN Exit-RVT: Restorative Justice
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
3-4 December, Dublin, Ireland
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Bellingcat OSINT Workshop
Bellingcat
9-13 December, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @bellingcat

Seminar: Crisis Management in Terrorism
NATO Centre of Expertise Defence Against Terrorism (COEDAT)
9-13 December, Ankara, Turkey
Website: visit | Twitter: *n/a*

Europe and its Neighbourhood 2019:
Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management in the 21st Century
Chatham House, International Crisis Group & Al-Sharq Forum
10 December, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @ChathamHouse; @CrisisGroup; @sharqforum

Safeguarding Refugees from Being Recruited and Radicalized
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
11 December, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Terrorist Offenders
Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)
12-13 December, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Website: visit | Twitter: @RANEurope

January 2020

Breakfast Briefing: What Works (and What Doesn't) in Efforts to Prevent or Counter Violent Extremism?
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)
17 January, London, United Kingdom
Website: visit | Twitter: @RUSI_org

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

About *Perspectives on Terrorism*

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

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

The editors invite researchers and readers to:

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

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

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

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