

Society for
Terrorism Research

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Society for Terrorism Research



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**2017 New York City
Presenter Abstracts**

Day 1: August 14th

9:30-11:00 am: Panel Session 1

1. The Islamic State: New Research on Ongoing Threats and Trends

Pieter Nanninga (University of Groningen) – “Branding a Caliphate in Decline: the Islamic State’s video output, 2015-2017”

The Islamic State’s information warfare is a key component of its general strategy. The group’s rise in Iraq and Syria had been accompanied by the establishment of an extensive media structure that propagated the group’s successes in thousands of videos, magazine issues, and photo reports. However, the Islamic State’s self-representation as a powerful caliphate that is ‘remaining and expanding’ has come under increasing pressure due to its mounting difficulties on the ground, including the loss of large swaths of territory and increasing problems in the fields of governance, and recruitment. How has the Islamic State’s propaganda machine dealt with these circumstances? How has it framed its setbacks and adapted its narratives to continue inspiring and mobilising its supporters? Most studies on the Islamic State’s media output are based on small samples and particular cases, whereas comprehensive examinations of long-term trends are still largely absent. Based on the author’s complete archive of IS video releases, this paper therefore delineates the main trends in the Islamic State’s media output over the last two years. First, it offers a quantitative overview of the group’s official video output, demonstrating a significant decline in media output and some major changes in the content of the videos. Second, the paper qualitatively assesses how the Islamic State has framed its setbacks in Iraq and Syria. It shows that the group employs a multi-faceted strategy to uphold its brand, including (i) an increasing focus on the theme of victimhood; (ii) more emphasis on its successes in unconventional forms of warfare, such as suicide operations, snipers and drone attacks; (iii) shifting attention to the long-term struggle between good and evil. By exploring how the group uses Islamic traditions to frame its hardships and invest it with meanings related to trial, purification, and self-sacrifice, the paper sheds new light on the Islamic State’s branding efforts during the second and third year of its caliphate. This not only increases our understanding of the group itself, but also of how it has been able to remain a source of inspiration for jihadists elsewhere.

Colin Clarke (RAND) – “The Crime-Terror Nexus in Europe”

Certain academic and policy circles are engaged in an ongoing debate over the existence of what has been dubbed “the crime-terror nexus.” The term refers to the intersection of crime and terror, and the idea that a relationship between criminals and terrorists exists to the extent that a nexus has been established, although it can take one of several forms—temporary marriage of convenience, one-off encounter or lasting partnership. Some scholars assert that the notion of such a nexus is overblown, while others suggest it is best to conceptualize crime and

terrorism on a continuum, or sliding scale, where groups move back and forth over time, ebbing and flowing between ideological and profit motives. And while healthy scepticism is necessary, especially when considering this nexus on a truly global level, it does appear to be a major threat in one part of the world in particular—Europe, where terrorists and criminals now recruit from the same milieu. Based on research from case studies, open source reporting and the broader terrorism literature, this analysis will argue that a crime-terror nexus does exist in Europe at a parochial or local level, wherein criminals and jihadists rely on petty theft, fraud, robbery and drug trafficking to raise funds for their operations and organizations. This paper will analyse several of those funding methods, with a particular focus on drugs and narcotics. Moreover, this paper will explore the various avenues available to law enforcement and security services as they attempt to counter the threat from terrorists and criminals working together on European soil.

2. Trends in Homegrown Violent Extremism

Daniel Snook & John Horgan (Georgia State University) – “Religious beliefs and practices among Muslim converts and non-converts: Starting points for understanding convert over-representation in violent extremism”

Over the past several years, it has become increasingly apparent that the public-facing image of Islamist extremism has changed. Groups like ISIS have made it a priority to target converts to Islam for recruitment in an effort to make their “caliphate” seem as ubiquitous and diverse as possible (Callimachi, 2016). The media has inundated society with images of Westerners who have turned from their previous belief systems to fundamental Islam and violent extremism. Evidence is well established that, in Western countries, converts to Islam are substantially over-represented in Islamist extremist groups compared to non-converts Muslims (Schuurman, Grol, & Flower, 2016). Although many have speculated as to why converts are disproportionately engaged in Islamist extremism (Cottee, 2006; Vidino & Hughes, 2015; Roy, 2006), the phenomenon has yet to be empirically investigated. Little is known about differences between converts and non-converts in terms of their Islamic beliefs, attitudes, and practices, and even less is known about these difference in the US. To explore this topic, the current study administered the Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness (PMIR; Abu-Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, & Stein, 2008) to a national sample of US Muslims (N= 356). About half of our participants were converts to Islam (n=177); the other half were non-convert Muslims (n=179). We compared patterns of religiousness among converts and non-converts using the PMIR’s 6 applicable subscales and one measure of overall Islamic religiousness. Preliminary means comparison analyses (independent samples t-tests) indicated that converts expressed higher Islamic Religious Struggle scores (i.e. “I find myself doubting the existence of Allah”) and lower Islamic Belief scores (i.e. “I believe in the existence of Allah”) than non-converts. However, converts also reported higher levels of overall Islamic religiousness than non-converts. To investigate why converts reported being significantly more religious despite having weaker belief, we ran hierarchical multiple regressions on PMIR subscales and religiousness while statistically controlling for background variables (age, gender, and education). These preliminary analyses yield evidence that converts and non-converts may interpret Islamic religiousness differently and gives insight into what psychological factors may drive Islamic faith in general.

Paige Pascarelli (Boston University) – “Identities ‘Betwixt and Between’: Analyzing Belgian Representation in Homegrown Extremism”

Belgium has seen more foreign fighters leave for the ISIS "caliphate" than any other European country in per capita figures. But among Belgian foreign fighters, as well as among Belgian terrorists who did not travel abroad, a stunning majority have been Belgian-Moroccan. What factors can explain this phenomenon? Both groups live in relatively similar socio-economic settings, experience stigmatization and discrimination, and both are, relative to broader Belgian society, poorly integrated. However, in investigating this question, an interesting caveat emerges vis-à-vis the "integration deficit" theory: Belgian-Turks, who are found to be comparatively *less* integrated than the Belgian-Moroccans, are underrepresented in extremist milieus. This paper argues that the insularity of the Belgian-Turkish population, a phenomenon not found to the same extent among Belgian-Moroccans despite also being poorly integrated (with some outliers), has protected the population from negative environmental elements, both criminal *and* extremist. That there are seen to be local factors that contribute to a "vulnerability" to the pull of crime and extremism, means that such conditions are likely to remain even if a group like ISIS fades into irrelevance.

Eylem Kanol (Humboldt-University of Berlin) – “Jihadi radicalization in Europe from a comparative perspective: profiles, contexts, networks and narratives”

Building on the works of Marc Sageman and Edwin Bakker, we are aggregating publicly available information on Jihadist individuals to generate a database. The underlying primary research questions, which we aim to answer using this database are the following: what individual socio-structural characteristics are related to Jihadi radicalization, how and where do individuals radicalize and are there country-specific radicalization processes? Our key hypotheses are derived from the two central theoretical approaches that are dominant in the social science literature: the disintegration theory and the social movement theory. When it comes to explaining radicalization, proponents of the disintegration theory focus on grievances and structural conditions. For these scholars, factors such as relative deprivation, poverty, and discrimination are the key driving factors behind political violence. Social movement scholars argue that such criteria alone are not enough to explain the emergence and persistence of radical groups. They argue that certain mechanisms need to be in place to translate individual grievances into (violent) activism. These mechanisms include mobilizing structures, such as mosques where radical imams preach, or political opportunity structures, such as institutional exclusion of Muslim organizations. In order to empirically assess our hypotheses, we are collecting in-depth biographical, sociodemographic, and network information on Jihadists from six European countries (Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Denmark). Using the sociodemographic data, we aim to investigate what kind of individual characteristics make people more susceptible to radicalization, and we draw on the biographical information to provide insights into processes and contexts of radicalization. In addition to these characteristics, we examine social contacts and networks of the individuals, which enable us to analyze the social network structures of Jihadist milieus. So far, we have collected and coded 340 individual profiles

from five countries (Germany = 160, the Netherlands = 60, France = 55, Denmark = 40, Austria = 25). In the presentation, we will discuss the findings from the ongoing data collection, focusing on demographic and socioeconomic variables, such as gender, age, educational attainment, and employment; biographical variables, such as criminality, critical life events and religious socialization; and on contexts or settings where radicalization processes take place. Furthermore, we will present the network structure and identify key influential figures within and across the sampled countries.

3. Lessons from Northern Ireland

Annabelle DeHeus (University of Nottingham) – “Don’t let them win: social drivers and the role of intergroup competition behind dissident republican violence”

This paper assesses the role of social relationships as drivers for dissident republican violence in post-conflict Northern Ireland. Through the lens of social identity theory, this paper seeks to go beyond the existing political and historical explanations of the use of violence in Northern Ireland, and focus both on the internal and external elements of group conflict and social comparison as a contributing factor for the continuation of some level of armed struggle. As such, this paper is structured to cover three key research areas.

This paper first conceptualises Tajfel and Turners Social Identity Approach and how this can be applied to modern intergroup conflict and identity. It then applies this framework to both the dissident Irish republican groups in comparison to one another, and to the wider dissident spectrum in comparison to the republican mainstream.

Second, it helps to elucidate on the disunity of dissident republicans as meaning anti-peace agreement republicans. There are a variety of active political and violent groups before and since the peace process. Whereas they share many political and ideological similarities, they fail to unify their efforts and often combat one another internally. This paper argues that this is in part due to personal conflict and a desire to attain a leadership position.

Furthermore, it is important to also consider the use of violence as both active and passive resistance towards the dominating narrative of Sinn Fein and its pragmatic, non-violent approach towards Northern Ireland. Many of the existing dissident republicans however, originally split from the current mainstream. The refusal to cease violent conflict, despite its minimal support and function, is internally justified not only by historical legacy and political conviction, but increasingly so as a tool to not let the mainstream ‘win’. Thus, the decision to continue to engage with armed struggle is more than just politically and historically grounded, but also exists through interpersonal relationships. Through assessing these relationships, this paper seeks to expand on the existing explanations for post-conflict violence in Northern Ireland.

John Lamb & Emma Kelly (Birmingham City University) – “The Thin Green Line: A Cross Border Exploration of Counter Terrorism during ‘The Troubles’”

On the night of 5th/6th may 1976 eight of the British Army’s elite Special Air Service soldiers were arrested by a mixed force drawn from the Irish Defence Force and An Garda Síochána for illegal entry into the Republic of Ireland. Known as the Flagstaff Hill incident, these arrests would spark a major diplomatic spat between the governments of the Republic and the United Kingdom and

would alter the counter terrorism policies in place in both countries. As such, this paper seeks to explore the political and legal frameworks within which cross border counter terrorism functioned, what its legal status was and to provide a discussion of the differing perspectives found within the Irish Defence Force, the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Specifically the paper seeks to explore the political and military interactions which occurred between the British Army and the Irish Defence Force in order to understand the issues which BREXIT and the potential reestablishment of a 'hard' border between the UK and the Republic may create.

Rachel Monaghan (Ulster University) – “Turning’ the Terrorists: The Jihadi Supergrasses from al-Qaeda to ISIS”

In the 1980s, in the United Kingdom nearly thirty members of paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland both republican and loyalist alike agreed to provide evidence against 500 of their former colleagues in return for a reduced sentence or immunity (complete or partial) from prosecution and a new identity and life. Such individuals although considered 'converted terrorists' by the authorities became more commonly known as 'supergrasses'. Many of those defendants found guilty on the word of a supergrass had their convictions overturned on appeal. In addition, some 16 supergrasses retracted their evidence either before their trials had begun or were concluded resulting in charges against the accused being withdrawn. Thus, the supergrass trials of the 1980s with their high convictions rates based on the uncorroborated evidence of the 'converted terrorist' were largely discredited as a criminal justice mechanism in countering terrorism and political violence in Northern Ireland.

Yes some thirty years later, the European Union's Commissioner for Justice, Věra Jourová has suggested that supergrass deals should be offered to Islamic State terror suspects as a strategy to tackle extremism and provide incentives for their assistance in counter-terrorism investigations. This paper explores the emergence of the jihadi supergrass starting with Mohammed Junaid Babar, the American jihadist who facilitated the 7/7 bombers' knowledge of bomb-making and Saajid Muhammad Badat, the British al-Qaeda supergrass whose evidence helped to convict Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, Osama bin Laden's son-in-law and Abu Hamza al-Masri, the radical Islamic cleric and former imam of the Finsbury Park Mosque in north London. The paper also examines the case of Harry Sarfo, a German national who joined ISIS and who agreed to provide intelligence on the group's command structure following his arrest on returning to Germany. The paper explores the types of information provided to the authorities and the deals, which the 'turned terrorists' received and examines whether or not such retro counter-terrorism is a useful tool in trying to reduce and eliminate terrorism.

4. Radicalization & Identity Theory

Rod Dubrow-Marshall (ICSA/University of Salford) – “Totalistic Identity Theory”

Rod Dubrow-Marshall will speak about the 'Totalistic Identity Theory' which he has developed (Dubrow-Marshall 2010) as an evidence based model to explain the psychological process of conversion which takes place for members of extremist and terrorist groups. The theory sets out

the psychological dominance of the extremist group identity and its emotional and value significance for the individual member to the exclusion of other identities and interests and this has significant utility in the prevention of recruitment to violent extremist groups and in the de-radicalisation, de-conversion and recovery processes for former extremist and terrorist group members.

Yuval Laor (Open Minds Foundation) – “A theory of Fervor”

Through my doctoral research into the evolution of the capacity for religiosity, I have developed a theory of fervor which is relevant to research into terrorism and radicalization. My talk will present two complimentary accounts of fervor: depicting fervor on the level of individuals, and analyzing the phenomenon from an evolutionary perspective. I will discuss concepts relevant to understanding radicalization such as the emotion of awe and sudden religious conversion, observable in cultic recruitment, where irrational long-term commitments can be induced in a very short time.

I propose a conception of fervor as a state, similar to the state of being-in-love (either parental or romantic love), where one’s infatuation is directed not toward a person but toward various authoritative agents, symbols and texts associated with a group or an ideology. Underlying fervor are certain emotions such as awe, devotion, wonder and reverence (I will refer to these collectively as “awe”). Fervor includes a strong and irrational (not based on cost-benefit considerations) commitment to the group, as well as an absolute certainty regarding tenets and authorities. It determines people’s moods and motivations and provides them with a sense of meaning and purpose.

My conception of fervor can be described as a feedback loop between certain experiences, beliefs and behavior. I start with a discussion of strong emotional experiences involving awe (in religious contexts these are referred to as mystical experiences) which can either strengthen one’s existing beliefs or bring about a sudden and fundamental conversion. The way this happens is by an event inducing a strong awe-filled experience, which can “prove” (psychologically) a set of ideas that may be unrelated to the initial event. Jesus walking on water (a “miracle” causing awe) “proved,” to some, things which are unrelated to the buoyancy of Jesus. The fervor feedback is complete when awe experiences “prove” beliefs which make people behave and react in ways that bring about yet more awe experiences.

Based on this conception of fervor it is clear that much attention should be given to the emotion of awe in general, and to the ways that experiences of awe come about. Events triggering awe experiences tend to feature a number of the following elements: being perceived as “miraculous”; vastness (including related concepts such as infinity and eternity); beauty; skill; altered states of consciousness; trauma and “celebrities”. These – especially miracles, altered states of consciousness and celebrities – are strongly shaped by expectations and assumptions. The intensity of awe experiences is amplified by crowds, confusion, distress, and being a teenager or a young adult.

The impact of high levels of fervor or strong awe-experiences can be extremely powerful, comparable only to the affect a baby has on her parents. As such, I maintain that a nuanced understanding of fervor and awe can shed light on the psychology underlying “radicalization”, and will be of interest to members of the Society for Terrorism Research.

Yvonne Woods (University of Adelaide) – “Radicalization in Refugee Camps”

The original notion behind the conception of refugee camps was the establishment of temporary shelters that could act as safe havens pending the operationalisation of durable solutions. However, the piecemeal actualisation of these solutions has increasingly led to the indeterminate confinement of refugees and placed them in a state technically referred to as protracted refugee situations (PRS). The Somali refugees in Kenya, the focus of this paper, is an archetype of PRS. Over time, some camps have become politicised and militarised spaces where some refugees have developed extreme views and exerted political influence in their countries of origin, and undermined the host country (Ek and Karadawi, 1991; Loescher et al., 2008). As such, protracted refugee situations not only present humanitarian concerns but also raise significant security challenges for the host state and the immediate region (Loescher et al., 2008; Milner, 2011). On their part, host states typically resort to the securitisation of refugee issues, a factor that has the potential to galvanise and consort with other contextual conditions to propel individuals on the pathway to (non)violent radicalisation.

My research examines the dynamics of radicalisation within a refugee camp microcosm and its interaction with other subsystems at national, inter-state and regional levels. The study relies on primary data sources namely interviews, reports, 10th moment data sources, government policies and legislation; and applies systems thinking to highlight the interactive dynamics of radicalisation. The research tentatively hypothesizes that the liminal state in a refugee camp context is the overarching sub-structure that hosts and incubates other contextual conditions that interact in a complex web of subsystems to precipitate radicalisation. The research further contends that the adoption of ahistorical and reductionist approaches in the analysis of radicalisation, and in countering violent extremism cannot be effective as long as broader complex contextual factors in other sub-systems that drive radicalisation pervade.

11:00-11:15 am: Coffee

11:15-12:45 pm: Panel Session 2

1. Civil liberties, human rights, & education

Adam Jacobson (New York University) – “Could the United States Re-institute an Official Torture Policy?”

In 2015, the United States passed legislation that reaffirmed its ban on using torture and abusive techniques in counter-terrorism interrogations. Scientific evidence, expert testimony, and the historical record show that coercive interrogation is not effective in eliciting reliable information. However, President Donald Trump repeatedly promised to revive torture as official policy, and the idea of torturing suspected terrorists is popular with the American public. Given these facts, what are the vulnerabilities within the current prohibition that make a return to an official torture policy possible? This paper examines the weaknesses within each branch of government and other factors that could contribute to making a return to official torture by the United States more likely. It shows that the prohibition against torture does face vulnerabilities that can be

exploited to reinstitute a torture policy, and that while this may not be likely in the current political environment, it is possible.

Ewelina Wasko-Owsiejczuk (University of Bialystok) – “National Security Letters — A Controversial FBI Tool to Fight Terrorism”

The terrorist attacks carried out on 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon led to the reevaluation of priorities in U.S. security policy. The boundary between freedom and security became more malleable. U.S. intelligence services, responsible for security, were set to a state of high alert. To help them in counter-terrorism missions, numerous changes in legislation have been introduced to equip government agencies with additional tools and simplified procedures. The aim of this presentation is to present the roots, the scope of activities and the scale of exploitation of orders for disclosure of information (the national security letters — NSL) by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). These orders have caused great controversy on account of the possibility to obtain access to the private data of citizens, while maintaining total secrecy. Although the NSL is alleged to be unconstitutional, violating citizens' rights to privacy and freedom of expression, the FBI holds firmly to the view that the NSL is an essential tool in the fight against terrorists. The FBI has adopted a strategy based on prevention, involving the collection of hundreds of thousands of items of information and private data.

The radical increase in the number of NSLs issued after 2001 gave rise to many questions, such as: Have national security letters been used for their intended purpose? Should a total secrecy clause be applied to all NSLs? Have orders of disclosure of information been issued on the basis of concrete evidence? Has the FBI abused the power given to them? Are NSLs an effective tool in the fight against terrorism? Why, despite allegations of the violation of human rights and civil liberties, are NSLs still considered a legitimate tool for the surveillance of society?

Orlandrew Danzell (Mercyhurst University) – “Panacea or Catalyst: The Education Terrorism Nexus on the African Continent”

Over the past decade, al-Shabaab has repeatedly attacked civilians both within and outside Somalia, citing the deployment of troops to combat al-Shabaab as instigation for targeting. However, Ethiopia to date remains nearly untouched by the group, despite its lengthy military engagement in Somalia, as well as numerous enabling factors that indicate a high likelihood of a terrorist strike by al-Shabaab. This study aims to address a gap in the terrorism literature, in particular, explain the apparent limited incidence of terrorism diffusion into Ethiopia by al-Shabaab where extant diffusion theory would otherwise expect it to occur. Utilizing a structured focused comparison of Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia, this paper examines factors relevant to cross-border terrorist diffusion that may help explain Ethiopia's apparent deviance from the diffusion model. It finds that rather than single proximate factors, a more nuanced assessment of regime type and the interplay of urbanization, communication freedom, and provision of non-coordination goods help explain the lack of a successful cross-border terrorist attack by al-Shabaab in Ethiopia.

2. Terrorist Disengagement, Reengagement & Risk Assessment

Mary Beth Altier (New York University), Emma Leonard Boyle (La Salle University), & John Horgan (Georgia State University) – “Returning to the Fight: An Empirical Analysis of Terrorist Re-engagement & Recidivism from 87 Autobiographical Accounts”

Recent interest in terrorist risk assessment and rehabilitation or ‘de-radicalization’ reveals that the causes of terrorist re-engagement and recidivism are still poorly understood. Part of the issue resides with the methodological challenges associated with measuring recidivism or re-engagement rates, which require not only a significant time horizon, but also close monitoring of terrorist offenders. Further, we lack data on re-engagement base rates within the terrorist population, making it difficult to test the effectiveness of different interventions (e.g., prison, de-radicalization programs). Informed by advances in criminology as well as a review of existing literature, this study develops a series of theoretical starting points and hypotheses about the factors associated with terrorist re-engagement and recidivism. We then statistically test our hypotheses using data on 185 terrorist engagement events, drawn from 87 autobiographical accounts representing over 40 terrorist groups across a variety of time periods. We also calculate rates of re-engagement and recidivism based on disengagement type (voluntary/involuntary, collective/individual). In nearly all instances, these autobiographical data cover terrorists’ entire life course and therefore provide adequate time horizons as well as detailed information on the circumstances surrounding an individual’s re-engagement. Our findings suggest that terrorist re-engagement and recidivism rates are relatively high (more than 57%) and in line with criminal recidivism rates except in the case of collective, voluntary disengagements. Further, we find that ‘de-radicalization’ and severing of ties to individuals within the terrorist group significantly reduce the likelihood of re-engagement and recidivism.

Kira Harris (Charles Sturt University) – “Linking Psychology to Counter Violent Extremism Outcomes”

Understanding the psychological experience of leaving extremism behind is paramount to developing successful programs Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) aimed at individuals within, or exiting, the radical milieu. CVE programs tend to pivot around deradicalization, disengagement and reintegration, which are three distinct phenomena, mean vastly different things, and rely on the individual undergoing different psychological states. While deradicalisation describes a cognitive shift in beliefs, regarding ideology or the acceptance of ideological-inspired violence, disengagement, requires an individual to physically distance oneself from extremist relationships, or forgo violent behaviours, regardless of ideological attachment.

When initiated by government agencies, CVE initiatives usually require voluntary participation, and often, the measures of success are unclear. Programs that offer incentives for changed behaviour tend to rely on compliance, and participants behave in a manner that is beneficial if rewards continue and there is (implied) monitoring. However, the voluntary nature can also indicate individuals are already on the path to exiting. While the start of the exiting process may not be immediately recognisable to the individual, there are cues, which indicate a break in group-identity maintenance.

Drawing on psychology research and interviews with formers, these cues relate to social cognitions which drive the exiting process and shape ongoing attachment to groups and their ideologies. These interviews indicate that group-related self-esteem threats are central to re-establishing an identity, as well as altering belief structures; however, changes in beliefs were a justifying mechanism for the extremist group's continued rejection, and rarely the cause.

However, despite rejecting the beliefs and group identity, the experience of leaving extremism behind can be distressing for an individual. While there is an initial experience of relief, there is a transition period, which is marked by grief and often maladaptive coping strategies. The reintegration of formers, which emphasises participation in mainstream practices and responsibilities, is frequently overlooked in the counter terrorism space as we triage based on risk. However, it is during this reintegration phase that individuals are vulnerable to influence and may re-enter previous networks, or enter groups which provide similar values and lifestyles.

In conclusion, CVE programs should weight indicators of success towards disengagement and reintegration, and consider ideology a second-order effect. Indicators of success should be progressive, with individuals initially demonstrating compliance through participation, through to changes in social cognitions that affect group-identity maintenance.

Sarah Knight – “Violent Versus Non-Violent Actors: An Empirical Study of Different Types of Extremism”

The scale and number of terrorist attacks worldwide since 9/11 has raised awareness of the fact that large numbers of people across the world hold extreme opinions, some of whom are prepared to commit acts of violence in the name of such beliefs. However, whilst many express extremist views, and may support the use of violence to achieve aims and objectives, very few of these actively facilitate or commit acts of extreme violence. With substantial numbers of people on terrorist 'watch lists', the challenge for law enforcement and counter-terrorism (CT) practitioners is to conduct risk assessments in order to identify real threats (Borum, 2015) and to train agents to be confident enough to do so (Gibbs, 2009). However, it can be notoriously difficult to distinguish between those who simply hold and espouse radical beliefs and those who are prepared to commit acts of extremist-related violence. This poses a problem for those responsible for CT needing to discriminate between these different types of extremists. The present study adopted an empirical approach to compare violent and non-violent extremists. A multi-method approach was applied, with Case Study Research (CSR) used as a starting point to generate and analyse rich and detailed information about different types of extremists. In-depth case studies on 40 extremist individuals were developed and analysed for key themes, sub-themes and underlying variables. Thematic analysis identified six key themes, referred to here as: (i) internal factors; (ii) grievances; (iii) identity; (iv) connectedness; (v) opportunities; and (vi) behavioural indicators of extremism. Violent extremists (VEs) and non-violent extremists (NVEs) were then compared to understand where similarities and differences lie. Content analysis was conducted, whereby numbers of cases were counted for evidence of all underlying variables, in order to allow comparisons between sub-groups, and the Fisher's Exact Test (FET) indicated where significant differences lay. Identified were a number of variables that distinguish between VEs and NVEs; this has implications for CT in terms of prevent, pursue and intervention. Findings provide a better and more nuanced understanding of why some individuals choose violent action

whilst others do not. However, the number of similarities between VEs and NVEs demonstrate how difficult it might be for those wanting to distinguish between these, when faced with large number of individuals who are known to be expressing radical opinions. Future research is now needed to understand how these findings can be used to assist risk assessment. Results may, for example, assist those responsible for CT and law enforcement to focus on variables that distinguish between violent and non-violent extremists in order to identify those who are most high risk (i.e. likely to actively facilitate and/ or commit acts of extreme violence) and focus their efforts on these, rather than on those who are not. Results may also inform CT practitioners and policy-makers on the development of tailored interventions for different types of extremist individuals and groups.

3. Agency, recruitment, & innovation in terrorist networks

Jason Warner (Combating Terrorism Center) & Hilary Matfess (Yale University) – “Jihad’s “Disruptors”: Trends and Innovations in Boko Haram’s Use of Suicide Bombers”

In the course of becoming one of the deadliest terror groups of the 21st century, one of the tactics that Boko Haram has employed has been the use of suicide bombers. Though Boko Haram’s campaign of violence began in earnest in 2010 after years of criminality and low-intensity conflict, the group’s reliance on suicide bombings did not manifest until 2014. The tactic emerged, evolved, and gained traction within the group as a response to the counter-terrorism strategy adopted by the state. Despite the attention given to suicide bombing in academic literature and by the policy community, insufficient attention has been paid to Boko Haram’s activities in this area.

To remedy this oversight, the research team constructed a database of Boko Haram suicide bombings by using newspaper reports compiled by LexisNexis. We found more than 200 unique suicide bombing attacks, employing more than 345 bombers between 2011-2016. The data was then coded to create a comprehensive database offering as complete a picture as possible of the nature of Boko Haram’s use of suicide bombers. Among the results returned from our search string, the database collected information as to the: date and location of bombing; nature of target; nature of bombers (including number, gender, and approximate age); nature of targets (including status as a religious or secular target, and subtype within those categories); and nature of destruction wrought (including number of deaths and injuries). This dataset reveals that the group has marked innovations in both the demographics of suicide bombers and the operational deployment of bombers.

Some of Boko Haram’s most prescient (and effective) innovations are the use of more than 170 female suicide bombers, the use of paired or grouped suicide bombers, and the use of child bombers. Other innovations include the actual detonation process (not just the demographics of the bombers), such as pretending to be homeless, deploying suicide bombers with children strapped to their backs, sending bombers to knock on targeted individuals’ doors, and even concealing the bomb in a casserole dish. Boko Haram’s tactical pattern also raises the issue of agency in determining whether an attack is correctly considered a ‘suicide bombing’ or better understood as a Human-born IED (HumBIED). Though in terms of sheer numbers, Boko Haram has not deployed as many suicide bombers as other insurgencies, by breaking the typical mold of suicide bombings by *ihadists* and relentless innovating regarding who is deployed as a

suicide bomber, how, and where, has 'disrupted *jihād*.' Our paper unpacks these innovations and provides insights regarding how the Nigerian Government's counter-terrorism policies incentivized Boko Haram to engage in an innovative campaign of suicide bombings.

**Maria Isabel Garcia & Jara Cuadrado Bolaños (Instituto Universitario Gutiérrez Mellado) –
“Prevention of Boko Haram bombers: women and girls”**

The appearance of Boko Haram in 2002 in the state of Borno –after an evolution of different salafi jihadist groups since the eighties–, and its expansion across the northern region, has become a significant challenge for the Nigerian government. Its expansion responds to several reasons, which stem from the period of English colony to the current high unemployment rates of young people, the change of leadership within the group or the way the society is being configured. Moreover, the group, which now call itself the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWA), has evolved from insurgency to a modern islamist terrorist group and is showing a predilection towards modern tactics and operations.

As part of its new strategy, Boko Haram has increasingly used women and girls in its suicide campaign bombing since 2014, when it was its first known case of using women as operatives. Since then, the group has conducted 47 female suicide bombers in Nigeria and Cameroon, according to data compiled by the Long War Journal. This number confirms that the group has the highest female participation in history in an islamist organization besides of employing the youngest female suicide bomber.

The vast majority of the studies has focused on Boko Haram's men and ignored the role that women are playing in the conflict. At this regard, and taking into account that women participation in the group is a new trend, this paper will try to shed light about why and how women are used by Boko Haram in order to understand the motivations of them to join the organization. Simultaneously, understanding what motives women to enlist Boko Haram may clarify the future of the group and offer a pattern of violence that can contribute with significant information in order to prevent this scale of terror.

Thus, the proposal of this paper is to highlight the potential of early warning systems, which work on the identification and timely alert of potential threats in circumstances of crisis and instability. The base of their success rests on a timely collection, analysis and communication of data, since their final objective is to transform warnings into preventive measures. ECOWAS, the regional organization, in collaboration with civil society organizations, has developed an important preventive network where gender issues are essential. The paper draws the attention to those early warning mechanisms as part of the counterterrorism measures.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to emphasize the potential of early warning mechanisms preventing the use of girls and women in terrorist acts. The main objectives are: (1) to understand the role and the motivations of women to join Boko Haram (2) to investigate why the group is employing women (3) to understand the role women have in the Nigerian society; and (4) to explain how early warning mechanisms could work on the prevention of use of women for terrorist acts by Boko Haram.

Johanna Masse (Université Laval) – “Reevaluating Women’s Political Agency in Violent Setting. The Northern Ireland case”

Despite the continuous involvement of women in terrorist groups since the 19th century, the appraisal of women’s political violence is still subjected to substantial bias, notably regarding their often-denied political agency. Terrorist women are therefore often “exceptionalized” in academic literature; as is questioned the “political” dimension of their actions. As we will show, such assumptions need to be questioned as it hinders a global appreciation and understanding of women’s roles in terrorist groups; and more generally of the multifaceted dimension of violence itself. The fact that women members generally occupy “behind-the-lines” functions (logistic, communication, etc.) should not presume of a lesser engagement in the group. Moreover, operating in a patriarchal and often oppressive context (civil wars) do not automatically imply that these women are not autonomous agents. Using semi-directed interviews about the life-story of women activists involved in the Northern Ireland conflict during the “Troubles” (1969-1999), as well as autobiographical accounts and second-hand materials, we will expose that much can be learnt from the personal narratives of women perpetrators. Not only it allows us to question the widely-held understanding of political agency as binary, it also highlights the pervasive character of violence – too often understood as only referring to a direct and “physical” act.

4. When & Why Terrorist Propaganda Resonates

Evan Copello & Dan Richard (University of North Florida) – “The Dark Side of Social Media: How Recruitment Appeals by Extremist Groups Seem Acceptable”

Terrorist organizations are growing in their sophistication at recruiting foreign fighters. Radical groups have increased their use of social media and online file sharing sites to reach out to vulnerable youths, promising glory, fame, and spouses. Groups, such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State (i.e., ISIS), no longer require recruits to join the fight in Syria; rather, recruits are instructed to stay abroad and fight the war from within their Western countries. Research on the role of the different type of channels of propaganda is in its infancy. This study looks at two main avenues of propaganda dispersal, Social Media (Twitter) and Online Journals (the *Dabiq*)

Due to the limited character count available on Twitter, there is a lack of complex appeals to potential recruits. In fact, Twitter may have served as a potential first introduction to ISIS ideology. Conversely, due to the complexity of attainment of the *Dabiq*, it tends to be attract those individuals who are either already enlisted with ISIS, or are past the initial stages of recruitment. The current project examined themes associated with the recruitment of terrorist actors through social media and printed channels of propaganda. This work provides a framework for understanding the different types of appeals made by terrorist groups to recruit foreign fighters. This study examined the role of Ideology, Identity, Religiosity, Enlistment Appeals, Isolation messages, and Time Pressure. We analyzed Tweets from Twitter and Columns from the ISIS Journal, The *Dabiq*, to determine if there are any differences in appeal based on the channel of propaganda.

Messages were coded by two independent raters, and Cohens Kappa values indicated high interrater reliability. The same coding scheme was used for both Twitter and the *Dabiq*, in order to make an even comparison. Preliminary findings showed that the *Dabiq* contained more Religiosity, Time Pressure, Isolation, and Enlistment Messages. Twitter and the *Dabiq* contained a similar number of Ideology and Identity messages. These results were not necessarily in line with our hypotheses, however they may be explained by several factors. First, Twitter has a limited character count and therefore may not be able to express complex, multi-faceted messages like the *Dabiq*. Secondly, Twitter has been doing a lot of “tweet combing”, therefore a lot of the messages that may have contained our variables of interest were deleted before tweet collection. Lastly, the *Dabiq* went through changes throughout its production as ISIS lost ground. This caused a notable change in its content that could have also skewed the results.

ISIS is constantly changing. This study sets a foundation for more work into the channels that ISIS is currently using (such as the *Rumiyah* and WhatsApp). ISIS is not the first group to use social media, but it is the most advanced. By understanding their appeals, we could potentially prepare ourselves for future organizations by building counter-radicalization messages now.

Julie Alice (Lily) Gramaccia (Université Bordeaux-Montaigne) & Aurelie Campana (Université Laval) – “Digital terrorist strategies: towards targeting of imagined audiences”

In a context where continuous technological innovations change the way people communicates, terrorist groups have been quick to adapt to the new digital environment and to adjust their propaganda to the new formats the Internet provide them with (Weimann 2004 and 2006; Conway 2006; Denning 2010; La Free, 2017).

Terrorist violence and digital propaganda allow terrorist groups to reach directly many audiences and fulfil diverse objectives (i.e. Nacos, 2006; Weimann 2006a and 2006b). However, most of the current literature tends to assume a strong and sometimes direct relationship between the terrorist groups’ capacity to bypass the traditional gatekeeping system and the resonance of their messages within their targeted audiences. Indeed, the role terrorist propaganda posted on the Internet has on the radicalization process remains up to now one of the most contentious issues within the literature on radicalization (Holt and al, 2015; Aly and alii, 2017; Conway, 2017). The main unsettled points refer to how and why a message posted online by a terrorist group resonate with some individuals and not with others, and may ultimately drive political engagement and/or incite to violence. It also concerns the influence of the medium on the process of reception of terrorist messages. In other words, the main unresolved issues about the online communication of terrorist groups relates to the performativity of their propagandist strategies.

Focusing on the terrorist online strategies shaped to attract varied publics, our presentation contends that one way of assessing the resonance of terrorist messages is to examine the digital discursive strategies terrorist groups use to culturally target diverse publics and socialize them to their messages. In so doing, we postulate terrorist propaganda to be articulated and framed to reflect the diverse publics’ assumptions (Hall, 1980), in an effort to consciously increase terrorist discourses’ performativity. This stage of the communication process – the interactions between those who enunciate the messages and their imagined publics – has been surprisingly overlooked in research about the strategies of communication of

terrorist groups. Only very recently have some authors started to consider that terrorist messages may have diverse publics (Aly, 2009; 2012; 2017). While research on terrorist political communication blossomed recently, especially since the emergence of the so-called Islamic state whose many authors rightly consider to best epitomize terrorist online political propaganda (Cockburn, 2014; Farwell, 2014; Stern and Berger, 2015), many aspects of the communication process remain understudied. This presentation intends to fill one of these gaps by concentrating on how terrorist organizations target different publics by embedding their messages into specific cultural, institutional and media frames. In so doing, we do not intend to focus on the reception of terrorist messages, but rather to study the strategies of enunciation adopted by one emblematic terrorist group, ISIS.

Locating at the intersection of communication and terrorism studies, we use micro-discourse analysis to interpret texts and socio-semiotics to decode images. It compares three magazines published by ISIS between 2014 and mid-2016 in three different languages: Dabiq in English ; Dar al Islam in French and Istok in Russian.

Kurt Braddock (The Pennsylvania State University), Paul Gill (University College London), & Emily Corner (University College London) – “The Moderating Effects of “Dark” Personality Traits on the Persuasive Effectiveness of Terrorist Narrative Propaganda”

Early researchers of terrorism and political violence argued that an individual’s risk for engaging in terrorism was determined by their unique personality factors or psychological characteristics. As terrorism research evolved, however, researchers came to believe this hypothesized relationship was not a valid one. Many personality factors (narcissism and psychopathy, for example) were implicated in acts of terrorism, but most individuals with these personality dispositions have *not* engaged in terrorism. It became clear to terrorism researchers that personality factors, though intuitively connected to engagement in terrorism, were not causally antecedent to violent behavior.

After researchers came to this conclusion, many abandoned the pursuit of connecting personality factors to engagement in terrorism. Terrorism studies moved on to explain terrorism as a function of the interaction between one’s psychological makeup and his/her social environment, root causes (e.g., poverty, lack of access to education), and several other explanatory mechanisms (e.g., models of violent radicalization). As these models were developed, researchers within terrorism studies came to debate which ones were “true.” Many of these models have featured terrorist communication as central to the process by which one becomes engaged in violent activity.

In this vein, researchers have expended significant effort to understanding the messages that terrorist groups convey to potential recruits. This has resulted in an abundance of research on the content of terrorist messages, but there has been little to no empirical research on how individuals interpret and act upon the messages to which they are exposed. As a result, terrorism researchers have produced no evidence to show how different types of individuals would react to different terrorist messages. This has led to a kind of understanding that terrorist messages are effective (or not) in and of themselves. However, communication science shows us that this is not the case. Evidence from communication studies shows us that individual-difference variables

(e.g., narcissism, psychopathy, sensation-seeking) affect how a message is interpreted and assimilated.

The failure of the terrorism studies community to recognize the importance of individual-difference variables in how message recipients interpret terrorist messages is a critical gap in our understanding of how individuals come to adopt beliefs, attitudes, or intentions consistent with terrorist ideologies. To redress this gap in our knowledge, this project features an empirical investigation into how certain individual-difference variables (i.e., narcissism, Machiavellianism, subclinical psychopathy, everyday sadism) interact with a critical message-level variable (i.e., message vividness) to produce a persuasive effect. This will represent a first attempt within terrorism research to apply common knowledge regarding the moderating effects of personality traits on message persuasiveness.

Specifically, we will be exposing participants (of different levels of narcissism, Machiavellianism, subclinical psychopathy, and everyday sadism) to one of several terrorist narrative stimuli of varying degrees of vividness. Data collection will begin in the Summer of 2017, allowing for the presentation of preliminary results to describe the nature of the interaction between these “dark” personality traits and different types of terrorist narrative propaganda.

12:45-1:45 pm: Lunch

1:45-3:15 pm: Panel Session 3

1. Organizing Terrorism

Michael Kenney (University of Pittsburgh) – “A Community of True Believers: Learning as Process among ‘the Emigrants’”

This paper applies the concept of “communities of practice” to *al-Muhajiroun* (‘the Emigrants’), an outlawed activist network that seeks to create an Islamic caliphate in Britain and the West through activism and proselytizing. Responding to recent studies on terrorism learning and adaptation, the author argues that focusing analysis solely on the outputs of learning is unsatisfactory. Instead scholars should analyze learning as a process and seek to unpack the causal mechanisms behind this process. To support his analysis, the author draws on extensive field work, including interviews and ethnographic observation. Newcomers to *al-Muhajiroun* learn the community’s norms and practices through repeated interactions with more experienced activists. These interactions take place in study circles and through companionship. Activists also learn by doing, preaching the Emigrants’ Salafi-Islamist ideology at da’wah stalls and protesting against the West’s “war on Islam” at demonstrations. The more they do, the better they become at performing the network’s high-risk activism, and the more deeply committed they become to its community of practice. Far from allowing activists to adapt seamlessly to all challenges, however, *al-Muhajiroun*’s dogmatic community of practice creates its own problems, hindering its ability to innovate, expand, and thrive in an increasingly hostile environment.

Gina Scott Ligon, Michael Logan, Scott Windisch, & Laramie Sproles (University of Nebraska Omaha) – “An Organizational Approach to Terrorism: When and How VEO Leadership Matters”

Surprisingly, leadership theory has seldom been applied to understand some of the most influential leaders—those of violent extremist organizations, or VEOs. However, we argue that the application of industrial and organizational psychology and of leadership theory in particular can aid in understanding the complex nature of how these individuals can influence social movements and the organizations charged with implementing them to enact mass casualty violence and lethality. We applied Mumford’s (2006) Charismatic, Ideological, and Pragmatic (CIP) model of leadership to examine 132 terrorist leaders across 80 unique VEOs whose height of power ranged between 1970-present. For our outcome variables, attacks sampled in University of Maryland’s Global Terrorism Database were content coded for destruction to people, process, property, and symbols of the outgroup. In addition, we identified an index of malevolent innovation, drawing from organizational creativity literature. Using hierarchical linear modeling, our findings indicated that Charismatic leaders were responsible for the most attacks to civilians and soft targets in general, while Ideological leaders attacked symbols, processes, and property nearly as often as they attacked people. Finally, Pragmatic leaders injured just as many people per attack as other types of leaders, but kill far less. Our findings have implications for leader profiling, as well as understanding emergent threats and capabilities of terrorist groups based on who leads them.

Rosalind Searle & Charise Rice (Coventry University) – “Creating your own ticking time bomb? The role of employee experience of organisational change in predicting insider threat behavior”

Across the globe, organisations are experiencing significant change as a result of economic pressures and innovation demands, geopolitical developments, and social change. Work is an important and often central part of individual identity (Searle, et al., in press). Therefore significant change within an organisation can leave employees feeling vulnerable, undermined, and critically, distrustful of management and the overall organisation (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003). At the same time, organisations may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation during periods of uncertainty and change when resources are restricted or roles in flux (Boonstra, 2004). To date relatively little attention has considered how employee experiences of organisational change might impact on the development of the most serious of counterproductive work behaviour (CWB), insider threat activity. CWBs are actions which threaten the effectiveness or harm the safety of an employer and its stakeholders. They can develop from small scale discretions (e.g. time wasting or knowledge hiding) into serious insider threat activities (e.g. destroying systems or divulging confidential information to malicious others). Thus insider threat must be considered within a context of threat to wider publics and national security, particularly given the heightened threat posed by radicalisation, increasing extremist sentiment and terrorist groups whose narratives include infiltrating organisations important to the national infrastructure (BaMaung et al., 2017). Developments in organisational change research show it can create trust issues that are then central for CWB (Kelloway et al. 2010; Fox et al. 2012), and we contend these are strongly linked to an individual’s potential to become an insider threat. Through a mixed method design - critical incident interviews, online employee surveys and

analysis of HR documentation – with a high stakes defence engineering organisation undergoing considerable change, this paper will present preliminary findings from a study of CWB and insider threat. We incorporate research dichotomising the cognitions and emotions between trust and distrust (Searle et al., 2016), and studies on contract breach and revenge (Restubog et al., 2015) to produce a conceptual model. The model identifies three distinct elements: individual, social and organisational level antecedents that appear important in the formation of insider threat behaviours. We then consider four processes, including individual affect and cognitive dimensions pertaining to the organisational change, and two critical social processes – those concerned with line managers and those focused on social relationships. Importantly, we demonstrate that insider threat does not occur solely due to the recruitment of deviant or malicious individuals but that significant negative organisational experiences can coalesce to form the individual and social conditions in which organisational deviance becomes an active means of revenge (Aquino et al., 2006). We outline how organisations can better detect and mitigate against such insider threat outcomes and propose a new ‘distrust agenda’ for the security and counterterrorism communities.

2. CVE in Time and Place

Patrick Stahl & Julia Wilton (New York University) – “The Future of Countering Violent Extremism: An Analysis of Current Programming in Jordan”

Jordan has long been viewed as a stalwart state in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region. In recent years, however, Jordan has experienced the problematic symptoms of the long-standing pressures exerted upon it by regional instability, the Syrian refugee crisis that followed, and its already existent domestic challenges. As a result, Jordan began combatting terrorism and extremist ideology, both at home and throughout the MENA region. Their effort to confront violent extremism is particularly necessary now, as one leader of Al Qaeda in Jordan recently warned, “if Jordan falls, the whole of the region goes with it.”¹

This is the first primary research to provide an overview and insight into the CVE programming present in Jordan. The findings of this research are based on six weeks of fieldwork in in Amman, Jordan, resulting in 36 interviews with 38 interviewees. The purpose of this research is to provide both the Jordanian government and stakeholders on the ground and around the world with a better understanding of what is currently being done and what still needs to be done with regards to CVE. This will be achieved by identifying current trends in radicalization drivers, the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps of current CVE programming, as well as an analysis of the structural impediments that exist in the Jordanian context. By shining a light on these areas, this research intends to aid stakeholders on the ground in improving their current and future CVE programming by helping them to establish better coordination amongst themselves, and by highlighting central issues that are experienced by all stakeholders in the Jordanian context. This research does not just speak to CVE programming in Jordan, however – it

¹Milton-Edwards, Beverley. *Jordan's troubles in its own backyard*. 22 February 2017. 24 March 2017.
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/02/22/jordans-troubles-in-its-own-backyard/?utm_campaign=Brookings+Brief&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=43368019>.

illustrates a larger trend in the tensions that exist between theory and practice in the implementation of CVE worldwide, drawing attention to the cross-cutting challenges faced by stakeholders everywhere.

Anne Marie Balbi (Curtin University) – “CVE- Local Resilience comparing Bali to Norway”

As the field of counter-terrorism (CT) strategies has embraced more preventative measures, as opposed to reactionary, countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts have spread globally. The concept of CVE is now an acknowledged part of a successful counterterrorism strategy focussing on elements such as *early intervention*, *counter-messaging* of terrorist propaganda and *local resilience* to violent extremism. However, while the practise-led CVE sphere of CT is currently engaging NGOs and civil society in an effort to roll out various CVE-programs, the academic body of knowledge on the field of CVE is still scarce in empirical and scholarly research.

One particular under researched sub-field of CVE is the concept of *local resilience*. While often identified as a key component of CVE measures, there currently exists little common understanding of what the term actually constitutes. In an effort to add to the existing body of knowledge, this paper explores the notion of local resilience to terrorism and more specifically how it is expressed in the aftermath of terror attacks. Using the case studies of the Bali bombings and the Norway terror attacks, the paper explores different concepts of local resilience and how it is empirically expressed in the social construction of contested public spaces such as the Sari nightclub site and those of Utoya/Oslo. The objective is to grasp how resistance to terrorism takes shape and emerges organically in the way local stakeholders engage with these sites in the aftermath of the attacks as well as the meaning-making practice of terrorism and counter-terrorism in an attempt to shed light on how this resistance and local resilience could inform the current field of soft counter-terrorism strategies.

Christine Neudecker (Simon Fraser University) – “CVE Programs and Initiatives Through the Ages: A snapshot of the past, present, and future”

We have reached the stage now where there are several countering violent extremism (CVE) programs and initiatives in existence. Each program leaves a unique imprint, making it possible to trace these efforts through the ages. Some impressions made by these efforts have been marked – good or bad, while others have been largely insignificant. This study is based on a database created by examining 50 existing or previously existing CVE programs/initiatives. Information drawn from these programs is used to develop a timeline of where CVE efforts have gone, where they are now, and provides an idea of where they might be going. It is the hope of this study to inform and improve the next generation CVE programming.

3. Explaining Domestic Terrorism

David Corliss (Peace-Work) – “Statistical Reproducibility in Terrorism Research”

In recent years, reproducibility has become an important issue in statistical research. The

increasing awareness of an inability of subsequent researchers, in many cases, to reproduce the results of published analytic research led the American Statistical Association in January 2017 to publish “Recommendations to Funding Agencies for Supporting Reproducible Research”. This paper reviews the ASA’s recommendations, presenting working examples of their application to terrorism research. Application of these practices and methods will support greater reproducibility, more reliable research, and improved quality of findings and directions arising from terrorism research. As an example, a new statistical model investigating a possible link between prominent hate speech in social media and subsequent acts of domestic terrorism against individuals targeted in the speech is examined.

Celinet Duran (CUNY-John Jay), Stephen Chermak, William Parkin – “Threats from the Left: A Multivariate Analysis of Environmental and Animal Rights Extremism”

This study examines whether a Routine Activities Theory (RAT) approach can account for county level variation of incidents committed by environmental and animal rights extremists. We empirically test RAT within the context of extremist violence as it applies to environmental and animal rights extremism, specifically for arsons and bombings committed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). Our hypotheses seek to explain the differences between counties that experienced an ELF/ALF event versus those that did not. Using data from the Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), the preliminary results from the multivariate analyses indicate partial support for our hypotheses regarding RAT, showing that RAT provides a better theoretical fit for explaining environmental and animal rights extremism over other theories.

Ari Fodeman (Georgia State University) – “Safety and Danger Valves: Functional Displacement in American Anti-Abortion Terrorism”

Anti-abortion extremism is difficult to explain: The peaks and valleys are complex, the activities are diverse, and the data are few or incomplete. Major theories of political violence that can guide analysis are the “safety valve”, “general strain” and “substitution” theories. According to these theories, restriction or frustration of peaceful political protest increases political violence. The substitution or safety valve account rests on evidence of reciprocal antagonism or de-escalation between protestors and the government. However, anti-abortion data do not lend itself well to analysis: anti-abortion extremism comes in a variety of forms which (A) occur in dramatically different amounts (e.g. 14 arsons in 1995 versus over 100 death threats), (B) rise and fall at different times (e.g. bombing and arson peaked in the 1990s while trespassing peaked in the 2000s), and (C) for some types occur so infrequently as to be statistically insignificant (e.g. only 8 murders over the course of 16 years occurring only within 4 individual years; National Abortion Federation or NAF, 2014). Furthermore, key resources, such as the NAF, no longer publicly provide all of the data, especially data before the mid-1990s and/or of specific types of protest. Qualitatively combining the available data, this article presents a relationship between all types of protest and relevant factors studied in previous research. It applies the aforementioned theories to the history of anti-abortion protest. This article concludes that political frustrations and victories for the anti-abortion movement increased and decreased anti-abortion extremism, respectively, as predicted by the theories.

4. Crafting CT Policy

Humera Khan (UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate) “Emerging Trends & The Global Research Network”

This session will provide an overview of the work of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN CTED), including assessments, technical expertise, trends analysis and research. The role of the “Counter-Terrorism Global Research Network” and current threat trends will especially be examined.

Timothy Weldon (University of St. Francis) – “Creative Vigilance”

“Our new norm is: What’s next? And that’s how it shouldn’t be.”

Ethel McGuire, former FBI Agent and now Senior Official, Los Angeles World Airports

The above incisiveness speaks to one of the greatest challenges presented by 21st century terrorism: managing complexity. With the number of non-state actors, state-sponsors, varying ideologies, increasingly varied terrorist tactics, sophisticated and otherwise, the reality of contemporary terrorism tends to confound and overwhelm. We can trace the evidence of this back at least to the events of 9/11 and the powerful admonishment of the 2004 paper presented in its wake, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*:

The most important failure was one of imagination. We do not believe leaders understood the gravity of the threat.

The complexity of contemporary terrorism calls for a response, exacting but creative, to render it comprehensible and manageable, short—and long—term. As good management begins with good strategy, and as the imagination in exercise is often the missing integer to counterterrorism-focused strategy, my presentation will discuss an efficacy-based strategy informed by the needed creativity the imagination can provide.

In outline, I will discuss the merits of the imagination and its applications in response to terrorism. From a philosophical perspective, I will begin with a working definition of the imagination, then the exigent situation that calls for its exercise, and the open-ended possibilities for its application. From a perspective of praxis, I will outline and discuss real-world, trending uses of the imagination in counterterrorism, public and private sector, e.g., strategy-enhancing disambiguation or “red teaming” exercises, super forecasting and trend-spotting, counter messaging in social media, creative advances in commerce and advertisement, creative efforts in education, law enforcement, diplomacy, rehabilitation or de-radicalization programs, and so on.

With an aim towards enhancing present and future counterterrorism efforts, I will end with an informed perspective on the success of more creative counterterrorism strategies.

Mina Chang (CEO, Linking the World) – “How We Can Use 'Peace Data' To Predict and Counter Violent Extremism”

The nexus of technology, data driven solutions, analytics, and innovative narratives can provide an insight into which communities are susceptible to radicalization, and how those community members can be off-ramped prior to mobilization and violent action.

3:15-3:30 pm: Coffee

3:30-5:00 pm: Panel Session 4

1. Strategies and Dangers of Terrorism

William Topich (Pulaski Academy) – “The Sideshow Becomes The Main Stage: Problems and Prospects in U.S. Efforts To Combat Terrorism In Pakistan”

The title of my proposal paper for the 2017 Society of Terrorism Research Conference in New York City is “The Sideshow Becomes The Main Stage: Problems and Prospects in U.S. Efforts to Combat Terrorism in Pakistan.” In the post-911 period the United States has struggled with how to navigate the increasingly troubled relations with Pakistan. As a frontline state in the War on Terror, Pakistan continues to be of vital importance for United States counterterrorism operations. As the nature of the terror threat has been altered Pakistan has shifted from the sideshow of the Afghanistan conflict to potentially the centerpiece of counterterrorism efforts.

This paper will explore efforts by the Pakistani government along with its ally the United States, to counter the growing threat from the Pakistani Taliban (TTP). In addition the increasing problem of sectarian violence in Pakistan and how to combat this will be analyzed. Finally the proliferation of terrorist activities from the traditional base of the tribal regions of Waziristan and FATA to the urban areas such as Karachi and Lahore will be explored. Combined these trends constitute a significant shift in the strategy and tactics of terroristic elements within Pakistan.

The final segment of this paper will look at possible policy options for the Pakistani government and how the U.S. can help facilitate the needed shifts in order to stabilize and secure this volatile nuclear state.

Joshua Lipowsky (Counter Extremism Project) – “The Dangers of Hezbollah’s Influence Over Lebanon”

Since its origins in the early 1980s as a guerilla group fighting against Israel, Hezbollah has since gained enormous influence across all major sectors of Lebanese society. Despite international agreements and U.N. resolutions, Hezbollah has integrated itself in Lebanon’s governmental, military, economic, academic, and non-profit/social services sectors.

Hezbollah now wields tremendous sway over the direction and stability of the Lebanese government. This was most apparent following the 2016 election of Hezbollah ally Michel Aoun as Lebanon’s president, after Hezbollah’s political party stalled the election of a new president for two years. Further demonstrating the danger his political alliance with Hezbollah represents, Aoun has heralded the terror group as the first line of Lebanon’s border defense and promised Lebanese military support to Hezbollah in the next war against Israel.

To maintain its support, Hezbollah has integrated itself into Lebanon’s educational,

social, and economic sectors. Hezbollah schools indoctrinate Lebanese youth while Lebanese banks and businesses openly deal with Hezbollah fighters and supporters. Hezbollah has created its own network of social services, providing health care, utilities, groceries, and construction. Further, Hezbollah's military entanglements in Syria and with Israel risk drawing all of Lebanon into regional conflicts. And though the United Nations has tasked Lebanon's military with supervising Hezbollah's disarmament, Hezbollah has instead built its military presence in Lebanon under the watchful gaze of the Lebanese army.

Hezbollah's integration into the Lebanese state allows it to siphon off resources for its own use while ultimately remaining unaccountable to the Lebanese government. Further, because of global sanctions, Lebanese hospitals, charities, and other businesses linked to Hezbollah or its members risk devastating economic sanctions. International aid organizations wary of inviting sanctions upon themselves must also navigate around Hezbollah when partnering with local Lebanese organizations.

This infiltration of every major sector in Lebanon presents an ongoing danger not just to Lebanon's neighbors, but to the Lebanese people and the state itself.

Burcu Yigiter (University College London) – “How viable the renowned strategies of terrorist groups and, How to identify them”

Strategies and goals are important concepts to understand the decision-making behaviour of terrorist groups, as well as to define terrorism. Kydd & Walter's frequently cited article (2006), 'The Strategies of Terrorism', is a valuable source that identifies specific strategies of terrorist organizations. In their article, five terrorist strategies are explored: attrition, intimidation, provocation, outbidding and spoiling.

Kydd & Walter's strategies, although widely covered in the literature, haven't been accompanied by empirical evidence to test whether they are consistent with the recent cases. This study shows that the authors' strategies are observed in many cases and are therefore viable. On the other hand, it also shows that their strategies are not the only ones and there are other strategies, which are explored in the literature and observed within the cases analysed in this research. Moreover, this study also exhibits attributes to every strategy in order to identify them better. In fact, differentiating these strategies is problematic considering the few example cases that Kydd & Walter provided. Therefore, this paper examines “how viable and sufficient the strategies defined in Kydd & Walter's 2006 article and how can we practically identify them in the recent terrorist attacks.”

This study offers three contributions to the literature:

- (1) exploring strategies that are not analysed in Kydd & Walter's article but exist in the literature and observed in the case research like “advertisement” and “territory/resource gain”;
- (2) providing up-to-date cases in which these strategies and goals are observed and assess their applicability;
- (3) exhibit attributes that could be used to identify and differentiate these strategies;
- (4) suggest possible counter-strategies.

To examine these questions, the study observes cases of recent terrorist attacks that caused the highest number of deaths between 2010 and 2016. The findings yield “attrition”, “outbidding”, “spoiling” and “intimidation” strategies explained by Kydd & Walter are viable,

because they are observed in many of the recent terrorist attacks, while strategy of “provocation” seems to be not as viable as others. These findings also explored two more strategies other than Kydd & Walter’s, which are “advertisement” and “territory/resource claim”.

2. Promoting & Explaining Resilience: the Role of Protective Factors

Kurt Braddock (The Pennsylvania State University) – “Vaccinating against Hate: Communicative Inoculation as Proactive Intervention against Violent Extremism”

In recent years, the problem of violent extremism has come to the fore as a concerning, sometimes deadly phenomenon. The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been effective in its ability to induce foreigners to travel to the Middle East to fight for the sake of the group’s ideology. “Lone wolves” have carried out lethal attacks in the heart of Europe, killing scores in Nice, Brussels, and Paris. White nationalists in the United States have been emboldened, leading to the emergence of a troubling number of right-wing extremist organizations. The ongoing presence of these threats demands continuous effort to confront them.

For their part, terrorism researchers, psychologists, and other social scientists have sought to identify and refine methods for keeping individuals from engaging in terrorism. One approach involves preventing the assimilation of beliefs and attitudes consistent with an ideology that promotes the use of violence against civilians. Although most research on preventing the adoption of such ideologies has been performed by researchers in the fields of psychology, political science, and criminology, the rapid expansion and increasing sophistication of extremist groups’ communicative efforts to attract potential new members (particularly via the Internet) has prompted communication researchers to join the fray. These researchers have begun to explore different types of strategic communication for the purpose of *counter-radicalization*—a process whereby targets are persuaded to argue against or dismiss messages intended to promote the adoption of extremist beliefs and attitudes. Although this line of research was initially speculative, it has come to rely on validated communication theories and models (e.g., narrative persuasion, media effects, psychological reactance).

Despite the growth in theory-based work on counter-radicalization, the use of *communicative inoculation* (i.e., the explicit forewarning of impending attacks to an individual’s established beliefs and attitudes, coupled with preemptive refutations to those attacks) has not been tested as a means of preventing the assimilation of beliefs and attitudes consistent with extremist groups’ messages. This oversight represents a thus-far missed opportunity, given the time-tested efficacy of inoculation for conferring resistance to persuasion in a wide array of domains. This study is a preliminary attempt to redress this oversight and determine the effectiveness of communicative inoculation as a viable tool for counter-radicalization.

Specifically, to test the effectiveness of communicative inoculation for conferring resistance to persuasion via extremist groups’ messages, I will perform a controlled experiment in which some individuals will receive an inoculation pre-treatment before being exposed to different types of extremist propaganda; other participants will receive no treatment. Through this experimental design, it will be possible to determine whether inoculation messages (a) effectively protect against persuasion via extremist messages, and (b) confer resistance to persuasion across messages produced by groups of different ideologies. This presentation will

also discuss a second iteration of this study which is to be undertaken in the next few months. In this replication, the experimental design is to be applied in real-world populations at risk for violent radicalization.

Tore Bjørge & Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik (University of Oslo) – “Right-Wing Extremists and anti-Islam Activists in Norway: Constraints Against Violence”

Given the abundance of violent ideologies and rhetoric among different strands of right-wing extremism and anti-Islamism in Norway, most activists never engage in actual violence and most of them distance themselves from violent methods. Even some of those with very extreme views have some limits to the kinds of violent acts they would actually commit. What restrains most of these activists from engaging in actual violence?

In this paper we are trying to identify various constraints against violence among right wing extremists and anti-Islam activists in Norway based on recent interviews with 10 individuals from such movements and our previous research on these movements. We start off with a description of the context and recent history of right wing extremism in Norway and Scandinavia. After presenting our interview sample we move on to the statements our interviewees made which throw light on what has restrained them from engaging in violence. Finally we discuss the findings.

Orla Lynch & Carmel Joyce (University College Cork) – “The enigma of reason: how argument and logic undermine de-radicalization”

Efforts to intervene with populations at risk of involvement in terrorism as well as with those individuals who have previously carried out or supported the commission of terrorist acts have been well documented in the literature on radicalization and de-radicalization over the past ten years. A number of interventions are lauded as being the pinnacle of preventative practice and these approaches tend to involve a family systems model, social services intervention, religious and educational mentoring, and cognitive behavioral therapy. The selective application of some or all of these interventions is seen in state sponsored programmes, grass roots services offered by NGOs as well as in prison and probation programmes delivered locally but mandated nationally. Much has been written about how such interventions may assist in preventing radicalization as well as preventing further violence amongst those who have already participated in terrorism; however the assumption inherent in these interventions, all of which are predominantly run of the mill best practice probation interventions, is that the focus for change is the individual or the family – thereby assuming that individual and/or family dynamics demonstrate a significant effect size on what ultimately emerges as terrorist behavior. While there also exists community based programmes that focus on deradicalisation/desistance/disengagement from terrorism, on the whole, the more *serious* cases tend to be dealt with at the individual level. In this paper I will address both the assumption that intervention can successfully be conducted at the personal and interpersonal level and the reality of how transnational terrorism might impact on that assumption. Finally, drawing on the work of Mercier and Sperber (2017) I will provide a theoretical framework for understanding how and why individuals who are drawn to terrorism rely on a well structured, logical reasoning

approach and how this undermines the assumptions inherent in current approaches to radicalization/de-radicalisation.

3. Propaganda, Influence, and Coercion: Terrorist Communications and Countermeasures

Levi West (Charles Sturt University) – “Violence, communication, and technology: terrorism and the exercise of convergent power”

The current focus on Islamic State’s use of social media platforms has been predominantly ahistorical and as such has viewed this phenomenon as uniquely innovative, absent of comparable historical occurrences. Compounding this shortcoming, there have been only limited contributions to the furtherance of conceptual frameworks for understanding the utilisation of communication by terrorist organisations, and the convergence of this use with violence and technology for the purposes of exercising power. This paper proposes a framework that seeks to enable analysis of the broader historical phenomena of terrorist communications, and their convergence with information technology, technologies of violence, and the development and deployment of narratives, in the service of exercising power. In developing this framework, the paper focuses on two historical examples and one contemporary example of the use of emergent communications technology by terrorist entities, their deployment of innovative forms of violence, and the convergence of these with a broader social and political milieu that informs their leveraging of a contextually relevant ideology and in turn, deployment of a strong narrative. The convergence of these elements of power, which in the absence of their fusion would have minimal capacity to coerce or influence, is a key mechanism by which terrorist entities are able to exercise power, despite their asymmetrically weak power position. Understanding the mechanisms by which terrorist entities are able to coerce and influence their adversaries through mechanisms other than direct kinetic activity is central to developing a holistic understanding of the ways in which terrorist entities are able to shape national and international security policies and agendas. The framework will be applied to three examples, namely the component of the anarchist wave of terrorism that took place in the United States; the Palestinian Liberation Organisation; and the Islamic State. These three examples will demonstrate the manner by which the framework explains the exercise of power by terrorist entities.

Haroro Ingram (Australian National University) – “The charismatic appeal of Anwar Al-Awlaki: Understanding & confronting the Pied Pipers of Jihad”

Anwar Al-Awlaki has had an extraordinary influence on militant Islamism in the West, an influence which has seemingly increased since his death in 2011. While much has been written about Al-Awlaki, few studies have used charismatic leadership theory to understand his appeal. Addressing that gap, this paper argues that Al-Awlaki’s charismatic appeal is rooted in a complex fusion of not only his image and message but the transformative charisma phenomenon (i.e. the tendency for militant Islamist charismatic leaders to emerge by building on the charismatic capital of predecessors). What emerges is that Al-Awlaki’s appeal amongst supporters in the West arises from a powerful mix of inspirational and reflective qualities that simultaneously exacerbate his supporters’ perceptions of crisis and offers a solution to them. Based on this

analysis, the study then presents a framework for confronting the appeal of charismatic figures, such as Al-Awlaki, that is designed to inform both policy makers and CVE practitioners.

Jamie Brown – “The Media and the Messengers: Criminal Justice and the Information Warfare Dimensions of Terrorism”

The accessibility of modern communication networks has enabled small groups of loosely-connected terrorist actors to dramatically impose themselves upon public and political discourse. By calibrating the communicative effects of their violent activities, notorious terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS have adopted relatively sophisticated information warfare techniques, calling for an “information jihad” against their adversaries which simultaneously functions as a mechanism for the radicalisation and recruitment of sympathisers. As the international and regional legal framework has evolved and expanded in recent years, European jurisdictions have struggled to adequately adapt to the ever-changing nature of transnational terrorism and newfound ways to weaponise information through various internet-based platforms. By reference to relevant doctrines of information warfare, this paper helps clarify the nexus between the physical and communicative aspects of terrorism in order to enhance the criminal justice approach to information warfare strategies used by terrorist groups.

By targeting specific persons or infrastructure with symbolic significance, acts of terrorist violence, such as ISIS’ hostage execution videos or certain recent European attacks, are often designed and carried out with an ultimate strategic purpose beyond the immediate victims. Similar to how many features of terrorism can be compared to traditional means and methods of warfare during armed conflict, the contemporary understanding of information warfare provides a multifaceted framework in which to analyse how certain extremist non-state actors plan their operations with the intent to manipulate, distort or disrupt the emotions, perceptions and behaviour of adversaries, populations, states and the international community. Information warfare doctrines focus on the effect these actions have on several dimensions: the underlying act of violence in the physical dimension is accompanied by (or simply constitutes) a message which relies on the informational dimension, the “media”, as a means of influencing the targets’ minds in the cognitive/psychological dimension. Accordingly, the terrorists’ objective to spread fear or radicalise is effectuated by associated individuals who play a substantial role in propagating and/or amplifying the terrorists’ message. Like a force multiplier, these accomplices deploy a variety of techniques and methods to ensure that the terrorist act has the desired cognitive effects upon the target audiences.

For the purposes of investigation and prosecution, it is paramount to establish a connection between physical acts of terrorist violence, members of terrorist groups, and those who play a supporting role in coordinating or facilitating the spread of terror. These activities touch upon a range of prohibited behaviours by increasingly complex anti-terrorism laws across Europe, presenting many practical and legal issues. Integrating aspects of information warfare doctrine into counter-terrorism and criminal justice approaches can help to discern the role, function and intention of individuals who directly or indirectly participate in terror-related activities in the informational and cognitive dimensions. Mindful of the need to not interfere with legitimate online activity and protect the right to freedom of expression, the information warfare framework can therefore help distinguish and contextualise lawful conduct from terrorist

offences by connecting certain activities to the direct tactical goals and/or broader strategic objectives of terrorist actors.

4. Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Context

Joshua Regan (University of New Haven) – “Understanding Abu Sayyaf from a Quantitative Lens”

Terrorism is an international security concern. This study will direct its attention towards one particular terrorist group, Abu Sayyaf (ASG). The purpose of this research is to provide an in-depth analysis of ASG. To achieve that, a variety of geographic, economic, and political indicators will be evaluated over a longitudinal period of twenty-two years (1994-2015). Using multivariate regression techniques, this researcher will determine which indicators are positively associated with reported ASG attacks. Policy implications will be discussed.

Anna Cornelia Beyer (University of Hull) – “How to rebuild Syria long-term”

A Marshall Plan is needed – as soon as the violence really has stopped sufficiently – to rebuild the country, as well as other countries in the region. A Marshall Plan is a programme of intensive aid and reconstruction, such as was applied to Germany after the Second World War. It would help stabilise the country and would even help with the flow of refugees from Syria towards Europe. Prosperity can bring peace, as we also know from the literature on civil wars. Civil wars, such as we have seen in Syria, usually happen in countries below a certain developmental level. This does not mean that we should help the Islamic State more, as long as they are fighting, with foreign aid. But it means to build up the rest of Syria, and help even the Islamic State as soon as they stop fighting and start complying with human rights and other demands. Such a Marshall Plan could be a joint project between the Western powers, and powers such as China, Russia, and Brazil. It should contain intensive economic reconstruction aid in terms of infrastructure creation, finance and investment, job creation, education, good governance, but also other aspects of support, such as might be fulfilled by first NGOs and later by good governance: including a welfare state comprising social services, medical and mental health services, welfare services, disability services etc.

Secondly, research seems to indicate that, for example, an increase in mental health conditions – such as depression, but also others – in any country probably increase in war and after war and can possibly predict the outbreak of (renewed) conflict. Hence, mental health should be taken seriously (but not as dogma) in addition to physical health in Syria and other post-war countries. It would be a normal occurrence of certain mental health conditions to increase after the experience of war. Also, it would be impossible, and not sufficient, to address such a development, i.e. an increase in mental health problems, with medication alone. While traditional medications might be necessary for and wanted by some people, they should always remain a choice. Alternative options also should be offered (as soon as possible), as the experience in the West has shown that a reliance on drugs solely is often insufficient to treat mental illness. While a cessation of violence and a process of economic recovery, including full

employment as soon as in any way possible, would be probably help relieve mental distress, additional options could possibly be considered. They could include therapeutic services, alternative and new medical and therapeutic options that are available or becoming available in the West, sufficient supply with healthy nutrition that is high in nutrients (i.e. fresh produce) as this has also been shown to play an important role in recovery from mental illness, social facilities of all sorts to recreate communities: from community and recreation centres, churches (i.e. mosques), education facilities, libraries, to cinemas, to sports clubs, etc., free media and, importantly, as wide as possible access to the internet. Other options might be thought about or demanded by the populations. Vitamins and other supplements are recommended as add on to medication. Finally, mental health should not become an obsession replacing other (re)development needs.

5:00-6:00 pm: Keynote Address by James Piazza (The Pennsylvania State University)

“Illiberal Democracy and the Consequences for Terrorism”

Some scholars, commentators and journalists worry that after dramatically increasing worldwide from the 1970s to the 1990s, democratic rule has now come under strain. Regimes with democratically elected leaders, such as Turkey, Russia, the Philippines and Venezuela, increasingly engage in illiberal behaviors such as targeted repression of political opponents, minority groups and the press while extremist populist politicians and political parties fare well at the polls in many Western democracies. Might the rise in illiberal democratic rule prompt more political violence and terrorism? In this presentation, I address this question by surveying published and unpublished research on regime types, regime behaviors, political attitudes and terrorism.

6:00-8:00 pm: Reception

Day 2: August 15th

8:30-9:00 am: Check-in & Coffee

9:00-10:30 am: Panel Session 5

1. Roundtable: Can Education Counter Violent Religious Extremism?

Ratna Ghosh (McGill University), Wing Yu Alice Chan (McGill University), Ashley Manuel (McGill University), Maihemuti Dilimulati (McGill University) - "How can the intelligence community, policymakers, and practitioners anticipate and prepare for these changes especially when confronted with limited resources?"

Violent religious extremism is a global concern today. As governments prepare their counter-terrorism policies, many focus solely on reactive measures such as military action and surveillance measures – *hard power* – that are responsive to individuals who are already radicalized. This paper argues that education should be incorporated into such policies as a preventive measure that not only makes students resilient citizens but can also address the psychological, emotional and intellectual appeal of narratives – *soft power* – that terrorists purport. In doing so, states can counter soft power with the use of soft power in a concerted effort among government departments, social institutions and communities. This Roundtable will be interactive and discuss the paradoxical role of education in which societies use it to support extremist ideologies on the one hand, and on the other hand education's potential in countering violent extremism. It will offer as well as seek specific pedagogical recommendations for educational systems to consider.

2. Terrorist Tactics and Targeting

Zoe Marchment, Paul Gill, Noemie Bouhana (University College London) – "Lone actor terrorist target selection: an analysis of residence-to-attack journeys"

Although there has recently been a considerable increase in research into lone actor terrorism, one of the main areas that remains understudied is that of target selection. The lack of empirically driven studies that can guide prevention measures is a notable oversight. This paper applies methods from environmental criminology to examine the residence-to-attack journeys of 122 lone terrorist acts in the US and Europe. The distance decay effect was evident, and significant differences were found between subgroups. Individuals were more likely to travel further if a) they were in the US, b) they had links to a wider network, c) they had a single-issue ideology, d) they attacked an iconic target, e) they attacked a symbolic building, or f) they used a bomb as their main weapon. A few case studies are discussed which highlight a need to conduct further research that considers the whole nodal network of an individual. The findings suggest that distance can be put forward as a constraining factor on lone actor target selection and

provide support for the notion that the spatial decision making of terrorists is similar to traditional criminals.

Jeff Gruenewald (Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis), Grant Drawve (University of Arkansas), Brent Smith (University of Arkansas) – “An Analysis of Successful and Unsuccessful Terrorist Events in the U.S.”

While terrorism research has increased dramatically since the 9-11 terrorist attacks, there has been less scholarly attention on failed and foiled terrorist plots. A more nuanced understanding of how amalgamations of offender-, victim-, and situational-level factors may lead to varying terrorist outcomes is useful for informing counterterrorism policies and programs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify similarities and differences in situated opportunities for committing acts of terrorism across successful and unsuccessful event types. Drawing from environmental criminology and situated crime prevention theories, we examine how the nature of preparatory and planning activities, group structures and ideologies, levels of attack sophistication, nature of weapon use, and target attributes combine to shape terrorist outcomes. To guide our study, we ask: *Which combinations of offender-, victim-, and situational-level factors are most likely to result in successful and unsuccessful outcomes?* Data on “officially designated” federal terrorism cases come from the American Terrorism Study (ATS), and were collected as part of a series of studies funded by the National Institute of Justice to examine pre-incident indicators of terrorist threats. Based on these data, a series of quantitative comparative analyses are conducted. Findings from this study reveal both similarities and key differences in combinations of terrorist, target, and situational factors across successful and unsuccessful outcomes. Implications for how analysts and investigators can more effectively intervene and prevent terrorism in the U.S. are discussed.

Marissa Mandala (CUNY- John Jay) – “Assassination as a terrorist tactic: a global analysis”

This study investigates what social, political, and economic conditions are associated with terrorist assassinations, and whether these conditions differ for suicide attacks. A series of negative binomial regressions are conducted across four two-year periods: 1995–1996, 2000–2001, 2005–2006 and 2010–2011. The dependent variables represent the count of total terrorist assassinations and suicide attacks taking place in countries worldwide. Independent variables measuring country-level conditions from various sources are used. Both assassinations and suicide attacks were found to be associated with some similar indicators. Certain indicators were uniquely associated with either assassinations or suicide attacks. Across most periods, countries that respect physical integrity rights experienced fewer assassinations and suicide attacks. During one period, politically stable countries experienced fewer assassinations and suicide attacks, while countries with a higher GDP per capita encountered more assassinations and suicide attacks. Across most periods, countries with more religious diversity experienced fewer assassinations, while countries with a high incidence of major episodes of political violence were associated with more assassinations. During one period, countries with more internally displaced persons experienced fewer assassinations, and more refugees originating from a country were related to more suicide attacks. Findings suggest that different terrorist tactics may stem from different underlying problems.

3. Policing Terrorism

Colin Atkinson (University of the West of Scotland) – “Now that you mention it, museums probably are a target’: museums, terrorism and securitisation in the United Kingdom”

A common thread in target selection of contemporary terrorism in Western Europe and beyond has been the focus on crowded places, which provide the opportunity for terrorists to inflict mass casualties. Terrorists have also selected targets for symbolic reasons – including the values, ideologies and beliefs that such targets are understood to represent – in order to amplify the subsequent communicative value of an attack. This paper aims to bring knowledge of terrorism and terrorist targeting to bear upon the contemporary museum and the issue of ‘museum security’.

Recent terrorist attacks and propaganda have indicated the interest of terrorists in the contemporary museum. However, existing academic research on terrorism and museums has focussed principally upon the destruction of cultural artefacts and the illicit trade in cultural antiquities by terrorists. The potential targeting of museums by terrorists, and the security responses of museums and counter-terrorism agencies to such threats, thus constitute lacunae in current knowledge.

This qualitative research study, based on primary fieldwork with practitioners and professionals in the fields of museums and counter-terrorism in the United Kingdom (UK), re-interprets the contemporary museum as a terrorist target within the single narrative of global jihadism and critically assesses responses to the terrorist threat to museums in the UK. This research suggests that whilst security actors and agencies have become increasingly attuned to recent shifts in the nature of terrorist targeting – including the inclination towards ‘soft targets’, a fixation on mass casualties at crowded places, and an understanding of symbolism as a communicative tool – the museum has not featured as prominently in counter-terrorism efforts in comparison to other, functionally similar locations. Secondly, the research nevertheless notes the ways in which museums have been subject to, and have actively participated in, some securitisation efforts in the context of counter-terrorism. This has included museum officials receiving counter-terrorism security briefings and acting upon counter-terrorism advice from policing and security agencies. The research also highlights how some museums are *self-responsibilising* themselves as security actors in the context of counter-terrorism; taking proactive steps to themselves deliver counter-terrorism training in the museum environment.

This paper refracts recent developments and emerging practices in counter-terrorism security at museums through the lens of securitisation. In doing so it highlights the challenges in ensuring an appropriate balance between effective security measures and maintaining the museum as a civically engaged, participative, open, transparent and accountable institution that promotes cross-cultural learning and dialogue. It is argued that museums should seek to avoid the discriminatory, stigmatising, marginalising, and alienating effects of securitisation that have been apparent on other fields of counter-terrorism security practice, and which have helped to creating and sustain ‘suspect communities’.

The focus of this paper resonates with the central theme of the 2017 conference. Through engaging with the topic of museums, terrorism and securitisation in the UK this paper seeks to raise awareness of emerging terrorist threats and to both assess and inform counter-terrorism responses.

Brian Nussbaum (SUNY-Albany) – “NYPD Counterterrorism: Decade Two”

There has been much written - positive and negative - about the counterterrorism efforts of the New York Police Department in the post 9/11 era. Since 2001, the US's largest police force has embraced counterterrorism as a function and as a priority; and while the decade following 2001 has been reasonably well described and analyzed in the academic literature, more recent developments have not. Both boosters and critics have focused largely on organizational, strategic, and tactical developments in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 attacks (the initial pendulum swing), while neither have paid sufficient attention to the same changes and programs a decade later. This analysis will attempt to update the existing understanding of NYPD's counterterrorism efforts as they have matured, continued across city political regimes, and the pendulum has continued to swing. The goal is to treat this case both as unusual (the city has both a threat profile and size and scope that are unique), and as part of a broader series of concerns (large scale urban counterterrorism).

Jeff Thompson (Law Enforcement/Lipscomb University) – “Terrorism & Hostage Negotiation: Law Enforcement Strategies, Preparation, and Training”

Recent terrorist events across the globe have demonstrated that those committing these acts are not limiting their methods of attack solely by using explosives, firearms, knives and other weapons to create mass and immediate carnage and death. Terrorist propaganda as well as incidents has demonstrated a tactic that includes kidnapping and hostage taking. This includes two-phase attacks that first involve violence and the second phase seeks to take hostages to prolong the incident. This presentation shares how law enforcement agencies need to ensure that their tactics, strategies, and training is being modified and adapted in order to properly respond to these types of specific terrorist incidents. Recent terrorist incidents were analyzed including Dallas, Texas; Dhaka, Bangladesh; Paris, France; Orlando, Florida; and Sydney, Australia. Based on the qualitative analysis of these and other incidents, recommended best practices were developed to assist negotiators (practitioners) prepare for terrorist-related incidents. Further, the recommendations can help inform researchers conduct future studies to measure its impact on both training and actual incidents.

4. Children, Violent Extremism, & Information Warfare

Junko Nozawa (Global Center on Cooperative Security) “Rehabilitating Children Convicted of Violent Extremist Offenses”

Children in conflict-affected environments have always been among the most vulnerable victims, and at times, among the purveyors of violence. As key partners in preventing and countering violent extremism, they have also played various roles in furthering violent extremist ideologies and participating in acts of violence, ranging from inciting propaganda online to carrying out deadly attacks. Terrorist groups have actively targeted youth for recruitment, coercing or inducing them into their ranks, while other children self-radicalize. At a time when the outflow of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) has generally decreased, the number of returning FTFs is increasing. Included among these returnees are minors who, on account of their stage of social

and intellectual development, pose unique challenges with regards to their rehabilitation and reintegration. The international community has a responsibility to uphold the protections enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international juvenile justice standards for youth convicted of terrorism and related activities.

The Global Center, along with the International Center for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague, prepared a policy brief *Rehabilitating Juvenile Violent Extremist Offenders in Detention - Advancing a Juvenile Justice Approach* which was formally adopted by the Global Counterterrorism Forum. It is accompanied by a larger research report to be published in July 2017. Together, the reports advance a juvenile justice approach for authorities responsible for the care of detained juvenile violent extremist offenders (JVEOs), drawing from good practices in international juvenile justice, the emerging body of principles and practices in the detention of adult violent extremist offenders, and the national experiences in demobilizing and reintegrating child combatants. The authors of the policy brief are Ms. Melissa Lefas, Director of Criminal Justice and Rule of Law Programs and Ms. Junko Nozawa, Legal Analyst at the Global Center.

Amy-Louise Watkin (Swansea University) & Sean Looney (Dublin City University) – “The Lions of Tomorrow” A News Value Analysis of Child Images in Jihadi Magazines”

This study contributes to the growing body of work on online jihadist magazines in two ways: it focuses on images, as opposed to most studies which almost exclusively focus on text. It also examines the portrayal of children, as opposed to most studies which focus on narrative themes such as in-group and out-group identities. With an abundance of psychological research concluding that images have long lasting, powerful, and highly emotional effects, the increased use of children in images across these publications is worrying.

This study aims to investigate child images published in five online terrorist magazines to further understand the intended goals of using these images and the strategies that are involved in achieving them. Every child image published in *Inspire* (Issue 1-15), *Dabiq* (Issue 1-15), *Jihad Recollections* (Issue 1-4), *Azan* (Issue 1-6) and *Gaidi Mtanni* (Issue 1-7) between 2009 and 2016 were entered into a database, coming to a total of 93 images. A news value framework was applied to the dataset and coded with a grounded theory approach, which systematically investigates what values the image holds that result in the image being classed as ‘newsworthy’. In this study, this simply translates to what criteria is included in these child images that make terrorist organisations firstly publish them, and secondly, believe that these images will positively contribute to helping them achieve their goals. This study used Bednarek and Caple’s table of news values which include: negativity, prominence, consonance, impact, novelty, superlativeness and personalisation.

One of the key findings is that *Dabiq* and *Inspire* contained the highest number of child images out of the five magazines, with the others containing very few child images. *Dabiq* and *Inspire* both initially published mostly images of children portrayed as victims of Western warfare (‘child victims’). While *Inspire* has continued that trend, strongly using images with personalisation up until its most recent issue with very few images portraying anything different, *Dabiq* only showed that trend until *Issue 8*. Although *Dabiq* always contained a number of images

portraying children as perpetrators of violence ('child soldiers'), this has dramatically escalated since issue 8, shown by a change in the ratio of prominent to negative images. Regarding child victims, *Inspire* is most likely to use negativity and personalisation, resulting in a majority of images showing children as dead and alone, thought to create feelings of anger. Regarding child soldiers, *Dabiq* is most likely to use prominence and personalisation, resulting in a high number of images showing child soldiers in full immaculate military attire with weapons, thought to be a strategy of psychological warfare. *Dabiq* is also most likely to portray children based on gender: they use boys to portray the fierceness of the organisation through superlativeness and girls to show everything that is right with the Caliphate and everything that is wrong with the West. This paper will discuss these key trends in more detail and conclude by suggesting strategies for counter imagery.

10:30-10:45 am: Coffee

10:45-12:15 pm: Panel Session 6

1. Public Perceptions of Terrorism & Counterterrorism

Carmel Joyce & Orla Lynch (University College Cork) – “Challenges to Irish diaspora identity: Examining Irish American support for Republican paramilitaries in Boston after 9/11 and the Boston bombings.”

Despite researchers suggesting that Irish-American support of the Republican movement in Northern Ireland is a widely utilised strategy for reaffirming diaspora connections with Ireland, particularly among distant generations (Wilson, 1996), there is currently no empirical evidence to support this assertion. However, if support for republicanism is a strategy for identity construction and maintenance among Irish Americans, the fundamental shifts in US political discourse regarding 'global war on terrorism', could potentially have ramifications for the identity strategies of this diaspora population.

In an effort to understand the processes of change within the Irish American communities, as well as to address a specific empirical gap, this research utilized a discursive approach to examine how the Irish diaspora who supported (or continue to support) Republican paramilitaries in Boston manage their national identity concerns, post the GFA, 9/11 and the Boston Bombings. Twenty individual interviews were conducted with current and past members of NORAIID (M= 13, F=7, M age = 63 years), including 4 self-identified first generation Irish and 16 self-identified second and third generation Irish-American.

Preliminary findings suggest that first generation Irish and Irish Americans had divergent understandings of the norms of Irish national identity expression abroad. Distant generation Irish Americans display their identity proactively, perhaps to demonstrate their loyalty to the national groups, while first generation Irish perceived overt displays of national sentiment to be inauthentic and a misguided interpretation of Irishness. This was mirrored in participants talk of involvement in NORAIID. First generation Irish claimed that their attendance at NORAIID events was passive and purely for the purposes of socializing with fellow Irish ingroup members. Such

individuals actively distanced themselves from proactive support of NORAIID and attributed this strategy for reaffirming Irishness as one predominately utilized by Irish Americans.

The potential implications are discussed in terms of how NORAIID support can be used as a strategy to reaffirm Irishness and also, to police the boundaries of the national category. Importantly, NORAIID support can also potentially reinforce experiences of peripherality and identity misrecognition, which in turn, could fuel efforts to demonstrate loyalty and to resist the dissolution of the group. This could potentially manifest in the continued support of violent republicanism and the rejection of the peace process in Northern Ireland in pursuit of a united Ireland by force.

Jack Jedwab & Ashley Manuel (Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration) – “Public Perceptions on Terrorism & Counterterrorism in Canada”

Over the years, the Association for Canadian Studies, through funding by Public Safety Canada, has generated an unparalleled body of research and empirical data on the Canadian public’s knowledge and perceptions on terrorism and counterterrorism, particularly as it relates to terrorism-anxiety levels, intergroup relations and effectiveness in counterterrorism. Our most recent survey wave (11) pays particular attention to the concept of radicalization to violence, focusing on the public’s awareness and assessment of countering radicalization to violence (CRV) programs and preventative initiatives in Canada. The data probes the sources of anxiety around terrorism and looks at the segment(s) of the Canadian population where concerns are most pronounced. Our research reveals that personal and collective identities play an important role in shaping our sense of security. This research helps identify the measures that citizens regard as most effective in addressing radicalization to violence and in combating terrorism. A user-friendly tool found on www.ciim.ca will also be showcased so as to demonstrate how our data can be accessed.

Peter Krause (Boston College/MIT) – “The Impact of Education on Attitudes About Terrorism & Counterterrorism”

Scholars and policymakers are divided over whether terrorists are “masterminds” or “animals,” how effective they are, how best to defeat them, and even how to define “terrorism” in the first place. They are similarly divided over whether the threat of terrorism is overblown or underestimated, but both sides agree on one thing: If you knew what they know, you’d agree with them. This study systematically tests these competing assertions for the first time by conducting a series of experiments on the impact of increased knowledge on how individuals define terrorism, (de)humanize terrorists, assess the threat and effectiveness of terrorism, and support counterterrorism policies. Evidence gathered from students in 31 terrorism and non-terrorism related courses at 12 universities across the country, as well as an international Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), provide robust empirical insight into how learning about terrorism impacts attitudes and policy preferences. We find that as individuals’ knowledge of terrorism increases, they see terrorists as more rational, their effectiveness as more nuanced, and their threat as smaller and more manageable. This suggests that knowledge can change attitudes, not simply reinforce them, even on the most sensitive of topics. Furthermore, politicians looking to “do something” to reassure their constituents in response to the threat of

terrorism should consider the impact of public education campaigns.

2. Criminological Approaches

Paul Gill & Emily Corner (University College London) – “Discerning Signal from the Noise in Online and Offline Threats”

A common question posed by practitioners concerns what factors differentiate those who make threats but never follow them up from those who do act upon them. Until now this question has been ultimately impossible to answer in any way because only those who do act out violently are visible in open-source data collection initiatives. Simply, we never hear about those who make threats, appear radicalized, yet stay at home. Instead, studies typically sample on the dependent variable. This paper utilizes a unique dataset provided by the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC). FTAC’s role is to collate, assess, and manage threatening communications to the royal family and members of parliament. The data is rich both in terms of the individual making the threats and, in the case of them trying to act upon it, the (attempted) offence itself. The data is categorized across approximately 200 variables including qualitative and quantitative aspects. The years 2013-2015 cover over 2500 cases alone. The intention of this paper is to assess whether key variables related to individual capability and environmental security help discriminate those who simply only communicate threats from those who approach the targets of their threats in real-life.

Nils Duquet (Flemish Peace Institute) – “Weapons acquisition: a neglected aspect of the crime-terror nexus? The case of Belgium in a broader European perspective”

In recent years there has been growing policy and scholarly attention of the crime-terror nexus in Europe. An important aspect of this nexus is the potential for criminal skills to be used by terrorist networks. Evidence from recent terror attacks in Europe clearly indicates that terrorists have recently been able to use their criminal skills to acquire firearms from the illicit gun market. This evidence also suggests that the ability of terrorist networks to do so is connected to their changing modus operandi. Interestingly, this crucial aspect of the crime-terror nexus has not received ample attention in the scholarly or policy community.

In this paper we will focus on the illicit acquisition of firearms by terrorists in Belgium. Despite the historical presence of several types of terrorist networks in Belgium, there have been rather limited successful terror attacks in the country (until the Brussels attacks March 2016). Cases seem to suggest Belgium is not so much a target for terrorist networks but rather a logistics base, including for the acquisition of firearms.

After giving a brief overview of Belgium’s history with terrorism since the 1980s, we will focus our analysis on the illicit gun market in Belgium and the access of different types of terrorist networks to this market. Given the many transnational aspects of terrorism, illicit gun markets and CT policy in Europe, we will analyse our findings on Belgium in a broader European perspective. In the final section of the paper we will discuss the policy implications of our findings and put forward possible routes to counter this (re-) emerging threat.

Rudie Neve – “Crime script and network analysis approaches of terrorism within the Dutch police”

The ‘terrorism enterprise model’ is an instrument developed by the Netherlands’ police for describing terrorist groups in the police information systems. Development of the instrument builds on earlier experiences with network analysis and crime scripting, although this was not made explicit. Aim of the present paper is to trace the roots of the instrument in crime analysis in The Netherlands, where network analysis and crime scripting have been developed in the last ten years. This development was inspired in part by the 2005 strategy document of the Netherlands’ police leadership, in which what was called the ‘nodal orientation’ was adopted. It was acknowledged that policing takes place within a network society, and that crime is part of global flows of people, goods, information and money. The document was a step in the development of approaches that look at crime as an enterprise, albeit illegal. A version of the crime script, called the ‘barrier model’, is to some extent institutionalised in Dutch law enforcement. Thus, models have been developed for several forms of organised crime, varying from cannabis growing to human trafficking. In these models, the steps in the business process of a specific form of crime are specified, as well as the tasks that have to be performed by those involved in order to realise the goals of the criminal project. The connected roles and persons performing these roles can also be analysed as a criminal network (Neve, 2010). A recent development is looking at connected networks on micro, meso and macro-levels (Spapens, 2012).

With respect to terrorism, it has been more common to talk about ‘networks’, although the concept was not always well defined. Recent Dutch studies in which quantitative approaches of Social Network Analysis were used to study known terrorist groupings have concluded that the analysis of terrorist networks can only offer an agency perspective when the content of the relationships among the network members are made explicit (De Bie & De Poot, 2016).

Another important input with respect to terrorist networks comes from the Netherlands General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD). The service has published several reports in which an account of the nature of terrorist networks related to the country is given. The service looked at group dynamics concepts in order to explain the (then apparent) decline of jihadist networks (AIVD, 2009). The lack of ‘task consistency’ and leadership observed by the service is confirmed in later academic studies, such as Schuurman (2016) who analysed terrorist case files from the police. In a more recent publication, the service signals a ‘swarming dynamic’ among terrorist networks (AIVD, 2014).

In the paper, conclusions with respect to the further development of the Terrorist Enterprise Model will be derived from an in-depth analysis of these sources as well as interviews with experts and stakeholders. I will argue that a crime script as well as network analysis approaches need to be developed for specific types of terrorist projects in order to design effective interventions to combat radicalisation and terrorism.

3. The Development of CVE Programming in the United States

Neil Aggarwal (Columbia University) – “Against A Public Mental Health Approach to Countering Violent Extremism”

In the past five years, mental health professionals (psychiatrists and psychologists) have increasingly suggested that violent extremism should be countered through models of risk assessment, prevention, and treatment that are informed through public health models. The British government has mandated that psychiatrists and psychologists conduct public health screening to counter violent extremism in its PREVENT program. American psychiatrists and even the National Academies have also espoused this approach. However, the public health model to violent extremism raises several concerns that are the focus of this discussion: (1) public health approaches biomedicalize terrorism rather than treat violent extremism as a law enforcement issue, (2) the government displaces the responsibility for civilian protection onto clinicians, (3) a public health model for mental health clinicians raises ethical questions about patient-clinician confidentiality, and (4) the focus on Islamic terrorism risks stigmatizing populations that are already underserved.

Elena Savoia (Harvard University) – “Developing Evaluation Model, Methods and Activities in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)”

The evaluation of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs is necessary to aid policymakers and program implementers in understanding whether these programs work, and how experience derived from their implementation may inform future practice. However, the measurement of outcomes and impact in CVE is inherently difficult. Also, while community-level organizations have the potential to make the greatest impact in CVE efforts, they are also unlikely to have expertise on how to document such impact. The first methodological challenge in CVE evaluation arises from the fact that violent extremism is an event that does not frequently happen and that the outcome of interest is the *“absence of violent extremism so practitioners must measure a non-event*. The challenge of measuring the elimination of rare, high impact events warrants careful consideration at each stage of the evaluation process. However, this is not a challenge inherent to CVE as there are many other types of programs such as emergency preparedness or prevention of rare diseases from which we can learn. The usual practice is to intervene at the mediator stage, by measuring the reduction of factors known to be causally related to the event of interest. Our team was recently tasked with developing an evaluation framework for the Greater Boston CVE Pilot Program, along with specific evaluation activities for CVE related projects in the Greater Boston Areas, and as well as the evaluation of the Peer to Peer Challenge Violent Extremism (P2P) initiative, a nationwide effort to engage college students in social media campaigns designed to address violent extremism. As part of this effort we have developed project specific evaluation logic models and study designs to address the measurement of outcomes as well as process. In this presentation, we will discuss the role of evaluation in CVE activities, including developmental, formative, process and outcome evaluation, study designs and methods derived from the field of epidemiology and their applicability to CVE, as well as a systematic review of questionnaires to measure CVE related outcomes. Important aspects of evaluation activities such as ethical concerns, confidentiality and issues related to the maintenance of independence of researchers from the context in which projects are conducted, and dissemination and use of evaluation results will also be addressed providing examples from current CVE evaluation activities.

Nate Snyder (Former Obama Administration CT/CVE Senior Advisor) – “CVE: Lessons from the Obama Administration”

Counting Violent Extremism work started under the George W. Bush Administration, it accelerated under the Obama Administration. Departmental and National strategies were developed, new partnerships were formed, research efforts were bolstered, and new bodies to support and implement were formed. Pilot efforts to support locally driven implementation of CVE strategies were started, and specialized regional staff were deployed. A national and international discussion was started. Hear how challenges were met from behind the scenes during the Obama Administration, lesson learned, and what it all means for CVE moving forward.

12:15-1:15 pm: Lunch

1:15-2:45 pm: Panel Session 7

1. Early Intervention & Interdiction of Potential Terrorist Offenders

Ahmet Yayla (George Mason University) – “The Role of Early Intervention in Countering Extremism and Terrorism”

Terrorists thrive with new recruits. Recruitment is essential and vital for the future of terrorist organizations. Recruitment usually involves a long process of association, indoctrination, and radicalization. Individuals do not become terrorists or radicalized without going through an indoctrination process. While it is true the Internet and the social media made this process faster; it is also found through numerous studies that usually human connection is involved during terrorist recruitment. From this perspective, this study focused on reaching out to numerous subjects targeted by terrorist groups for recruitment purposes. Vulnerable youth who were interacting with known extremists or people who were being self-radicalized through different means were targeted at the early stages, by interacting with those individuals to increase awareness of what they are getting into by providing council to persuade them not to join or interact with terrorist or extremist groups. This early intervention and research project named “Early Intervention through Families” was conducted between 2010 and 2013 in Sanliurfa, Turkey involving over 2,000 subjects. This presentation demonstrates the findings of the study and how reaching out to the vulnerable youth and people who are targeted by the terrorists can be utilized to save them from the hands of different terrorist organizations.

Annemarie van de Weert & Quirine Eijkman (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences) – “Early Warning Signs of Violent Extremism?: Dutch Youth Workers on Detection and Indication at the Local Level”

This article explores whether local youth workers are able to detect signs of violent extremism at the street level. Extremism and radicalism are often assumed to be a harbinger of terrorism. Even though extremism amongst youngsters is more exception than rule, the Dutch government instructs local professionals to be alert of alleged deviant behaviour and cross-border mindedness. Despite training and increased knowledge about the phenomenon, the question remains if youth workers are sufficiently equipped to assess (violent) extremism at an early stage.

This explorative study concludes that in practice social professionals find it hard to distinguish between signs of radicalisation and extremism and appear to have more faith in their own perception of the 'problem'. Henceforth, the fight against terrorism may not sort the desired effect.

2. Weaponizing Ideas: Terrorist Innovation & Use of the Internet

Tina Billington-Hughes (De Montfort University) – “Tomorrow’s Terrorist Today: is the keyboard the terrorists’ new weapon?”

Cybercrime cases are often complex and protracted but terrorist methodologies in the use of the internet have caused immense global political and logistical challenges. Although discourse continues as to whether cyber-terrorism exists (Macdonald, Jarvis & Nouri, 2014), a positive step forward for this controversial topic is acknowledgement of the degree to which terrorist groups use the internet. Reliance on the media by terrorist groups has diminished significantly as they have become more proficient in their use of social media platforms having recognised their popularity particularly with the young and vulnerable. Groups such as Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hezbollah, Boko Haram and, more recently, Islamic State (IS), have all embraced the internet for providing and obtaining information, for spreading propaganda, for the purpose of indoctrination, psychological manipulation, fund-raising, recruitment, planning and other nefarious activities such as weaponry acquisition (Jenzen & Rice, 2016). Whilst Lappin (2011) recently claimed that IS were using online bazaars in their own control areas to buy weaponry it is arguably not the only group to do so.

Collin (1996) provided 6 potential scenarios, one of which asserted that cyber-terrorism was a new weapon whereby convergence of the physical and virtual worlds provided the capability to cripple a nation without warning. Taking into consideration recent incidents, has Collin’s theory, in part, become a reality?

To a degree cyberspace has become the alternative battlefield, one in which terrorists are adapting and advancing almost as rapidly as the technology they use. The National Research Council (NRC) proclaimed that ‘tomorrow’s terrorist may be able to do more damage with a keyboard than with a bomb’ (National Research Council, 1991).

It could be argued that tomorrow’s terrorist is here and that the advancement of technology and our increasing reliance on it is making us more vulnerable than ever. The cyber-attacks on Friday 12 May 2017 are testament to that: a global ransomware attack crippled almost 100 countries including the UK’s National Health Service (NHS).

As a result of the attacks on the NHS (allegedly the largest in NHS history), politicians have pledged £50m (BBC, 2017) and £10b (ITV, 2017) to upgrade the UK’s cyber-security systems. Hospitals and health workers have already been subject to terrorist attack and some employees have been involved in terrorism (De Cauwer et al, 2016). Healthcare institutions hold some of the most sensitive information about us but patient’s lives are significantly at risk as are intellectual property assets: drug formulas, test studies and procedural experimentation (Le Bris & El Asri, n.d).

Cyber-attacks are classified Tier One in line with international terrorism in the UK’s National Security Strategy hence the Government’s £860m investment in the National Cyber Security Programme. However, with Europol warning that we could still be at risk from further

attacks and businesses could already unknowingly be compromised (BBC, 2017) questions arise: what steps are Microsoft taking to eliminate the continued vulnerabilities identified in their systems? Are our security strategies becoming too complex and should we therefore be taking a more simplistic approach? Will these attacks further tactical opportunities for terrorists?

Chelsea Daymon & Mia Bloom (Georgia State University) – “Addicted to Terror? Charting the Addictive Qualities of ISIS's Preferred Social Media Platform”

The messaging app, Telegram has increasingly become the platform of choice for the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and its many supporters. Telegram has also been used for the recruitment and coordination of attacks in France and Brussels (Meichtry & Schechner, 2016; Katz, 2016) and, unlike Whatsapp used by the Westminster attacker Khalid Masood, cannot be traced after the attack. The prevalent use of peer-to-peer encrypted messaging by ISIS and its supporters does not show signs of diminishment. Furthermore, as other social media platforms like twitter and Facebook are increasingly policed, Telegram remains their platform of choice. This leads to questions about how Telegram is used, as well as what kinds of threats that it might pose in the future.

Although Telegram is widespread, the subject remains largely uncharted. Much of the lacuna can be explained by access and difficulties in getting internal review boards to approve the studies. This lacuna limits our knowledge of how the platform is used for social bonding and potential terrorist recruitment. This research seeks to address this problem by extending the authors' previous research on Telegram, by examining the platform's addictive and persuasive qualities, analyzing both the content and the online behavior of ISIS members and supporters.

From a social identity perspective, individuals shape perceptions of themselves based on identification with groups, group values, and emotions (Tajfel, 1982). As a result, constant presence in online environments can foster extreme political and religious views, excessive violence, in-group and out-group rivalries, as well as create an echo chamber for radicalization (Sageman 2008). This is to say, constant presence on the network may increase the likelihood of susceptibility to radical recruitment. Additionally, Khang et al. (2013) found that individuals continuously on social media platform manifested addiction to such environments. This incessant presence on Telegram channels and chat rooms reflects the addiction to the platform. This environment is ripe with persuasive messaging, leaving susceptible individuals at risk to further exploitation.

One should take into consideration additional factor when examining the persuasive qualities of Telegram's use by ISIS and its supporters, notably the negative and psychological effects of exposure to excessive violence. As Bandura (1999) maintains, people will become desensitized, and morally disengaged. Additional research on the addictive qualities of gambling and gaming inform the process.

William (Travis) Morris (Norwich University) – “Idea Centric Analysis: Neo-Nazi and Violent Jihadi Ideas that Shaped Modern Terrorism”

This research analyzes the most significant ideas that have transformed violent extremism over the past six decades. This study examines the violent jihadi and neo-Nazi innovations that have been normalized by groups and individuals. Using a comparative research design and both quantitative and qualitative methods, strategic and tactical ideas are examined in context. The purpose of the study is to examine how innovations such as how to weaponize thoughts, create new forms of violence, or shift targets advance terrorism studies into the realm of violent extremist doctrine. Findings identify how some most of the influential violent jihadi or neo-Nazi ideologues transition ideas to action. The paper concludes with some recommendations for policymakers and experts in the field.

3. Counterterrorism: Back to the Basics

Garth Davies (Simon Fraser University) – “Stop reinventing the wheel: How past campaigns against social problems can inform the practice of countering radicalization to violent extremism”

One of the many consequences of the change to the language of radicalization to violence following the London bombings in 2005 has been the unfortunate tendency to treat the process of becoming a violent extremist as brand new, unprecedented, unique, and therefore requiring original programs and approaches. But this ahistorical view of the problem of radicalization has led to a curious blindness regarding the potential utility of past approaches that have been used address socially problematic behavior. There is, for example, considerable overlap in the dynamics surrounding radicalization to violent extremism and affiliating with a gang. Law enforcement has considerable experience with trying to keep youths from joining gangs, but until very recently, this knowledge has not informed programs aimed at preventing radicalization. Similarly, many jurisdiction in the United States and Canada have success in reducing problematic social behaviors such drinking and driving. While the analogy between such behaviors and violent radicalization is less than perfect, it is nonetheless worth exploring whether social marketing and other established approaches might have something to offer. This study distills the “lessons learned” from past campaigns that have addressed serious social programs and demonstrates how they might be adapted to counter radicalization to extremist violence.

Robert Braithwaite (Michigan State University) – “Extreme Motivations: The Impact of Terrorist Attacks on Religious Identity”

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 created a new security dynamic in the international system that was characterized as “the War on Terror”. However, many policy-makers and scholars have identified that the increased attention to extremist violence and counter-terrorism measures has had some unforeseen consequences. In particular, increasingly concern is expressed regarding how extremist violence impacts the religious identity of those prone to extremist recruitment. This study examines the relationship between terrorist attacks and religious identity in a broader context by focusing on the question: Do terrorist attacks make religious identity more salient? Given the religious overtones that are embedded in the “War on Terror” it seems useful to determine whether incidences of terrorist attacks can lead to changes in the social environment

that impact the attractiveness or salience of religious identity, which can have important consequences for counter-terrorism policy. I test the impact of terrorist attacks on religious identity utilizing attitudinal data from the World Values Survey in a cross-sectional context that examines approximately 60 countries from 2000 – 2015.

Huseyin A. Sari (University of Massachusetts, Lowell) – “Fight Against Terrorism: Back to Building Inclusive Institutions”

In recent years, terrorism researchers and policymakers increasingly taking on the challenge of identifying the ‘silver bullet’ profile for a terrorist with no avail. The goal of this paper is to move a few steps back and analyze whether or not the link between the colonization and terrorism is solely consists of the historic grievances and injustices or it is about the absence of inclusive political and economic institutions in the greater Middle East region. This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative sources such as Center for Systemic Peace, Global Terrorism Dataset and extensive literature on institutions, colonization and terrorism.

Citizens who live in countries with inherently extractive political and economic institutions tend to rely heavily on informal social capital (Aldrich, 2012). In other words, the citizens’ confidence in state institutions is nearly non-existent; thus the absence of such mechanisms in spurring robust and balanced state-citizen engagement creates detrimental gaps within the society. In such environments, some members of the society may be transfixed by the past historical events of the colonization, in which may lead to extremist religious/nationalist ideals. These individuals can further disseminate alike ideals within their informal social network by utilizing the existing strong and weak ties.

The jihadi terrorist organizations look back at the ‘glory days’ of the past ‘jihads’ (i.e. Afghan jihad in the 1980s). Such misplaced longing by the jihadi groups goes back to the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of Khilafat movements in the 1920 and 1930s in the greater Middle East (Schimmel & Neimeijer, 1973). The brief period of colonization in this geography was not able to produce inclusive political and economic institutions - like the ones in India - due to the pronounced existence of social capital among the citizens and the lack of institutionalization during the pre-WWI era (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001). It is possible that the time span that is required to build much needed citizen oriented inclusive state institutions during the colonization in this geography was interrupted by the wars (i.e. WWII) and shortsighted ambitions of these newly independent states’ elites.

Through this perspective, the problem of terrorism that has been devastating the greater Middle East, especially since 1979, may be blamed on the era of colonization of these states in the region with an important caveat: the process of the colonizers’ potential capability - namely France and Britain - in building relatively healthy state institutions was disrupted by wars and the ambitions of independence pursued by the elites. Therefore, such interruptions may have created an environment for the citizens of these states to rely on other sources of confidence that may have otherwise provided by the institutions. Such sources of confidence were largely placed on informal ties that can be easily influenced by the radical religious and nationalist actors within the society. In the end, one of the predominantly accepted definitions of terrorism is ‘the killings non-combatants for political goals by the armed non-state actors’ (Forest, 2015).

4. Foreign Fighters

Christopher Wright (Austin Peay State University) – “An Update on How Dangerous Are Domestic Terror Plotters with Foreign Fighter Experience? The Case of Homegrown Jihadis in the US”

Do Americans who return home after gaining experience fighting abroad in Islamist insurgencies pose a greater risk than homegrown jihadi militants with no such experience? This study updates an earlier work published in *Perspectives on Terror* in 2016 to include data from the last 6 years. The earlier study only included plots from 1990 – 2010 available at the time using Hegghammer’s Jihadi Plots in the West dataset and looked at the net effect of foreign fighters on domestic plots in the US. The earlier study found that the presence of a returnee decreases the likelihood that an executed plot will cause mass casualties. Also, that plots carried out with American returnees from Islamist insurgencies abroad decreases the likelihood that a plot will come to fruition. This study will include more recent data to either verify or falsify the earlier conclusions. Importantly, it showed that US policies on foreign fighters were largely effective and the European nations would be wise to adopt similar measure.

Joseph Young (American University) – “Transnational Volunteers: American Foreign Fighters Combating the Islamic State”

Why do some people go abroad to engage in other people's wars? Some studies attempt to discern why individuals choose to fight in distant lands or seek to count how many do so. The term foreign fighter has been used nearly exclusively in recent research to describe transnational fighters who join with Islamist organizations, or more generally for individuals fighting with resistance groups against a state. However, little research has been done on the many transnational fighters who travel to fight against resistance groups or against Islamist organizations. This paper examines these transnational militants who battle against the Islamic State, focusing on Americans who engage in such activities, often referred to as *volunteers*. Through a review of open-source media, we created a dataset of these individuals, recording demographic data such as each individual's military experience and stated purpose for becoming a transnational fighter. In addition we have conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews of about a dozen of these individuals. We argue that American volunteers and foreign terrorist fighters are phenomena with difference in degree, but not in kind.

2:45-3:00 pm: Coffee

3:00-4:30 pm: Panel Session 8

1. Perceptions & the Effectiveness of the CVE Programs in the United States

Melissa Salyk-Virk (New York University) – “Building community resilience”

In August 2011, international recruitment to terrorist groups became a growing concern for the United States, one that garnered significant media and political attention, particularly with regard to U.S.-based individuals planning to become involved in terrorism or those trying to flee to Islamic State-controlled territory. As an example, nine Somali-American men between the ages of 18 and 22 were arrested for terrorism charges relating to ISIL in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The Obama Administration started a public private partnership (PPP) pilot program focused on countering violent extremism (CVE) in the United States called Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States. This program was the first of its kind. It directly addressed the administration's concern about domestic violent extremism and radicalization in the U.S. The initiative's focus on community programming, coupled with government intervention, set it apart from similar, previous efforts. Three specific target areas were listed in the plan: engagement, prevention, and intervention. Other CVE and/or deradicalization programs have emphasized engagement with radicalized individuals, either during detainment, imprisonment, in the reintegration phase, or a mixture of all of the above. The Twin Cities' program has focused primarily on prevention of radicalization through a community and government partnership. The primary focus of the program was to identify drivers for recruitment and radicalization, and then develop programs to counteract those drivers. This paper analyzes tensions between government-sanctioned CVE approaches and the communities where CVE programs are implemented. Until now, research has not been performed on this specific program from a community perspective. This research aims to fill the gap in community perspectives of government-initiated CVE programs. As a case study, this research focused on the Minneapolis/St. Paul CVE program called Building Community Resilience. The research looks at how this specific program in its current state was created and implemented, and what efforts were made to engage the community. In order to gauge that participation, attitudes were recorded in the ethnic Somali (or Somali-American) population in Minneapolis/St. Paul with regard to the creation of this program and how it was perceived in the community. The research explores whether this program in its current state can be effective in engaging the community to enhance CVE methods.

Caitlin Ambrozik (Cornell University) – “Why mobilize? An empirical investigation of the reasons for mobilization around countering violent extremism initiatives in the United States”

In 2011, the Obama administration announced a national strategy to counter violent extremism (CVE) domestically. The strategy outlined a community-led approach to address the underlying causes of violent extremism. Despite efforts to empower local communities to mobilize and form local governance networks to develop and implement collaborative CVE programs, few communities across the US have done so. Why do only some communities mobilize around CVE initiatives and create local CVE governance networks? In this paper, I argue that the interaction between three factors, community interest in CVE, community capabilities to mobilize, and the type of mobilization facilitation, determine the prospects for mobilization. Mobilization is most

likely in communities with an interest in CVE and the capabilities to mobilize if a facilitator uses network management techniques to assist in the mobilization process. To explore the explanatory value of this theory, this paper uses a matching technique to identify two communities, Houston, TX and Columbus, OH that expressed an initial interest in CVE and share similarities on a number of extraneous variables. Survey research of individuals who mobilized in Houston and individuals most likely to mobilize in Columbus but did not highlights the importance of the interaction between the three factors for mobilization. By focusing on this interaction, I provide a new theoretical perspective on the emergence of governance networks to address security-related problems. As such, this paper provides both an explanation for the lack of mobilization around CVE in the United States and policy recommendations to change the current state of affairs.

Faiza Patel (New York University) – “Countering violent extremism”

The Trump administration reportedly plans to revamp the “Countering Violent Extremism” (CVE) programs begun by the Obama administration to focus exclusively on American Muslims. Regardless of whether CVE explicitly refers to Islam or not, the programs initiated under this have, in practice, focused almost exclusively on American Muslims. These initiatives fall into three categories:

1. Initiatives focused on identifying American Muslims — especially youth — who have adopted “radical” or “extremist” ideas, or who exhibit signs of alienation and are therefore assumed to be at risk for becoming terrorists.
2. Programs to fund or facilitate the provision of health, education, and social services to American Muslim communities, based on the theory that adverse economic and social conditions facilitate terrorism.
3. The promotion of messages that the government believes will counter the propaganda of groups like ISIS, as well as monitoring and sometimes suppressing messages that the government believes foster extremism, including through Internet companies.

The first category is particularly problematic because it seeks to tag people as potential terrorists – with attendant negative consequences – using discredited methodology. While CVE programs acknowledge that there is no reliable way to identify potential terrorists, they nonetheless seek to do just that, often on the basis of common political views such as concern about human rights or U.S. intervention overseas. These programs are framed as community-led efforts to counsel young Muslims. In practice they are mostly led, funded, and administered by law enforcement agencies, including the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, U.S. Attorney’s Offices, the FBI, and state and local law enforcement agencies. The involvement of law enforcement increases the likelihood that these programs will act as a vehicle for intelligence reporting about people and organizations in CVE-targeted communities. While their negative effects are manifold, there is no evidence that CVE programs carry tangible security benefits. Channeling law enforcement resources into investigating people based on a potpourri of unproven indicators isn’t likely to snare criminals, but rather to draw scrutiny to individuals whose speech or beliefs are outside the mainstream. While providing resources to communities that need them – the second type of CVE program – is a laudable goal, there is no indication that it contributes to counterterrorism. Finally, by targeting extreme or radical viewpoints — either by identifying

political views as potential indicators of terrorism, or by seeking to suppress them online — CVE programs restrict discourse and debate. This not only undermines First Amendment values, but also drives terrorist narratives underground, where they are harder to challenge. In sum, while the concept of CVE initially may seem appealing as a “softer” alternative to traditional counterterrorism strategies, it poses serious risks to targeted communities with no proven benefits.

2. Explaining Lone Actor Terrorism

Nick Brooke (University of St. Andrews) – “The Loner v the Lone Wolf”

The rise of the ‘lone wolf’ has been commonly perceived as *the* emerging trend in terrorist violence in recent years. Whilst the general public’s understanding of the phenomenon is relatively rudimentary, this is partly because of the way in which the media report upon the phenomena. In recent years, a number of high-casualty lone-actor attacks have been committed (with widespread media attention), both by those espousing Islamic extremist views, and what could be described as ‘right-wing’ terrorists. However, it has been suggested that the media report on these two similar phenomena very differently: with the incidents of jihadist terrorism treated as a continuation of attacks by a well-networked collective, whereas right-wing attacks are dismissed as the work of a ‘loner’.

This paper compares the media treatment of single-actor terrorist incidents based on the ideology of the actor, to assess the extent to which this perception is accurate. To do this, a detailed content analyses of media reporting (primarily through written media) on the Boston Marathon Bombing, the murder of Lee Rigby and the Pulse nightclub shooting and the 2016 Nice attack will be compared to the attacks carried out by Anders Breivik, Dylan Roof and the murder of Jo Cox MP. It will examine whether or not this distinction is borne out in the media and attempt to trace the factors behind this distinction.

Noemie Bouhana, Emily Corner & Paul Gill (University College London) – “The PRIME Project: Preventing, Interdicting, and Mitigating Lone Actor Extremism”

In this paper, we present findings from the EU-funded FP7 PRIME Project (Preventing, Interdicting and Mitigating Lone Actor Extremism). We introduce the project’s analytical framework, which motivated us to examine the interaction of different categories of indicators associated with lone actor terrorist events across different ideological, temporal and geographical contexts. Using a custom-designed dataset of lone actor terrorist cases which took place in Western Europe and the United States, we analyse the radicalisation, attack preparation and attack phases of 125 lone actor terrorist events using probability-based techniques, which produce diagrammatic sequences of behavioural, social, and ecological indicators. We discuss the implications of our approach for the disruption of lone actor terrorism, including the use of indicator- or risk factor-based risk assessment tools.

3. Right-Wing Terrorism in Liberal Democracies

Priya Dixit (Virginia Tech) – “On Militias and Sovereign Citizens: Armed Groups and National Security in the United States”

While there is increasing focus on Jihadist extremism in the United States, there is far less attention paid to two other types of armed individuals: militias and so-called sovereign citizens. Militias in the US are armed groups who often claim they are patriots, acting to protect the population when the state is unable to do so. They have been increasing in number in the past few years. Sovereign citizens are individuals who claim to be outside of the laws of the state. Both groups have proliferated in the past decade, with there being militia training camps around the country and militia-led armed occupation of government lands. US law enforcement has claimed, in recent surveys, that the threat from sovereign citizens is higher than that of Jihadist extremists. Despite this claim, both groups are not often brought up in discussions of extremism. This is especially the case in US countering violent extremism (CVE) programs, which focus almost exclusively on Jihadist extremism.

This paper analyzes media and popular representations of militia and sovereign citizens, focusing specifically on how they are described, what their motivations and goals are, and how their use of violence is represented. Using computer-aided content analysis, selected events involving the two groups are scrutinized to note how the use of violence is depicted in key media sites. This is compared with a similar analysis of media representations of relevant incidents of Jihadist extremism. The paper argues that the media analysis indicates violent acts by militia and sovereign citizens are excused and depicted as less threatening to the nation-state and the population, even when they are directly acting against the government. This serves to normalize such violence and ignore their potential as threats to national and societal security. It also serves to link “extremism” only with Muslims and those perceived to be Muslims, thus creating a security threat to the Muslim population in a multicultural nation-state such as the United States.

Arie Perlinger, Jared Dmello, & Matthew Sweeney (University of Massachusetts Lowell) – “The Violence of Political Empowerment: Electoral Success and the Facilitation of Political Violence”

In the weeks following the end of the American 2016 elections, multiple organizations reported a dramatic rise in the number of violent acts which were initiated by individuals and groups who are affiliated with American far-right. These trends should not come as a surprise, especially in the context of the violent American far-right. Previous studies hinted that far-right violence in the United States tends to spike following what may be perceived as an electoral or judicial success of the American conservative movement or political camp. These trends, of increase in politically motivated violence, perpetrated by groups or individuals which are part of a political camp which actually enjoy a rise in its formal political power, seems not to be restricted to the American case. For example, the most known Jewish terrorist group which emerged in Israel, the “Jewish Underground,” was formed by a group of settlers in 1980, during the term of the first right-wing government (which was ideologically committed to the Settlement project in the West-Bank) which was formed in Israel, and the electoral victories of Juan Peron in the late 1940s and early 1950s in Argentina were accompanied by a violent campaign which was also promoted by extra-parliamentarian groups which embraced Peron’s ideology and populist rhetoric.

Nonetheless, despite these examples, the impact of ideological successes in electoral processes on political violence within constituencies is, to date, under-researched. This study

aims to fill this gap via examination of how minority-majority outcomes in the electoral process impact political violence in democratic states. To set forth a generalizable framework, we employ a longitudinal case study approach, evaluating this relationship in the United States of America and the Republic of India. Using publicly available data from the Census of the respective nations and open-sourced data on ideological terrorist activity in the countries, we provide new insight into how the democratic, electoral process facilitates political violence.

Jacob Aasland Ravndal (University of Oslo) – “The Modus Operandi of Right-Wing Terrorists in Western Europe”

Drawing on new and updated events data from the RTV dataset, this paper reviews trends in the modus operandi of right-wing terrorists in Western Europe between 1990 and 2016. More specifically, the paper investigates right-wing terrorists’ organizational forms, target selection, weapon preferences, group affiliations, and the different types of violence employed. Furthermore, by linking RTV data with previous events data from the TWEED and DTV datasets, and by reviewing existing tactical manuals, court testimonies, interviews, autobiographies, and news reports involving violent right-wing perpetrators, the paper also offers explanations of how and why variables related to their modus operandi have changed over time as a result of changing environmental conditions. Most notably, in Western Europe, well organized elite-sponsored groups involved in large-scale terrorist campaigns have been replaced by more loosely organized subcultural networks, groups, and individuals, whose violence and target selection is both less terroristic and less predictable in nature.

4. Counter-Narratives & Terrorist Messaging

Kurt Braddock (The Pennsylvania State University) & John Morrison (University of East London) – “Cultivating Trust and Source Credibility in Online Counternarratives Intended to Reduce Support for Terrorism”

Researchers have long-sought to identify methods for challenging terrorist ideologies as a means of dissuading engagement in terrorism. To this end, terrorism scholars have recently begun to explore counternarratives as effective tools for promoting counter-radicalization. Although this work has argued for the potential efficacy of counternarratives, there has been little empirical work on their effective construction and distribution.

One exception is Braddock and Horgan (2016), who recently developed a preliminary framework for constructing and disseminating counternarratives. In their paper, the authors suggested a set of actionable procedures grounded in communication and psychology theory that contribute to the successful development of counternarrative messages. In discussing these procedures, Braddock and Horgan emphasized the importance of cultivating trust between counternarrative targets and those perceived to be the source of the message. Drawing from psychological reactance theory (Brehm, 1966), they argued that a counternarrative’s content is moot if the message recipient did not consider its source to be legitimate and trustworthy. Without this trust, counternarratives are likely to be ignored or deemed illegitimate.

The purpose of this manuscript is to expand on this key theme to inform the development of effective counternarratives. More specifically, this paper assesses our understanding of the role that trust plays during two key stages in Horgan's (2014) "arc" of terrorism: initial involvement in and disengagement from terrorism. The paper also considers the issue of source credibility and how it relates to online counternarratives. This discussion draws from Sundar's (2008) MAIN Model, which identifies content and structural characteristics of online messages that influence the degree to which users attribute credibility to the sources of those messages. By integrating these two complementary areas of research, this paper demonstrates the role of trust in the effectiveness of counternarratives.

Insight gained from this analysis is then leveraged to propose practical guidelines on cultivating trust among counternarrative targets. This takes the form of 16 recommendations for authors of counternarratives to improve the likelihood that their messages are perceived as trustworthy. Because these recommendations represent an initial attempt at offering practical guidance in cultivating trust in counternarratives, however, this paper also emphasizes the need for future experimental work on the cues and heuristics detailed in the MAIN Model. This future work can help practitioners reduce the likelihood that counternarratives will be dismissed by their targets—a perpetual challenge to strategic messaging geared towards countering violent extremism.

Vivian Guetler (West Virginia University) – “Are We Reaching the Targeted Population?: Countering the Jihadi Narrative on Facebook”

With the technological and communication advancements, terrorism continues to pose threats to the national security. Terrorists use of the internet to further their causes varies, most importantly, the internet and social media platforms are utilized for radicalization and spreading propaganda. Online counterterrorism measures implemented by Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) practitioners include the use of social media to counter narratives of extremist groups. However, the effectiveness of counter-narratives through social media platforms in reaching the targeted population remains to be explored and analyzed. This study explores counter-narrative strategies of a Facebook page that seeks to educate the communities on the positive and correct meaning of Jihadism and Islam, while challenging the extremists' propaganda and narratives. The Facebook page was implemented by an intra-faith CVE initiative in Kenya, targeting the Muslim as well as the Kenyan population. Managed by religious leaders, the page frames and delivers positive religious messages through photos, videos, and Islamic narratives. Data was collected and analyzed through content analysis of the public Facebook page. Results show that majority of the content posted are positive information on Islam and condemnation of violent extremism. While there are over 14,000 page followers, very few likes and comments are posted by the followers suggesting the information posted might not be reaching the targeted population, non-active followers, or not interesting enough. Yet, videos posted have many views, from 100 to 1 million and more discussions. Findings are significant for the implementation of effective online counter-narrative strategies and CVE programs, with the focus on maximizing the social media platform in sending positive counter-narratives and reaching the targeted population.

Audrey Alexander (George Washington University) – “Testing for Digital Decay in the Online Jihadisphere”

Several indicators suggest that the Islamic State (IS) is losing its foothold on the ground Syria and Iraq. In 2016 alone, IS lost considerable territory, putting tremendous strain on the organization's internal revenue schemes while casualties and decreasing foreign fighter flows continue to deplete their pool of combatants. Despite the aforementioned material losses, IS sympathizers continue to wage a protracted struggle in the digital sphere using a wealth of digital communications technologies. This paper examines decline in the virtual theater.

Much like the militant body of the organization, considerable challenges confront the pro-IS community online. Several initiatives targeting the digital sphere have made it more difficult for supporters to communicate freely. Content-based regulations, for example, have censored many sympathizers, limiting their ability to disseminate violent rhetoric.

While indicators suggest IS has suffered in the physical space, policy makers, law enforcement officials, and private companies have a limited (and largely anecdotal) understanding of how pro-IS online networks respond to duress in the digital arena. Consequently, this report strives to examine how the English-speaking pro-IS community on Twitter fares in the face of initiatives aimed at weakening the movement. After drawing on relevant literature, researchers employ various metrics to test for change over time in a sample of approximately 836,599 Tweets produced by 1,749 accounts between February 15th, 2016, and May 1st, 2017. The Program on Extremism (PoE) pulls this unique dataset from part of an ongoing initiative tracking IS in the West.

After introducing the study's data collection process, researchers make several caveats that contextualize the scope, transferability, and reliability of the dataset. Despite some limitations, this unique resource offers the Program on Extremism a tremendous opportunity to measure decay in the digital arena. By partitioning the corpus of Tweets into three 21-week segments² using Kibana, a data visualization platform, researchers compare how metrics in the first quarter of the year compared to metrics from later periods. In short, initial findings prove that various initiatives have depreciated the pool of IS sympathizers on Twitter over time.

4:30-5:30 pm: Keynote Address by Bruce Hoffman (Georgetown University)

The Threat From ISIS and al Qaeda: Contextualizing The Role of Social Media

A terrorist movement's longevity ultimately depends upon its ability to recruit new members as well as to appeal to an expanding pool of both active supporters and passive sympathizers. The role of effective communication in this process is pivotal: ensuring the continued flow of fighters into the movement, binding supporters more tightly to it, and drawing sympathizers more deeply into its orbit. The revolution in terrorist communications utilizing social media has facilitated this process in hitherto unimaginable ways and has likely ensured that the threat from ISIS will not disappear soon while that of al Qaeda continues.

5:30-7:30 pm: Reception

²Segment A: Feb 15th 2016 to July 11th 2016; Segment B: July 11th 2016 to December 5th, 2016; Segment C: December 5th, 2016 to May 1st, 2017.