VIOLENT RADICALISATION & FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN EUROPE

Aristotle Kallis, Sara Zeiger, Bilgehan Öztürk

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Edited by Aristotle Kallis, Sara Zeiger, and Bilgehan Öztürk

Hedayah
countering violent extremism

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FOREWORD

This volume has been made possible by the valuable collaboration between two esteemed organisations, namely SETA and Hedayah. Their collaboration was embodied in the form of a research project that aimed at shedding light on the burning issue of the violent radicalisation and extremism of individuals and groups that belong to - or at least are sympathetic to – the non-mainstream right currents in European countries. In this way, the current volume draws attention to the non-religious dimension of the phenomena of radicalisation and violent extremism and contributes to a relatively small body of works, as opposed to the dominant approach in the relevant literature which, for the most part, affiliates the phenomena with religious forces and elements. This approach is important since overemphasising one aspect of the phenomena runs the risk of blinding societies and policymakers to the other aspects and, therefore, making them less effective in terms of fending off the negative impacts of the phenomena. This work aims to be conducive to the due recognition of the overlooked aspects of these phenomena and hopefully serve as the first step towards tackling them.

The well-grounded organisation of the volume also adds to its novelty. In order to invigorate the book's analytical strength, the editors stroke a balance between a 'zoom-out' and a 'zoom-in' perspective in collecting the chapters. In this sense, the book is divided into two sections: the first consists of thematic reports, which delve into the transnational nature of the phenomena, while the second comprises country-specific reports that examine their idiosyncratic quality in local contexts. Furthermore, the selection of countries for country-specific reports is also pertinent, as it provides an opportunity to contrast very different, both historically and geographically,

contexts: a Western European country with a long history of democracy, on the one hand, and, on the other, an Eastern European country with a relatively short experience of democracy. Lastly, it goes without saying that each report was written by an expert on the topic and, where necessary, substantiated by fieldwork.

This volume is a timely contribution to the current corpus of remedies and prospective efforts to counter the phenomena of violent radicalisation and extremism in a period when the rise of right-wing populism is being witnessed across the European continent. The political atmosphere across Europe increasingly succumbs to right-wing discourse and policies, which originally manifested themselves as concerns over the rising number of Muslims and immigrants among far-right politicians. Protectionism, anti-immigrant sentiments, xenophobia and Islamophobia find appeal among considerable portions of electorates. The recent elections in Germany, the Netherlands and Austria established that either centre-right parties succumbed to extreme nationalist views or far-right movements became more and more popular. To be clear, both paths lead Europe to an increase in Islamophobia, xenophobia and radicalisation. Against this backdrop, the violent radicalisation and extremism of individuals and groups belonging to the non-mainstream right threaten to undermine and destabilise societies and democratic orders. At this juncture, the findings and policy recommendations of this work are crucial in paving the way for a contribution to the resilience of governments and societies in the face of the alarming rise of violent radicalisation and extremism in Europe.

I would like to thank the distinguished authors and editors of this timely and articulate work for their painstaking efforts throughout the writing process.

Prof. Burhanettin Duran
General Coordinator of SETA

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The report is the result of a research project organised by Hedayah and the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (*Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı*, SETA), born out of the need to understand both the generic and context-specific dynamics of the violent radicalisation of individuals and groups belonging to the far-right. The aim was to explore the causes, dynamics, multiple trajectories, and effects of violent radicalisation among the particular constituency of the far-right in Europe.

Such an exploration is timely in two significant ways. First, the world is witnessing an appreciable rise in violent rhetoric and terrorist action from the far-right in Europe. While the dynamics of this trend may differ from country to country and from region to region, more research is needed at the intersection of structural, historical, biographical, and anthropological approaches to radicalisation, violent extremism, and efforts to counter it.

Second, understanding and addressing violent radicalisation of the far-right requires at least as much focus on the particularities of the radicalisation process as on the particular field of the so-called 'far-right'. Preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) policies in particular, and to some extent P/CVE programmes, have tended to treat the violent radicalisation of the far-right as a subset, however distinct, of a wider problem. Understandable though this approach may be, it runs the risk of confusing the similar outcome (violent extremism) with the potentially unique and very different causes and drivers of radicalisation in the particular domain of the far-right. While on the programme level there exist initiatives that focus on the far-right and exit strategies, they are not always reflected in policy and could become expanded.

The report contains four essays, two of which focus on a single country (United Kingdom and Hungary) and two more on important inter- and transnational themes (single/lone actors and online radicalisation of the far-right). In following this formula, the project seeks to explore the role of different factors at various stages of the process of radicalisation and against the backdrop of different political cultures and historical legacies. The essays were presented at an international workshop held in Ankara on 24-25 May, 2017, hosted by SETA, Hedayah, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

Each essay is structured in two discrete parts. The first part features a policy-based treatment of the subject, with emphasis on recommendations for future P/CVE action. The second part provides an extensive analytical treatment of the subject and case study, with a literature review, historical background, and analysis of particular facets backed by relevant evidence.

The project was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report seeks to investigate why and how far-right movements radicalize, to what extent the process of radicalisation is driven by national dynamics or transnational factors, and in what circumstances these factors lead to violent radicalisation of the far-right. Attempting to fill a gap in the literature on the subject, this report also looks at the consequences of this radicalisation on communities in contemporary Europe as well as how the governments and mainstream political parties have dealt with far-right radicalisation and violent extremism in their countries. The aim of this report is to facilitate an evidence-base for better counter-terrorism policies and programs, particularly for the spectrum of prevention known as preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

While this report does not comprehensively cover all the potential topics related to the radicalisation of far-right violent extremism in Europe, it provides a beginning step to enhance the available research on the subject and generate some specific examples and recommendations for policy and programme responses. Two thematic chapters are able to assess the overall picture of far-right violent extremism in Europe from a specific angle of focus. Two country chapters are able to illustrate aspects and trends that could be seen as specific to geopolitical contexts (e.g. Western/Central and Eastern Europe), political cultures, and regional/national historical journeys. Taken together, the contributions will extrapolate more general insights about far-right violent radicalisation from the experience of Britain and Hungary while at the same time noting that each country has a unique context.

In addition to the more specific recommendations outlined in the chapters by each of the authors, there are several broader recommendations that are useful for programming and policymaking, especially with relation to P/CVE.

Recommendation 1: As a starting point, there needs to be a recognition by all stakeholders that far-right violent extremism may be a significant threat to communities in Europe. For example, as Feldman and Stocker point out in Chapter 3, the Channel programme in South Wales receives more referrals for far-right violent extremism than religion-based extremism and the recent attack on the Finsbury Park Mosque in London is evidence that the violence that can be carried out by those with far-right ideology is very real. Some governments recognise this threat more aggressively in their policies than others—for example, as Littler points out, the German government has established a specialist centre focused on far-right and far-left extremism, the *Gemeinsame Extremismus- und Terrorismusabwehrzentrum* (GETZ). In contrast, the Italian policies towards violent extremism have largely focused on religion-based extremism and tackling the migration crisis for individuals travelling from North Africa. However, even this growing recognition of the threat from far-right violent extremism is not without its political, social and cultural challenges. Despite some countries having established policies on far-right violent extremism, there is work to be done in convincing all stakeholders involved, including the general public, that far-right violent extremism can pose a significant threat to national security. At the same time, the threat should not be over-dramatised—individual governments should of course tailor their policies to match with the actual threat that far-right violent extremism poses to their country.

Recommendation 2: As with other forms of radicalisation to violent extremism, localised context is important when determining a potential profile of a far-right violent extremist. As the research has shown, the far-right 'profile' is generally one of young, white males—but other forms of identity may be at play, including religion, economic class, education or social status. Different country contexts seemed to result in different profiles and personas that depended heavily both on national and international political discourse, as well as localised in-group/out-group sentiments. At the very least, the manifestation of far-right violent extremism is very much dependent on the national political culture, but can also be influenced by more localised cultural fluctuations that influence symbology and narratives. In the Hungarian context, the core ideology of the far-right has morphed over time, drawing on a sense of nationalism and xenophobia to justify anti-Roma sentiments and actions that have now started to turn towards anti-immigration and Islamophobia in some cases.

Recommendation 3: Recognise that questions around a sense of identity are at the core of far-right radicalisation in Europe. The identity question is often in relation to key political issues that are playing out in the current political discourse in many European countries. While the nuances of these discussions vary from country to country, the overall questions that are being asked relate to what it means to be 'European', and who is included in that categorisation. At a national level, this means redefining what it means to be 'Hungarian' or 'British' or 'French' or 'German'. Far-right violent extremists capitalise on this identity question by claiming to have the correct and most 'pure' interpretation of it, and justifying acts of violence or hate speech against anyone not fitting within that interpretation. This means that sometimes the

mainstream political discussions around, for example, immigration, can sometimes reinforce ideologies of the far-right.

Recommendation 4: Interventions should begin with identifying 'trigger' points for far-right violent extremists. While the radicalisation to violence of the far-right is a complex process that often relies on a number of factors, several authors pointed out that especially with lone actors, there are several trigger factors that could help with detection and intervention of far-right violent extremists. Such trigger factors are mental illness, loss of employment, or changes in family or social status. While these factors alone do not lead to violent extremism, a mapping of these factors onto the potential exposure of individuals to far-right ideology may help to reveal localities of possible intervention before violence takes place.

Recommendation 5: Utilise the online far-right networks to facilitate offline interventions. There are a number of opportunities for preventing and countering far-right radicalisation both in the online and offline spaces. Online, there are opportunities for intervention to counter the narratives of far-right groups, particularly through hate speech and exclusionary rhetoric. However, the influence of online propaganda should not be overestimated; far-right groups also often have a disproportionate presence online (as opposed to actual membership), and a heavy focus of online counter-messaging may not effectively reach the target audiences for prevention. Despite the heavy focus of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism policies and programmes aimed at the internet, there was also evidence that emerged of offline interactions - between peers in particular - can provide platforms for engagement. This means utilising the online presence to identify the ideology and networks, and designing interventions that work offline to counter those messages received in the online space.

Recommendation 6: Work with the private sector to prevent the spread of violent ideology online. Even though far-right violent extremists are not necessarily as widespread and present as they may appear online, the broader political climate in Europe may reinforce certain ideological values that are the core of far-right justifications to violence. As previously mentioned, this includes discourses on immigration or Islamophobia, which can sometimes lead to hate speech or hate crimes. In order to tackle the spread of violent far-right ideology, the private sector companies whose platforms are utilised to share ideas (Facebook, Google, Twitter) should assess and reassess their internal policies for both hate speech and terrorism. Notably, these private sector companies have made great strides in the past several years to better identify and take down content for religion-based extremism, but have not had similar results for far-right and far-left violent extremism.

INTRODUCTION

ARISTOTLE KALLIS, SARA ZEIGER, BİLGEHAN ÖZTÜRK

Key concepts: radicalisation, violence, and the far-right

Violent acts perpetrated by far-right movements and networks in Europe are not new. In June 2017, far-right supporter Darren Osborne, a resident of Cardiff, Wales, attacked Finsbury Mosque in London, United Kingdom, stating in his attack that he aimed the attack at Muslims.[1] Similarly, a far-right nationalist was arrested in early July in France for plotting to kill President Macron at a Bastille Day parade in Paris.[2] Both of these incidents were considered acts of terrorism by local authorities. Furthermore, the murder of MP Jo Cox by Thomas Mair in Britain, the attacks by Anders Breivik in Norway, and the violent acts perpetrated by far-right groups from Germany and Sweden to Hungary (to name but a few) serve as reminders that far-right violent extremism is far from a nominal threat. Moreover, emerging trends in the European political context, including the rise of nativist nationalism and the emergence of hostile public discourses on immigration, have brought ideas traditionally attributed to the far-right into mainstream discussion, in the process popularising and in some cases 'normalising' them in the eyes of particular audiences.

The term 'far-right' in itself is notoriously slippery, largely because it presupposes a significant degree of ideological distance from a putative 'mainstream'. The broad, diverse family of the non-mainstream right - used in this project as a superset that includes 'far-right' in both its violent and non-violent forms - extends from radical, populist and anti-establishment but non-violent organised parties of the right to clandestine terrorist individuals and groups, fighting their own version of culture wars

[1] "Darren Osborne Charged with Murder over Finsbury Park Van Attack," *The Guardian*, 23.6.2017, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/23/darren-osborne-charged-with-terrorism-related-murder-over-finsbury-park-van-attack.

[2] "Emmanuel Macron Assassination Plot Foiled by French Police," CNN, 4.7.2017, http://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/03/europe/macron-assassination-plot-foiled/index.html.

on the terrain of ultra-nationalism, anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism, anti-globalisation identity politics.[3] Some radical but non-violent parties of the non-mainstream right have been making headlines in recent years, with increasing electoral support and agenda-setting power. They may have not - as yet - achieved an electoral breakthrough, but they are increasingly successful in a number of critical fields, such as influencing the political agenda and breaking taboos and thus shifting social attitudes. They also have a significant (and disproportionate to their electoral or social appeal) exposure in (mostly) new and old media. Against this backdrop of resurgent non-violent radical right politics, however, there are growing concerns about the threat from far-right violence, whether coming from organised movements, informal networks or individuals.[4]

In general, the term 'far-right' is used in this volume as an umbrella term to indicate an assortment of ideologies and groups/movements that situate themselves at the more nativist, exclusive, intolerant, and (rhetorically and/or behaviourally) aggressive side of the non-mainstream right-wing spectrum. It is important to stress that the 'far-right' too hosts an array of ideological, discursive, and behavioural stances that range from the non-violent to the pre-violent to the extremely violent. This means that the far-right may not be by definition violent but spans a political space where violent repertoires may become - and indeed have become - justified, normalised, and performed with devastating effect.

[3] Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, vol. 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester University Press, 2010); Cas Mudde, "The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy," *West European Politics* 33, no. 6 (2010): 1167–86; Jens Rydgren, *Movements of Exclusion: Radical Right-Wing Populism in the Western World* (New York: Nova Publishers, 2005); Matthew J Goodwin, *The New Radical Right: Violent and Non-Violent Movements in Europe* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012).

[4] Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremist Radicalization Processes: The Formers' Perspective," *Journal Exit-Deutschland. Zeitschrift Für Deradikalisierung Und Demokratische Kultur* 1 (2014): 307–77.

This is why the notion of violent radicalisation is central to the project. In the security sector, in the last few decades there has been considerable research interest in radicalisation, defined here broadly as a phased, dynamic process of cognitive and behavioural transformation that puts an individual and/or group at odds with a society's core values and a growing willingness to pursue fundamental change through radical means. Such a broad definition includes scenarios of violent action (the active pursuit or acceptance of the use of violence to attain a stated goal), reaching all the way to terrorism - though it should be stressed that these constitute a subset of a generic radicalisation dynamic.[5] Especially since the turn of the new millennium, the discussion on the dynamics of, and threats from, violent radicalisation has received considerable fresh attention since a series of recent terrorist attacks testified to its highly disruptive and destructive potential. Taken together with the appreciable rise in instances of hate speech and in violent incidents against vulnerable groups (Muslim, Jewish, Roma communities; immigrants and refugees, etc.), it is now feared that we may be witnessing a much broader and profound 'reverse wave' towards more intolerance, exclusion, and normalisation of violent extremism in contemporary societies.[6]

Extending the term 'radicalisation' outside its conventional current association with religion and applying it to the particular context of the far-right opens up an extensive field of enquiry regarding radical right-wing ideas and politics, as well as their links to violent activities. It also poses the question as to whether the domain of the far-right should be analysed as a distinct problem of violent radicalisation from the point of view of research, analysis and/

[5] Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2009).

[6] Ingrid Habets, "Liberal Democracy: The Threat of Counter-Narratives," *European View* 14, no. 2 (2015): 145–54; Geiselberger, Heinrich. Ed. *The Great Regression. An International Debate* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017).

or P/CVE action. From a methodological point of view, the main challenge is to balance two broad categories ('violent radicalisation' and 'far-right') against a number of particular (individual and collective; local, national, regional and global) contexts. In drawing attention to the violent radicalisation of the far-right in particular, we essentially test two related hypotheses. The first is that there are significant distinct features in this specific domain of the far-right in terms of motives and mechanisms of radicalisation to set it apart from other contexts. The second hypothesis is that there are enough important similarities in the trajectories of radicalisation of different individuals and groups associated with the far-right and operating across a number of countries to speak of a distinct radicalisation model for the far-right.

The project focuses on the following research questions:

- Why and how do far-right movements radicalise?
- To what extent are particular instances of radicalisation driven by national dynamics or influenced by shared transnational factors?
- To what extent are such instances of radicalisation driven by individual, structural or international factors?
- In what circumstances can radicalisation lead to violent extremism?
- What are the consequences of this radicalisation on communities in contemporary Europe?
- How have governments and mainstream political parties dealt with far-right radicalisation and violent extremism?

In order to address these questions, the project adopts a methodology that combines empirical and thematic enquiry. Two specific national case studies (UK and Hungary) have been identified on the basis of their particular relevance to this discussion of radicalisation to test hypotheses and explore the suitability of policy recommendations that emerge from this project. The choice of the

four topics allows for a number of further enquiries, such as the impact of diverse local and national factors and drivers, of different national political cultures and regional histories, as well as of new modes of violent socialisation and networking.

Another goal of this project is also to produce programme and policy recommendations based on the results of these questions, particularly for intervention points to prevent violent extremism and violence perpetrated by far right groups.

Radicalisation and violence

In the context of policy and practice for P/CVE in Europe, the use of the term 'radicalisation' presents unique opportunities, but it also entails methodological and definitional challenges. To begin with, the literature on radicalisation originally emerged in the field of radical social movements. Such studies have highlighted how complex social bonds within a radical network are often the primary drivers of radicalisation, bringing the individual closer to the group in ideas, attitudes, and behaviours while at the same time bringing about cognitive and psychological transformations that facilitate and accelerate violent, taboo-breaking action. This kind of research has delivered significant insights in relation to historical case studies of political radicalism and violence, ranging from the mobilisation of socialist and trade-union movements in the past two centuries to ethno-nationalist separatist violence in Ireland and Spain to left-wing terrorism in Germany and Italy during the 1960s and 1970s.[7] On the methodological level, it has focused attention to the triangular interaction between the person, the (clandestine) community/network, and society as a whole against the backdrop of key structural and contextual factors.

[7] Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Uwe Backes, "Extreme Right- and Left-Wing Violence in Germany," *Politische Studien* 58, no. 1 (2007): 31-43.

The current conventional identification of 'radicalisation' with either terrorism or the religion-based extremism was practically absent from the literature until the 1990s. Since then, a series of terrorist attacks - from Oklahoma, Baghdad, and New York to Madrid, Mumbai, and Oslo - have refocused attention to the personal journeys and diverse processes that led to them. The diversity of ideological backgrounds (from old and new forms of religious fundamentalism to an equally growing action repertoire of right-wing extremism) offered fascinating insights into radicalisation as a process but it also produced conceptual slippages. As a result, many definitions used in the academic literature and in the policy debate lack precision and the term 'radicalisation' (in essence, as already mentioned, a fiercely dynamic process) has often been confused with other concepts such as radicalism, extremism or terrorism (outcomes of the transformative process).[8]

Thus, the research located at the intersections of radicalisation, violence, and the far-right that constitute the focus of this project represents a very particular subset in the relevant literature on radicalisation. As mentioned above, the link between radicalisation and violent action is a tenuous one. Radicalisation is essentially suggestive of a complex dynamic of transformation – a process by which individuals come to hold radical views that challenge the status quo and question widely shared taboos.[9] However, this transformation does not have a clearly defined end-point;[10] it may result in a situation which individuals come to justify and eventually undertake violent activity - but it may also stop short of such a behavioural change. Emphasis on the process as a particular timeline of events

[8] Mark Sedgwick, "The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 4 (2010): 479–94.

[9] Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell, and Michael King, *The Edge of Violence: A Radical Approach to Extremism* (London: Demos, 2013).

[10] Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation*, 132.

may retrospectively suggest a sense of progression from one stage to another and towards the attainment of a rational goal. The challenge for the researcher, particularly research that intends to generate practical recommendations for intervention points, is to focus as much on the trajectory as a whole as on the various intersections along the way, where unintended or unforeseeable effects may have occurred.[11]

This tension between process (radicalisation) and outcome (violent versus non-violent behaviour) also points to a broader contentious facet of the discussion on radicalisation: the interface between cognitive and behavioural radicalisation.[12] While there are convincing arguments to view cognitive (that is, ideological) radicalisation as the necessary condition for a change of behaviour and thus a personal endorsement of violence as a form of action,[13] others have called for distinctions to be made when it comes to journeys to violent action.[14]

Similarly, in reference to the radicalisation of far-right movements, questions have been raised with regard to the relations of this violent subset with the broader family of the non-mainstream right - or indeed with the mainstream one. Research on this link has so far been more conceptual than empirical, generating sophisticated typologies[15] that account for significant differences

[11] Daniela Pisoiu, *Islamist Radicalisation in Europe: An Occupational Change Process* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[12] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2008): 415–33; Goerzig & Al-Hashimi, *Radicalisation*, 94.

[13] Peter R Neumann, "The Trouble with Radicalization," *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2003): 873–93.

[14] Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

[15] Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); David Art, *Inside the Radical Right: The Development of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-28.

in ideological outlook, political strategy, and modes of political action. Clearly, while some parties of the non-mainstream right have undergone significant cognitive radicalisation in recent years, they are fundamentally different in their political strategies to movements and networks that have already broken the taboo of violent action against the status quo. There is far less consensus, however, in relation to the nature of this distinction. For example, does the radicalisation of the ideological discourse of populist parties of the non-violent radical right facilitate particular kinds of violent action perpetrated by others? What is the cumulative effect of cognitive radicalisation, with or without the appendage of violent action by extremist groups, on mainstream parties and society? What are the narratives and 'framing' patterns of far-right extremism and what are their effects on mainstream political and social discourses?

The journeys of radicalisation: causes, junctures, triggers

Considerable research has been conducted in relation to the causes and facilitating factors of violent radicalisation in contexts that are not specific to, or go beyond, the far-right. Not surprisingly, it is the terrorist, as an individual and/or member of a group, that has received most of the attention, as opposed to the dynamics and interplay of terrorist groups. There is also a significant body of literature regarding 'lone wolf' or 'lone actor' terrorism that seems to include radicalisation of the individuals with limited or no contact with extremist and terrorist groups.

There have been diverse typologies of factors that cause or facilitate the violent radicalisation of individuals and groups, but this is not the place to review these typologies in detail. Overall, it would be fair to note that the general direction of travel in the literature is currently away from mono-causal interpretations or neat taxonomies towards more composite, dynamic, time- and

context-sensitive models of explanation.[16] In other words, there is not a one-size-fits-all model that can describe the process of radicalisation leading to violent acts. However, generally, such models have involved interactions between different social, motivational, and temporal factors. For example, Della Porta and LaFree have popularized the tripartite distinction between individual, group, and societal factors conducive to violent radicalisation (or micro, meso, and macro, in their words). For them, radicalisation is the sum result of various processes which should be distinguished analytically as they "seem to be driven by different mechanisms, follow different patterns, and need to be understood in their social and political context".[17] A similar tripartite distinction is replicated in the root-cause model of radicalisation developed by Veldhuis & Staun (2009) that combines the social dimension (individual and society) with distinctions about the nature of the facilitating factors (psychological and/or environmental). In colloquial terms, the factors or drivers that cause individuals to join violent extremist groups are known as 'push' and 'pull' factors.[18] Others have described the drivers of radicalisation as 'structural motivators' and 'individual incentives'.[19] In this alternative model, it has been noted that a

[16] Alex P Schmid, *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Databases and Literature. (*Amsterdam, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 1983); Alex P Schmid, "Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review," *ICCT Research Paper* 97 (2013): 22.

[17] Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree, "Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 6, no. 2 (2012): 4.

[18] Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism," USAID, February, 2009; USAID Policy, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice," USAID, September, 2011; Sara Zeiger, Anne Aly, *Countering Violent Extremism: Developing an Evidence-Base for Policy and Practice* (Perth: Curtin University, 2015).

[19] James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, *Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation* (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2016).

third potential set of factors, 'enabling factors', such as mentors or group dynamics, play a significant role in the radicalisation and recruitment processes.

Notably, it is often the combination of the relevant drivers with the 'enabling factors' that catalyse and/or exacerbate the process of radicalisation. For example, with respect to 'pull' factors or 'individual incentives', Viktoroff has underlined the role of psychological factors, arguing that the journey to the terrorist act involves a combination of the biographical (biological, developmental, and cognitive factors) with the contextual (social and cultural environment, group dynamics).[20] Griffin has underlined the need of the terrorist to seek meaning through their action, thereby resorting to violence to fulfil social and psychological needs.[21] The strategic model of interpretation for the path that leads from violent radicalisation to the terror act assumes rational and/or consistent actors in pursuit of a grander vision of transformational change that involves a radical and supremely active rejection of the status quo. Conversely, Githens-Mazer has spoken of the 'radical irrationality' of the terrorist caused by an unusually high sensitivity to a particular critical issue.[22] Meanwhile, while the strategic model of radicalisation posits a direct link between the political vision/cause and the violent act - the latter being the primary, desired or 'last-resort',[23] vehicle for the realisation of the former -, evidence points to various degrees of disconnect between the two. In fact, as Abrahms has emphasised, the resort to the violent act appears to be fulfilling

[20] Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 1 (2005): 3–42.

[21] Roger Griffin, *Terrorist's Creed: Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012).

[22] Jonathan Githens-Mazer, "Rethinking the Causal Concept of Islamic Radicalisation," *Political Concepts: Committee of Concepts and Methods Working Paper Series* 42 (2010).

[23] Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston, MA: Little Brown & Co, 1987), 133-9.

more social and psychological than political needs - in particular, the need to develop affective ties with other fellow individuals.[24]

Whether primary emphasis is placed on the individual journey (as in psychological theories), on the impact of group dynamics (as in social movement theories), or on the social, political, and cultural environment, the dynamics and trajectory of violent radicalisation is largely determined at the points of contact between the personal (whether individual or group) and the structural. Prioritising the one over the other may indeed obscure the role of what Coleman has defined as the more complex 'causal mechanisms'.[25] These are situated at the points of contact between the various levels and have often a critical effect on aligning (or not) radicalisation with a violent action path.

Meanwhile, there is a growing realisation that even the most sophisticated model of underlying causes of violent radicalisation should steer clear of any hint of determinism, analysing instead the permissive factors[26] that make the jump to the violent action path more likely. This is why a number of explanatory models shift perspective to a time-sensitive approach to violent radicalisation, distinguishing between structural, motivational, facilitating, and above all trigger factors.[27] Whether the chosen metaphor is a pyramid,[28] staircase[29] or simply stages, there is a correlation between

[24] Max Abrahms, "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 78–105.

[25] James S. Coleman, "Social Theory, Social Research, and a Theory of Action," *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 6 (1986): 1309-1335; Donatella Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 21.

[26] Darcy ME Noricks, "The Root Causes of Terrorism," *Social Science for Counterterrorism* 74, no. 06–C (2009): 11.

[27] Tore Bjørgo, *Root Causes of Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[28] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2008): 415–33.

[29] Fathali M Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 161.

critical junctures in time and the momentum of radicalisation. Borum has distilled the process into three main stages - from antipathy towards a group to cognitive-ethical justification of the violent action pathway to finally "eliminating social and psychological barriers that might inhibit action".[30] Others have elaborated on the transition from the first to the second stage (namely, from the biographical to the action-oriented and/or collective), as well as on the dynamics of radicalisation within the second stage itself, introducing for example dynamics of recruitment and socialisation in collective organisations. But all such models feature a final stage, a climax akin to Borum's third stage. This last category is particularly important, for the endorsement of a violent action path requires a final push that transgresses into taboo territory. Triggers or precipitants immediately precede the endorsement of violence[31] and may involve a perceived humiliation or outrage on any of the three levels that is perceived as needing to be avenged. Triggers may also involve a perceived provocation by hostile groups and thus usher in a vicious circle of cumulative radicalisation, whereby the violent actions of one group are construed as permissive causes of further violent radicalisation of the other, and vice versa.[32]

Lessons for studying the radicalisation of the far-right

It is important that we recognise the violent radicalism of the far-right as both a distinct genus in the broader field of rad-

[30] Randy Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): 37; Randy Borum, "Rethinking Radicalization," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): 1.

[31] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379–99.

[32] Roger Eatwell, "Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain," *The Political Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (2006): 204–16; Jamie Bartlett and Jonathan Birdwell, *Cumulative Radicalisation between the Far-Right and Islamist Groups in the UK: A Review of Evidence* (London: Demos, 2013), 3; Joel Busher and Graham Macklin, "Interpreting 'Cumulative Extremism': Six Proposals for Enhancing Conceptual Clarity," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 5 (2015): 884–905.

icalisation and a key member of a family that has featured left-wing militant, religious, and right-wing groups in its genealogical tree. In this respect, drawing insights and lessons from other fields is possible but may require critical calibration. A study by RAND Europe compared a series of factors among radicalised individuals across the entire spectrum from religious to nationalist-separatist to left- and right-wing groups.[33] The findings of this exercise were fascinating, though perhaps not surprising in their key message: differences in motivations, trajectories, and triggers notwithstanding, a series of key factors proved significant across the entire sample. These factors included biographical factors such as proneness to violence; facilitating factors such as violent socialisation via the use of internet; and triggers such as negatively perceived environmental events. In all scenarios, violent radicalisation is a phased dynamic process that is situated at various critical junctures of the biographical, the ideological, the collective/group, the structural, and the environmental.[34] Understanding both commonalities and particular facets of these processes is crucial for the development of meaningful and effective P/CVE strategies.

In piecing together the particular puzzle of violent radicalisation in the context of the far-right, it is crucial to maintain a dialogue between the distinct characteristics of this very particular ideological-political subset with the broader experience of violent radicalisation. For example, it will be important to accommodate the category of 'hate crime' in the trajectories of violent radicalisa-

[33] RAND Europe, *Synthesis Report on the Results from Work Package 2: Inventory of the Factors of Radicalization and Counter Terrorism Interventions*, 2011 - http://impacteurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/D2.2-Synthesis-Report.pdf.

[34] Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, "The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 11 (2015): 958–75.

tion that chart pathways from non-violent to violent behaviour.[35] It will also be essential to accommodate the specific spectrum of organisational dynamics in the field of the far-right. These may range from organised parties to a version of social movements to smaller groups (formal and informal, space-bound and virtual) and finally to the so-called 'lone actor', a category that has tended to dominate the field of right-wing extremism.[36] Furthermore, it will be fascinating to observe how transformations in the structural and environmental context (e.g. the recent refugee crisis in Europe; the impact of 2016 US elections and 2017 European elections; the threat posed by DAESH-inspired terrorism, etc.) will affect the dynamics and action pathways of violent radicalisation in the far-right in the near future. Finally, it will be essential to monitor the impact of new technologies of communication (internet, social media, etc.) on theoretical assumptions about socialization in radical networks and violent action pathways.[37] Piecing the puzzle together means both elaborating interpretive models that translate well to the experience of far-right radicalisation and collecting significant amounts of empirical information about particular case studies, both national and inter-/transnational.

[35] Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe: Current Developments and Issues for the Future," *Prism: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations* 6, no. 2 (2016): 84-104; Alex P Schmid, "Violent and Non-Violent Extremism: Two Sides of the Same Coin," *ICCT Research Paper* (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2014).

[36] Clare Ellis, Raffaello Pantucci, Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn, Edwin Bakker, Benoît Gomis, Simon Palombi, and Melanie Smith, *Lone-Actor Terrorism. Final Report* (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2016); Raffaello Pantucci, "What Have We Learned about Lone Wolves from Anders Behring Breivik?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 5-6 (2011); Matthias Gardell, "Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (2014): 129-55; Matthew Feldman, "Comparative Lone Wolf Terrorism: Toward a Heuristic Definition," *Democracy and Security* 9, no. 3 (2013): 270–86.

[37] Gabriel Weimann, "Lone Wolves in Cyberspace," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 3, no. 2 (2012) - https://jtr.st-andrews.ac.uk/articles/10.15664/jtr.405/.

The contributions to this report

This project investigates a number of key intersections: the individual and the collective, the biographical and the structural, the national and the transnational, the historical and the contemporary. The four essays featured here shed light on a number of features of violent radicalisation in the specific field of the far-right.

Paul Jackson's essay *Beyond the 'Lone Wolf': Lone Actor Terrorism and the Far-Right in Europe* is dedicated to 'lone actor' far-right terrorism. He employs the term as a superset that includes self-radicalised loners, lone actors with otherwise established links to far-right organisations, and small, self-directed groups. In spite of this typology, Jackson reminds us that it remains hard to determine standard profiles for the far-right lone actor. Their radicalisation may be driven by an array of personal and structural factors; and it may be critically facilitated through the internet. Nevertheless, Jackson argues that, in comparison to the case of far-right groups, detecting the radicalisation trajectories of lone actors remains particularly challenging and may require a stronger focus on tackling 'far-right cultures' more widely.

Mark Littler's essay *Online Radicalisation, Risk and Terrorism in the Digital Space* draws attention to use of the internet by far-right individuals and groups. He underlines the facilitating role of the internet in terms of both violent socialisation - regardless of limitations of time and space - and distribution of extremist content. As the disruptive effects of the internet are likely to increase over the coming years, Littler underscores the need for both states and online providers to urgently address the deficiencies in their response to online radicalisation by the far-right.

Matthew Feldman and Paul Stocker identify the 2016 referendum on EU membership as a pivotal moment in the history of far-right cultures in the UK in their essay *The Post-Brexit Far-Right in Britain*. First, it was marked by the assassination of Jo Cox MP

by far-right terrorist Thomas Mair on the eve of the referendum vote. Second, the entire campaign for the referendum had a critical normalising effect on a number of extremist ideological themes on Islam and Muslims, on immigration and race, on nativism and hyper-nationalism. Starting with a historical overview of the far-right cultures and organisations in Britain, Feldman argues that the Leave campaign for the 2016 referendum has illustrated how much the entire British political culture has shifted to the right and how the outcome of the referendum has unleashed forces that increase the dynamics of far-right violent radicalisation.

Finally, the essay by Julia Holdsworth and Katherine Kondor *Understanding Violence and the Hungarian Far-Right* draws attention to a very different set of contextual factors: the historical roots of the far-right since the beginning of the 20th century; the country's recent, complex post-socialist transition; and the strength of hyper-nationalist ideologies at the mainstream of Hungarian political and media cultures. In comparison to Britain, the political space of the far-right in Hungary is broader, extending from parties operating in the mainstream to organisations aiming to violently try to overthrow the political system. The targets of violent radicalisation are also more diverse: immigrants and more recently refugees, Muslims but also Roma, Jews, and members of the LGBT community. Holdsworth and Kondor highlight the particular challenges and obstacles facing P/CVE action in contemporary Hungary.

CHAPTER 1

BEYOND THE 'LONE WOLF': LONE ACTOR TERRORISM AND THE FAR-RIGHT IN EUROPE

PAUL JACKSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, Europe has experienced a new wave of violent far-right radicalisation. This has led to a heightened risk of individuals, as well as small self-directed groups of like-minded activists, developing terrorist acts. This report surveys recent research into this phenomenon, highlights a number of salient cases, and offers policy recommendations applicable to European governments.

KEY FINDINGS

Who are far-right lone actors?

- Rejecting the emotive term 'lone wolf' as unhelpful, far-right terrorists can be divided into three categories: 'loners', who have vicarious relationships with wider far-right cultures; 'lone actors', who have long-lasting, two-way relationships with far-right cultures; and 'small groups', clusters of activists who develop into self-directed, autonomous cells. Lone actor terrorists who are actively directed by larger terrorist groups do not appear to be part of far-right violent extremism at present.
- The current research shows there is no single profile for far-right lone actor terrorists in Europe, other than they are typically white and male.

What issues are crucial to radicalisation?

- Combinations of long-term factors, such as previous criminality and mental health issues, and short-term factors, such as losing a job or experiencing a relationship breakdown, typically (though not always) explain why people become vulnerable to violent forms of far-right radicalisation.
- Exposure to ideology is also crucial to far-right radicalisation, while personal grievances are often blended into the worldviews of far-right terrorists, helping to legitimise action. The

inclusion of an ideological component distinguishes lone actor terrorists from others who kill, such as serial killers.

- The increased role of the internet in contemporary forms of far-right radicalisation is crucial, especially as a tool for self-directed radicalisation, providing attackers with inspirational ideological material, information on how to develop methods of attack, and opportunities to tell others about their actions.

What issues are crucial to detection?

- More effort is needed to address the problem of far-right radicalisation, viewing it as a distinct issue from other forms of radicalisation.
- Intelligence gathering on far-right organisations will facilitate detection, and data suggests that monitoring of far-right security threats is poorer than monitoring of similar threats from religion-based extremist groups.
- Online monitoring of extreme-right groups is particularly important, as is doing more to tackle the easy availability of extremist material online. Far-right activists regularly use online spaces, and can even disclose intentions to carry out attacks online.
- As detecting far-right lone actor terrorists will remain difficult, consideration needs to be given to other methods for reducing the risks of violent attacks, such as limiting the availability of potential bomb making materials, and other weapons that could be used in attacks.
- Addressing security threats from far-right terrorism must be related to wider, long-term strategies designed to tackle the whole range of issues posed by far-right cultures, as this will help deter people from entering into a culture of radicalisation. Such strategies include education programmes to tackle racism in schools, initiatives to encourage the reporting of hate crimes, and state support for credible NGOs that challenge the far-right.

PART 1: LONE ACTOR TERRORISM, CAUSES AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

Across Europe in recent years, politics has become less stable and more unpredictable. Attitudes towards immigration, as a result of factors such as the refugee crisis from 2015 onwards, have become more discordant, while major problems within the European Union, such as Brexit, also add uncertainty. Meanwhile, national agendas are increasingly becoming defined by a securitisation agenda focused on tackling religion-based extremism, itself helping to normalise prejudices hostile to Muslim communities. In this context, many varieties of non-mainstream right activity, from populist parties to terrorist threats, have found fertile territory for growth. While this report is focused on the issues posed by the most extreme forms of non-mainstream right behaviours, lone actor terrorism, the wider context is crucial to appreciate because it provides the backdrop to some of the most aggressive kinds of far-right activism.

For many analysts and political figures, the archetypal contemporary far-right lone actor terrorist remains Anders Breivik. His two acts of terrorism in Norway on 22 July 2011, leading to 77 deaths, certainly offer a standout example of far-right lone actor terrorism. Since 2011, this case has also helped inspire a dramatic rethink of the potential risks posed by violent far-right activists. Yet despite this new focus on the risks posed by the far-right, detailed research into lone actor terrorism remains limited in scope, and any conclusions to be drawn must still be, to a degree, tentative.

Who are far-right lone actors?

While Breivik has had a profound impact on the research literature, generalisations drawn from one case are rarely useful. This

raises the question of who should fall under the category of far-right lone actors? Clearly, the phenomenon of far-right lone actor is far more varied and complex than Breivik's high profile case might suggest. It is crucial to learn lessons from the diverse examples of such terrorism, which include: Thomas Mair, an isolated British neo-Nazi who killed the British MP Jo Cox in June 2016; Gianluca Casseri, who was loosely linked to the CasaPound group and killed two Senegalese market traders in Florence, Italy in December 2011; and Pavlo Lapshyn, a Ukrainian who carried out several attacks on Muslim communities in the UK, including one murder, in 2013. Study of the phenomenon of such self-directing far-right figures who have committed murderous violence also includes cases of small, independent groups, the most notorious of which in recent times has been the National Socialist Underground, active throughout the 2000s and responsible for at least ten murders.

The phenomenon of far-right lone actor terrorism also raises many questions, such as: what does 'lone-ness' actually mean, when individuals are influenced by an ideology constructed by others, and often engage with larger groups and networks in some way before they carry out attacks? How significant are mental health factors, often identified as explanatory and of central importance in media accounts? Has the internet become crucial for self-directed far-right radicalisation? And finally, how can these mercurial and elusive lone actors be detected before they carry out acts of violence?

While the nature of such far-right terrorism and violence remains under-researched, as this report will demonstrate, some conclusions from the current literature are possible, and experts in this field do point to some clear answers to these questions. Firstly, it is crucial to deconstruct the idea of 'lone-ness' to grasp this phenomenon. The term 'lone wolf', often deployed in media commentaries (and originally generated by American far-right cultures) is very misleading, and ought to be resisted. Many lone actors may act

alone, but their behaviour is inherently linked to wider ideological communities of support. They are not as isolated as media accounts often suggest, and the term 'lone wolf' can act as a barrier to understanding this phenomenon. Typically, interactions with others can either be experienced in a one-way relationship, (i.e. the lone actor as an isolated figure engages with material found online), or a more complex two-way form (i.e. when longstanding activists decide to go beyond the limits of groups they are linked to and develop more extreme action alone). When such activists are linked to ongoing activism they may even come together to form groups and act as a small collective, supporting and reinforcing each other's activism, though not receiving direction from a larger terrorist organisation. In each of these three configurations, lone actors are rarely truly 'alone', and certainly consider themselves intimately connected to a wider ideological community of support.

Deconstruction of the idea of lone-ness is crucial, especially when dealing with issues of detection, which are discussed below. To help create a language reflecting on this issue, Raffaello Pantucci of the Royal United Services Institute has reflected on these categories, and his analysis has been adapted for this report to reflect different types of 'lone-ness'.[1] Drawing on Pantucci's model, types of self-directed terrorism include:

- **Loners**: those who have little to no two-way interaction with wider far-right communities and are almost entirely self-radicalised.
- **Lone actors**: those who have a much more engaged set of interactions with far-right organisations, but decide to step beyond their limits and engage in terrorism.

[1] Raffaello Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2011), accessed 11 August, 2017, http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1302002992ICSRPaper_ATypologyofLoneWolves_Pantucci.pdf.

- **Small groups**: those who come together in pairs, threes or small clusters to create a new group which acts independently of pre-existing larger far-right organisations.

This report will also use the term 'lone actor' as a generic term to refer to all three of these, as it is widely used as such in the research literature.

This model, while far from perfect, certainly allows for a more granular understanding of different types of lone actor, and highlights that all have some form of relationship with wider far-right communities. Nevertheless, this general framework only goes so far in explaining what characteristics these troubled people share, and what makes them unique.

Unique and common factors found in far-right lone actor terrorists

The research into this area to date draws out a crucial point regarding the types of people drawn to such terrorism: there is no clearly discernable profile of a lone actor terrorist. Paul Gill's analysis in particular urges appreciation of the diversity of those drawn to lone actor terrorism, their complex backgrounds, and the inherent difficulties in drawing useful generalisations from the many cases over the years, hampering efforts to generate a clear picture of a specific 'type' of lone actor. Apart from the fact that they are almost universally white and male, there are few shared characteristics shared by all far-right lone actors.

The lack of a common profile also helps address questions of how 'specific' to national and local circumstances cases of far-right lone actor terrorism are. Local and national issues, on one level, certainly define how lone actors conceive their actions, yet such issues also often point to generic concerns as well. For example, Gianluca Casseri was a lone actor linked to the Italian group CasaPound

who attacked specifically Senegalese market traders in Florence in 2011; Zack Davies was linked to the British group National Action and framed his attack on an Asian man in 2015 as 'revenge' for the murder of Lee Rigby by religion-based extremists; and, to take an American case, Timothy McVeigh, one of the Oklahoma City bombers, was radicalised by the US government's storming of the Branch Davidians compound in Waco, Texas. While all of these examples can be seen as being driven by specific local and national concerns, each case also evokes a more general issue. Casseri's focus on Senegalese street traders relates to a wider context of racism and anger towards migrants, an attitude commonly found in far-right cultures. The murder of Lee Rigby has a particularly strong resonance in the UK, but the wider issue here, violence framed as a response to religion-based extremism, is again a general theme found in contemporary far-right cultures. Finally, the actions of the US government directed against militia cultures in the 1990s relate to a specific US context. Yet the more general trope of radicalisation emerging as a response to perceived heavy-handed government activity is again one that is regularly articulated in far-right cultures.

In other words, all attacks can be seen as defined by many unique contexts. With this in mind, the literature highlights a number of areas that do emerge that help to draw out the dynamics of the lone attacker. These include the following:

Personalisation of attacks is a typical feature of lone actors. As opposed to the actions of larger far-right groups, lone actors inevitably have much greater freedom to incorporate their own personal issues and grievances into their campaigns, while also setting these alongside ideological concerns. Typically, far-right lone actor terrorists do not act merely out of generally held grievances articulated by far-right ideologies, but use ideology and personal grievance together to generate specific worldviews that, for them, legitimise terrorism in powerful ways. For example, in 1999, the British nail bomber

David Copeland combined hatred of immigrants with his own experiences of homophobic bullying to develop his targets. He told police interviewers that his final attack, on a gay pub, was caused by this personal grievance, while other attacks on multicultural areas were more ideologically driven. This issue of personalisation also helps to explain the highly idiosyncratic nature of such attackers.

Mental health issues are a common feature of far-right lone actors, though again it is difficult to make too many generalised points from this observation. From depression in cases such as Copeland, to narcissistic personality disorders in cases such as Breivik, there are no clear patterns between cases that researchers have identified that suggest specific mental health conditions are crucial, nor it is clear that mental health concerns explain why all lone actors engage in violence. Studies are also divided on whether lone actors demonstrate a significantly higher level of mental health issues compared to the wider public. With these caveats in mind, care should be taken when linking far-right lone actors to mental health issues. This is certainly a common long-term factor, but mental health should not be highlighted to inadvertently exclude other crucial issues, such as the role of ideology, online radicalisation and the culpability of the person in question.

Online radicalisation has become a common feature of far-right lone actors since the 2000s. Even cases before this time, such as David Copeland in 1999, used online communication as part of their radicalisation. The internet now offers a wide array of material, from the pragmatic (i.e. bomb-making instructions) to the ideological (i.e. books such as *The Turner Diaries*), as well as access to sympathetic communities (i.e. Stormfront.org), which can all benefit potential attackers in a variety of ways. While the 'dark net' seems less useful for facilitating terrorism, the 'darker areas' of the surface web certainly provide easy access to motivational and instructional material used by many self-activating solo actor terrorists.

These fundamental areas of far-right one actor terrorism – ideology, personalisation, mental health and online radicalisation – require further research. Nevertheless, the literature to date explores these issues as crucial to understanding each unique case of far-right lone actor terrorism.

How does radicalisation lead to violent extremism?

This section of the report takes 'radicalisation' as signifying a turn to politically motivated violence, though as noted by Aristotle Kallis et al. in the introduction, radicalisation can signify a wider range of non-mainstream practices. As case studies examined below highlight, there are a wide range of factors feeding into each example of far-right terrorism. For those vulnerable to radicalisation, some form of engagement with a far-right community, either as a 'loner' in a one-way manner, or as a 'lone actor', in a two way dynamic, is crucial. However, exposure alone does not make someone vulnerable to violence. What 'triggers' someone into deciding on a pathway of violence will vary from case to case. Such triggers could include a wide array of specific life events, which may be indirectly related, or not related at all, to their political views. Moreover, both long-term (distal) and short-term (proximate) factors will combine in each case in a way that explains a lone actor's radicalisation.

Often these factors can be quite mundane, yet they will combine in a way that means someone also exposed to far-right culture becomes vulnerable to seizing upon a radicalised, violent solution. A better understating of distinguishing elements of far-right culture, from its number codes, to typical logos and slogans used by far-right groups, among professionals likely to encounter those vulnerable to far-right radicalisation is important in managing the risk of violent extremism. This could include people working for local authorities who encounter members of the public, mental health workers, and police officers. Typical long-term factors regularly cit-

ed in the research literature as helping make people vulnerable to far-right radicalisation include: an underlying mental health issue; becoming socially isolated; and/or having a criminal record. However, such issues will not be present in all cases. Short-term factors commonly found in cases include issues such as: losing a job; experiencing a relationship breakdown; joining a new organisation; and changing address. Explaining violent forms of radicalisation comes in the ways these combine within the context of exposure to ideology. For example, losing a job may occur because of a mental health issue, which then offers a potential lone actor time to become frustrated by an issue they see around them, such as immigration, leading to them becoming more absorbed in an ideological response, developing deeper interest in far-right culture, and finally developing a plan for an attack. Typically processes of radicalisation take time, and attacks are usually not 'spontaneous'.

Lone actor terrorists also share many characteristics with serial killers. Cases of lone actor terrorists and serial killers typically possess similar narratives of longer-term personal and social problems becoming more intense, before somehow culminating into violent action. However, there are important differences from serial killers too, including the ways far-right lone actors are typically linked to a wider ideological community of support; and are far more likely to leak data regarding their attack to others before an attack. Moreover, despite elements of personalisation far-right lone actors are clearly driven by ideological motives, whereas serial killers are driven by far more personal grievances.

Responding to risks

While the combination of long and short term factors helps explain the triggering of attacks, another crucial factor in lone actors becoming successful when enacting a planned attack is likely to be some form of failure by authorities in detecting them. It is

impossible to know whether all those who simply fantasise about lone actor terrorist activity will one day act on their desires, and so we will never know how many potential attackers are truly 'out there'. However, current studies certainly suggest that more needs to be done to detect potential far-right lone actors before they engage in violence. As noted above, this includes providing a wide range of professionals who encounter vulnerable people with a better knowledge base of far-right activity. Moreover, a series of reports from 2016 by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) focused on cases of lone actor terrorism across Europe. It showed that 40% of all detection of far-right lone actors was primarily through chance, rather than as a result of intelligence-led investigations focused directly on the potential perpetrator concerned. In contrast, the report noted that 88% of religiously inspired lone actors were detected through intelligence operations that were focused on the perpetrator concerned. Such striking findings points to a need for better intelligence gathering on far-right cultures.

RUSI's analysis highlights some further issues with detecting far-right lone actor terrorists, which point to the need to appreciate the fundamentally different nature of far-right radicalised contexts.[2] For example, 50% of religiously inspired lone actors manifested notable behavioural change before an attack, while the equivalent figure for far-right lone actors was just 15%. RUSI's analysis also highlighted that many lone attackers engage in 'leakage', or letting others know of an upcoming attack. From their dataset at least, RUSI concluded 'leakage' occurred in 46% of cases, a figure that was the same for far-right and religiously inspired attacks. However, they detected a difference in the type of 'leakage' between religiously inspired attacks, such as religion-based ones, and far-right

[2] The project generated a number of discrete papers, which are accessible from the following online hub, accessed 11 August, 2017, https://rusi.org/projects/lone-actor-terrorism.

leakage. Far-right lone actors were less likely to tell friends or family about their intentions, and more likely to disclose in more ambiguous ways, such as posting indicators on social media or other online sources. In 41% of cases, some form of indicator was posted online before an attack. Better monitoring of far-right online spaces, therefore, is vital.

Finally, while security services could do more to detect attacks, it is not reasonable to expect every far-right lone actor to be detected prior to an attack. Therefore, as with religion-based extremist threats, introducing measures that make carrying out attacks more difficult, such as restricting access to weapons, and hampering the availability of material likely to aid radicalisation, is also important to consider, as part of a range of responses to this threat.

So, while focusing on long term and short term factors that lead to radicalisation is crucial for explaining how people become vulnerable to far-right radicalisation, one element of mitigating risk here is to respond to a relative failure of state security services to do enough to tackle far-right radicalisation, compared to efforts put into tackling religion-based extremist threats. While not all attacks can be prevented, making them more difficult to carry out will also help protect the public.

Policy suggestions to tackle lone actor far-right radicalisation

Religion-based extremism has been the focus of state security services in many European countries in the 2000s and 2010s, and for important reasons. Figures such as Daniel Koehler, Director of the German Institute on Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation, stress that this focus has led to a poverty of knowledge on the far-right in policy circles. As RUSI's analysis also explains: "Government bodies and law-enforcement agencies should examine their policies and procedures to ensure they are understanding and pri-

oritising the right-wing threat appropriately, and dedicating sufficient resources to mitigate it".[3] Strikingly, RUSI also stress successful far-right lone actor terrorists tend to be more deadly than religion-based ones.

Despite such sobering observations, this issue is one that ought to be manageable, and the research now emerging supports the point that this is an issue that can be dealt with. Far-right lone actors are people who are less secretive, and less difficult to detect, than is commonly believed. It is also important for governments to develop long-term policy frameworks to tackle far-right radicalisation, and threats from lone actor terrorism forms only one element of this threat, which also includes violent and non-violent forms of hate crime. The data discussed in this report clearly suggests that greater monitoring of far-right activity, offline and especially online, will benefit detection of such threats. Often, far-right lone actors are not detected yet this can be explained through a lack of sufficient resources, as well as an inadequate underpinning knowledge base, to deal with this issue.

With these issues in mind, specific policy recommendations to target far-right lone actors can therefore be summarised as follows:

More resources need to be devoted to monitoring far-right cultures, including online environments, with the aim of developing a detailed understanding of far-right activists, their networks, and especially those on the fringes of these groups with unstable lives, who are particularly susceptible to become engaged in violent activity.

As simple **counter-narrative strategies are unlikely to deter someone who has become convinced of the need for an attack,** greater emphasis on public education of the risks of far-right terror-

[3] Clare Ellis and Raffaello Pantucci, *"Leakage" and Interaction with Authorities* (London: Royal United Service Institute, 2016), accessed 11 August, 2017, https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201602_clat_policy_paper_4.pdf.

ism, and how it is linked to wider far-right culture, will help raise awareness of the issue, and potentially lead to greater reporting of those who have become radicalised but who have not yet engaged in violence.

As identification of lone actor terrorists will remain difficult, measures that make carrying out attacks more challenging, such as restricting access to weapons and bomb making materials, also play a crucial role in limiting the risks of this type of terrorism.

Developing solutions to the risk posed by lone actors requires **a multifaceted response from governments,** for example through different agencies sharing information, and by **fostering a better appreciation of the wide varieties of non-mainstream right activity and how they interrelate.** Moreover, doing more to educate the public of the full nature of this issue is crucial. In Britain and elsewhere, the idea that far-right terrorism is a lesser concern than other security risks, such as religion-based extremism, is reflected in the attitudes of the wider public. Therefore, governments need to work harder to communicate these risks, and make wider communities aware of issues posed by far-right terrorism. Crucially, the general public needs to be educated to become both familiar with, and willing to engage with, ways to report issues of far-right radicalisation if they encounter them. This includes people in front line professional roles. Without an active and engaged public, alert to national programmes designed to tackle terrorist threats, the work of security agencies will be much harder.

Finally, tackling far-right lone actor terrorism relates to a more general need for governments to develop clear, overarching strategies to deal with a wide range of issues posed by the far-right. Vidhya Ramalingam's 2014 report for the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, *Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe*, set out some of the ways in which governments can do this, which include:

- Creating comprehensive, long-term plans to tackle social issues posed by far-right activity, including ensuring the existence of long-term funding sources for initiatives to challenge racist attitudes.
- Developing robust and consistently enforced legal frameworks for tackling hate crime and issues of discrimination.
- Ensuring that all areas of the state, local and national, work in a coordinated manner to tackle issues posed by the far-right, and also ensuring state sector organisations work effectively with credible NGOs that are engaged with tackling the far-right.
- Funding specific programmes to help people leave far-right groups (such as Exit-Germany or Small Steps in the UK).

Such wider measures all point to a key underlying point: governments and societies that take risks of political violence from the far-right seriously will be in a better position to deal with such attacks than those that do not. Failure to develop general strategies designed to tackle far-right extremism, from hate crimes to lone actor political violence, will increase the likelihood of violent attacks.

As set out at the beginning of this report, in recent years, European politics and society have become less stable and less predictable. Migration is increasing, and is perceived by many as being out of control. Moreover, new, online spaces now offer polemical news outlets that hype such issues, a boon to populist far-right politicians who are gaining increased press coverage (though not necessarily electoral breakthroughs), normalising their agendas. Clearly, within this wider context the risks of far-right radicalisation are also growing. To address this issue, European countries need to develop more robust frameworks for tackling far-right extremist attitudes. The picture is far from hopeless. Strong civil society responses, such as the work of credible NGOs, and mainstream politicians, can combine to deliver specific government action and create multilayered responses that will reduce the likelihood of Europe developing more far-right lone actor terrorists.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

THE NEW CONTEXT OF FAR-RIGHT VIOLENT RADICALISATION

Within the last ten years dramatic changes, from the instability of mainstream politics, to the growth of alternate online spaces to facilitate radicalisation, have fostered a new context for far-right radicalisation in Europe. Reflecting on this changed dynamic, Daniel Koehler, Director of the German Institute on Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation, highlights that Europe has recently experienced a "revival of militant right-wing extreme groups, networks and incidents". He also highlights that the dynamics of such militant far-right activity remains poorly understood, as a result of the focus in recent years on religion-based extremism.[4] A leading voice on radicalisation, Koehler not only stresses the need for policymakers to renew efforts to understand the issues posed by the far-right, but also emphasises they need to recognise these as distinct from those posed by religion-based extremists. Policymakers and practitioners, he concludes, must not make simple assumptions on risks posed by far-right cultures based on their understanding of other terrorist threats from different quarters.

Koehler is one among many voices who recognises the dynamics of far-right radicalisation are changing. The contested term 'radicalisation' itself can have a variety of meanings. While there is no single definition, following Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree, one useful approach is to see 'radicalisation' as "a process leading towards the increased use of political violence".[5] With this

[4] Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe: Current Developments and Issues for the Future," *Prism* 6, no. 2 (2016), 84 – 104.

[5] Donatella Della Porter and Gary LaFree, "Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization," *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 6 no. 1 (2012), 4 – 10.

broad formulation in mind, what follows will identify salient issues found in recent cases of far-right lone actor radicalisation. A number of studies and reports in recent years have tried to understand the more general issue of lone actor terrorism,[6] as well as forms of far-right violence.[7] These have helped to capture the changing dynamics of far-right radicalisation, though their many useful observations cannot be captured in this short literature review. Rather, the focus here is on using these studies to draw out some of the core dynamics of far-right lone actor radicalisation. This section concludes with sketches of some of the most instructive and salient cases of recent times, from Anders Breivik, to Gianluca Casseri to the actions of the National Socialist Underground.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE 'LONE WOLF'

This report focuses on those who are often dubbed 'lone wolves' in media reporting of such terrorism. However, it is crucial to move beyond media clichés and develop a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. In the face of new risks of far-right radicalisation, care needs to be taken to reflect the most up-to-date understanding that explains why people find violent action as, somehow, desirable.

With regard to the problematic use of the term 'lone wolf', the recent case of Thomas Mair, who murdered the British Labour

[6] These include: Mark S. Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); Gerry Gable and Paul Jackson, *Lone Wolves, Myth or Reality?* (London: Searchlight, 2012); Mark Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies* (Indiana: Indiana State University, 2015); Ryan Lenz and Mark Potok, *Age of the Wolf: A Study of the Rise of Lone Wolf and Leaderless Resistance Terrorism* (Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2015); Jan Leenaars and Alastair Reed, *Understanding Lone Wolves: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Comparative Analysis* (ICCT, 2016).

[7] Max Taylor, P. M. Currie and Donald Holbrook, eds., *Extreme Right Wing Political Violence and Terrorism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Daniel Koehler, *Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century: The National Socialist Underground and the History of Terror from the Far-Right in Germany* (London: Routledge, 2016); Sabine von Mering and Timothy McCarty, eds., *Right-Wing Radicalism Today: Perspectives from Europe and America* (London: Routledge, 2013).

MP Jo Cox in 2016, typifies the media's uncritical use of the term. Many reports framed Mair as a typical 'lone wolf'.[8] However, it is important to state that the term 'lone wolf', an emotive and ultimately imprecise descriptor for various forms of self-directed terrorist activity, is quite misleading. In particular, it is often used to create visions of activists with no relationships to larger political movements – thereby creating the false impression such activists are virtually undetectable. This is an important myth to challenge. As one leading study stresses in contrast to the 'lone wolf' mythology, "Lone–actor terrorists regularly engaged in a detectable and observable range of activities, with a wider group, social movement, or terrorist organisation".[9] Though 'lone wolf' is, and will continue to be, used by journalists, serious accounts now tend to reject 'lone wolf' as a useful conceptual tool, and prefer terms like 'lone actor' while also reflecting on the ways such figures are rarely, truly 'alone'.

Given its resonance as part of a far-right mythology idealising violence, it is unsurprising to learn that the term 'lone wolf' was itself coinage of the American neo-Nazi scene, promoted in particular during the 1990s. Activists including Tom Metzger and Alex Curtis encouraged the idea of the 'lone wolf' as a way to idealise an alternative form of activism that was not reliant on large-scale organisations to direct it.[10] A crucial element they

[8] For example, David Wilson, "Was He a Lone Wolf Seeking Moment of Fame?" *Mail on Sunday*, 19 June, 2016; and Lucy Thornton and Nick Sommerlad, "Rise of the 'Lone Wolf' Extremist Feared After Thomas Mair's Murder of Jo Cox," *Daily Mirror*, 23 November, 2016.

[9] Paul Gill, John Horgan and Paige Deckert, "Bombing Alone: Tracing the Motivations and Antecedent Behavior of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 59, no. 2 (2014), 425 – 435.

[10] Anti-Defamation League, "Alex Curtis: 'Lone Wolf' of Hate Prowls the Internet," accessed 11 August, 2017, https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Alex-Curtis-Report.pdf; Southern Poverty Law Center, 'Tom Metzger', accessed 11 August, 2017, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger.

wanted the term to denote was that the so-called 'lone wolf' was not in any way connected to other forms of far-right culture. The 'lone wolf' was, according to their mythology, supposed to be, or at least appear, detached from fellow far-right activists. Curtis, Metzger and others built on pre-existing ideas in American far-right discourses. This included taking inspiration from William Pierce, a leading American neo-Nazi who idealised the idea of far-right violence in his novel *The Turner Diaries*, and the lone killer acting for a political cause, in novels such as *Hunter*.[11] They were also influenced by Louis Beam, who promoted the idea of 'leaderless resistance' to evoke those who acted independently, without direction from a larger organisation, but in accord with commonly held ideological goals.[12]

One important essay by Tom Metzger, 'Laws for the Lone Wolf', widely available online, sets out some interesting advice for would-be 'lone wolves'. Again, these 'laws' are notable for the way they too undermine the idea that such people are ever truly disconnected from a wider extreme-right milieu. At one point, Metzger advises 'lone wolves' to "[C]ommunicate your message to others having the same beliefs as yours. Communication will add to your knowledge base".[13] In other words, potential 'lone wolves' should actually be in contact with others who are ideologically akin, and should not simply isolate themselves. Metzger also states, "Exist and fight as lone wolves or in a small cell and you will last longer and be at peak performance".[14] In other words, 'lone' does not nec-

[11] George Michael, "Blueprints and Fantasies: A Review and Analysis of Extremist Fiction," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, no. 2 (2010), 149 – 170.

[12] Jeffrey Kaplan, "Leaderless Resistance," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 no. 3 (2007), 80 – 95.

[13] Tom Metzger, "Laws for the Lone Wolf," accessed 11 August, 2017, https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t454864/.

[14] Metzger, "Laws for the Lone Wolf".

essarily mean 'alone': he is really talking about people acting either individually or forming small groups discrete in nature to larger, pre-existing organisations.

Finally, Metzger adds, "I have never said their [sic] will never be a time when all small cells and lonewolves may evolve into a highly structure [sic] but ruthlessly militant organization with steel hard leaders. That time is not now and will not be for the foreseeable future".[15] In other words, at least in principle for Metzger 'lone wolf' activism is supposed to feed into the growth of a larger political movement that will take form at some point in the future. Would-be 'lone wolves' are asked to identify with a wider community of activists, seen as fragmented at present yet potentially united and victorious at some undisclosed future moment. This is a trope of a regenerated future that can be found in other articulations of the mythology, such as Breivik's manifesto, which proposed 2083 would be the year when Europe would finally undergo a revolutionary transformation first sparked in 2011.[16] In this sense, the mythology of the 'lone wolf' evokes what Roger Griffin calls a 'palingenetic' fantasy, or a mythology whereby political activism is legitimised by a discourse that promotes a coming revolution, typical of fascist and other extreme political cultures.[17] In its full form at least, the mythology of the 'lone wolf' allows protagonists to think of themselves as revolutionary warriors, heroically creating a new era for 'their' people. The 'lone wolf' mythology is a deeply ideological construct, identifying its contours is crucial but analysis also needs to move beyond its delusions.

[15] Metzger, "Laws for the Lone Wolf".

[16] Paul Jackson, "The License to Hate: Peder Jensen's Fascist Rhetoric in Anders Breivik's Manifesto *2083: A European Declaration of Independence," Democracy and Security* 9, no. 3 (2013), 247 – 269.

[17] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993).

LONE AND SMALL GROUP TERRORISTS AND FAR-RIGHT IDEOLOGIES

Unlike others who act alone and kill *en masse*, such as serial killers,[18] ideology clearly plays a central role in political violence, yet this is also a complex issue. Not all far-right terrorists share the same ideological beliefs. More generally too, researchers who focus on forms of far-right violence regularly identify heterogeneous viewpoints that can be described as 'far-right', ranging from overtly neo-Nazi anti-Semitic conspiracism steeped in white supremacist ideals to Islamophobic activists engaged in 'Counter-Jihad' cultures.[19] Far-right ideologies and cultures are becoming increasingly transnational too,[20] especially since the 1960s when activism was fuelled by technologies such as cheap international travel, and, more recently, the internet.[21] The roles played by these wider extreme-right communities are crucial to explaining far-right radicalisation. Within such environments, online and offline, the idea of political violence is regularly idealised, and myriad resources for developing ideological commitment to a cause can easily be found. This is also a world rife with conspiracy theories, dramatic critiques of mainstream politics and society, [22] and so for those who become vulnerable to radicalisation, these milieus provide many of the resources needed to act violently.

[18] John Horgan et al., *Across the Universe? A Comparative Analysis of Violent Behavior and Radicalization across Three Offender Types with Implications for Criminal Justice Training and Education* (Washington DC: National Institute of Justice, 2016), accessed 11 August, 2017, https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249937.pdf.

[19] Paul Jackson, "Surveying the 'Far Right' in Europe: Reflections on Recent Trends and Conceptual Approaches," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 13 (2016), 31 – 57.

[20] Andrea Mammone, Emmanuelle Godin and Brian Jenkins, eds., *Varieties of Right-Wing Extremism in Europe* (London, Routledge, 2013); Paul Jackson and Anton Shekhovtsov, eds., *The Post-War Anglo-American Far Right* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2014).

[21] Michael Whine, "Trans-European Trends in Right-Wing Extremism," in Mammone et. al., eds., *Varieties of Right-Wing Extremism*, 317-332.

[22] Jeffrey Kaplan and Heléne Lööw, eds., *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization* (California: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002).

Whatever the specific qualities of a violent protagonist's ideology, Ramon Spaaij suggests that ideology provides lone actors with a crucial sense of moral authority that allows them to believe they are engaging in violence as a way to confront an enemy they believe to be morally corrupt.[23] Moreover, he explains that a high degree of personalisation is a common feature of the way lone actors develop ideology. The blurring of the ideological and the personal occurs in myriad ways, but lone actors can certainly be seen as ideological creators and innovators, reflecting concerns within a wider extremist culture but linking them to their own worries and anxieties, to produce potent worldviews that point towards a need for violence. An example here is David Copeland, who Spaaij highlights, exhibited a homophobic outlook that developed in childhood, not as a result of his neo-Nazi beliefs (though was later supported by them). This prejudice helped him decide on the target of the Admiral Duncan pub, a well-known gay venue, for his fatal nail bomb.[24]

CHARACTERISING FAR-RIGHT TERRORISTS: FROM RADICALISATION TO DETECTION

Exposure to, and interest in, a highly idiosyncratic and personalised far-right ideology is only one part of what can be identified as being crucial to producing far-right lone actor terrorists. Radicalisation is a process that occurs over time. What takes someone on a journey from frustration to violence can thus be discussed in terms of longer term, or distal, factors as well as shorter term, or proximate, factors. In principle, people can be identified before they carry out violence, and their activity can be directed towards a different interest. In practice, identifying people already on a pathway of radicalisation, but before they have committed any serious

[23] Ramon Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention* (London: Springer, 2011), 61.

[24] Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 44.

crimes, is difficult, especially with the lone actor category. Each case of far-right lone actor terrorism presents a unique mix of such distal and proximate factors, and often it is only after an attack that these can be seen as explanatory for the radicalisation of an individual. While common issues arise, none can be found in every case of far-right lone actor terrorism, so these themes should be used with care and cannot be used to develop a reductive model of radicalisation applicable to all cases.

With this in mind, Paul Gill's identification of common issues that help to explain why someone chooses to act violently is worth reflecting on. His research shows regularly occurring distal factors can include: previous criminality; ongoing social isolation; and a history of mental illness. These are issues experienced by many people, and so these alone do not really explain far-right radicalisation. Such 'distal' factors combine with proximate factors, which commonly include: a sudden intensification of ideological beliefs for some reason; experiencing a stressful life situation; a problem in a personal relationship; changing address; and becoming unemployed. These too are quite common occurrences, and only help to explain violent radicalisation. Gill talks of the ways these distal and proximate factors interact, in the context of exposure to an ideology, to create situations where people become more vulnerable and susceptible to decide to engage in self-radicalisation. To sketch out a typical scenario: a potential lone actor may lose a job, perhaps in part as a consequence of a mental health or other long term factor leading to instability, resulting in them having time and opportunity to develop a deeper ideological belief. From this position, someone may then decide to act violently and then develop an attack. While each case varies dramatically, he concludes that attacks are rarely entirely spontaneous. A pathway to violent radicalisation develops over time, and often an individual communicates with others while on this pathway to action, potentially creating opportunities for detection.

For those searching for a point for intervention before an attack, areas where individuals develop relationships with state sector services could be an opportunity to persuade people towards taking a different pathway. Moreover, greater awareness of issues posed by the far-right among the public in general can also help to alert relevant authorities of people who may be manifesting a cluster of issues that are of concern, before they engage in an extreme, violent act. Therefore, greater awareness of far-right symbols, number codes, slogans and other identifiable elements that distinguish someone as part of a far-right milieu, among community police officers, social workers, medical professionals, and others who may be in a position to identify potential extremists, are likely to facilitate identification of those people who may be on a trajectory towards extreme far-right activity. While better appreciation of these milieus among such practitioners is important, it is also crucial to stress these are professionals whose roles typically rely on trust between them and those who are vulnerable. Though developing a sharper awareness among such professionals of far-right culture, and the types of distal and proximate factors that lead to violent extremism, can improve detection of people in a radicalised, though pre-criminal, space, this should not undermine their wider professional roles and responsibilities. People in such roles need to be in a position to make judgements, especially as there is no straightforward description of a far-right lone actor terrorist.

While research to date has been unable to 'profile' far-right lone actors, it has produced a wealth of data that helps draw out a picture related to key issues. Another key study, by Gill, Horgan and Deckert, focused on 119 American lone actors, of which 40 were linked to extreme-right violence.[25] This reveals some interesting shared characteristics, including:

[25] Gill et al., *Bombing Alone*.

- the average age of perpetrators was 36.3 years,
- 50% of perpetrators were unemployed,
- 50% had previous criminal convictions,
- 27.5% had been in prison.

The data on age is interesting, but in reality this age range varied considerably. For example, in America lone actors have included people such as James von Brunn, who was 88 when he carried out a shooting spree at the United States Holocaust Museum in June 2009, as well as cases such as Dylann Roof, who was 21 when he killed nine people at a church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. More useful here is the data showing relatively high levels of unemployment, as well as relatively high levels of previous criminality. As Gill explains elsewhere, while far from being necessary components of a specific case of far-right lone actor terrorism, both of these are important distal factors.

Gill, Horgan and Deckert's analysis also produced data that helps unpick the issue of detection, again underscoring the point that lone actors do engage in activity that, in principle, can be monitored to help detection before an attack. Data that explodes the myth lone actors do not communicate with others prior to an attack includes:

- 47.5% of perpetrators had recently joined a group;
- 52% verbalised their intent to others, such as friends or family;
- 10% relied on other people to help procure weapons;
- 17.5% carried out dry runs of their intended attack;
- 17.5% gave prior warning of their attack;
- 37.5% used online sources to prepare the attack.

The second point, that over 50% of perpetrators showed verbalisation of intent, highlights the point clearly. Similarly, RUSI's recent analysis of lone actors discussed in the first part of this section of the report suggests that just under half exhibit some form

of 'leakage' related to their attack before perpetration.[26] In other words, repeated studies highlight that lone actors are people who are less 'alone' than the problematic term 'lone wolf' suggests. Gill, Horgan and Deckert also show a reliance on others to procure weapons in some cases, as well as examples of carrying out dry runs, which could also lead to detection prior to an attack. Their data also highlighted some cases involved warning others of an attack before carrying it out, which again could generate opportunities for detection before violence. Finally, the point that 47.5% had recently joined a new group highlights a crucial proximate factor: an intensification of ideological commitment.

Mental health issues are much debated in the literature on this topic.[27] Gill among others certainly identifies this as a potential distal factor. Spaaij has been central to debating this issue, and he explains that "in comparison with group-actor terrorism" lone actors "seem relatively likely to suffer from some form of psychological disturbance".[28] Sometimes they may want to completely withdraw from society, he adds, and have significant problems with alienation that may be the result of mental health problems too. However, Gill, Horgan and Deckert explained that in their study of 119 cases only 30% of perpetrators seemed to manifest mental health concerns, while RUSI's recent report on European cases, including extreme-right lone actors, summarised the issue as follows:

> 35% of the perpetrators reportedly suffered from some kind of mental health disorder [and] the estimated percentage [of such disorders] for the general population is 27%.[29]

[26] Clare Ellis and Raffaello Pantucci, *"Leakage" and Interaction with Authorities*.

[27] Paul Gill and Emily Conner, "There and Back Again: The Study of Mental Disorder and Terrorist Involvement," *American Psychologist* 72, no. 3 (2017), 231 – 241.

[28] Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 50.

[29] Jeanine de Roy van Zuijdewijn and Edwin Bakker, *Personal Characteristics of Lone-Actor Terrorists* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2016), accessed 11 August, 2017, http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CLAT-Series-5-Policy-Paper-1-ICCT.pdf.

A further problematic factor here is that RUSI's data was largely collated from media accounts, and so there may be discrepancies between actual mental health issues, and the ways these were disclosed in media reporting and at trials.

While mental health concerns are often part of the picture of lone actor terrorists, they are not a necessary component of the phenomenon. They also seem to vary depending on the type of relationship between how significant this issue is, and the relationship a lone actor has with wider far-right ideological communities. Jeff Gruenewald has employed the categorisation of 'loner', 'lone actor' and 'small group' used by Pantucci (discussed more fully below) to assess the phenomenon. He concluded that 40% of 'loners', those with only a vicarious relationship with ideological communities, had mental health concerns compared to 20% of lone actors, those with more developed two-way relationships with extremist groups manifested mental health issues and 2% of small group actors. More research is needed to unpick the relationship between mental health and lone actor terrorism.

Finally, the internet has become crucial to the process of all forms of far-right radicalisation, including lone actors. As early as 1999, David Copeland used the internet to download material useful for his campaign.[30] In America, Tom Metzger was experimenting with message boards using his Commodore 64 computer from as early as 1984.[31] Many well-known far-right websites, such as Stormfront.org which began in 1995,[32] offer easy access to ideological material and an online community, and extreme-right media usage has spiralled since the start of the 2000s. Studies on this

[30] Gable and Jackson, *Lone Wolves*, 24 – 26.

[31] Chip Berlet and Carol Mason, "Swastikas in Cyberspace," in Patricia Anne Simpson and Helga Druxes, eds., *Digital Media Strategies of the Far Right in Europe and the United States* (Maryland, Lexington Books, 2015), 21-36.

[32] Heidi Beirich, *White Homicide Worldwide* (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2014) accessed 11 August, 2017, https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/publication/white-homicide-worldwide.pdf.

use of online spaces by far-right groups are emerging. Regarding Islamophobic contexts, Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hans Brun have shown how online networks have become central to the self-styled 'counter-Jihad' movement that Breivik identified with.[33] Breivik's manifesto, an extreme example of this wider position, was an amalgam of self-written sections set alongside many blogs, opinion pieces and other radical material written by others linked to the 'counter-Jihad' movement, drawn from the internet. Meanwhile, Manuela Caiani and Linda Parenti have highlighted the complex ways online activism is making the far-right more transnational as well as leading to a more decentralised organisational style.[34] The transnational nature of lone actor radicalisation was epitomised by Pavlo Lapshyn, who idealised American neo-Nazi cultures and Timothy McVeigh, on his VKontakte social media account. Exposure to online forms of radicalisation is now widespread and typical in cases of far-right lone actor terrorism. In sum, online far-right media is now central to the radicalisation process.

A TYPOLOGY OF LONE ACTOR TERRORISM: LONERS, LONE ACTORS AND SMALL GROUPS

The long-term and short-term personal factors that make troubled people susceptible to radicalisation, alongside exposure to far-right cultures facilitated by the internet, and a decision to act violently to somehow 'solve' a perceived impasse, are all common issues found in lone actor terrorists. Yet, as the discussion so far shows, while common patterns can be found, there is no single profile of a lone actor, and creating a specific generic framework for conceptualising lone actor terrorism remains somewhat arbitrary.

[33] Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hans Brun, *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2013), accessed 11 August, 2017, http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/ICSR-ECJM-Report_Online.pdf.

[34] Manuela Caiani and Linda Parenti, *European and American Extreme Right Groups and the Internet* (London: Routledge, 2013).

As previously mentioned, to help categorise such activity, one approach to developing a typology for classification has been proposed by Raffaello Pantucci. He has tried to categorise different types of lone actor figures by focusing on the ways individuals develop relationships with wider extremist cultures. Although Pantucci developed his model by focusing on religion-based extremism his framework can be adapted to create three subcategories for analysing far-right lone actors. These are 'loners', 'lone-actors', and 'small groups'.[35] He described 'loners' as those who essentially develop a one-way, vicarious relationship with a wider extreme-right culture, through for example engaging with online media. He characterised the 'lone-actors' as those with a more complex two-way relationship with extreme-right cultures, engaging in face-to-face interactions over a period of time with others, before acting alone in some way. Finally, 'small groups' of autonomous actors develop when several lone actors combined to work as a team. What follows uses this structure to survey instructive cases of far-right solo actor terrorism.

Loner

Pantucci explains that 'loners' are those who "do not appear to have any actual connection or contact with extremists – beyond what they are able to access through passive consumption on the Internet or from society at large".[36] Instructive recent cases of loners include the following:

Pavlo Lapshyn. A Ukrainian postgraduate student, Pavlo Lapshyn came to Birmingham as part of his studies in April 2013. Changing address is a common proximate factor leading to radicalisation. Once in the UK, he planted three improvised explosive

[35] Raffaello Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists* (London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2011), accessed August 11, 2017, http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1302002992ICSRPaper_ATypologyofLoneWolves_Pantucci.pdf.

[36] Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves,* 14.

devices at mosques in June and July. Before this, he attacked and killed an 82-year-old Muslim grandfather, Mohammed Saleem. Police investigations found he had no ongoing links with wider far-right groups, either in the UK or Ukraine, though his social media accounts certainly demonstrated a high level of idealisation of other far-right terrorists, in particular Timothy McVeigh. Lapshyn also idealised *The Turner Diaries*, and clearly American neo-Nazi and white supremacist material was central to Lapshyn's self-directed radicalisation. He was also a capable figure, and he had a high level of knowledge on constructing functioning terrorist devices. He had even experimented with making bombs before he came to the UK, and was known to Ukrainian authorities.

Anders Breivik. The most well-known example of lone actor terrorism from the far-right in recent times, Breivik is also another good example of a 'loner'. He engaged with a wide range of material online, which he used to construct his extensive manifesto. His online communication included discussions with organisations outside of Norway, such as the English Defence League. However, he does not appear to have developed lasting two-way relationships with far-right groups. As a result of wide-ranging, primarily online activity, Breivik was able to self-radicalise and generate a unique ideology based on Islamophobia that also argued Europe was in a state of undeclared civil war, a perspective he believed justified violent acts. His attacks on 22 July, 2011, in Oslo and on the island of Utøya led to 77 deaths, one of the most deadly examples of far-right terrorism in Europe since 1945. Even more so than Lapshyn, Breivik's narrative points to a man who was highly skilled and able. Moreover, there is a mental health dimension to the case, as he was eventually diagnosed with a narcissistic personality disorder. Again, this typifies how mental health, a typical distal factor, can become part of the picture with far-right lone actors. Breivik's mental health profile helps explain his self-belief and solitary nature, though does

not mean that he was unable to act rationally once he became convinced of the need for terrorist violence. Indeed, his operation was particularly notable for being well planned over a long period, and 'successfully' implemented.

Thomas Mair. In 2016, a week before a major referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union and at a time of heightened rhetoric against migrants, Thomas Mair killed a Labour MP campaigning for 'Remain' with notable pro-immigration views, Jo Cox. There is little evidence to show that Mair had substantial links to extremist groups in Britain, though it is quite possible he was connected to a British outpost of the American neo-Nazi organisation, the National Alliance, in the 1990s. Mair lived very close to Paul Jeffries, who ran this group, and data released by the Southern Poverty Law Center shows Mair brought material from the National Alliance in America, including a publication called *Improvised Munitions Handbook*. Mair also used the internet to research elements of his attack. Specifically, he used a computer in a local library to find out information on the Waffen SS, the Ku Klux Klan and other data linked to political extremism. It remains unclear how he acquired his weapon, a .22 calibre bold action rifle. After the attack, Mair's brother noted he had mental health issues, a typical distal issue, and certainly Mair sought help for these locally in the years prior to the attack. He also struggled to hold down a job, another key distal issue. Circumstances allowed Mair time and space to develop his ideology over a long period of time. Mair's case is also interesting as ongoing investigative journalism may throw up more data that reveals Mair did indeed have a more complex relationship with far-right groups, of which several were active in the area, including the British National Party, the National Front and National Action. If further investigation points to a more sustained engagement with far-right groups, then potentially Mair would be a good case of a 'lone actor' not a 'loner'.

Lone Actors

While 'loners' are those who manifest, or appear to manifest, little to no two-way contact with other far-right groups apart from online interactions, those who can be placed in the 'lone actor' category are essentially those who have ongoing online and offline engagements with others. Pantucci describes such people as those who, "while appearing to carry out their actions alone and without any physical outside instigation, in fact demonstrate some level of contact with operational extremists".[37] Instructive recent cases of 'lone actors' include the following:

Zack Davies. On 24 January, 2015, Davies went to a local branch of the British supermarket Tesco armed with a claw hammer and a machete. While shouting "This is for Lee Rigby", a British soldier who had been killed by two religion-based extremists in London in 2013, Davies attacked a customer, leaving him with life-changing injuries. Davies later explained he chose his victim because he "looked Asian". Typifying the personal and the political found in lone actors, he also told police interviewers that "it was like Europe was under siege. My personal issues and paranoia and political world events all combined". Prior to this attack, Davies was active in a nebulous, extreme British group called National Action that had been founded in 2013 and which build up a profile as an overtly National Socialist organisation notable for promoting neo-Nazi training camps featuring training in using knives and unarmed combat. National Action training events also idealised DAESH training videos, while Davies himself praised the notorious DAESH killer Jihadi John. This case highlights the ways a range of ideological material can combine, as their extreme nature is seen as relevant to a protagonist despite coming from an alternate, 'enemy' perspective. National Action has subsequently been

[37] Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves*, 19.

prohibited in the UK. The group clearly played a crucial role in Davies' radicalisation, and he met with its other activists offline, though the attack itself seems to be one that Davies himself initiated alone rather than being directed by National Action's leaders.

Michael Wade Page. Though an American rather than European case, Page offers another evocative example of a typical lone actor. Like Davies, Page was much more active in far-right politics when compared to those in the 'loner' category. His activism culminated in an attack on a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin in August 2012. He shot dead six people, injured four more and then turned the gun on himself. His radicalisation had begun at least ten years earlier, while based at Fort Bragg, which was targeted by recruiters for the American neo-Nazi organisation the National Alliance in the mid-1990s. Page became particularly interested in the White Power music scene, and in the 2000s, he played with various bands, including Definite Hate and Blue Eyed Devils. He was also a regular contributor to websites such as Stormfront.org, and by 2011, was a member of the white supremacist organisation Northern Hammerskins. Networked in an online and offline extremist community, Page manifested personal issues, such as alcohol abuse, which had led to him being discharged from the US Army for misconduct, as well as losing a truck driving job in 2010. Losing a job is a significant proximate factor, while Page's alcoholism can be seen as a typical distal factor, in this case making his life unstable.

Gianluca Casseri. In December 2011, in two attacks on the same day, Casseri shot dead two Senegalese street traders, and injured three more. He fled the second attack, and after police discovered him in a car park, Casseri turned the gun on himself. He was an accountant, author of comics and a historical novel called *La Chiave del Caos* (The Key to Chaos), and someone with a deep interest in the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien as he published a magazine dedicated to him. (It is worth noting that in Italian far-right

contexts, there is a great deal of interest in Tolkien's writings). Casseri was also sympathetic to the ideas of the Italian far-right group CasaPound, which espouses a range of anti-immigrant ideas and idealises the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. His relationship with the group was both online and offline, as he held talks on his book at one of CasaPound's Tuscan venues. A spokesperson for CasaPound described him as someone "living in his own world" and 'lonely' but 'not crazy'. Again, Casseri's profile is one revealing a degree of engagement with wider far-right culture, though ultimately he was someone who activated his attack without wider support from CasaPound or other groups.

Small Groups

Pantucci's model set out how small groups, perhaps consisting of two or three people, could also develop self-directed attacks. As he added, "rather than there being a single individual who becomes ideologically motivated; it is a group of individuals who self-radicalise".[38] Again we can see examples of extreme-right small groups coming together in various ways in recent years. Certainly, these are not 'lone' attackers, as they operate in small clusters. However, such cases are important to discuss when examining the field of self-activating far-right terrorism. One frustration that can develop among lone actors is that they want to work with others, but are unable to find co-conspirators willing to go as far as enacting on violent fantasies. One explanation for small, self-activating groups developing, then, is that on occasion several potential lone actors can and do come together and do agree to act collectively. Instructive recent cases of 'small groups' include the following:

Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, and Michael Fortier. The standout example of the small group phenomenon remains the American case of the activists who carried out the Oklahoma

[38] Pantucci, *A Typology of Lone Wolves*, 24.

City bombing in April 1995, which led to 168 deaths. Three central figures developed in this act of terrorism: Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier. Often the attack is erroneously reduced to an example of 'lone actor' terrorism, as on the day, McVeigh led the attack, while others were elsewhere. Nichols was in Kansas when the bomb exploded, but he has subsequently been convicted of helping to create the bomb. Fortier had knowledge of the attack, and in 2004, was also convicted of failing to inform relevant authorities of the threat posed by McVeigh. While each member of the group manifested differing levels of commitment in the attack, all held some level of culpability. McVeigh himself shows evidence of typical distal and proximate factors helping to explain his radicalisation: he was a veteran from the Gulf War of 1990 – 1991 who struggled to develop a settled life after the conflict, and his radicalisation was also clearly a product of the neo-Nazi and militia milieus found in parts of America in the early 1990s. Like others in this American milieu, a number of specific incidents, such as the 1992 shootout at Ruby Ridge and the 1993 storming of the Branch Davidians compound in Waco, Texas, played a crucial role in cementing an extreme anti-government mindset. This outlook was central to the issue of selecting a target for the 1995 attack on a government building.

Enschede Mosque attackers. In February 2016, five men were involved in an attack using a Molotov cocktail on a mosque in Enschede in the Netherlands. The mosque contained worshipers at the time, including children, but though the fire spread quickly it only caused minor damage and no one was seriously injured. A total of five men were involved in the attack, though two were only involved in planning the incident, while the motive was wanting to deter asylum seekers from coming to the area. The groups showed clear signs of far-right sympathy, including sharing a photograph of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz with the slogan "Place needed for

asylum seekers? Auschwitz is currently empty". One of the suspects had a large portrait of Hitler in his house too. After the incident, the five members of the group even celebrated while posting material on social media that, it appears, they hoped would provide them with an alibi for the attack. Though the actual nature of the attack was far less dramatic than that of a case such as the Oklahoma Bombing, this does not detract from this example's clearly terrorist nature. At the subsequent trial, the attackers' defence presented the claim that the clumsy nature of the attack meant this was not a true case of far-right terrorism, a position refuted by the court which concluded that though inept, the attack was terrorist in nature and had caused a high level of concern among the Dutch Muslim community.

National Socialist Underground. While the Enschede Mosque attackers highlight the amateurish and transient nature of some small, self-directing groups, the example of the National Socialist Underground highlights the potential for extreme-right small groups to develop into long-lasting units of activism. Its three members, Beate Zschäpe, Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt were active in the neo-Nazi milieu in Jena in the 1990s, and decided to go 'underground' following police investigations into their activities. Described by the Attorney General of Germany as a group that dedicated itself to killing foreigners, between 2000 and 2011, the NSU carried out at least ten murders, and engaged in other criminal activity to sustain their underground actions, such as bank robberies. The case again reveals the ways in which a wider community of support sustained such activity, as the organisation had ongoing links with other neo-Nazi and extreme-right activists in Germany at the time. Analysis of the failings of the German state to detect the group continue, but several high profile resignations from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution followed revelations of the NSU's case.

CONCLUSIONS

The cases surveyed help to draw out the diverse nature of far-right radicalisation, and the types of terrorist activity it leads to. Moreover, despite some important studies by Spaaij, Gill and Pantucci, among others, far-right lone actor terrorism remains poorly understood. More research is needed into the latest wave of far-right violence, from individuals and small groups, which is impacting in a number of European contexts, to better understand this phenomenon.

As has been demonstrated, the research to date shows there can be no set profile for a far-right lone actor. Nevertheless, this research has been able to identify some common characteristics. Building on the current knowledge base, there are a number of crucial areas where new datasets, discovery of new cases, and closer scrutiny of known cases, will help to foster better understanding of the phenomenon. As Daniel Koehler has stressed, this deeper knowledge base on far-right terrorism is much needed. Areas for greater investigation include:

- Ideology-creating frameworks for identification with others and offering a sense of moral justification for terrorist action.
- Personalisation of ideology to heighten its emotive potency and make attacks more than expressions of ideology.
- Long-term (distal) and short-term (proximate) factors leading to radicalisation of troubled people.
- Mental health issues that increase vulnerability to radicalisation.
- Roles of professionals, and the wider public, in identifying those who are vulnerable to far-right radicalisation.
- Online radicalisation and its relationship to offline encounters, and the development of engagement with far-right milieus that facilitate radicalisation.

- Ways in which far-right lone actor terrorist acts can be made more difficult, such as restricting access to bomb-making materials, weapons, and other items crucial for carrying out a violent attack.

Finally, as noted in the first part of this report, studies that have led to policy recommendations highlight that currently the far-right appears less well monitored when compared to religion-based extremism. Greater intelligence gathering on far-right activists will help to prevent future cases of lone actor terrorism, a core conclusion stressed by RUSI in particular. These efforts alone will not tackle this issue, and they need to be part of a multidimensional response to threats posed by the far-right. This needs to include national governments, wider state agencies, local government, mainstream political parties and credible NGOs all working together to create long-term frameworks to challenge far-right extremism.

CHAPTER 2

ONLINE RADICALISATION, RISK AND TERRORISM IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

MARK LITTLER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last twenty years have seen a significant growth in activity by radical-right political movements across the Western world, and from a security perspective, also a rise in violent acts perpetrated by affiliates of the radical right. The rise in prominence of the contemporary European radical right has taken place in parallel with a significant increase in their online activities, opening new fronts in the battle against extremism and radicalisation. While this mirrors the increase in internet use across the developed world over the last twenty years, and has taken place in parallel with the rise of online radicalisation by religion-based extremist groups, it is important to ensure that policymakers are alert to the need for a considered and academically rigorous response to the unique security threats that radical-right groups pose.

This paper is an attempt to identify and address some of the key issues around the role of the internet in the process of radicalisation for the radical right. Beginning by framing its terms of reference and placing the use of digital technologies in the context of a longer history of radical-right adoption of new technologies, it offers a review of the academic theory on radicalisation and a consideration of the empirical literature underpinning the commonalities in the key theoretical models. It identifies the significant impact of both opportunities for socialization and the distribution of extremist content that stem from the use of digital communications, alongside mapping the gaps in the supporting research evidence. It then highlights the need for research to make use of more sophisticated modelling strategies and experimental designs as a means of supporting the making of causal inferences, alongside identifying the limitations imposed by a lack of data and difficulties accessing participants.

The second half of this report addresses the current European policy response, offering an overview of the key challenges that face policymakers in respect of radical-right groups' use of the internet. It provides a discussion of the current EU response to online radicalisation, and identifies the difficulties inherent in framing a single Europe-wide policy under the EU Agenda on Security. This problem is placed in the context of both the architecture of the internet, with many content hosting companies based in the United States; the difficulties in framing common understandings of 'extremism'; and the nation-state unwillingness to surrender control over a key area of security policy.

The key issues that should be addressed by policymakers are identified, including:

- The challenges of cumulative extremism and the role of digital communications (particularly social media) in framing radical-right understandings of – and violent responses to – acts of religion-based political violence and terrorism.
- The impact of 24-hour communications and the difficulties this causes for the management of violent extremist content.
- The growth of transnational linkages between European and American radical-right groups and the difficulties inherent in both regulating cross-border information flows and building consensus around a global (or regional) response.

Legislative and policy options for responding to these challenges are discussed, including the role played by private content hosting organisations such as Facebook and Twitter. The challenges of 'fake news' are also highlighted, as is the importance of balancing the managing of extremist content with the need to respect legally protected free speech rights.

To address these shortcomings a number of specific policy responses are suggested. These include:

- Greater efforts towards the **establishment of a transnational regulatory framework for online extremism**, including the development of national legal powers to limit or restrict access to extreme content hosted on overseas platforms.
- **The establishment of an international judicial framework capable of adjudicating on the regulation of access to content** by nation states in respect of their international obligations to respect and protect free speech.
- **The allocation of greater and more specialised resources** by nation states to the **policing of the online sphere**, ideally through the establishment of national and transnational policing units focussed on extremism online.
- **Working with online content providers to enhance the robustness and agility of response to online extremism.**
- **Enacting legislation to bring platforms such as Facebook and Twitter under the jurisdiction of national courts** by introducing a requirement that they incorporate in each country of operation.
- **Supporting** via increased funding research efforts to develop – and refine –**sophisticated machine language processing (MLP) and machine image processing (MIP) systems** that can quickly identify and remove extremist content online without human oversight.
- The introduction of **legislation to compel encrypted platforms** such as WhatsApp and Skype to **provide state access to unencrypted user communications.**
- **The allocation of greater resources by state and third sector actors to support radical-right counter-messaging online.**

Finally, this paper concludes with a discussion of the likely future direction of radical-right use of digital technologies, in particular highlighting society's increased reliance on sensitive digital

infrastructure as presenting significant opportunities for activism online (as exemplified in the recent ransomware attacks). The potential impact of extreme views being 'mainstreamed' is also addressed, as is the potential impact of the growing polarisation of Western societies.

PART 1: A REVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC LITERATURE ON ONLINE RADICALISATION AND THE RADICAL RIGHT

INTRODUCTION

It is beyond dispute that computerisation and the rise of digital communications have transformed human life, arguably more than any force since the Industrial Revolution. The growth of mobile devices, and of mobile digital communications, has – alongside the rise of social media following the introduction of 'Web 2.0'[1] architecture – fundamentally changed the nature of social relationships, offering new ways for geographically and socially disperse individuals to connect and form transnational communities centred on shared social and political identities and common bonds of interest.

The transformative impact of this shift has been subject to substantial academic debate, with a large volume of literature exploring the major pro-social benefits of digital communications. At a practical level, the ability to organise online has helped support the growth of nascent protest movements fighting autocratic and despotic states,[2] while the ability to connect isolated individuals with niche hobbies and interests has enabled online communities to flourish that would not be viable offline. Alongside the impact on political campaigning, education, and commercial transactions, the benefits of the 'information age' are, perhaps, too great to count.

However, as has been widely noted, all technologies have a 'downside', and in this -despite the optimism of 'techno-utopians'- the advances facilitating an increasingly interconnected society are

[1] O'Reilly, Tim. *What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software.* Munich: RePEc Archive, 2007.

[2] Khondker, Habibul Haque. "Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring," *Globalizations* 8, no. 5, (2011): 675-679.

no exception. For every positive aspect of the information age, there is a negative mirror: the advances in commercial interconnectivity are balanced by the greater opportunities for cybercrime, while the ability to organise protest movements has been balanced against the greater opportunities for despotic political regimes to use technology to suppress legitimate political dissent.[3]

In the context of political activism and the ability to organise geographically disperse communities around a common interest or topic, the downside of the rise of digital communications has been particularly severe. Significant academic attention has been paid to the use of digital communications as a means of organising and recruiting by extremist movements,[4] with the recent emergence of DAESH and its extensive – and highly sophisticated[5] – use of social media providing significant opportunities for academic research.

While much recent attention has focussed on the use of social media and digital communications technologies by members of religion-based extremist groups, its use by the radical right has also received significant academic attention. Widely recognised as being amongst the first to exploit the transformative organisational and recruitment potential of the internet,[6] a significant body of literature has sought to understand their usage of digital communications – forming national and transnational communities,[7]

[3] Dann, Gary Elijah, and Neil Haddow. "Just Doing Business or Doing Just Business: Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! and the Business of Censoring China's Internet," *Journal of Business Ethics* 79, no. 3, (2008): 219-234.

[4] Bartlett, Jamie, Jonathan Birdwell, and Mark Littler. *The New Face of Digital Populism.* London: Demos, 2011.

[5] Rowe, Matthew, and Hassan Saif. "Mining Pro-ISIS Radicalisation Signals from Social Media Users," in *ICWSM*, 2016, 329-338.

[6] Zhou, Yilu, Edna Reid, Jialun Qin, Hsinchun Chen, and Guanpi Lai. "US Domestic Extremist Groups on the Web: Link and Content Analysis," *IEEE Intelligent Systems* 20, no. 5, (2005): 44-51.

[7] Bartlett, Jamie, Jonathan Birdwell and Mark Littler. *The New Face of Digital Populism.* London: Demos, 2012.

forming linkages between groups,[8] organising offline action,[9] and - in some cases – facilitating violent radicalisation[10] – as a means of improving the quality of the policy response.

The increasing importance accorded to responding to these online threats can be found in the recent launch of the EU's *Radicalisation Awareness Network,* with a brief to respond to the risk of radicalisation online as part of the *European Agenda on Security*. Similarly, national policy shifts in the UK (through the promulgation of the National Counter Terrorism Security Office's *Online Radicalisation Guidance),* France, and Germany attest to the growing salience of these concerns, particularly following radical-right activist Thomas Mair's execution of the British MP Jo Cox.

These developments should be welcomed as signs of a growing recognition that, while many elements of the process of radicalisation online are similar for all extremist groups, the nature of the policy response has been slow to address the threat of non-religion-based extremist risks. The need both for a better understanding of online radicalisation by the radical right and the development of more tailored policy responses has never been more keenly felt, and it is against this backdrop that this report is positioned. It represents an attempt to draw together some of the key insights in respect to the role of social media in facilitating online radicalisation by the radical right. Starting by outlining its assumptions and providing an overview of the history of radical-right activity

[8] Chermak, Steven, Joshua Freilich, and Michael Suttmoeller. "The Organizational Dynamics of Far-Right Hate Groups in the United States: Comparing Violent to Nonviolent Organizations," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 3, (2013): 193-218.

[9] Van Laer, Jeroen. "Activists Online and Offline: The Internet as an Information Channel for Protest Demonstrations," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 15, no. 3, (2010): 347-366.

[10] Koehler, Daniel. *Internet and Radicalizations: Connecting the Dots–The Role of the Internet in the Individual Radicalization Processes of Right-Wing Extremists.* Berlin: Institute for the Study of Radical Movements, 2012.

online, it will offer an overview of key academic theories of radicalisation contextualised with references both to the role of the online space and the most significant empirical literature on radical-right activists. Building on these insights, it will identify a number of deficiencies in the existing research, alongside opportunities for scholars to advance understanding in this field.

Assumptions

As Sedgwick[11] notes the concept of radicalisation is inherently contested, and subject to significant – and ongoing – academic debate, particularly around the relationship (or lack thereof) between radicalisation and engagement in violence.[12] This picture is complicated further in the context of online radicalisation, with Perrin's[13] observations around the difficulties of defining the limits of social media and the online space adding an additional element of complexity. As a result, any work which seeks to address these phenomena must first seek to adopt at least working definitions of its key terms.

At a practical level, Hall et al.[14] are right to identify that the terms *radicalisation*, *terrorism* and *extremism* are closely related. Indeed, they observe that "radicalization and extremism are often used interchangeably" in policy and academic discourse to denote processes leading up to active engagement in violence, despite that they imply subtly different meanings.

[11] Sedgwick, Mark. "Defining Objectives for Future Research into Radicalization and Terrorism among European Muslims," *Perspectives on Immigration and Terrorism* 78, (2011): 17.

[12] Borum, Randy. "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4, (2011): 7.

[13] Perrin, Andrew. "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015." (Pew Research Center: Internet and Technology) accessed 8 October, 2015. http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/.

[14] Hall, Marc, Patryk Pawlak and Clare Ferguson. "Radicalization, Extremism and Terrorism: Words Matter," *European Parliamentary Research Service Blog*, accessed 12 July, 2016. https://epthinktank.eu/2016/07/12/radicalisation-extremism-and-terrorism-words-matter/.

While these difficulties are accepted, in order to bound its enquiry this paper will follow Vidino[15] and frame radicalisation as the process by which an individual becomes 'extreme'. However, in line with Wintrobe's[16] distinction between extreme action and extreme belief, and aware of the potential for controversy inherent in defining extremism in purely ideological terms, it frames extremism in terms of the active promotion of violence. While it is accepted that this approach may be controversial, and is not without its difficulties – particularly given evidence on the absence of a clear relationship between radicalisation and engagement in violence[17] – it nevertheless mirrors policy understandings of radicalisation and extremism which is appropriate given the context and focus of this report.

Relatedly, and cognizant of the similar difficulties in terms of defining the groups of interest, this paper will focus on the violent 'radical right', categorised here under the definition proposed by Martin.[18]

Mirroring the difficulties inherent in defining the online space, and cognizant of the significant debates around this terminology (particularly with respect to the 'dark net' and the increasingly granular and 'walled' nature of much digital space[19]) this paper will mirror Ryabchenko and Gnedash[20] and restrict its focus to those

[15] Vidino, Lorenzo. *Countering Radicalization in America*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2010.

[16] Wintrobe, *Rational Extremism: The Political Economy of Radicalism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[17] Borum, *Radicalization into Violent Extremism,* 36-41.

[18] Martin, Isaac William. "Old-World Tea Parties," *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 3, no. 1, (2014): 117-121.

[19] Bartlett, Jamie. *The Dark Net: Inside the Digital Underworld.* London: Melville House, 2015.

[20] Ryabchenko, Natalia Anatolievna, and Anna Aleksandrovna Gnedash. "Structure, Types of Users and the Practices of Online-Social Networks as a Field of Political Practices," *International Review of Management and Marketing* 5, no. 1S, (2015); 115-120.

public elements of the global digital communication network characterised by public access and the use of Web 2.0 design architecture. This expressly excludes the so-called 'dark net', legacy technologies (for example, dialup bulletin board system), private networks connected to the internet and some 'walled garden' ecosystems.

A brief history of radical-right radicalisation online

Berlet[21] asserts that radical-right use of digital communications can be traced back to 1984, and the launch of several Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) including *Info. International Network*, *Aryan Liberty Net*, and the *White Aryan Resistance Net*, predating the 'birth' of the modern internet by five years.[22] While this early adoption is, on some levels, hard to explain given the conservative and regressive social and political views of these groups, their appropriation of digital technologies should be understood as the most recent example of a process of technological appropriation that stretches back to the early days of mass printing, through the mail delivery of newsletters and magazines to direct communication through pirate and ham radio.[23] In this, their use of technology parallels the broader adoption of digital communication by mainstream society and other extremist groups over the last twenty years, being driven - as has always been the case – by purely instrumental concerns rather than by ideological reasons. Their underlying goals remain effective "social movement mobilisation and growth" via recruitment,[24] as

[21] Berlet, Chip. "When Hate Went Online." *Chip Berlet's Blogsite: Research for Progress*, http://www.researchforprogress.us/topic/34691/when-hate-went-online, accessed 28 April, 2001.

[22] Moschovitis, Christos J., Hilary Poole, and Theresa M. Senft. *History of the Internet: A Chronology, 1843 to the Present.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999.

[23] Berlet, Chip. "The Write Stuff: US Serial Print Culture from Conservatives out to Neonazis," *Library Trends* 56, no. 3, (2008): 570-600.

[24] Berlet, Chip, and Carol Mason, "Swastikas in Cyberspace," in *Digital Media Strategies of the Far Right in Europe and the United States*, ed. Patricia Anne Simpson, and Helga Druxes (Lanham, MA: Lexington, 2015).

well as shifting public debate outside the control structures and organisations of the - often hostile - mainstream media.[25]

While a number of radical-right extremist groups established an active presence in the early days of the public internet,[26] perhaps the most obvious date for the beginning of their use of the internet is 1996, when the world's best known and most widely visited radical-right website, Stormfront.org, was registered with ICANN.[27] Since then, there has been significant growth both in the number of radical-right websites published online, and the volume of content made available through them, mirroring society's increasing embrace of the internet over the last twenty years.

Moreover, while the content provided at the start of this period largely originated with the American radical right, recent years have seen the adoption of Web 2.0[28] architecture and the 'Social Media Revolution',[29] which facilitated a second explosion in radical-right internet use. This was partially due to the lower participation barriers and the ease of content management and creation, thus allowing European movements to organise and recruit on a scale previously unimaginable.

An indication of the significance of this change can be seen in the number of individuals active in radical-right groups across Europe over the last twenty years. By the end of the 1990s, there were estimates that the most prominent British groups comprised

[25] Littler, Mark, and Matthew Feldman. "Social Media and the Cordon Sanitaire: Populist Politics, the Online Space, and a Relationship That Just Isn't There," *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16, no. 4, (2017): 510-522.

[26] Levin, Brian. "Cyberhate: A Legal and Historical Analysis of Extremists' Use of Computer Networks in America," *American Behavioral Scientist* 45, no. 6, (2002): 958-988.

[27] Burris, Val, Emery Smith, and Ann Strahm. "White Supremacist Networks on the Internet," *Sociological Focus* 33, no. 2, (2000): 215-235.

[28] DiNucci, Darcy. "Fragmented future," *Print* 53, no. 4, (1999): 32.

[29] Smith, Tom. "The Social Media Revolution," *International Journal of Market Research* 51, no. 4, (2009): 559-561.

less than 2,000 activists,[30] a picture broadly consistent with other states in mainland Europe.[31] By contrast, twelve years later the EDL was shown to have an active membership of at least 25,000, with similarly popular groups also present across Western and Central Europe, the Mediterranean, and Scandinavia.[32] While it is impossible to definitively claim that this change was caused by social media, and it is important to remember that several other important factors also fed into the rise of the radical right during this period, it is equally important not to downplay the significance of new technologies in their remarkable growth.[33]

Defining the problem

As highlighted in the preceding sections, the idea of radicalisation by right-wing groups predates the emergence of the internet by several decades. In this, radical actors' adoption and use of digital communications technologies should be understood as part of a broader shift in social communications norms that has seen us all increasingly meld online and offline engagement to build complex social lives. As a result, it is important to understand 'online radicalisation' not as a sui generis phenomenon, but instead as component of a broader process of 'radicalisation' expansively defined.

Moreover, it is important to recognise that, while the policy context in which radical-right extremism is positioned is somewhat unique, the process of radicalisation itself operates in a fashion similar to other varieties of extremism. The structural factors that render individuals susceptible to radicalisation are similar for most

[30] Renton, David. "Examining the Success of the British National Party, 1999 – 2003," *Race & Class* 45, no. 2, (2003): 75-85.

[31] Eatwell, Roger. "Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain," *The Political Quarterly* 77, no. 2, (2006): 204-216.

[32] Bartlett, Jamie, and Mark Littler. *Inside the EDL: Populist Politics in a Digital Age.* London: Demos, 2011.

[33] Ibid.

varieties of extremist risk, with only the narrative framing and trigger causes varying across different extremist groups.

As a consequence of this, it is likely that existing scholarship and research on both the offline radicalisation process and the radicalisation of non-radical-right risks is likely to possess descriptive validity in respect of the radical right online, and as a result, that many existing theories will provide useful insights in respect of online radicalisation. This is discussed at length later in the report.

However, while it is important not to overstate the inherent novelty of the 'online' elements of 'online radicalisation', it is nevertheless important that we recognize that the emergence of digital communications possess unique challenges not typically characteristic of other modes of radicalisation.

Writing in 2013, the review of the existing literature by von Behr et al.[34] identified that digital communications posed five key challenges in respect of radicalisation: a proliferation of opportunities; the development of closed, self-reinforcing echo-chambers; the possibility for rapidly accelerated radicalisation; and the possibility for autodidactic and remote radicalisation. While their study found evidence supporting only the first two challenges, these nevertheless pose significant challenges for our understanding of the digital radicalisation process. The most significant implications of this are outlined below.

The internet and the proliferation of radical narratives

Given the increasing reach of digital communications, their low cost, and the large number of online outlets operated by the radical right, it is perhaps unsurprising that the internet's principal role is as a source of radical narratives. Sites like Stormfront.org are expressly operated as repositories of extreme content that attempts both to frame individual grievances as the fault of ethnic and re-

[34] Von Behr, Ines, Anais Reding, Charlie Edwards, and Luke Gribbon. *Radicalisation in the Digital Era.* Cambridge: RAND Europe, 2013.

ligious minorities and create new grievances that can be used to recruit additional members.

Moreover, there is evidence that radical-right content online may actively promote direct recourse to violence[35] with some work highlighting that regular internet use is a correlate of support for violent protest amongst the population at large.[36] While recent work by Littler and Feldman[37] has highlighted a more complex relationship between social media use and the articulation of 'extreme' right-wing views, there is nevertheless reason to believe that radical-right organisations expressly develop and target messages to recruit and shift mainstream political attitudes via the internet.[38]

If this is the case, then the literature on radicalisation would suggest that radical-right groups will continue to enjoy success as a result of their activities online. The implications of this are potentially serious, and highlight the challenges faced by policymakers in responding to the challenges of the radical right online. This is discussed in more detail in the policy section of this report.

Echo chambers, community and socialisation

The important role occupied by the group is evident in research exploring both socialisation and the adoption and internalisation of antisocial views.[39] Similarly, research on far-right web content has highlighted the important role that membership of

[35] Bowman-Grieve, Lorraine. "Exploring 'Stormfront': A Virtual Community of the Radical Right," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 11, (2009): 989-1007.

[36] Littler, Mark. "*The Rational Extremist:* Reconciling Religion, Attitudes to Politics, and Support for Violence." PhD Dissertation, University of Manchester, 2014.

[37] Littler and Feldman, *Social Media and the Cordon Sanitaire.*

[38] Lee, Benjamin, and Mark Littler. "Viral Advertising and New Pathways to Engagement with the British National Party," *The Journal of Political Criminology* 1, no. 1, (2015).

[39] For a fuller discussion, see Timimi, Sami. *Naughty Boys: Anti-Social Behaviour, ADHD and the Role of Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005; Deitch, David, Igor Koutsenok, and Amanda Ruiz. "The Relationship between Crime and Drugs: What we Have Learned in Recent Decades." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 32, no. 4, (2000): 391-397; Harris, Judith Rich. "Where is the Child's Environment? A Group Socialization Theory of Development." *Psychological Review* 102, no. 3, (1995): 458.

online 'communities' plays in the lives of regular users[40] with Bowman-Grieve[41] identifying that, for many, online extremist sites can become a 'second home'.

Qualitative studies suggest that many users of radical-right websites often experience discrimination and stigmatisation offline, as a result of which the online community can become a place of 'refuge' that takes on special significance for regular users.[42] Moreover, given the relative geographical dispersion of radical-right activists, online sites can often provide their only regular contact with other extremists, making them key conduits for the reinforcement of negative views,[43] often across national borders.

As the regular reinforcement of extreme views is widely identified in the literature as key to the internalisation of radical and extreme views, the strength and endurance of online communities should be a cause for concern amongst policymakers. This is discussed at length in the policy section of this report.

Academic theories of radicalisation online

Despite a growing body of literature on the practical impacts of digital communications on radicalisation, the process by which it takes place is widely acknowledged to be one of the most opaque and difficult to research areas in the study of contemporary extremism. The problems of gaining access to reliable data, establishing causation, and developing valid measurement tools has proved a bar to establishing universally accepted theoretical models. In this context, some scholars have argued that the

[40] Caren, Neal, Kay Jowers, and Sarah Gaby. "A Social Movement Online Community: Stormfront and the White Nationalist Movement," in *Media, Movements, and Political Change*, ed. Jennifer Earl and Deana A. Rohlinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Group, 2012).

[41] Bowman-Grieve, *Exploring Stormfront*.

[42] De Koster, Willem, and Dick Houtman. "STORMFRONT IS LIKE A SECOND HOME TO ME - On Virtual Community Formation by Right-Wing Extremists," *Information, Communication & Society* 11, no. 8, (2008): 1155-1176.

[43] Bartlett and Littler, *Inside the EDL*.

search for a grand theory of radicalisation is futile, and doomed to failure,[44] a point lent credibility by review papers' consistent rejection of the idea of common social and psychological traits for extremists.[45]

While the role played by the internet - and digital communications more broadly defined - is contentious, and the unique characteristics of the digital space are recognised as posing significant challenges for orthodox radicalisation scholarship, there is little in the way of a specific body of theory exploring 'online radicalisation'. As a result, broad theories of 'radicalisation' are generally applied to help understand radicalisation in the digital space. Moreover, as highlighted above, as many of the structural causes of radicalisation will be common to all types of extremist risk, there is little in the way of academic theory focussed exclusively on the radical right. As a consequence, insights may usefully be drawn from broad accounts of radicalisation addressing multiple types of risk.

This section will not attempt to provide an exhaustive overview of these theoretical models, as to do so would stray significantly from the core focus of this paper. Rather, it will offer a broad overview of the three major theoretical strands that may be argued to characterise the overwhelming majority of academic literature on radicalisation: rational choice theories, theories of ideological causation, and individual trait theories. These are outlined below, alongside an overview of their principle strengths and weaknesses and their key structural implications for policy interventions.

[44] Lorenzo, Vidino. "Countering Radicalization in America," *United States Institute of Peace. Special Report,* 262, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR262%20-%20Countering_Radicalization_in_America.pdf.

[45] For a fuller discussion, see Hudson, Rex. *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?* Washington, DC: Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 1999; Victoroff, Jeff. "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches," *Journal of Conflict resolution* 49, no. 1, (2005): 3-42; Borum, Randy. "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4, (2011): 7.

Individual trait theories

Individual trait theories seek to frame the radicalisation process as the result of individual characteristics and personality factors. These may include biological abnormalities, social experiences, or and individual psychological traits. Such approaches infer a largely deterministic process of radicalisation, with individuals moving inexorably towards engagement in extremism as a result of factors over which they exercise little agency.

While instinctively appealing, the academic evidence supporting these approaches is inconclusive, with little consensus as to how – if at all – individual biological and psychological traits may influence engagement in extremism. Indeed, Hudson's[46] review of academic research on terrorist radicalisation found no evidence of biological or psychological abnormality amongst known terrorists, specifically identifying that the only commonality (even within cohesive waves of violence) was the rationality of the individual actors.

While the literature on social and emotional factors is more complex, these drivers can be accommodated in other models. Moreover, while approaches in this tradition may infer a link between individual experience and radicalisation, they are largely unable to explain *why* the social prevalence of these traits exceeds the overall prevalence of extremism. This suggests that, while the conditions they identify as causes may be necessary prerequisites, they are not in themselves sufficient to explain the radicalisation process.

Ideological theories

Theories of ideological causation suggest that individuals engage in extreme action because of the ideological requirements of the group or cause to which they are affiliated. Frequently applied to explain religious violence, approaches in this tradition suggest that ideological texts compel violence, meaning that for adherents to be 'good' supporters of their cause, they must engage in violence.

[46] Hudson, *The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?*

While this approach has some prima facie merits, particularly given the prevalence of calls for violent action in extremist texts, the low overall prevalence of extremism suggests that pro-extreme interpretations must rely on a very selective reading of any guiding texts. In this context, the impact of the internet is likely to be felt via the lowering of barriers to publication, facilitating the proliferation of content distributors/authors sharing non-mainstream narratives.

Rational choice theories

With roots in classical economics and framing the decision to engage in extremism and political violence as the result of a process of decision calculus, rational choice approaches seek to frame extremism as a strategy for desperate political actors,[47] chosen against – and in preference to – a range of alternate modes of political engagement.

As a result, theories in this tradition seek to explore the impact of the factors that shape the favourability of our perceptions of extreme action, facilitating the development of policy interventions and strategies that either bolster our support for mainstream political engagement or lower the favourability of perceptions of extreme action.

The exact factors in question vary significantly between different models in this area, with scholars arguing that extreme action results from foreign occupation or political domination,[48] target hardening[49] or political inefficacy and unfairness.[50] In this, rational choice approaches may (at the broadest level) be characterised as philosophical rather than practical models, unified only in their belief in the underlying process of evaluation.

[47] Wintrobe, *Rational Extremism.*

[48] Pape, Robert. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.* New York, NY: Random House, 2005.

[49] Berman, Eli. *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011.

[50] Littler, Mark. "Rethinking Democracy and Terrorism: A Quantitative Analysis of Attitudes to Democratic Politics and Support for Terrorism in the UK," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 9, no. 1, (2017): 52-61.

Still, these approaches have been enormously influential in the development of policy, focussing attention on the need to develop interventions that support pro-social political engagement and delegitimise engagement in violence and extreme action.

THE CHALLENGE OF CONTEMPORARY RADICAL-RIGHT INTERNET USE

While the advent of digital technologies has clearly presented the radical right with several novel opportunities for organisation and recruitment, and there is a clear theoretical literature suggesting the process by which online radicalisation may take place, significant variation is evident between groups in terms of the success, tone, and reach of their online operations. Indeed, Demos' *The New Face of Digital Populism* offers an indication of this variation, highlighting the extent of differences in the nature of online engagement between groups in different countries.

The difficulty inherent in identifying a common set of themes in radical-right content online is, therefore, significant. Moreover, given the rapid evolution of this space, and the proliferation of active groups over the last ten years, it is impossible within the confines of a short report to do justice to the significant variation that exists.

Despite this, some broad – albeit limited - conclusions may be drawn from the existing literature. As Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou[51] identify, the appeal of most extremist groups is generally agreed to be rooted in underlying political or economic grievances. In this, radicalisation should be understood in terms of linking these grievances with 'causes' or, as Vieten and Poynting[52] argue, the "… 'othering' and blaming of out-groups is [simply an] ideo-

[51] Vasilopoulou, Sofia, and Daphne Halikiopoulou. *The Golden Dawn's 'Nationalist Solution': Explaining the Rise of the Far Right in Greece.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

[52] Vieten, Ulrike and Scott Poynting. "Contemporary Far-Right Racist Populism in Europe," *Journal of Intercultural Studies,* 37. No. 6, (2016); 533-540.

logical manoeuvre that obfuscates the real causes" of social problems, the majority of which result – at least in the current period – from the effects of globalisation.

As a result, the exact framing of radicalisation narratives varies significantly between groups, and appears to be highly responsive to local social and political context. A cursory review of the existing literature adds weight to this contention: in the context of the UK, Awan's[53] study of the EDL highlights the centrality of cultural erosion and the grooming of white girls by 'Muslim' paedophile gangs (a salient local political issue in parts of the North of England) as key to recruitment messages, a point collaborated by work on (the now proscribed) National Action.[54] By contrast, work on Golden Dawn highlights the centrality of economic concerns[55] in fuelling engagement, while work on Pegida in Germany highlights anxiety over migrant criminality as the key issue.[56]

These group-specific themes appear to be key to understanding the radicalisation process, and while there is no comparative literature on the nature of group communications, a cursory review of the online presence of several of the largest groups reveals a number of commonalities in their approach: themes are usually repeated via social media status updates, videos, and viral images[57] that are designed to be easily distributed, ideally virally.

[53] Awan, Imran, "Islamophobia and Twitter: A Typology of Online Hate against Muslims on Social Media," *Policy & Internet* 6, no. 2, (2014): 133-150.

[54] Littler, Mark. "Who Are 'The Men Who Will Stand Up and Fight?': A Digital Profile of National Action," *ESRC Seminar on the Far-Right.* Manchester: University of Manchester, 15 May, 2015.

[55] Koronaiou, Alexandra, and Alexandros Sakellariou. "Reflections on 'Golden Dawn', Community Organizing and Nationalist Solidarity: Helping (Only) Greeks," *Community Development Journal* 48, no. 2, (2013): 332-338.

[56] Thran, Malte, and Lukas Boehnke. "The Value-Based Nationalism of Pegida," *Journal for Deradicalization* 3 (2015): 178-209.

[57] Lee and Littler, *Viral Advertising*.

PART 2: RESPONDING TO THE RADICAL RIGHT ONLINE: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND POLICY

The preceding section of this report has highlighted the significant role played by the internet in the radicalisation process, linking the increased opportunities for content distribution and group socialisation to the theoretical literature on radicalisation. As a result, effective policy responses will increasingly need to accept and address the role of the internet as a place where radicalisation 'happens', embedding the response to this challenge within existing countering extremism and counter-terrorism strategies.

Moreover, while the use of digital communications technologies by the radical and extreme right represents – as noted above – a continuation of a process of engagement evident with older technologies, the unique characteristics of digital communications offer opportunities for a range of new – and unique – problems to arise. These include the impact of cross-border network architecture, disparities in regulatory frameworks, the 24-hour communication cycle, cumulative extremism, and the role of multinational corporations such as Facebook and Google.

In tandem with understanding the role of the internet as an agent of 'traditional' radicalisation, policymakers will also increasingly need to address these new and complex risks if they are to formulate effective policy. This section of the report will attempt to explore these key risks, identifying the nature and scope of the challenges they pose alongside specifying how policymakers may wish to respond. It will do this by focussing on four key issues: the possibility for autodidactic radicalisation; cumulative extremism and the 24-hour communication cycle; the mainstreaming of hate; and the impact of private organisations and transnational elements of the internet's underlying architecture.

AUTODIDACTIC RADICALISATION

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the growth in use of the online space is the potential for so-called 'autodidactic radicalisation', whereby individuals are radicalised through exposure to extremist content without direct contact with a group or organisation.

The difficulties inherent in controlling access to extreme content online are well documented[58] and there are a number of high-profile cases in which extremists have been radicalised through exposure to this content alone, without the presence of meaningful socialisation with members of extreme groups (most notably Anders Breivik).[59]As countering violent extremism and counter-terrorism policies (such as the UK's PREVENT strategy) often rely on participation in group activity to identify those at risk of radicalisation, the relative anonymity of the internet may be seen to reduce opportunities for early intervention. While the growth of governmental surveillance can, to some extent, mitigate this risk, significant potential for radicalisation will nonetheless persist.

CUMULATIVE EXTREMISM AND 24-HOUR COMMUNICATION

Another potential risk presented by the rise of digital communications regards cumulative extremism,[60] a concept first proposed to explain the process by which competing forms of extremism feed off one another in an accelerating spiral of radicalisation.

[58] For a fuller exploration, see Howard, Philip N., Sheetal D. Agarwal, and Muzammil M. Hussain. "When Do States Disconnect Their Digital Networks? Regime Responses to the Political Uses of Social Media," *The Communication Review* 14, no. 3, (2011): 216-232; Trygg, Sanna. "Is Comment Free? Ethical, Editorial and Political Problems of Moderating Online News," *Working Paper*, London: Media@LS, 2012.

[59] Feldman, Matthew. "Comparative Lone Wolf Terrorism: Toward a Heuristic Definition," *Democracy and Security* 9, no. 3, (2013): 270-286.

[60] Eatwell, *Community Cohesion.*

Research investigating anti-Muslim hate crime[61] has highlighted that acts of religion-based political violence may often trigger a violent backlash against Muslim populations, a point corroborated by police statistics across Europe.[62] While academic attention has largely focused on the offline expression of hate crime, evidence also affirms a significant relationship with the exhibition of online hate speech,[63] a point that has potentially significant implications given research on the 'mainstreaming' of populist right positions.[64]

While further research is necessary to definitively identify the processes by which cumulative extremism occurs, initial research evidence suggests that media framing is key to the dynamic, with acts of violence that receive low levels of media coverage, or which are identified as the result of mental illness rather than religion-based extremism, less likely to occasion a strong negative response from opposing radical-right extremist groups.[65] Given the hostility of radical-right extremist groups to mainstream news sources,[66] it has been suggested that the internet may play a significant role in shaping perceptions of causation, responsibility, and response,[67] and as such, policymakers should be aware of the significant impact that the internet has had on the dynamics of cumulative extremism.[68]

[61] Copsey, Nigel, Janet Dack, Mark Littler, and Matthew Feldman. *Anti-Muslim Hate Crime and the Far Right.* Middlesbrough: Teesside University, 2013.

[62] Littler, Mark, and Matthew Feldman. *Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/2015: Annual Monitoring, Cumulative Extremism, and Policy Implications.* Middlesbrough: Teesside University, 2015.

[63] Feldman, Matthew, and Mark Littler. *Tell MAMA Reporting 2013/14: Anti-Muslim Overview, Analysis and 'Cumulative Extremism'.* Middlesbrough: Teesside University, 2014.

[64] For a fuller exploration, see Mazzoleni, Gianpietro. *The Media and Neo-Populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2003; Mudde, Cas. "Three Decades of Populist Radical Right Parties in Western Europe: So What?" *European Journal of Political Research* 52, no. 1, (2013): 1-19.

[65] Littler and Feldman, *Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/2015.*

[66] Bartlett, Birdwell, and Littler, *The New Face of Digital Populism.*

[67] Littler and Feldman, *Tell MAMA Reporting 2013/2014.*

[68] Busher, Joel, and Graham Macklin. "Interpreting 'Cumulative Extremism': Six Proposals for Enhancing Conceptual Clarity," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 5, (2015): 884-905.

MAINSTREAMING HATE: CREDIBILITY, AUTHORITY AND 'FAKE NEWS'

A related issue is present in respect of the 'mainstreaming' of radical-right positions, with the collapse of the *cordon sanitaire* posited by the academic literature as potentially offering opportunities for radical-right actors – for so long locked out by the mainstream media – to shift mainstream political views.[69] While this argument relies on the post-2007 collapse in living standards and political trust creating the structural conditions for the embrace of nativist political sentiments, the democratising impact of social media may be seen to have facilitated the communication of negative messages through its lowering of the bars to participation in the media marketplace.

This problem was shown to be particularly pronounced in the run-up to several major Western political events in 2016 and 2017, with anecdotal evidence crediting the outcome of the Brexit referendum, US and Austrian presidential elections to the impact of 'fake news'. Again, as with the risks identified above, it is difficult to respond to this challenge in a way which is both proportional and consistent with international obligations to protect free speech.

REGULATION AND THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY MULTINATIONALS

Another challenge posed by the rise of internet communications is the role of technology multinationals, and in particular the role played by social media providers such as Facebook and Twitter. As human interactions have increasingly moved into the online space across the Western world, the power of the organisations providing the communications platforms and infrastructure facilitating online communication has grown inexorably. Often based

[69] Littler and Feldman. *Social Media and the Cordon Sanitaire: Populist Politics, the Online Space, and a Relationship That Just Isn't There*.

in North America, these organisations are not subject to European national legislation, and as such, compelling them to tackle the publication of unacceptable and extreme content online has proved difficult.[70] Their unwillingness to engage in regulating 'free speech' is, arguably, born of both the USA's strong constitutional protections for individual expression (identified elsewhere as facilitating the spread of hate online)[71] and a laissez-faire and often libertarian political outlook that views social media occupy an idealised transformative role, bringing democracy and civil rights to the dark corners of the internet.[72]

Without the ability to compel content providers to restrict access to extreme content, nation states are left with only the option to block access to platforms *en masse*, often eliciting critical comment from third states, international bodies and civil society organisations.

THE CURRENT EU POLICY RESPONSES

In an effort to respond to the challenges of online radicalisation, international bodies and nation states have adopted a range of different strategies as part of the evolution of broader counter-terrorism policies.

In the context of the EU, the current counter-terrorism strategy expressly identifies the significant role played by the internet in facilitating radicalisation via exposure to extremist content. Communiques issued by the European Council after the adoption of the EU counter-terrorism strategy in 2006 noted the need for effective

[70] Ammori, Marvin. "The New *New York Times*: Free Speech Lawyering in the Age of Google and Twitter," *Harvard Law Review,* 127, (2013): 2259.

[71] For a fuller discussion, see Rosenfeld, Michel. "Hate Speech in Constitutional Jurisprudence: A Comparative Analysis," *Cardozo L. Rev.* 24, (2002): 1523; Walker, Samuel. *Hate Speech: The History of an American Controversy.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

[72] Gerbaudo, Paolo. *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism, and Global Protest.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

monitoring of the internet, and committed the EU to examining "ways to impede terrorist recruitment using the Internet".[73] Yet, despite this, comparably little practical action has been taken to facilitate the implementation of this promise.

While the EU adopted a revised strategy for countering violent extremism (CVE) in January 2014, and launched the EU Internet Forum in 2015, as part of the European Commission Agenda on Security 2015-2020, these changes have had comparably little impact on either policy or the prevalence of extremist content online. While the introduction of the EU Internet Forum was intended to coordinate an EU-wide response to online extremism, it has been stymied by member state reticence to engage and a failure to enact hard legislation capable of providing it with the tools to respond to extremism directly.

As a result, the EU has largely been confined to offering advice on strategy, though there is anecdotal evidence that it has even been circumvented in this respect by bilateral relationships between member states.[74] This impotence is lent credibility by papers published by the European Parliament highlighting that the current framework is dependent on 'cooperation' rather than compulsion, and expressly noting that counter-extremism online has been left the preserve of member states.

Despite this failure, the EU continues to support a number of state-led initiatives directed at addressing extreme content online (for example, the German '*Check the Web*' initiative), and the Terrorism Working Party of the Council of the European Union continues to explore options for improving the response to online

[73] Council of the E.U. "The European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism," Justice and Home Affairs Council Meeting (Vol. 1)., December, 2005.

[74] Walsh, James. "Intelligence-Sharing in the European Union: Institutions Are Not Enough," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no. 3, (2006): 625-643.

radicalisation, most recently discussing a German proposal for an EU-wide Centre for Prevention and Deradicalisation at a meeting on 17 May, 2017. The extent to which this will result in meaningful change – particularly after the exit of the UK, a key leader within the EU in defence and security matters[75] – remains to be seen.

EU counter-terror policy also needs to be understood against the backdrop of other transnational policies and arrangements targeting online extremism, including those of the Council of Europe, the G8 Roma-Lyon group (including Britain, France, Germany, Italy), and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF). While largely advisory or strategic in focus, these collaborations have led to several notable changes in policy. This has included lobbying ICANN to improve quality assurance and enhanced enforcement agency access to domain registrant data; facilitating greater data sharing between state agencies and third-sector CVE partners; and developing a series of guidelines for national CVE best practice under the Ankara and Abu Dhabi memoranda.

EU MEMBER STATE ACTION

While the paucity of action on the part of the EU would suggest that individual member states have taken significant responsibilities for responding to the risk of online extremist content, the transnational (and largely US-based) architecture of the internet has operated to prevent the development of a truly effective response. Indeed, it is impossible – without limiting the transnational flow of information and establishing national 'walled gardens' as in Iran and China[76] – to restrict access

[75] Institute for Government. "UK–EU Defence and Security Cooperation." Last accessed 17 August, 2017. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/brexit-explained/uk-eu-defence-and-security-cooperation.

[76] Deibert, Ronald, John Palfrey, Rafal Rohozinski, Jonathan Zittrain, and Janice Gross Stein. *Access Denied: The Practice and Policy of Global Internet Filtering.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008.

to content using only national law, and as a result, many national policy developments have remained limited. Moreover, while most EU member states have embedded a response to online radicalisation within their national counter-extremism and counter-terrorism strategies, the extent to which this has been effective or addressed to the concerns of radical-right extremism varies significantly. To illustrate this point, the following section offers an overview of the actions and policies taken by several major EU member states who have sought to address the risk of online radicalisation by the radical right. However, due to limitations within the scope of this paper, this assessment should not be considered comprehensive, but rather offering key pieces of evidence to give an overall picture of the EU member state actions against the radical right.

France

An example of this can be found in the actions of the French government's proactive stance towards online extremism, developing a free-standing counter-extremism website and developing the PHAROS reporting service to allow citizens to report extremist content. While the site provides detailed guidance on the identification of extremists and explains in detail much of the radicalisation process, the content is dominated by its focus on the risk of religion-based extremism. Indeed, the principal web-platform – *Stop Djihadism* (Stop Jihadism) – is expressly focussed on religion-based extremism, with no corresponding site focussed on the threat from the radical right.

Germany

The German response, by contrast, has focussed far more on the radical right, with the government taking numerous steps to respond to online extremism over the last decade. Alongside the introduction of new legal powers, the expansion of the spe-

cialist *Beweissicherungs und Festnahmeeinheiten* (BEF; Units for Arrests and Securing Evidence) police unit, and the establishment of a multi-agency governmental task force on online hate speech, the government has also established the *Gemeinsame Extremismus- und Terrorismusabwehrzentrum* (GETZ), a specialist centre focussed on domestic far-right and far-left extremism including online. This supplements the international surveillance and monitoring focus of the federal intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, and complements the work of the government-backed NGO working on the deradicalisation of far-right activists, *EXIT*.

Given the national context and the legacy of the East German police state, advocacy for greater surveillance powers has been tempered with concerns around the erosion of privacy rights and the evolution of '*gläserner burger*', or transparent citizens. Despite this, Germany has been a passionate advocate for EU level content decryption laws, and has worked with major social media providers including Facebook, Twitter, and Google to secure agreement that German law should take precedence over corporate free speech policies. Legal powers also exist to facilitate extreme content takedown and blocking.[77]

Italy

Despite both a long history of right-wing extremism during the *Anni di Piombo* (Years of Lead), and the emergence of a number of new radical and populist right actors including *Lega Nord,* and *Forza Nuova*, the Italian response to radical-right extremism online remains limited. This is particularly surprising given the foiled 2014 plot by members of *Avanguardia Ordinovista,* with evidence presented at trial suggesting that members organised a plot against left-wing politicians and immigrants using social media.

[77] Deibert, Palfrey, Rohozinski, Zittrain, and Gross Stein, *Access Denied.*

Responses to extremism have generally made use of the 2001 Decree 374 and 438 powers of surveillance, with the Ministry of the Interior employing this information to identify websites used by violent extremists. These can then be blocked by Italian ISPs. Despite a successful prison-based deradicalisation programme there is no online counter-extremism programme, with the government's P/CVE efforts largely directed towards the risk of religion-based extremism.[78]

United Kingdom

British responses to online extremism have largely operated under the umbrella of the Prevent CVE strategy, with potential extremists identified and referred for individually tailored interventions on the basis of the Channel guidance framework. This specifies the drivers of engagement in extremism, and is predicated on the basis of confidential research undertaken by government, including MI5s Behavioural Science Unit (BSU). Crucially, the UK approach takes an expansive approach to extremism, focussing on opposition to 'fundamental' British values rather than active participation in violent extremism.

The UK has been proactive in its approach to both radical-right and online extremism, with the government's manifesto for the 2017 general election promising the introduction of robust measures to punish social media providers for failing to remove extremist content. This sits alongside a promised tax on social media providers to fund the cost of policing social media and providing online CVE programmes.

[78] Counter Extremism Project. *Italy: Extremism and Counter-Extremism.* Online at https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/country_pdf/IT-04282017.pdf.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result both of the challenges identified above it is clear that EU member states need to take significant action to address the deficiencies in their response to online extremism and radicalisation. While these challenges largely originate from structural factors related to the architecture of the internet, the remainder of this paper will offer a series of detailed recommendations for new policy initiatives and the improvement/refinement of existing responses that will help address these risks.

1. Building an International Consensus

As many of the challenges identified above related to the globalised nature of the internet and the inherent difficulties in ensuring the regulation of this space, perhaps the most obvious policy recommendation relates to the need to build an international consensus – including the US – on the management of the digital space. While much of the internet's critical infrastructure is based in the US (and thus sits under US jurisdiction), the idea that individual sites and platforms should therefore be subject solely to US laws is risible. The infrastructure of the internet should be considered – as is the case with other communication technologies – a global asset, and as a result, global standards and global responses to the challenges it poses should be developed.

As a result, greater efforts towards the establishment of transnational and cross-border regulatory agreements should be made, allowing countries to respond in a more agile fashion to the threat of online extremism within their geographical borders. However, as this may prove difficult to achieve, nation states should seek to enact powers to limit access to extreme content on foreign hosted platforms. While this potentially runs the risk of drawing criticism for limiting free expression, it is submitted that this risk is exceeded by the very real risk of extremist radicalisation online.

2. Building International and European Institutions

Aside from the need to build an international consensus, care should be taken to ensure that national restrictions on free speech in pursuit of the management of extremist risk enjoy as great a degree of public support as possible. To this end, lessons should be learnt from the operation of external bodies such as the European Court of Human Rights, with national legislation restricting access to extreme content made justiciable under an international court for the internet. This could be established by agreement of internet-accessing states, potentially under the auspices of the UN, with cases around restrictions on content access evaluated in terms of proportionality and compliance with agreed international standards.

There are numerous benefits to this approach in terms of ensuring a consistent approach, and addressing a key deficiency of current legal norms – mainly, the failure to recognise that the character of the internet is transnational. Moreover, by passing the ultimate power of review for any restriction on free speech to an external body, participating states could effectively depoliticise their actions, and thereby improving public confidence and negating criticisms in respect of the use of counter-extremism powers as a Trojan horse for the suppression of legitimate political protest.

3. Building National Response Capacity

At a more practical level, policies should be enacted to increase the capacity of nation states to identify and respond to extremist content online, providing for the greater allocation of specialised human resources to addressing this threat. One of the key shortcomings of existing approaches to online extremism is the lack – in many countries – of capacity, with capacity to review and oversea content far outstripped by public use of the internet. As data from

Eurostat[79] identifies, over 71% of Europeans are daily internet users, vastly exceeding the capacity of state actors to stay abreast of content. Moreover, identifying extremist content online requires specialised technical skills not present in the repertoire of regular policing agencies, as a result of which the most successful responses to online extremism have been left within the purview of specialised agencies.[80]

Working to address this problem could entail the establishment of well-resourced and highly specialised online police units, or the establishment of teams addressing extremist content on the internet within existing agencies.

4. Working with Content Platforms

Another key issue identified earlier in this report is the difficulty inherent in compelling content hosting platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to remove or block access to extremist material. While the last two years have seen many organisations take significant steps towards the management and removal of the extreme content disseminated by religion-based extremist groups, the response to radical-right extremism is somewhat less well developed. Moreover, while many sites have taken steps to implement user-referred blocking with human moderation, and have dramatically limited access to violent content, new content is published daily, and new platforms continue to emerge allowing extremists to skirt existing responses.

While it is accepted that blocking and removing content will only ever offer a partial solution given the constant evolution of digital communications technologies and the continued risk of

[79] See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Internet_access_and_use_statistics_-_households_and_individuals

[80] Thiel, Darren. *Policing Terrorism: A Review of the Evidence.* London: The Police Foundation, 2009.

'offline' radicalisation, lessons from the response to religion-based extremism and the limiting of access to extreme content on large social media platforms (for example, Facebook and Twitter) suggests that blocking and content takedown is likely to be an effective response of first resort given the role of social media sites as a gateway to extreme content for many of those at risk of radicalisation. As a result, it is important that efforts continue to be made to ensure that radical-right content is managed in a way analogous to the handling of religion-based extremist content.

More broadly, however, significant difficulties exist in respect of agreeing what constitutes 'extreme' content, with technology providers often facing the difficult challenge of attempting to reconcile wildly divergent viewpoints, especially in respect of the large disparity between EU and US toleration for free speech.

Legislation penalising failure to tackle extreme content already exists in a number of EU countries,[81] and has recently been proposed in the UK.[82] However, while content hosting organisations remain domiciled in the USA, European state actors will be limited in their ability to compel them to follow national legal rules, and as a result, difficulties will continue to manifest in terms of the blocking and takedown of extreme content online.

To address this in the absence of an agreed supranational legal framework (as proposed above), national legislation should be enacted to bring content providers within the scope of domestic legal systems, perhaps by requiring them to incorporate in each country in which they operate. By doing this, nation states can ensure that they are subject to national legal norms, and that content management strategies are responsive both to domestic context and legal requirements.

[81] McGoogan, Cara. "Germany to Fine Facebook and YouTube €50m If They Fail to Delete Hate Speech." *The Telegraph*, 30 June, 2017.

[82] Titcomb, James, and, Ben Farmer. "EU Deals Theresa May Encryption Setback as MEPs Propose Ban on Government Backdoors," *The Independent*, 16 June, 2017.

5. Content Takedown and Machine Learning

In relation to the 24-hour nature of social media, the continuous publication of large volumes of content represents perhaps the most significant practical challenge to the regulation of extremism online. Unlike traditional print media, it is impossible to ensure tight editorial control over content on social media, and while attempts have been made to limit the opportunities for the publication of extreme content by nation states – for example, in China and Russia[83] – the resource investment renders such approaches impractical.

While platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have implemented community standards that have allowed for the regulation of extreme content above and beyond the threshold required by national laws, the qualitative distinctions that are required to ensure fair and reasonable implementation require significant resource investment.

At the same time, while attempts have been made to negate this problem through recourse to machine language processing (MLP) and machine image processing (MIP) systems, current implementation remains crude and prone to errors,[84] consequently requiring extensive human oversight. Moreover, MLP and MIP systems that have been utilised by social and online media platforms have generally focused on religion-based extremist content, with very little done to address content takedown for radical-right groups. As a result, more should be done to develop databases of radical-right content, especially in countries where the threat of the radical right is high, in order to enhance the development and efficacy of MLP and MIP responses.

[83] De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno, and George W. Downs. "Development and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, (2005): 77-86.

[84] Collobert, Ronan, Jason Weston, Léon Bottou, Michael Karlen, Koray Kavukcuoglu, and Pavel Kuksa. "Natural Language Processing (Almost) from Scratch," *Journal of Machine Learning Research* 12, no. Aug, (2011): 2493-2537.

Despite this, recent advances in machine learning offer the prospect for more sophisticated responses in future, and attention should be paid on the part of state actors to support – via funded academic research – attempts to evolve more sophisticated applications of these technologies as a means of reducing human resource costs associated with regulating speech online.

6. Digital Encryption

Another significant issue related to the regulation of extreme content online regards the use of private communications platforms such as WhatsApp and Skype, where data communicated is often encrypted and thus unavailable to state agencies involved in responding to extremism and radicalisation. While this issue has recently come to prominence in respect of religion-based extremism online similar challenges are also present in respect of other extremist risks given the wide-scale adoption of such technologies.

While European state actors have recently begun to demand access to decrypted data,[85] the largely US-domiciled technology companies have been reticent to act on their requests, doubling down on their commitment to end-to-end encryption and framing state requests for 'back doors' as an unacceptable derivation from individual rights to privacy.[86]

Recognising the significant difference that exists in the conceptualisation and limitation of free speech and privacy rights between the US and EU, technology companies must show themselves to be responsive to local context and work with state actors to develop legislative frameworks capable of granting security agencies the access to encrypted content they need while also protecting individual rights to privacy.

[85] Titcomb and Farmer, "EU Deals Theresa May Encryption Setback as MEPs Propose Ban on Government Backdoors".

[86] See https://blog.whatsapp.com/10000618/end-to-end-encryption.

7. Proactive Counter-Messaging

Perhaps the most significant lessons for those seeking to respond to the rise of radical-right groups online may be found in the fight against religion-based extremism, and in particular in the development of sophisticated online counter-messaging initiatives. These interventions seek to identify those at risk of radicalisation through their engagement with extreme content and groups online, and deliver targeted interventions to divert them away from radicalisation.

An example of this approach in action may be seen in *The Redirect Method,* a programme developed by Jigsaw, a UK-based Google subsidiary, and Moonshot CVE, a counter-extremism NGO based in London. Using keywords from online searches they identified individuals seeking content linked to religion-based extremism, before using advertising tools to redirect them to unbranded but visually alluring anti-extremist media content aimed to support deradicalisation.[87]

While there are already a number of online deradicalisation initiatives for those engaged in right-wing extremism (for example, exitwhitepower.com and exit-deutschland.de), they are generally extensions of offline initiatives, and are, therefore, reactive in focus and resourced by individuals who may lack the advanced digital skills required for more proactive online engagement.[88] Moreover, existing counter-messaging outputs targeting the radical right may also lack the visual panache found in the outputs of the most organised and dangerous right-wing extremist groups.[89] As a result, they are likely to be less engaging to younger, more internet-media savvy users.

[87] See https://redirectmethod.org/ for further information.

[88] Ramalingam, Vidhya. *On the Front Line: A Guide to Countering Far-Right Extremism.* London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2014.

[89] Jackson, Paul. "#hitlerwasright: National Action and National Socialism for the 21st Century," *Journal for Deradicalization* 1, (2014): 97-115.

The provision of greater financial support for radical-right counter-messaging programmes should therefore be a priority for funders, as should the provision of digital skills training for CVE NGO staff, and the development and strengthening of links between existing CVE NGOs and technology companies. By doing so the good practice exemplified in programmes such as *The Redirect Method* may be replicated in respect of the radical right.

The Future of Online Radicalisation

While it is perhaps futile to speculate as to the likely future direction of online radicalisation, it is clear that the threat posed by extremism online is unlikely to abate. Despite this, some key trends are evident that merit discussion, particularly in respect of critical infrastructure and the mainstreaming of hate.

The 2017 malware attacks[90] highlight the sensitivity of critical national infrastructure to online attacks, and so nation states must begin to explore the role of the internet as a potential target – as well as a potential source of – online extremism. Moreover, as evidence has suggested that mainstream political debate in the West has become increasingly polarised and – in some cases – extreme, concern should be expressed as to the potential impact of extremist content on mainstream political life. Particularly given the evidence on 'cumulative extremism' (discussed above), the potential for this to legitimate hostility to ethnic and religious minorities must be considered and addressed urgently.

Whatever the direction and nature of future developments, it remains clear that policymakers will need to continue to innovate and evolve their response, developing new tools with which the police and security services can continue to fight the spread of ex-

[90] Booth, Robert. "Cyber-Attacks Set to Escalate as Working Week Begins, Experts Warn," *The Guardian*, 15 May, 2017.

tremism online. This point is particularly significant in the context of the rapid evolution of digital technologies, with the emergence of increasingly immersive and complex communications platforms (for example, through VR and live video) opening new fronts in the war on extremism.

As a result, in addition to the need for more academic research (identified above) as a way of informing the development of more effective policy responses, there is also a major need for more evaluative research exploring both the efficacy of existing responses and how these can be improved and refined to address the emergence of new threats. Only through such a commitment to understanding the roots and pathways of the radicalisation process can nation states hope to effectively respond to the threat of online extremism, and in so doing deliver the safety and security on which successful, prosperous and stable societies depend.

Directions for Future Research

Despite the proliferation of research on both online and offline radicalisation, there remain several notable deficiencies in the existing academic literature, particularly in respect of the lack of micro-level quantitative data and experimental designs focussed on establishing causal relationships. As a result of this lack of evidence, it is impossible to definitively identify how the radicalisation process operates, or to develop truly effective policy responses.

While a number of theoretical models of radicalisation have been proposed, and there is some – albeit limited – consensus as to the factors that they assert link to radicalisation, the supporting evidence used to validate these relationships is largely qualitative, or reliant on correlational analyses. There is comparably little research capable of robustly establishing the causal nature of such linkages, and as a result, it is impossible to reliably map how the radicalisation process takes place.

While it is accepted that the processes underpinning radicalisation are complex and multifactorial, and that this poses significant challenges to researchers working in this field, the failure to make greater use of experimental designs and sophisticated data modelling strategies (for example, using instrumental variables or structural equation modelling) is hard to explain. To overcome this, future research should mirror good practice in other social sciences exploring complex outcomes – for example, political science, or public health – and employ more sophisticated research designs. This should include employing randomised control trials and complex statistical analyses as ways to validate the causal nature of relationships identified using correlational analyses elsewhere in the existing literature – for example, in respect of religious ideology, trust in government, or social marginality.

Similarly, a lack of academic researcher access and – in some cases – ethical and statutory restrictions have prohibited the engagement with extremists that is required to produce good qualitative research. Indeed, in the context of the EU, restrictions embedded in national counter-terrorism legislation (for example, the UK Terrorism Act) and learned society (for example, SRA, EPSA, or ESC) research guidelines have effectively barred researchers from engaging with extremists, limiting their ability to produce useful research findings.

As a result of this, our understanding of radicalisation is often derived from research conducted outside of the EU, and frequently in jurisdictions with more relaxed statutory and ethical frameworks. Particularly in respect of quantitative studies, these limitations have meant that much of the existing research base is focussed on US groups who operate in a context characterised by significant structural differences. As a result, policy interventions developed on the basis of this literature may not operate effectively in a European context. To address this deficit, academics should work with policy-

makers to develop a more flexible regulatory environment in which they can access sensitive and currently restricted data without fear of harsh legal consequences. Moreover, steps should be taken by bodies such as the Society for Terrorism Research to produce clear ethical guidance that is distinctly tailored to the needs of scholars working in these fields.

Moreover, much of the existing research relies on numerically limited samples, with significant consequences for the generalisability of any findings. While larger data sets capable of sustaining more robust analysis exist, a lack of academic access has prevented their use in peer-reviewed research, with implications for our ability to test and develop theoretical models of online radicalisation. Future research should therefore explore the potential for using alternate data – including self-select social media data – as a way to address this deficiency.

CHAPTER 3

THE POST-BREXIT FAR-RIGHT IN BRITAIN

MATTHEW FELDMAN & PAUL STOCKER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

British politics have been upended since the vote to leave the European Union on 23 June, 2016. Prime Minister David Cameron resigned the day after the vote, to be replaced by Theresa May after a short leadership contest. May then called a snap election in spring 2017 in which the Conservative Party lost its overall majority to a resurgent Labour Party under the socialist leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. Despite the upheaval, the expected far-right gains were nowhere to be seen, for the fragmentation of Britain's far-right had, with the decline of the once-unifying British National Party (BNP), preceded the pivotal 'Brexit' vote by more than five years.

Accordingly, a number of British far-right political parties have emerged, from defence leagues like the English Defence League and Northeast Infidels to the anti-Muslim movement Britain First to the now-banned neo-Nazi group, National Action. Yet none have proved capable of harnessing far-right activism into an even moderately successful political party. In its place has been a resurgence of political violence by right-wing extremists. Several have been self-activating (or 'lone wolf') terrorists allegedly 'taking our country back' from allegedly traitorous politicians, Muslims or other minorities. This was exemplified by the appalling murder of the Batley and Spen Member of Parliament, Jo Cox, by the apparently self-radicalised Thomas Mair. His home stuffed with radical-right books and Nazi memorabilia, he shouted "Keep Britain independent" as he shot and stabbed the MP exactly a week before the 'Brexit' vote. During his first court appearance, Mair declared "Death to traitors, freedom for Britain", a phrase then taken up by the overt neo-Nazis of National Action. In turn, this led to the small activist group's proscription under terrorist legislation in December 2016.

Themes of largely uncoordinated political extremism, racists insisting upon 'taking back control' after 'Brexit', and self-directed acts of terrorism form the bedrock of this chapter. All three themes were exemplified in another case of self-activating terrorism, when a vehicle-ramming attack targeting Muslims at Finsbury Park was allegedly carried out by Darren Osborne, who afterward claimed "I want to kill all Muslims". In turn, this rising tide of hatred against ethnic and religious minorities had surged after 23 June, 2016, with a 41% spike in hate crimes in July 2016 when compared with the previous July. Record hate crimes were recorded by third party reporting centres and regional police forces, often leaving ethnic and religious minorities fearful for their safety. It is this alarming state of affairs addressed in this chapter.

To do so, a number of indicators in the rise of far-right violence are analysed by the present authors. This ranges from persisting attacks against Muslims – for example, nearly one mosque per week has been attacked since May 2013 – to the emergence of militant and confrontational movements like National Action, a group revealed through its sophisticated social media use through the hashtag #hitlerwasright. These issues are first approached through an overview of salient issues, followed by a brief contextualisation of Britain's radical right. Key concerns regarding far-right extremism in Britain are then examined, including violent radicalisation; hate crimes; and terrorism – as above, the latter typically undertaken by unaffiliated 'lone wolves'. Indicative of these concerns about far-right violence are striking figures counter-terrorism arrests in Britain, rocketing to roughly one-third of the overall total in 2016.

Vexing changes are thus in the air in post-'Brexit' Britain, from a 'mainstreamed' rhetoric of exclusion to a resurgence in far-right violence. After a detailed analysis of these developments, this chapter then presents several policy recommendations on combatting the re-emergence of political violence by radical-right activists.

First, protection of ethnic and religious minorities, and governmental reassurance to minority communities, must be a top priority. But how to achieve this? Most generally, authors of this essay urge 'joined up thinking', including a much wider sharing of materials and best practice. What works in what area may not work elsewhere, but reinventing the wheel in countering violent extremism can be unproductive and stagnating. Accordingly, closely looking at grass-roots initiatives and successes is an excellent starting point for consolidating both theoretical and practical knowledge of how to reduce hatred, division, and extremism.

More specifically, the second recommendation advocates targeted research to understand embed useful strategies for countering the far-right. This ranges from quantitative analysis of deradicalisation programmes, through to banning orders and safeguarding strategies such as the Prevent agenda and the Channel Project.

Likewise, closer attention needs to be paid to recent trends in far-right extremism identified by researchers: disproportionate engagement in hate incidents and crimes – and the disaggregation of data on these attacks –; better recourse in using existing legislation (such as the Public Order Act); and independent confirmation of figures by statutory bodies. Greater attention also needs to be paid to online extremism, both in terms of social media platforms and other web-hosting/server organisations, and in more visible prosecution of ringleaders, as well as key disseminators of hate incidents and crimes.

With social media use continuing to rise exponentially, it must be made clear that the 'anything goes' modus operandi of the past is no longer tolerable when it comes to inciting hatred and extremism. These can be key vectors in the development of real-world violence and even terrorism, as some of the cases surveyed in this chapter make plane.

Finally, and perhaps above all, policy recommendations here stress that countering violent extremism of the far-right must do a job for government, police and security services corporations as well as engaged citizens alike. When it comes to countering far-right hatred, extremist radicalisation and political violence, there must be no doubt: we are all necessary stakeholders.

PART 1: CHALLENGES FROM THE FAR-RIGHT IN POST-BREXIT BRITAIN AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Less than a week before Britain's momentous vote to leave the European Union on 23 June, 2016, Member of Parliament Jo Cox was assassinated by far-right terrorist Thomas Mair. Since the 1980s, Mair had been affiliated with a string of white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups, including most recently with the Islamophobic movement Britain First. Nor was he the first extreme right-wing terrorist in recent British history. He had apparently taken inspiration from neo-Nazi David Copeland's nail bomb attacks in London in 1999.[1] Mair reflects the most extreme end of Britain's far-right spectrum, one where diverse range of political ideologies can be witnessed. Cox's murder has drawn attention to the most violent forms of far-right extremism, most notably that of self-directed (or 'lone wolf') terrorism, which has seen a spike in activity following Copeland's murder of four people and wounding of scores more;[2] a terrorist tactic long favoured by the extreme right and still a substantial threat.[3]

Evidence for the continued risk of extreme-right 'lone wolves' – a method initiated by 19th-century anarchists and recently taken up by religion-based extremist attackers – appears to have rocked Britain for the third time in a year with a vehicle ramming attack

[1] See, for example, Ian Cobain et. al., "The Slow-Burning Hatred That Led Thomas Mair to Murder Jo Cox," *The Guardian*, 23 Nov., 2016: www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/23/thomas-mair-slow-burning-hatred-led-to-jo-cox-murder. All websites in this chapter were last accessed on 23 June, 2017.

[2] See the 2007 analysis by Gerry Gable and Paul Jackson for the campaigning anti-fascist group, Searchlight, *Lone Wolves: Myth or Reality?*, www.lonewolfproject.org.uk/resources/LW-complete-final.pdf.

[3] See the Royal United Services report from 2016 by Clare Ellis et. al., *Lone Actor Terrorism*, https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201604_clat_final_report.pdf.

that left one dead and several injured outside Finsbury Park Mosque in London (the other two car attacks were also in London, committed by religion-based extremists at Westminster Bridge and London Bridge). The alleged terrorist, Darren Osborne of Cardiff in south Wales, struck following weekend commemorations marking the year since Jo Cox's assassination on 16 June, 2016, veering his hired white van into a crowd of Muslim worshippers. At the time of writing, Osborne has not been connected to established far-right groups, save for apparently liking and retweeting social media posts by Britain First. According to witnesses at the scene, Osborne shouted "I'm going to kill all Muslims"[4] and/or "I want to kill Muslims".[5]

At the extreme end of violent anti-Muslim prejudice that has wracked Britain for more than a decade, the Finsbury Park attack has nonetheless highlighted the 'mainstreaming' of Islamophobia, for example, in the tabloid press.

Ironically enough, even *The Daily Mail* reported in 2016 that more than 100 mosque attacks had been recorded since the brutal murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich some 30 months before – a rate of nearly one per week.[6] The sometimes non-ideological nature of this rising anti-Muslim violence was exemplified that same year, when the two convicted killers of an 81-year-old grandfather on his way to morning prayers were given 46 years for 'sickening violence': so hard had they kicked the victim, Mushin Ahmed, that trainer impressions remained on his face.[7]

[4] As reported in *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 June, 2007, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/19/going-kill-muslims-witnesses-recount-horror-finsbury-park-attack/.

[5] As reported in *The Independent*, 19 June, 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/finsbury-park-attack-latest-witnesses-man-shouted-kill-muslims-london-mosque-van-crash-dead-police-a7796601.html.

[6] See *The Daily Mail* article of 20 Nov., 2016, "Mosques Targeted by 100 Hate Attacks Since Killing of Lee Rigby, Group Says," www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3955116/Mosques-targeted-100-hate-attacks-killing-Lee-Rigby-group-says.html.

[7] See *The Independent* report by Samuel Osborne, 9 Feb., 2016, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/muslim-pensioner-beaten-to-death-on-the-way-to-morning-prayers-a6863766.html.

Both terrorist attacks appear to have been perpetrated by lone, unconnected extremists. What has been released about Mair's and Osborne's political ideas, in turn, owes much to far-right rhetoric and politics today – both party-political and ideological. As this report will demonstrate, far-right activity in Britain is multifaceted: ranging between electoral politics, street marching, social media campaigns, debate forums as well as violence. However, distinguishing between a violent, 'extreme' right that is ultimately revolutionary, on one hand, and a non-revolutionary yet 'radical' right, on the other, has challenged scholars of the far-right in Britain for decades.[8] In sidestepping this taxonomic debate, this report instead focuses upon groups and individuals that have either perpetrated or incited violence (in this approach, putting them on the 'extreme' right of the political spectrum). In addition to a snapshot of the far-right – as a broad umbrella including both 'extreme' and 'radical' right politics – this report will also address a broader context of what might be called 'near right' sentiment: not overtly racist or far-right but sharing many themes in common including nationalism, Islamophobia, anti-EU discourse and often intolerance towards multiculturalism in Britain. Here, attention will be paid to how ideas and language of more mainstream arguments can lead to justifications for, or even acts of, violence from hate crimes to political violence and terrorism.

To do so, the first part of this report will analyse the different forms of the far-right in Britain. After further unpacking the terminology used across this report, a short historical context is provided on the development of far-right politics in Britain. Thereafter, this report thematically analyses the far-right in contemporary Britain, before moving on to the extreme right, who pose the greatest threat

[8] For recent examples, see Mark Hayes, *The Ideology of Fascism and the Far-Right in Britain* (Ottowa: Red Quill Books, 2014); see also Nigel Copsey & John Richardson, eds., *Cultures of Post-War British Fascism* (London: Routledge, 2015).

to public safety. The wider cultural 'mainstreaming' of far-right concerns, which has become an increasingly salient issue in scholarship, will then be considered for its role in political violence. Finally, this report examines the biggest threats posed by the far-right in Britain today: violent radicalisation, hate crime and terrorism. A second, shorter part of this report will then assess policy implications for the far-right activity in Britain, offering potential policy recommendations to counteract the complex challenges posed by the far-right.

In relation to data collection, the information presented has been gathered from a range of sources. Much of the methodological background and terminology has been compiled from secondary sources. The most recent analysis of far-right groups has been gathered via anti-fascist organisations conducting research 'on the ground', such as *HOPE not Hate*, *Searchlight*, and the more academically oriented Institute for Race Relations and Institute for Strategic Dialogue. A further analysis of the far-right's online presence is illustrated through a range of primary sources. The authors are grateful to Kate Allen for her research assistance toward this report.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is an axiom too little accepted that policy recommendations are comparatively easy to advance, and rather more difficult to implement. Barriers to the latter not only include pragmatic implementation, but even before this, there are challenges in getting relevant agencies and institutions to accept key findings; and perhaps above all, in providing evidence for the benefits of specific policy solutions. In this vein, comparatively fewer but deeper, more expansive and actionable policy suggestions advanced here may represent a helpful way forward. With this in mind, the following four recommendations are aimed at policymakers and key stakeholders alike, with an emphasis placed upon overcoming barriers to enactment. To this end, the following policy recommendations are advanced in order of challenges to being taken up, ranging from more straightforward to more complex implementation.

1. In countering far-right extremism – and extremism more generally, amongst any one of any number of cognate phenomena – joined up thinking is essential. In practice, this means **developing closer working relationships between academics, policymakers, third sector practitioners and other relevant stakeholders** sharing information, and in particular, examples of what works best when countering violent extremism by the far-right.

Practical solutions exist, and our digitally interconnected world is able to swap good ideas as never before. Since the far-right is more transnationally linked than ever before, correspondingly, international partnerships should be so too. Thus, ahead of a June 2017 Britain First rally in the UK and beyond, nationalists abroad travelling to the event were interdicted by Britain's border police. In one case, the 'Christianist' Jacek Miedlar, described as a 'fanatical hate preacher' was detained upon arrival at Birming-

ham International Airport – thanks to the collaboration between Polish and British security services. In this way, when it comes to far-right extremism, 'best practice' must be more than just a buzzword. Sharing what works is more important than ever before.[9]

a. **When it comes to the UK, local, regional or national success stories should be highlighted, embedded and widely disseminated amongst the public.** At the top-down level, for instance, putting Islamoprejudice on the same unacceptable footing as BAME racism and anti-Semitism – as well as other forms of scapegoating minorities, which remains the sine qua non of far-right activism – is a particularly welcome step forward. In the wake of the Finsbury Park terrorist attack, Prime Minister Theresa May gave a ground-breaking speech in June 2017 identifying anti-Muslim prejudice, that new 'lowest common denominator' of far-right prejudice, as a form of unacceptable 'extremism' in contemporary Britain.[10] She was right to do so, and more such leadership is needed from political elites – and not just them. Indeed, celebrities, sporting heroes, and other public figures can all play a role in marginalising extremism nationally, using their substantial clout to put far-right groups and militants on notice: they will be closely held to the laws and norms that are part and parcel of liberal democracy. Extremism, from whatever quarter from which it derives, will no longer be tolerated in Britain.

[9] Paul Wright, "Dutch and Polish Far-Right Activists Detained at UK Airports Ahead of Britain First Rally in Birmingham," *International Business Times*, 24 June, 2017, www.ibtimes.co.uk/dutch-polish-far-right-activists-detained-uk-airports-ahead-britain-first-rally-birmingham-1627609?utm_campaign=soficalflowtwitter&utm_source=socialflowtwitter&utm_medium=articles.

[10] Alan Travis, "May Says Islamophobia is a Form of Extremism, Marking Shift in Rhetoric," *The Guardian*, 19 June, 2017, www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/19/may-says-islamophobia-form-extremism-marking-shift-rhetoric.

b. At the same time, **approaches to the far-right in Britain need more than top-down policies - bottom-up perspectives need greater attention.** A fresh look at what works in different national contexts is no less worthwhile. One example is provided in Wales, which has signed the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child - defining the latter up to the age of 25. This opens the door to a less 'securitised' approach to far-right criminality, allowing for educational and third sector interventions that involve less stigmatisation than, say, prosecution or prison. Likewise in Holyrood, in 2009, the Scottish Parliament enacted progressive legislation regarding 'racially aggravated harassment'; in 2012, Scotland also passed the Threatening Communications Act which can be applied to hate attacks online.[11] These examples are precisely the types of laws that can hamstring far-right recruitment and radicalisation on one hand, and rhetoric as well as incitement on the other. They should be shared in other regional and national – and even international – contexts in order to make life more difficult for far-right groups and their activists.

Nor should local knowledge and initiatives be overlooked. Grassroots campaigns and bottom-up engagement, where appropriate and replicable, should also be disseminated as widely as possible. Two local examples in the British context bear mentioning here, even if many others exist. First, in countering 'defence league' demonstrations, it has long been the case that the large majority of arrests are from the 'anti-fascists' side. To some extent, changing police tactics – such as ensuring groups are kept as separate as possible or moving demonstrations to the outskirts of cities and towns – can only go so far. Those in the firing line often know best how

[11] Scottish Government, "Report of Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion," 23 Sept., 2016, http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/3565.

to defuse potentially violent situations; thus, in York during 2013, a local mosque faced down an EDL protest with tea, biscuits and a football kickabout in mixed groups.[12] How many other counter-demonstrations might benefit from such local ingenuity? Likewise in Edinburgh, a 'Charter for Public Transport' was launched in June 2017, which aimed to make travel 'hate free'.[13] This initiative extends to hosting road shows, public pledges to report hate attacks, and 'special talks' aimed at raising public awareness. All of these wise ideas belong in cities across Britain. Still more generally, drawing upon best practice from transnational no less than local knowledge remains the best way to consolidate the most effective responses to far-right extremism.

2. **Target research funding on what 'successful' anti-far-right policies entail.** For example: Do banning orders work? Can the German distinction between 'radical' right (hostile to, but accepting of, the democratic order) and 'extreme' right groups (who reject liberal democracy and aim for a right-wing revolution) be mapped across Europe, let alone beyond? These and related questions simply have not been sufficiently addressed to date. The UK's issuing of banning orders against National Action was widely praised in November 2016, but was it successful? As with crime or drugs, it can be the case that police (and derivatively, the security services) prefer congregations rather than dispersals of anti-social behaviour. This can aid in monitoring trouble-spots and ringleaders, but is it also the case with ideological militants like the extreme-right National Action? As noted in Feldman and Stocker's chapter on the far-right in post-Brexit Britain, National Action was the first fascist group

[12] BBC News, "York Mosque Praised for Offering EDL Protesters Tea," *BBC York and North Yorkshire*, 28 May, 2013, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-22689552

[13] Edinburgh Council, "The Capital Drives Out Hate Crime on Public Transport," *The City of Edinburgh Council*, 27 June, 2017, www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/2318/the_capital_drives_out_hate_crime_on_public_transport.

to be banned in the UK since the Second World War; however, it is the 85th such group to have been proscribed in this century (the other proscribed groups are religion-based extremists and Northern Ireland paramilitaries). Is this strategy effective? Does proscribing revolutionary groups lead to their disbanding, or to their increased militancy, or to going 'underground'? The short answer is that we do not know for sure. Too little empirical research on this area has been undertaken, whether in Britain, Europe, or beyond.

a. **Support successful projects contesting the far-right in Britain.** There are a number of CVE and associated deradicalisation programmes in Britain, ranging from the football-oriented grass-roots organisation Show Racism the Red Card, to the successful intervention start-ups Connect Justice and MediaCultured.[14] Which initiatives work best, and which (such as the 'conveyor belt' theory) are not broadly applicable? With respect to self-activating, 'lone-wolf' terrorists, it seems clear that profiling is unrealistic, and can even be counterproductive. For instance, for every 15- to 50-year-old 'lone wolf' terrorist – the standard 'profile' of self-directed terrorists – there are cases such as James von Brunn in the United States, who attacked the United States Memorial Museum in 2009, aged 88. So too with focussing upon 'loners', or those with mental health challenges. In the case of the former, some 'lone wolves' are well-integrated into society, or appear to be highly functioning individuals, such as the Norwegian mass murder, Anders Behring Breivik. So too with mental illness: an estimated 1 in 20 million people facing such challenges resort to violence.[15] Stigmatising

[14] For example, see Show Racism the Red Card, online at: www.theredcard.org; Connect Justice, online at: http://connectjustice.org/index.php; and MediaCultured, online at: www.mediacultured.co.uk.

[15] This figure is cited in Mark S. Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 56.

and overgeneralisation, surely, must be avoided at all costs. Yet, the lesson is doubtless also a broader one. Whether profiling, banning orders, or CVE policies like Britain's Prevent, more generally, empirical findings are all too often lacking. This leads to an initial, uncontentious two-part recommendation.

b. Above all, **detailed quantitative studies are desperately needed.** To do so, significantly more funding for researchers – whether based in universities, third sector organisations or elsewhere – should be targeted at questions of utility: what approaches work best? Here, specific calls should be made to test the viability of specific programmes and interventions. Correspondingly, government agencies – who are invariably best placed to host and monitor such public-facing research calls - should be encouraged to share otherwise classified details with selected, pre-screened experts.

c. In this way, **sharing confidential information with key stakeholders on the far-right** is crucial to reducing the threat. Moreover, successful policies could easily be much expanded – whether through regional, national or even international bodies.

3. **There is a need for greater institutional attention placed upon far-right extremism, both media and governmental.** American researchers recently found that, in the US, religion-based extremists committed 12.4% of attacks between 2011 and 2015, but received 41.4% of media coverage on terrorist attacks; put another way, "there was a 449 per cent increase in media attention when the perpetrator was Muslim".[16] As with terrorism, so too with other forms of extremism beyond the US,

[16] Ben Kentish, "Terror Attacks Receive Five Times More Media Coverage if Perpetrator is Muslim, Study Finds," *The Independent*, 3 July, 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/world-0/terror-attacks-media-coverage-muslim-islamist-white-racism-islamophobia-study-georgia-state-a7820726.html.

including non-violent radicalisation. The media should be encouraged to retain experts on far-right extremism, and to give this growing threat due consideration.

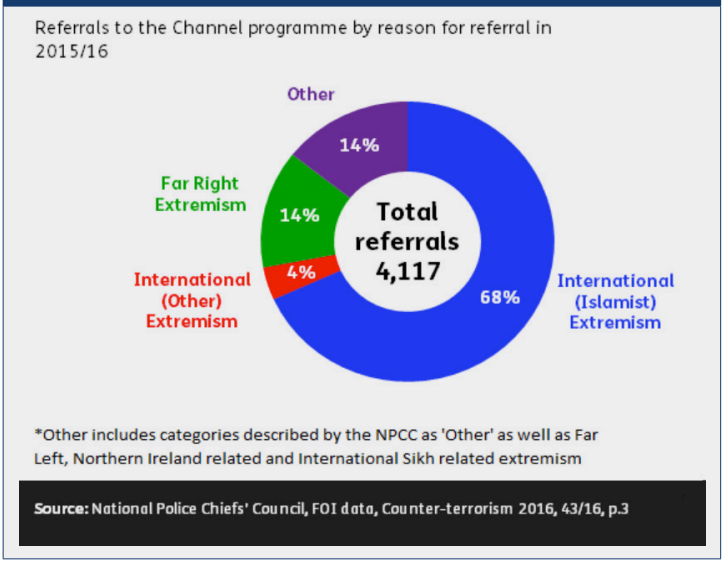
a. At the policy level, **governments should pay more attention to far-right extremism and political violence.** In the case of Britain, it is clear that disproportionate governmental attention was initially placed upon religion-based extremism; in fact, the initial version of Prevent (2006) as well as the wider 'Contest' strategy, of which it forms one of four counter-terrorism pillars, did not mention far-right extremism at all. Given the appalling bombings in Britain on 7 July, 2005 – which killed 52 innocents in London, sending shockwaves through the country – this is quite understandable as a reaction to religion-based extremism. Yet, the policy diverted resources from other forms of extremism; above all, far-right threats of violence and terrorism, while raising trenchant criticisms of governmental attention being unfairly targeted at so-called 'suspect communities'. Many observers felt this single-issue focus was 'alienating' precisely those BAME groups needed in the fight against religion-based extremism.[17]

b. **There should also be greater and more visible prosecution of far-right extremism and violent crimes.** To some extent, more recent iterations of Prevent (notably in 2011) have corrected the aforementioned imbalance - it now explicitly engages with all forms of extremism in the UK, including that of

[17] See James Ball and Hannah Al-Othman, "Here's How Britain's Authorities Are Trying to Tackle the Threat from Far-Right Extremists," *Buzzfeed News*, 3 July, 2017, www.buzzfeed.com/jamesball/heres-how-britains-authorities-are-trying-to-tackle-the?utm_term=.xy6mVv7PX#.npxZ9oAGK; and Lizzie Dearden, "Government Risks 'Alienating' Muslims with Response to Terror Attacks, Watchdog Warns," *The Independent*, 26 July, 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/terror-attacks-uk-isis-government-alienating-muslims-report-independent-reviewer-terrorism-a7862016.html.

the far-right. Yet, this CVE policy has not avoided charges of remaining 'toxic' in the words of the recently installed Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham.[18] More to the point, has the Prevent strategy, in the words of Diane Abbott MP, the shadow Home Secretary, "failed to change the attitudes of those on the far-right"?[19] The increase in far-right referrals to Prevent, as well as to the UK's deradicalisation programme, the Channel Project, would suggest that, at the very least, this has been the case until recently. In terms of Channel, for example, in 2015/16 only 14% of referrals, or roughly 1 in 7 cases, have been related to the far-right.

FIGURE 1. REFERRALS TO THE CHANNEL PROGRAMME



[18] Andy Burnham, cited in "Prevent: Time for a Radical Rethink of Our Counter-Extremism Strategy?" *iNews*, 4 July, 2017, https://inews.co.uk/essentials/news/prevent-time-radical-rethink-counter-extremism-strategy/.

[19] Diane Abbott, cited in Nadia Khomami, "Prevent Strategy Failing to Rein in Rise of UK's Far Right, Says Diane Abbott," *The Guardian,* 21 Nov., 2016, www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/21/prevent-strategy-failing-to-rein-in-rise-of-uks-far-right-says-diane-abbott?CMP=share_btn_tw.

c. In turn, that figure is up more than 10% in the six months since then, so that, in the words of Security Minister Ben Wallace MP, roughly "a quarter of people who are supported by the voluntary Channel programme are for far-right concerns - the Prevent strategy deals with all forms of terrorism and does not focus on any one community".20 With far-right referrals up to fully 30% in 2016/17 – and in some regions of Britain, representing more than half of all Channel interventions – much has changed in the 10 years since the programme was launched.21 Yet more still needs to be done in terms of both publicising this information – through the media, press releases and the like – and reassuring all communities that violent extremism will not be tolerated in contemporary Britain.

d. **To do so, more visible use of existing legislation against the far-right is strongly recommended.** Given the pervasive nature of both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia across the far-right, recourse to racial and religious hatred statutes is, surely, a no-brainer. Examples of ringleaders should be made legally, and chances taken with prosecutions of borderline cases. Moreover, the preponderance of minority abuse could effectively be addressed by greater recourse to aggravated harassment laws already on the books, while the 1936 Pub-

[20] Ben Wallace, cited in Harry Yorke, "One in Four 'Extremists' Reported to Government's Deradicalisation Programme Are Far-Right Sympathisers, Figures Show," *The Telegraph*, 15 Feb., 2017, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/15/one-four-extremists-reported-governments-deradicalisation-programme/.

[21] Lucy Pasha-Robinson, "Number of Far-Right Extremists Flagged to Government Terror Unit Soars 30% in a Year," *The Independent*, 19 June, 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/finsbury-park-attack-far-right-extremist-rise-year-statistics-prevent-terrorism-scheme-referrals-a7798231.html.

lic Order Act could also be expanded. With respect to the latter, in fact, in January 2015, Britain First co-leader Paul Golding was convicted under this legislation, and in November 2016, Jayda Fransen; the movement's other leader, was convicted under the same legislation. On the whole, laws exist to combat a resurgent far-right, and this should be very publicly redoubled. Such initiatives would have the effect of both reassuring minority communities in Britain – the disproportionate victims of far-right aggression – while at the same time taking a firm stand against all forms of illegal bigotry and extremism. One specific suggestion, therefore, is to publish and widely circulate an open source dossier on media and governmental initiatives aimed at combatting far-right extremism, including a description of laws that could be deployed as well as workable intervention scenarios for encouraging specific projects and/or highlighting deradicalisation successes.

4. **There needs to be a better understanding and countering of hate incidents related to far-right violence.** Hate incidents and crimes can have devastating effects. They can cause distress and anxiety, leaving affected individuals feeling both isolated and targeted. Hate crimes can lead entire minority communities to feel insecure and under direct threat. This can have disastrous ramifications for community cohesion, and in some cases, may even lead to social disengagement and individual radicalisation. A 'zero tolerance' approach to hate incidents and crimes is therefore necessary. Yet at the same time, we know too little about causes and drivers of hate abuse. Are hate attacks more frequently opportunistic and individual, or group-based and planned? Are some groups or geographical 'hot spots' more vulnerable than others? What strategies for reassuring 'at risk' communities and counter-

ing ethnic/religious hatred work best? These questions have yet to be satisfactorily answered, and to be sure, our understanding of hate crimes remains partial. Likewise, underreporting remains a major concern, with fewer than half of hate incidents likely recorded by authorities. Building trust, robust metrics and supporting targeted communities therefore goes hand in hand. Here, there are three specific recommendations that could be taken up, both in Britain and more widely.

a. First and foremost, **a better picture of hate attacks in general is needed to draw comparative data.** This particularly includes greater disaggregation of data into the key strands of hate incidents and crimes: sexuality; ethnicity; religion; disability and 'alternative lifestyles' (the latter including, for instance, protection of 'Goths', as has been practiced by Greater Manchester Police). To date, few policing bodies have disaggregated data into these strands, and this should be a statutorily-required practice amongst all 44 police forces across the United Kingdom. Doing so would give a more nuanced, and importantly, local and regional, picture of hate attacks, thus facilitating targeted, specific interventions. That said, by their nature, individuals have multiple identities, dubbed 'intersectionality'. For instance, three reports by the Centre for Fascist, Anti-fascist and Post-fascist Studies have shown that, unlike all other forms of hate crimes – which are overwhelmingly male-on-male – Muslim women, often visibly identified as such (through wearing the *abaya* or *hijab*, for instance), represent the striking majority of victims targeted in anti-Muslim attacks.[22] This could be driven by gender *and* ethnicity *and* religion. Yet again, we need to know more, drilling down

[22] The three quantitative reports on anti-Muslim hate attacks – in 2013, 2014, and 2015 – by the Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies are available online at: www.tees.ac.uk/sections/research/design_culture_arts/facist_centre.cfm.

into the drivers of hate incidents and attacks. Accordingly, the more fine-grained the evidence – whether regional, local, intersectional or personal – the better.

b. Finally, we know that most hate incidents and crimes take place online. Alongside dissuading users from this abhorrent practice and enjoining governments to crackdown where applicable laws exists, **online platforms must be convinced to address hate speech and incitement of violence through hate speech online.** Encouraging news recently saw Facebook hiring some 3,000 staff as part of a 'community operations team' to combat hate speech – even if questions persist over levels of far-right extremism there.[23] So too with Twitter and other platforms; even Google and other search engines have pledged to take down hateful or extremist content.[24]

[23] See BBC News, "Facebook Hires 3,000 to Review Content," *BBC Technology*, 3 May, 2017, www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-39793175; and Sam Biddle, "Facebook's Tough-On-Terror Talk Overlooks White Extremists," *The Intercept*, 6 July, 2017, https://theintercept.com/2017/07/06/facebooks-tough-on-terror-talk-overlooks-white-extremists/.

[24] Counter-Extremism Project, "Under Fire from EU Regulators and Advertisers, Google Discusses Fighting Terrorism Online," 21 June, 2017, www.counterextremism.com/press/under-fire-eu-regulators-and-advertisers-google-discusses-fighting-terrorism-online.

PART 2: NARRATIVE AND ANALYTICAL REPORT

TERMINOLOGY

As noted above, the far-right does not reflect a homogenous entity, but is rather a diverse party family with different 'faces'. In this regard, for the purposes of this report, the important conceptual differentiation between the 'extreme right' and the 'radical right' will be applied – with the former explicitly endorsing political violence and/or revolutionary sentiments. Today, the 'extreme right' is the most dangerous facet of the far-right spectrum encompassing neo-Nazis, fascists and nationalist revolutionaries. These groups seek to overthrow democracy and bring about an ultra-nationalist 'new order'. Importantly, the extreme right is often prepared to use violence, intimidation and even terrorism in order to achieve this aim. The extreme right is typically devoted to conspiracy theories, mostly anti-Jewish, and in particular, ideas of an ethnically-defined 'race war', which became popularised following the publication of William Pierce's 1978 American dystopian novel, *The Turner Diaries*. Extreme-right organisations tend to be small but dangerous, given the violent nature of their activity. In Britain, examples of such groups include: Combat 18, Blood and Honour, Aryan Strike Force, and the recently banned movement National Action. It bears noting here that the main concern of this paper is with respect to far-right movements that have incited or engaged in violence (those listed here have done so), not far-right political parties or other non-violent actors.

Within the ideological family of the far right – both 'British' and transnational – there are also less extreme movements often referred to as 'radical right'. It is difficult to label many organisations under investigation here simply as 'radical' or 'extreme' right. This is because parties often demonstrate 'frontstage' and 'back-

stage' language designed to obscure their true purpose. This means extremist language is reserved for its 'core' membership and more respectable rhetoric is provided for public consumption.[25] Therefore, while this report focusses on the subcategory 'extreme right', the umbrella term 'far right' encompasses non-revolutionary groups like the English Defence League or anti-Muslim political parties like Britain First, which do not easily fall under the 'extreme right' category. Some attention will also be paid to the wider 'mainstreaming' of prejudice and bigotry in the UK as 'near right', essentially straddling the one-time *cordon sanitaire* between 'mainstream' and 'fringe', or dangerous, political opinions.

Like the extreme right, the broader far right broadly holds a 'nativist' conception of politics – meaning that 'Britishness' is defined as ethnically white European – and demonstrate significant xenophobia towards foreigners and ethnic minorities. Such groups are likely to be authoritarian and perhaps even sceptical of democracy itself – certainly *liberal* democracy – yet are not seeking to impose a totalitarian state in the model of the Third Reich (a feature associated with neo-Nazism). Conspiracism pervades far-right ideology as do anti-left and anti-liberal ideas. Yet crucially, the radical right subset of the 'far right' are less violent or non-violent, favouring electoral politics or street marches. Whilst the latter are less violent than terrorism or coordinated acts of violence, such examples nevertheless reflect physical intimidation that can often become violent. Examples of far-right organisations in Britain include the largest and most successful far-right party in British history, the BNP, which achieved notable (but nevertheless limited) political

[25] For a discussion of this 'doublespeak' in different national contexts, see Matthew Feldman and Paul Jackson, *Doublespeak: The Rhetoric of the Far-right Since 1945* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2014); for a shorter discussion, see Matthew Feldman, "Doublespeak: The Radical Right Today," 9 Aug., 2015, www.fairobserver.com/region/north_america/doublespeak-radical-right-rhetoric-today-78554/.

success between 2002 and 2009. The far right also includes Islamophobic 'defence leagues' such as the English Defence League and North West Infidels from the so-called 'Counter-Jihad' movement.

THE FAR-RIGHT THREAT: RADICALISATION, HATE CRIME AND TERRORISM

RADICALISATION

With an electorally inert far right, the risks and dangers of their activity clearly lie outside of the traditional political sphere. Far-right attempts to recruit people to their cause, particularly the young, is an important factor to take into account when countering radicalisation. Recently, there have been indications that far-right radicalisation is increasing. In the year 2015/16, nearly 300 individuals under the age of 18 were flagged up under the government's counter-extremism Prevent Strategy due to concerns of far-right radicalisation. Whilst this amounts to 1 in 7 of total under-18 referrals to Prevent – the majority originating from religion-based extremist sources – it reflects an increase and indication that young people are being targeted.[26] One effect of this radicalisation means that "white suspects made up 35 per cent – or one in three – of all terror related arrests in 2016, compared with 25 per cent in 2015 [….] Official statistics found 91 out of a total 260 people held on suspicion of terrorism offences were white – a rise of 20 from 2015 and the highest number since 2003".[27]

There has also been an increase in the number of referrals to deradicalisation programme Channel on the grounds of far-right radicalisation more generally, which, in some parts of the coun-

[26] See Dipesh Gadher, "Warning over Rise of Hitler Youth," *The Times*, 20 Nov., 2016, www.thetimes.co.uk/article/warning-over-rise-of-hitler-youth-79pkwnfkl.

[27] Lucy Pasha-Robinson, "Number of Far-Right Extremists Flagged to Government Terror Unit Soars 30% in a Year," *The Independent*, 20 June, 2017, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/finsbury-park-attack-far-right-extremist-rise-year-statistics-prevent-terrorism-scheme-referrals-a7798231.html.

try (such as South Wales), outnumber all other types of referral (such as religion-based extremism). Out of 4,117 total referrals in 2015/16, 2,810 related to religion-based extremism, 561 to far-right extremism and 746 to other forms (including Northern Ireland related, far-left and miscellaneous 'other').[28] Between 2012/13 and 2015/16, far-right extremism referrals to Channel grew from 170 to 560 (this is despite its overall total percentage of referrals dropping from 23% to 14%).[29] Thus, whilst the rate of those being referred for concerns over far-right radicalisation has increased substantially, it is growing at a lower rate than other forms, such as religion-based extremism.[30] For the year 2016/17, the counter-radicalisation programme Channel has seen a 25% rise in far-right cases, now accounting for nearly 1 in 3 referrals.

There are also some indications that wider events in 2016 have encouraged people to turn towards far-right groups. A report by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue has argued that the far right 'amplified their online reach' during the EU referendum campaign, a period which also saw the murder of Jo Cox. Furthermore, the English Defence League, the British National Party and Britain First "were all talked about in a more positive way online following the murder of Cox and the EU referendum result".[31] The significance of the EU referendum as well as Jo Cox's murder indicate a 'growth in visibility' for the far right which risks "enacting a positive

[28] See the police response to a Freedom of Information Request 43/2016, available online at: www.npcc.police.uk/Publication/NPCC%20FOI/CT/043%2016%20NPCC%20response%20att%2001%20of%2001%2014042016.pdf#page=2.

[29] A word of caution here: this increase in referrals does not necessarily equate to an increase in extremism or radicalisation, nor is there any data on the type of referrals. It could be as a result of a raised awareness of far-right extremism (possibly following Anders Breivik's attack in Norway in 2011).

[30] See the independent analysis "Far-Right Extremism: A Growing Threat?" *Full Fact*, 24 Nov., 2016, https://fullfact.org/crime/far-right-extremism-growing-problem/.

[31] Melanie Smith and Chloe Colliver, *The Impact of Brexit on Far-Right Groups in the UK: Institute for Strategic Dialogue Research Briefing* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue Publications, 2016), 1.

feedback loop where exposure can lead to popular support".[32] One particularly dangerous impact of upsurges of far-right organisations which scapegoat ethnic minority groups is the reciprocal effect this has on radicalising the others. For example, far-right anti-Muslim hatred can turn Muslims towards religion-based extremism and vice versa. This phenomenon, known as 'cumulative extremism' or 'reciprocal radicalisation' threatens to not just lead to a breakdown in community cohesion, but a spiral of radicalisation and violence which is difficult to stem. A case in point is the alleged Islamophobic terrorist attacks near Finsbury Park, London – apparently in a bigoted form of 'revenge' against all Muslims for the earlier actions of extremists like Khalid Masood (the London Bridge and Parliamentary Estate attacker) in London. Thus, dynamics which motivate far-right radicalisation and religion-based radicalisation should not always be analysed in isolation, but together, as different extremisms often feed each other.

HATE CRIME

As with ideological radicalisation, an increase in hate crimes in 2016 appears to be linked to wider events, such as the Brexit referendum, where record numbers were reported shortly after. Between 16 June and 30 June, 2016 – just 14 days – over 3,000 hate crime incidents were reported to the police: an increase of 42% on the previous year. The Metropolitan Police's Deputy Commissioner, Craig Mackey, drew a link between the rise and the EU referendum, arguing that the Brexit vote had "unleashed something in people".[33] Between July and September 2016, over 14,000 hate crimes were recorded. For no fewer than 10 police forces, this reflected over a 50% increase compared to the previous quarter. Dorset Police saw a rise of 100%, whereas Nottingham-

[32] Smith & Colliver, *The Impact of Brexit*, 7.

[33] Craig Mackey, cited in "Met Policy Deputy Chief Links Brexit Vote to Hate Crime Rise," *BBC News*, 20 July, 2016, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-36835966.

shire Police recorded 75% more hate incidents. By far the largest number of hate crime incidents were recorded by London's Metropolitan Police, with the figure at 3,356.[34]

THE RADICALISATION OF THOMAS MAIR

Thomas Mair's links to the extreme right became apparent immediately following his murder of Jo Cox. Mair was heard by one bystander to have screamed 'Put Britain first!'. What became clear later was the far-right organisations he had made contact with over a near thirty-year period. In May 1999, Mair bought a range of goods from US-based National Alliance, including bomb-making instructions as well as manuals on how to assemble home-made pistols. Six issues of the National Alliance journal *Free Speech* were purchased, as well as a copy of *Ich Kämpfe* – a pamphlet given to Nazi Party members in 1943. The National Alliance is a white supremacist, neo-Nazi organisation based in West Virginia. It was founded in 1973 by prominent US white nationalist William Luther Pierce, world renowned in extreme-right circles for his fictional publications *The Turner Diaries* and *Hunter*. The National Alliance's membership policy, as stated on its website, allows only a 'White person (a non-Jewish person of wholly European ancestry) of good character' to join. Mair earlier subscribed to white supremacist magazine *SA Patriot*, published by The Springbok Club, a South African far-right and pro-Apartheid organisation. The Springbok Club still has a website, which states that it 'advocates and works towards the re-establishment of civilised rule in Southern Africa'. Mair had also briefly been involved with the National Front in the 1990s and had also been seen at a Britain First rally. Although he was an incredibly reclusive individual, it is nevertheless clear that he was radicalised by a range of organisations. What is more, it demonstrates the transnational nature of radicalisation – even before the rise of the internet and social media.

Similarly, a report published by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), shortly after the 23 June vote, tentatively confirms the link to a rise in hate crime and Brexit. The IRR analysed 134 racist incidents which followed the vote that were reported by the media. The report entitled 'Racial Violence and the Brexit State' argued that the increased incidents reported could not be decontextualized from the Brexit campaign, state policy, as well as political and media rhetoric surrounding 'outsiders' preceding the vote: "the spike in race

[34] "'Record Hate Crimes' After EU Referendum," *BBC News*, 15 Feb., 2017, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38976087.

hatred has had a direct impetus from the divisive approach to race, religion and migration which is now official state policy".[35]

Out of the 134 incidents, 51 (38%) made specific references to the EU referendum result. The IRR report argued that many of the attacks demonstrated that "the referendum result was taken by some as affirmation that the country was not only now 'theirs' but it was theirs 'again'". In this way, there was a sense of history being corrected and of historical wrongs (immigration, primarily) being 'righted'. Several incidents demonstrated that the referendum was seen by some as "a sign that a set of assumed legal and cultural 'norms' could be reasserted". To take but one example amongst many, a Muslim woman had her *niqab* ripped off and was racially abused, with the attacker saying, "You live in Britain, live by British rules".[36] Whilst only 11 of the 134 incidents highlighted in the IRR report involved the far right, it is nevertheless troubling and indicative of the increased normalising of hate crime, which is not solely linked to an extremist fringe, but part of a wider problem.

It has been noted before how 'trigger events', such as the EU referendum, can lead to spikes in hate crime. In the week after Drummer Lee Rigby was brutally murdered in Woolwich in 2013 by two religion-based extremists, Muslim attack monitoring service Tell MAMA recorded a 373% rise in online and offline attacks on Muslims compared to the previous week.[37] Likewise, in the following year, Tell MAMA recorded spikes in online anti-Muslim attacks following religion-based extremist attacks in Paris, Sydney and

[35] John Burnett, "Racial Violence and the Brexit State," *Race & Class* 58, no. 4 (2017): 89

[36] Ibid., 7.

[37] Matthew Feldman & Mark Littler, *Tell MAMA Reporting 2013/14: Anti-Muslim Overview, Analysis and 'Cumulative Extremism, Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies Report* (Middlesbrough: Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist, and Post-Fascist Studies, Teesside University, 2014), www.tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/finalreport.pdf.

Copenhagen.[38] Most recently, following the Manchester bombing by the religion-based extremist Salman Abedi on 22 May a 505% increase was recorded for the following month by Greater Manchester Police.[39] These cases support the idea of 'cumulative extremism' – that the attack by one group of extremists contributed to a rise in extremism from another group. Potential trigger events should be more closely focused upon by researchers in order to understand the motivations behind hate crime spikes.

THE MURDER OF LEE RIGBY: A CASE STUDY IN CUMULATIVE EXTREMISM

Roger Eatwell coined the term 'cumulative extremism' in 2006, describing it as "the way in which one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms". Eatwell was primarily concerned with the rise of the British National Party, particularly in areas with large Muslim minorities in the wake of riots in Oldham and Bradford in 2001 and the negative impact on 'community cohesion'. Yet the term has gained much traction in academic and policymaking circles since it aptly describes the relationship between, for instance, jihadi Islamists and far-right extremists. In May 2013, British army Drummer Lee Rigby was run over by two British jihadi Islamists – Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale – before being stabbed to death. This highly public and gruesome act of extremism horrified millions around the country, as graphic images immediately following the attack were beamed onto their TV screens. A substantial anti-Muslim backlash followed. The night after the murder, two mosques in Braintree and Gillingham were attacked. A mosque in Grimsby was firebombed days after that, and an Islamic centre in Muswell Hill was devastated by a fire. Tell MAMA data reported a 373% rise in anti-Muslim attacks in the week after the killing, ranging from online abuse, verbal and physical attacks, headscarves being torn off Muslim women and desecrations of Islamic buildings. The far-right set up demonstrations almost immediately afterward, and continue to exploit Rigby's death to this day. These incidents demonstrate how two very different but linked extremisms, can feed off one another – as well as the significant impact this can have upon public order.

[38] Mark Littler & and Matthew Feldman, *Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/15: Annual Monitoring, Cumulative Extremism and Policy Implications, Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies Report* (Middlesbrough: Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist, and Post-Fascist Studies, Teesside University, 2015), www.tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Tell%20MAMA%20Reporting%202014-2015.pdf.

[39] "Manchester Attack: Islamophobic Hate Crime Reports Increase by 500%," *BBC News*, 22 June, 2017, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-40368668.

TERRORISM

The violent ideology of the extreme right can lead directly to extreme political violence. Concern over terrorist threats has become particularly salient following Anders Breivik's slaughter of 77 innocents in June 2011, and more recently, the murder of Jo Cox MP. In particular, concern has arisen over so-called 'lone wolf' terrorism which has been the traditional method of the extreme right and is difficult to track down prior to an incident, due to being conducted by one individual, often using 'low-tech' methods – such as the June 2017 Finsbury Park attack – as opposed to a group or network. The term 'lone wolf' is in fact misleading, as terrorists do not self-radicalise but are often part of what Paul Jackson calls "a much wider extremist milieu". Furthermore, "so-called lone wolves are typically helped and encouraged by a much broader movement, one that plays a crucial role in the individual's radicalisation".[40]

Jo Cox's killer has been regularly depicted as a 'loner' or mentally ill. This may well be the case, but he was nevertheless in contact with a much wider extremist network (such as the white supremacist National Alliance in the United States and the South African Springbok Club), which provided him with support and information such as bomb making manuals.[41] As this also suggests, radicalisation is often transnational (even more so in the internet and social media age). Anders Breivik was fully connected with a range of counter-Jihadist blogs, forums and websites in Norway, wider Europe and the United States. Indeed, Mair's attack – but particularly Breivik's – demonstrates "the importance of seeing the

[40] Paul Jackson, "Behind the lone wolf," *Searchlight*, 15 Sep., 2016, www.searchlightmagazine.com/2016/09/behind-the-lone-wolf/.

[41] Ian Cobain et. al., "The Slow-Burning Hatred That Led Thomas Mair to Murder Jo Cox," *The Guardian*, op. cit.

terrorism of loners as embedded in, and motivated by, the rhetoric of larger social movements".[42]

Importantly, one does not need to be a member of an extreme-right or explicitly neo-Nazi movement to be tempted by extreme political violence. A 2012 report conducted by Matthew Goodwin and Jocelyn Evans found that "large numbers of BNP and Ukip supporters in our sample endorse the view that violence between different ethnic, racial and religious groups in Britain is largely inevitable", with much higher percentages in the BNP endorsing that view.[43] Sixty per cent of BNP supporters strongly agreed that violence between different ethnic, racial or religious groups was 'inevitable', with over 90% agreeing to some extent. Thirty per cent of Ukip supporters strongly agreed, with over three quarters agreeing to some extent. Furthermore, over half of BNP supports stated that *preparing* for conflict between groups was a 'justifiable' action to 'defend the national way of life'. Twenty-two per cent said it was always justifiable, while 29% said it was only justifiable sometimes. Whilst only 8% of Ukip respondents believed preparing for armed conflict was always justifiable, 23% did believe this was justified sometimes. Respondents were also asked if *engaging* in armed conflict is justifiable for the same reasons. Troublingly, 40% of BNP respondents believed it was justifiable (12% 'always'; 27% 'sometimes') whereas 21% of Ukip voters did (3% 'always'; 17% 'sometimes').[44]

This section, having analysed the state of the far right in post-Brexit Britain, the risks of radicalisation, hate crime and terrorism, will now turn to the broader historical context.

[42] Lars Erik Berntzen and Sveinung Sandberg, "The Collective Nature of Lone Wolf Terrorism: Anders Behring Breivik and the Anti-Islamic Social Movement," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 5 (2014), 2.

[43] Matthew Goodwin and Jocelyn Evans, *From Voting to Violence? Far-Right Extremism in Britain* (London: HOPE not Hate, 2012), 7.

[44] Ibid., 26-7.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The British far right tradition can be dated back to at least 1923, following the foundation of the British Fascisti – a hybrid movement of ultra-conservatives and fascists inspired by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.[45] Since then, fascist and far-right organisations have been small but ever-present in Britain. Their success, however, has generally been derisory. It is possible to speak of three waves of fascist 'success' – despite it always being minimal and short-lived. Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists achieved a short period of success between 1933-1934, where party membership rose to 40,000 at its peak. Mosley also received the backing from notable elites, such as *Daily Mail* proprietor Lord Rothermere. Following highly publicised instances of violence and blatant anti-Semitism, the party's membership declined rapidly. The leadership of the group was ultimately interned during the Second World War.

Post-war far-right groups in Britain have always been tainted by association with Nazi Germany and genocide, and were generally marginal for the first 25 years after the Second World War. The National Front in the 1970s, a coalition of neo-Nazis, fascists and ultra-conservatives, appeared to be making a breakthrough off the back of public anger towards government immigration policy. The latent extremism of the group as well as the Conservative government's crackdown on immigration deprived the NF of political space, and the group quickly became irrelevant. The third and final period of far-right upsurge occurred between 2002 and 2013, when the British National Party picked up dozens of local authority seats,

[45] For works on British fascist history, see Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain: A History: 1918-1998* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism, 1918-1939: Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany*, 1933-1939 (London: Faber and Faber, 1980); see also John Richardson, *British Fascism: A Discourse-Historical Analysis* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2017).

as well as two Members of the European Parliament.[46] Nearly 1 million voted for the BNP at the European elections of 2009; a party whose roots are firmly located in the interwar fascist movements and post-war Neo-Nazi scene. The BNP began to collapse shortly after the 2010 following infighting and financial problems. Whilst the BNP still operates, it has a tiny membership and is barely noticeable.

In addition to the BNP, the EDL – an Islamophobic street-based social movement – emerged in 2009.[47] The group was soon part of a wider 'Counter-Jihad' movement active across Europe and the United States. The EDL initially drew in thousands to their marches, which were a significant drain on local police resources and resulted in multiple arrests. The EDL began to decline in 2013 when leader Stephen Yaxley-Lennon resigned from the party claiming it had been infiltrated by right-wing extremists.[48] Since then, whilst the EDL still exists, it is a shadow of its former self.

The electoral strength of the far right has always been minimal in Britain, largely due to its 'first past the post' system. Even the minor electoral gains by far-right groups in the first decade of the 21st century has practically disappeared, and the violent street marches which plagued towns and cities has similarly dissipated. Yet the far right has not vanished and still remains a threat to public

[46] For works on the BNP, see Nigel Copsey, *Contemporary British Fascism: The British National Party and the Quest for Legitimacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009); Nigel Copsey and Graham Macklin, eds., *The British National Party: Contemporary Perspectives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Matthew Goodwin, *New British Fascism: Rise of the British National Party* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Daniel Trilling, *Bloody Nasty People: The Rise of Britain's Far-Right* (London: Verso, 2012); forthcoming is Stephen Ashe, *Rise and Fall of the British National Party: A Sociological Perspective* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

[47] For works on the EDL, see Joel Busher, *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots Activism in the English Defence League* (Abgindon: Routledge, 2015); Nigel Copsey, "The English Defence League: Challenging our Country and our Values of Social Inclusion, Fairness and Equality," *Report on Behalf of Faith Matters*, 2010; Hilary Pilkington, *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[48] "EDL Leader Tommy Robinson Quits Group," *BBC News*, 8 Oct., 2013, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24442953.

order, community cohesion and in the worst cases, national security. This can be seen in Britain's currently fractured far-right landscape. Since the decline of the BNP, the far right is currently electorally insignificant and no one, catch-all group has arisen to take its place. During the EU Referendum, the far right, whilst gaining some notoriety particularly following the murder of Jo Cox (none of it was good publicity however), was totally marginal to the debate. Yet, there remains a far-right presence in the UK which holds a nationalist, xenophobic, anti-Muslim and deeply racist ideology. Furthermore, it could be argued that this fragmentation, which has made an electoral challenge unlikely, has radicalised the far right into more extreme rhetoric and street demonstrations as opposed to traditional electioneering, which requires a shift in response.

The British National Party (BNP) still remains one of the biggest far-right parties in Britain. It is currently led by former teacher Adam Walker, who took over from Nick Griffin in 2014 (Griffin was expelled from the party, having led them since 1999). Its membership currently sits at under 300 – significantly lower than 2013, where it stood at over 4,000. The BNP has shown itself to be highly prone to leadership conflicts, and has struggled with financial problems since the 2010 General Election. The largest active party on the far right is currently Britain First, who have an estimated membership of approximately 1,000 (although many of these are inactive members). Britain First describes itself as "a patriotic political party and street movement that opposes and fights the many injustices that are routinely inflicted on the British people".[49] It is similar to the BNP, although adopts a more confrontational approach, which conducts 'mosque invasions' and 'Christian patrols' in areas with large Muslim populations. Britain First's leader, Paul Golding, is a former BNP activist and spent time in jail in 2016 after breaching

[49] "Britain First Mission Statement," *Britain First* website, www.britainfirst.org/mission-statement/.

a court order which forbade him from entering mosques. The party has a significant online presence which far outweighs its physical activity: it has a Facebook page 'followed' by nearly 2 million people.

Smaller far-right parties also exist. The National Front, which has been officially running since 1967, is a small but extreme party on the far-right fringes. Its membership is around 200 and declining. That being said, the party is known for having a strong and violent neo-Nazi element within its membership. Like many parties on the far right, it is riven with infighting over tactics, specifically, whether to adopt a more violent approach or more conventional politics. Another smaller party is Liberty GB, led by Paul Weston, which has a membership of fewer than 100. The anti-Muslim 'counter-Jihadist' party stood in the Batley and Spen by-election organised following Jo Cox's murder (as did the British National Party and National Front) and won barely 1% of the vote in a contest which major parties chose not to contest out of respect. Another tiny far-right group is the British Democratic Party, founded by former BNP MEP Andrew Brons, who fell out with Nick Griffin and left the BNP in 2010. The party has a tiny following of less than 20 members.

A core element of far-right ideology, which has been present throughout its history, is ultra-nationalism. All other ideological features, such as criticisms of multiculturalism, Euroscepticism, and 'Islamoprejudice', feed from the idea of putting the 'British people' first. For example, some of Britain First's policies include: "Recruit, train and pay British doctors, nurses and dentists"; "The protection of British companies from unfair foreign imports in certain areas where competition is not on an equal footing"; "Scrap the entire 'foreign aid' budget"; "Make all state benefits, housing and assistance available only to British citizens"; "Britain and the wider Commonwealth should pursue its own defence and foreign policy".[50] The British National Party similarly pledge: "Reassert

[50] "Britain First Policies," *Britain First* website, www.britainfirst.org/policies/.

that British law comes before any other in Britain"; "End public funding of organisations advocating multiculturalism"; and "the selective exclusion of foreign-made goods from British markets and the reduction of foreign imports. We will ensure that our manufactured goods are, wherever possible, produced in British factories, employing British workers".[51]

Another salient ideological theme across all far-right groups in Britain is Islamoprejudice, which takes a number of forms. Within the far right as well as the wider 'Counter-Jihad' movement, Britain's Muslim community and Islam in general is rejected on a wide range of grounds. Perhaps the most common is the linking of all Muslims with terrorism and religion-based extremism. This has been a feature dating back over fifteen years. Since the high profile terrorist attacks on 11 September, 2001 and, in particular, the London 7/7 bombings, the far right has shifted from generalised racial prejudice toward the black and Asian community to focusing almost entirely on Muslims. Other terror attacks, such as those in Paris during January and November 2015, are highlighted to supposedly show the conspiratorial, violent nature of Islam. At the same time, the Mediterranean refugee crisis, which drew significant national attention in the summer of 2015, was similarly stoked up by the far right as a 'Muslim invasion' of Europe – with many claiming that refugees were actually terrorists in disguise.

Britain First regularly posts content playing up the threat of religion-based extremist attacks, with stories headlined such as "ISIS Jihadi urges Pals to Launch 'St Petersburg-Style' Bomb Attacks in London"! In like vein, the BNP upload 'fake news' stories on their website with headlines such as "80% of Muslims Support ISIS". Liberty GB also posted gruesome images of the aftermath of terror attack at the Bataclan Theatre in Paris in November 2015, stating "this so-called religion of peace is far more than an archaic doctrine

[51] "Policies," *British National Party* website, https://bnp.org.uk/policies/.

built upon by the misogynistic fantasies of a seventh century psychopath: it is hell on earth". Liberty GB have also posted:

> ISIS isn't separate from Islam: it is the embodiment of Islam. Should it attain power, Britain First pledge to introduce a comprehensive ban on the religion of 'Islam' within the United Kingdom. This ban will include the prohibition of halal slaughter, sharia courts, religious publications (such as the Koran, Hadiths), the operation of mosques, madrasas and 'cultural centres' and the public preaching and/or teaching of Islamic scriptures and doctrines; Anyone found to be promoting the ideology of Islam will be subject to deportation or imprisonment.[52]

Turning the persistent issue of the British Empire's history on its head, the BNP have pledged to "[r]each an accord with the Muslim world whereby they will agree to take back their excess population which is currently colonising this country".[53]

As noted above, the electoral challenge from the far right is currently lower than at any point since the early 1990s. In the 2015 General Election, the far right did not come close to breaching even 1% of the national vote, with the BNP only standing in 8 seats. Their 'influence' and significance thus lies in their social media presence, which risks radicalising sections of the population. Further, there remains an ability to cause public mayhem and drain police resources through street demonstrations and harm community cohesion between ethnic groups, particularly in areas with existing racial tension, such as East London or the Bedfordshire town of Luton. The EDL, which emerged from Luton to national prominence in 2009, has cost taxpayers more than £10 million in policing costs to 2013 alone,[54] with hundreds of arrests and sporadic violence the norm at 'defence league' street demonstrations.

[52] "Britain First Policies," *Britain First* website, www.britainfirst.org/policies/.

[53] "Britain First Mission Statement," *Britain First* website, www.britainfirst.org/mission-statement/.

[54] Jessica Elgot, "EDL Marches Costing Taxpayers £10m in Police Patrolling Costs," *Huffington Post*, 19 July, 2013, www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/07/19/edl-cost_n_3622366.html.

EXTREME RIGHT IN BRITAIN TODAY

In keeping with distinctions made in German law, Cas Mudde argues that

> the major difference between the radical right and extreme right is that the former is opposed to the constitution, whereas the latter is 'hostile' to the constitution

This means that extreme-right organisations are often the focus of the state and liable to be banned, whereas radical-right organisations are not.[55] The revolutionary, extreme right in Britain has always been small, even in comparison to the far right. Whilst there is no single dominant extreme-right organisation, they each form part of a loose, wider network possessing a violent ultra-nationalist ideology. This includes a deeply conspiratorial political outlook which is often derivative of Nazism and the desire to overthrow the British state. The extreme right does not live in isolation from the broader far-right network in the UK either. Members of far-right organisations can often drift into smaller, more violent and extreme organisations and vice versa. Accordingly, the small extreme right ultimately provides the biggest risk to public safety on account of their use of violence and the threat of terrorism.

The most significant group on the extreme right, at least until their banning in December 2016 by Home Secretary Amber Rudd, was the recently founded National Action. The openly neo-Nazi organisation had a membership of around 100. National Action described themselves as a "growing community of young nationalists in the United Kingdom, united in a mission to save our race and generation", purportedly fighting "the government,

[55] Cas Mudde, *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 13.

the new aristocracy, global capitalism, and all other white race traitors".[56] The party, a splinter from the Young BNP, had a significant youth following. National Action initially organised around universities was particularly savvy on the internet and new media. Although much of their activity was online, they also organised small marches in 2015 and 2016, which drew media attention to their neo-Nazi ideology.

National Action drew increased notoriety after one member, Garron Helm, was convicted for sending a string of violently anti-Semitic tweets to Labour MP Luciana Berger, who is Jewish. Another member, Laurence Burns, was convicted of incitement to racial hatred in December 2015 having called for a 'real Holocaust'. Banners at demonstrations were openly anti-Semitic; one stating "When the time comes they'll be in the chambers".[57] Earlier that year, shouting "This is for Lee Rigby" and "white power", Zack Davies attacked an Asian man in north Wales with a machete, in an attempted beheading that was adjudged an act of terrorism for the 'planned and racially motivated attack'; Davies will serve at least 14 years in prison.[58] In 2016, the party became the first extreme-right organisation to be banned as a terrorist organisation, and the first to be outlawed since the Second World War. The party also glorified the murder of Jo Cox, placing the slogan "Death to Traitors, Freedom for Great Britain" on its website (the only words Cox's killer spoke when asked for his name in court). Whilst the organisation has been banned on grounds of 'glorifying terrorism' (for its

[56] Chris York, "National Action, British Neo-Nazi Group, to Be Banned by Government," *Huffington Post*, 12 Dec., 2016, www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/national-action-british-neo-nazi-group-to-be-banned-by-government_uk_584e695de4b0fccb6799ba30.

[57] Jessica Elgot, "Neo-Nazi Group National Action Banned by Home Secretary," *The Guardian*, 12 Dec., 2016, www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/12/neo-nazi-group-national-action-banned-by-uk-home-secretary.

[58] "Lee Rigby Revenge Attacker Zack Davies Given Life Sentence," *BBC News*, 11 September, 2015, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-east-wales-34218184.

endorsement of Thomas Mair's terrorist assassination), it remains to be seen what its banned membership will do next.[59]

NATIONAL ACTION: BRITAIN'S YOUNG NEO-NAZIS

National Action was banned in December 2016 by the Home Office and in doing so, became the first extreme-right organisation to be proscribed through anti-terrorism legislation (Terrorism Act 2000). Following the murder of Jo Cox by Thomas Mair, the group posted a number of statements online in support of his actions, such as '#VoteLeave, don't let a man's sacrifice go in vain. Jo Cox would have filled Yorkshire with more sub-humans' as well 'Only 649 MPs to go'. The group, which could be described as a youth movement due to its young membership glorified Hitler, the Third Reich, British fascist and neo-Nazi movements of old and regularly posted anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, as well as genocidal rhetoric. They orchestrated demonstrations, the so-called 'White Man' marches in Liverpool and Newcastle, where they would publicly display Nazi salutes. Members from the organisation also turned this violent rhetoric into action. In January 2015, 25-year-old Zack Davies undertook a near fatal racist attack on an Asian man in a branch of Tesco in North Wales. National Action glorified the attack even once it became apparent that Davies was mentally ill. Once found guilty of attempted murder, he was sent to a psychiatric institution. *HOPE not Hate* described National Action as a 'dangerous organisation' in 2016, arguing that Davies would "not be the first nor the last person to want to join the gang and prove himself". Whether their banning reflects simply a rational response to the organisation's latent extremism or indicates a tougher government stance on the extreme right more generally following Cox's murder remains to be seen. National Socialist ideology is far from limited to National Action and where their members end up will be of great interest to the authorities.

Another extreme-right, neo-Nazi group is Combat 18. Founded in 1992 as a bodyguard for BNP leaders, the organisation developed national notoriety for violent acts committed towards eth-

[59] Chris Allen, "Proscribing National Action: Considering the Impact of Banning the Far-Right Group," *The Political Quarterly,* 88, no. 4 (2017): 652–659.

nic minorities and immigrants.[60] The organisation currently has a membership of between 30 and 50 people, and is far less active than it once was. Yet troublingly, it appears to have undergone a revival in 2016 and its membership has increased slightly. Another organisation which continues to campaign is the Racial Volunteer Force (RVF), which split from Combat 18 in 2002. The group, like Combat 18, is part of a wider transnational neo-Nazi network, and has been involved in confrontational street demonstrations that often turn violent. The neo-Nazi organisation – the numbers '1' and '8' refer to 'A' and 'H' in the alphabet, or 'Adolf Hitler' – which views the far-right English Defence League as a false flag operation orchestrated by Jews, has declined in importance over the past year. It currently has a tiny membership of around 10 militants.

The British Movement is another small neo-Nazi organisation, closely allied to the National Front. While in 2015 it had more members than Combat 18 and the RVF combined, it has since declined to a membership of roughly 50 activists. One of the British Movement's main activities appears to be placing stickers in public places, where they wish to "[take] the British National Socialist message out across the whole of Britain". Although the British Movement have been around since the 1980s, a very recent and new type of extreme-right organisation has arrived – called Misanthropic Division. The organisation, which has around 30 members, was born out of the recent Ukrainian-Russian conflict in Eastern Ukraine, where its leader Francesco Saverio Fontana was kicked out of the Ukrainian ultra-nationalist Azov Battalion. The movement ultimately seeks to recruit nationalists to fight on the front line in Crimea against Russia – an issue which divides British nationalists, the majority of whom express support for Russia and glorify Russian Federation president, Vladimir Putin. It also co-operates with other extreme and far-right groups on street demos.

[60] Nick Lowles, *White Riot: The Violent Story of Combat 18* (Preston: Milo Books, 2001).

Extreme-right ideology, which talks up apocalyptic scenarios of 'race war' and conspiracy theories holding that plotters are seeking to exterminate the white race, has led to several cases of extreme violence and terrorism over the past twenty years – some have been executed, though more were prevented before they could be carried out. The highest profile incident prior to Finsbury Park car attack was David Copeland, who murdered three and injured scores during a nail bomb attack in London in 1999. In a series of three bomb attacks, Copeland targeted the East End Bangladeshi community, Brixton's black community and a gay pub in Soho. Following his arrest, Copeland explained the motivation for his attack:

> If you've read the Turner Diaries, you know the year 2000 there'll be the uprising and all that, racial violence on the streets. My aim was political. It was to cause a racial war in this country. There'd be a backlash from the ethnic minorities, then all the white people will go out and vote BNP.[61]

Other plots which could have provoked untold devastation include Robert Cottage, a former BNP candidate, who was jailed in 2007 for storing a collection of explosive chemicals at his home. Cottage claimed to be holding on to the chemicals in the event of a race war caused by uncontrolled immigration.[62] A more sinister case occurred in 2010, when Ian Davison, founder of extreme-right cell Aryan Strike Force, was found with prepared ricin at his home in County Durham. Davison was an avid follower of Adolf Hitler and had regularly posted anti-Semitic conspiracy theories on internet forums. Davison was jailed for 10 years in 2010 and became the first person in Britain to be jailed for producing a chemical weapon.[63]

[61] David Copeland, cited in BBC Panorama, "The Nailbomber," *BBC1*, 30 June, 2000; transcript available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/audio_video/programmes/panorama/transcripts/transcript_30_06_00.txt.

[62] "Ex-BNP Man Jailed over Chemicals," *BBC News*, 31 July, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/lancashire/6923933.stm.

[63] Martin Wainwright, "Neo-Nazi Ian Davison Jailed for 10 Years for Making Chemical Weapon," *The Guardian,* 10 May, 2010, www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/may/14/neo-nazi-ian-davison-jailed-chemical-weapon.

DOVER, 2016: THE FAR-RIGHT TURNS VIOLENT

The Kent seaside town of Dover has symbolic value for the far-right (and indeed most Eurosceptics) as the symbolic gateway of Britain from continental Europe. It is also the key port where migrants, asylum seekers and refugees enter Britain from Calais in France, legally and illegally. January 2016 saw a far-right demonstration in Dover which quickly turned violent. Several people were hurt as far-right demonstrators clashed with police and anti-fascist opposition. A host of far- and extreme-right organisations were present, including the National Front, the South East Alliance and the Infidels. Bricks and other projectiles were thrown and the police seized over 20 weapons including knives and knuckledusters. North West Infidels leader Shane Calvert, ringleader in the riot, was jailed for two-and-a-half years for violent disorder. In sum, six people were hurt but only nine arrested on the day – the cost of policing the riot was £250,000. Eighty arrests were made by November 2015 and prison sentences totalling 63 years have been handed out to those arrested and charged after the demonstrations. The riots ultimately demonstrate the danger to public order posed by the far-right as well as the great cost to public resources. Dover was a particularly violent demonstration, yet street demonstrations have been a regular occurrence over the past eight years since the founding of the EDL. As the far-right continues to achieve little success at the ballot box, this threat to public order has become one of the most salient posed.

Whilst the extreme right is known for its uses of violence, it engages in wider activity which is not inherently violent but does construe a risk to community cohesion. An area of growing influence on the extreme right are debating forums. The Forum Network is a collection of discussion groups and lecturing events. Forum Networks, importantly, are an active area of transnational collaboration between British and overseas ultra-nationalists. There is no formal membership for The Forum Network which is described by *HOPE not Hate* as "meetings where fascists, Nazis, racists and Holocaust deniers come together to hear speeches and discuss

extreme ideas".[64] Forum branches exist in London, the South West, Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire. One can still view dozens of speeches and talks delivered at the Forum Network events on YouTube. The subjects range from historical analysis which tends to soft-pedal the history of the Third Reich; Holocaust denial; speeches from nationalists in Estonia to the United States; racial theories; and other issues central to far-right ideology.

An active 'white power' music scene also exists. Blood and Honour is a white power music network which has existed since 1987. The name deriving from the motto of Hitler Youth 'Blut und Ehre', it was set up by extreme-right cult hero Ian Stuart Donaldson, the lead singer of skinhead band Skrewdriver who died in a car accident, aged 36, in 1993. Active in seventeen countries across Europe, six concerts were held in the UK in 2016 which saw between 150 and 600 attend. Hundreds are loose members of Blood and Honour in the UK, with many coming from Polish and Italian immigrant communities living in Britain. The Blood and Honour network demonstrates that the extreme right is both a cultural and political community with a membership of between 200 and 300 in 2015. Yet neo-Nazi musical events can draw far more supporters; for instance, more than 350 people attended a three-day Blood and Honour festival in Cambridgeshire during September 2016 – it was allowed as a 'charity event'.[65]

The significance of the extreme right lies not in its numbers, but its impact on the radicalisation of individuals; National Action's Zack Davies is a perfect case in point, as is the Thomas Mair's terrorist murder of Jo Cox. There remains a genuine risk of violence from groups which do not see the liberal British constitution as legitimate and are prepared to carry out violent acts in order to

[64] HOPE not Hate, *The State of Hate: 2017*, 38.

[65] "Cambridgeshire Neo-Nazi Rally Allowed as 'Charity' Event," *BBC News*, 7 Oct., 2016,www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-37575508.

promote their ideas, hasten the demise of the British state or simply kill individuals from minority ethnic and religious groups. The fact that the British government has taken unprecedented measures to ban National Action demonstrates the threat such groups pose to the safety of individuals and, at times – such as Darren Osborne's attack on Finsbury Park in London – to national security as well.

THE NEAR RIGHT AND THE 'MAINSTREAMING' OF THE FAR RIGHT

One party which does not fit on the far-right spectrum easily, but certainly merits discussion, is Ukip.[66] The decline of the BNP was closely followed by a significant rise in support for Ukip – a more mainstream 'radical right' party, which derives from the Eurosceptic Tory-right tradition. Ukip have been the most successful insurgent party on the right of British politics in modern history, gaining just under 4 million votes at the General Election in 2015 and winning the national vote in the 2014 European Elections. The party's leader until June 2016, Nigel Farage, has eschewed the label of far right:

> We have nothing in common with the BNP. They are racist. We are inclusive. They are authoritarian. We are anti-authoritarian. They hate Europe, to be sure, as much as they hate the rest of the world and a large percentage of Britons. We love Europe but happen to reject the EU.[67]

Ukip indeed has elected BAME officials, are democratic and are not borne out of the fascist tradition. However, the populist

[66] For works on Ukip, see Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin, *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Radical Right in Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); and Matthew Goodwin and Caitlin Milazzo, *Ukip: Inside the Campaign to Redraw the Map of British Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). For a journalistic account see: Owen Bennett, *Following Farage: On the Trail of the People's Army* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2015).

[67] Nigel Farage, *Flying Free* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2011), 108.

party – which frequently rails against immigration, multiculturalism, left politics and 'unpatriotic' elites – shares much in common with the narratives and language of the far right. Their political rise between 2012 and 2016 saw them manage to set the agenda in Britain somewhat effectively over the issue of immigration – which grew to become the most important issue voters took into account before voting in the EU referendum.[68] The growth of this 'near right' movement has prompted a debate over where the greatest impact of the far right lies.

Whilst far-right parties have been generally electorally unsuccessful, many of their ideas have not been as out-of-step with public opinion. This increased mainstreaming of far-right rhetoric and ideas in Britain has been noticeable, both before the vote to leave the European Union and since.[69] Aristotle Kallis has argued that far-right parties, whilst generally struggling electorally across Europe, "have been notably more successful in translating their poll ratings into (disproportionately stronger) political and socio-cultural influence". Mainstreaming is thus the "(partial or full) endorsement by political agents of the so-called political 'mainstream', and/or by broader sectors of society, of 'extreme' (in some cases even taboo) ideas and attitudes without necessarily leading to tangible association […] with the extremist parties that advocate them most vociferously". In practice, this has meant ideas relating to immigration, multiculturalism and xenophobic attitudes have become normalised in Britain and are no longer taboo.[70]

[68] "Was Brexit an Anti-Immigrant vote?" *UK Polling Report*, 18 Oct., 2016, http://ukpollingreport.co.uk/blog/archives/9767.

[69] Paul Stocker, *English Uprising: Brexit and the Mainstreaming of the Far-Right* (London: Melville House, 2017).

[70] Aristotle Kallis, "Breaking Taboos and 'Mainstreaming the Extreme': The Debates on Restricting Islamic Symbols in Contemporary Europe," in Ruth Wodak, Majid KhosraviNik and Brigitte Mral, eds., *Right-Wing Populism in Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 57.

The right-wing press and media have been crucial in the mainstreaming of far-right ideas since the turn of the 21st century. In the late 1990s, the tabloid press began to hysterically report the modest rise in asylum seekers looking for sanctuary in Britain – typically depicting it in terms of a 'migrant invasion'. As net migration began to rise following the accession of A8 countries into the European Union from Central and Eastern Europe, press coverage became even more deeply hostile to immigration. Islamophobia also began to pervade the national press following the 11 September, 2001 attacks and 7/7 attacks across London in 2005. The relentlessly hostile coverage of immigration and multiculturalism in the run up to the Brexit referendum, which assisted the Leave campaign, was unmistakable.

One issue which provides a good case study of the increasingly extreme tone taken by mainstream actors is the 2015 refugee crisis. Take one article written in centre-right broadsheet *The Times* by Melanie Phillips. Phillips' argument against Britain accepting refugees bears little difference to that of far-right rhetoric on this issue. She painted an apocalyptic scenario, arguing that "the Arab and Muslim world is disintegrating into chaos, war and terror. The ascendancy of radical Islam is producing untold barbarism. The West-imposed model of the nation-state is collapsing into tribal warfare. A dying culture has turned murderously upon itself whilst trying simultaneously to conquer the wider world". For Phillips, accepting refugees would "alter the cultural balance of the country for ever".[71] Likewise, after a migrant boat sank in 2015, killing hundreds, *The Sun* columnist Katie Hopkins wrote:

> NO, I don't care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins and show me skinny people looking

[71] Melanie Phillips, "Accepting These Migrants Is a Big Mistake," *The Sunday Times,* 10 Sep., 2015, www.thetimes.co.uk/article/accepting-these-migrants-is-a-huge-mistake-dfmk5r9s2dq.

> sad. I still don't care […] It's time to get Australian. Bring on the gunships, force migrants back to their shores and burn the boats.[72]

Both arguments, published in national tabloid newspapers, more than just vindicate the views of the far right - they normalise them.

The Brexit campaign similarly demonstrated how far British political culture had shifted towards the right, and how the UK climate had become more favourable to the far right. A prominent feature of the campaign utilised by the Leave side was the improbable scenario of Turkey joining the European Union, designed to play into anxieties over immigration and Muslim integration in Britain. One billboard claimed "Turkey is joining the EU" with footsteps going through a door shaped like a British passport. Another leaflet had a map of "countries set to join the EU" painted in red, including Turkey. Iraq and Syria were shaded in pink, obviously seeking to mislead. Following a visa free agreement between Turkey and the EU (which Britain was not even part of as it is not part of the Schengen Agreement), a leaflet said "Britain's new border is with Syria and Iraq". The most infamous campaign poster in the campaign was Ukip leader Nigel Farage's Leave.EU campaign 'Breaking Point' poster. The poster pictured hundreds of destitute looking migrants from the Middle East, as if they were arriving to Britain *en masse*.

The significance of mainstreaming is that it changes how far-right 'success' is viewed. Whilst the far right have always been weak performers at the ballot box, they appear to have both benefitted from and contributed to a political climate more favourable to their ideas. Much more study needs to be conducted on how far-right ideas have become part of ordinary, accepted political discourse and the factors which continue to instigate this.

[72] Katie Hopkins, "Rescue Boats? I'd Use Gunships to Stop Migrants," *The Sun*, 17 April, 2015; no longer online; cached version available at www.gc.soton.ac.uk/files/2015/01/hopkins-17april-2015.pdf.

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AND THE HUNGARIAN FAR-RIGHT

JULIA HOLDSWORTH & KATHERINE KONDOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years the far-right has gained ground in Hungary, with sections of the far-right entering the social and political mainstream and enjoying both widespread societal support and electoral success at local and national levels. At the same time, there is increasing concern in the broader European context about far-right violence and violent extremism. This report surveys recent research into the Hungarian mainstream and radical far-right in order to outline a number of key characteristics of the far-right in Hungary and offers a number of policy recommendations to address the increase in far-right violence.

KEY FINDINGS

The landscape of the far-right in Hungary is complex and constantly changing but all far-right groups share a strong ethno-nationalist ideology. There are significant links at both individual and group level between the mainstream far-right and more radical far-right groups and the resultant presence of far-right rhetoric and ideology within the mainstream serves to normalise, and even legitimise, violent far-right ideologies and actions.

The electoral success and broader societal popularity of the far-right since the end of communism in Hungary can be connected to the social, cultural, and political uncertainties that arose in the change from communism to capitalism. The Hungarian far-right has a distinctive character arising from specific socio-historical circumstances including: the legacy of post-socialist transition, Hungary's relationship with the European Union, and the current political context. As can be seen below, these are mixed with characteristics commonly found in far-right groups across Europe. Hungarian far-right groups share a number of traits including: irredentism, anti-Roma prejudice, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE FAR-RIGHT IN HUNGARY

The first far-right political party to emerge after the end of communism, *Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja* (MIÉP; Hungarian Justice and Life Party), gained popularity arguing that the difficult post-communist transition was being led by people who were 'anti-Hungarian' and that these should be replaced by 'national forces of resistance'.[1] In 2005, they joined with the newly-founded Jobbik, Movement for a Better Hungary, a party with close links to Hungarian hate groups. Quickly growing to become the third-largest political party in Hungary, their rhetoric was openly anti-liberal and anti-EU, often homophobic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Roma.

The majority ruling party, Fidesz, and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán have recently faced criticism from European leaders for increasingly radical policies. Since Viktor Orbán's election in 2010 and re-election in 2014, Fidesz has rewritten the Constitution, militarised the country's southern borders, led a campaign against migrants, and governs "over a culture within which racist speech and prohibited far-right paramilitary activities are tolerated".[2] Most recently, Fidesz led an aggressive campaign against the Hungarian-American Jewish philanthropist George Soros and has attempted to close the Central European University, which he founded.

FAR-RIGHT VIOLENCE IN HUNGARY

There are significant linkages and crossovers between some far-right political parties and other organisations, including ones that engage in violence in Hungary. This report considers four main violent far-right groups: the New Hungarian Guard, the Hungari-

[1] Kovács, András. "The Post-Communist Extreme Right: The Jobbik Party in Hungary," in *Right-Wing Populism in Europe. Politics and Discourse*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

[2] Fekete, Liz. "Hungary: Power, Punishment and the 'Christian-National Idea'," *Race & Class* 57, (2016): 39-53.

an Defence Movement, the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, and the Outlaw Army, and traces some of the connections between these and other, more mainstream right groups. These four groups are the most prominent far-right groups in Hungary that do not have a formal relationship to the political sphere and that have shown the greatest potential for violence.

Policy recommendations to combat far-right violence need to take into account the challenging broader socio-political environment in which Hungarian far-right groups operate. A further challenge is presented by the paucity of reliable data on hate crimes and violence committed by groups and individuals. Combatting the threat posed by violent far-right groups in Hungary necessitates a multifaceted response from government and third sector organisations. Listed below are some key areas in which attention to policy development would have the greatest effect:

- **Improved information recording is needed to address the deficit of understanding of far-right activity.** For example, closer monitoring of far-right groups both online and offline to identify those at risk of radicalisation and individuals and groups involved in violence.
- **Develop clear definitions that are agreed across different government bodies and third sector agencies,** especially for key terms such as hate crime and hate speech.
- **Develop a multi-agency approach to tackling far-right violence that moves away from more securitised approaches towards more inclusive ones** that include, for example, educational programmes.
- **Work to provide appropriate support to vulnerable groups and victims of hate crime.**

PART ONE: THE GROWTH OF THE FAR-RIGHT IN HUNGARY: CONTEXTS, CONSEQUENCES AND RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen a rise in far-right extremism across Europe. Reactions to the perceived refugee crisis from 2015 have resulted in strengthening anti-migrant rhetoric and xenophobia in many parts of Europe but this has been especially marked in 'border' countries. In Hungary, this tendency is strengthened by the fact that many Hungarians continue to deal with social and economic dispossession in which, for many, the expected benefits of ending communist rule and joining Europe have not materialised. Young people, in particular, have been attracted to parties and groups that seek to place blame for their lack of prosperity and opportunity on others. In Hungary, the main targets for this blame are the European Union, 'other insiders' such as Roma, and 'other outsiders' such as migrants. This has made the messages of far-right groups especially attractive as they provide apparently simple solutions to ongoing social problems.

Hungarian far-right groups share much in common with other far-right organisations across Europe, including strong ethno-nationalism, anti-Semitism, anti-Roma sentiment and xenophobia while other characteristics of the Hungarian far-right, including irredentism and Pan-Turanism, are specific to the local context but inform and underpin other ideologies and attitudes.

Whilst a number of high profile cases have hit the headlines in recent years the majority of problems that arise from far-right extremists often go unreported,[3] existing as 'everyday' acts of harass-

[3] Krekó, Péter. "Hungary," in *Preventing and Countering Far-Right Extremism: European Cooperation, Country Reports*, edited by Alex Glennie, Sebastien Feve, and Vidhya Ramalingam. London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012.

ment, intimidation, violence or other hate-motivated crimes that target both individuals and groups.

THE CONTEXT OF FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN HUNGARY

The far-right has played an important role in twentieth-century Hungarian political history, participating in government between 1919 to 1922 and then from 1944 to 1945, during which period the far-right was "deeply involved in the Holocaust in the country".[4] Many far-right groups today adopt symbols and imagery from these groups as well as espousing similar ideologies and prejudices.

During the 44-year socialist period far-right groups were officially and publicly non-existent in Hungary but the far right saw a resurgence in Hungary soon after the transition from communism in 1989. As with many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the end of communism offered both opportunity and uncertainty. For many in Hungary and across Central and Eastern Europe, the promises of capitalism and democracy failed to materialise, and the last 25 years have, instead, been marked by ideological and financial stresses alongside ontological insecurities. This is reflected in surveys taken of the Hungarian population. In 2009, for example, the PEW Global Attitudes Survey found that 75% of Hungarians believed "they are generally 'worse off now than under communism'".[5] Kelemen et al. argue that Hungarians' dissatisfaction was closely related to a perceived injustice in social conditions, and that the "cultural nation was organised against a hostile, alien,

[4] Tamas, Pal. "The Radical Right in Hungary: A Threat to Democracy?" in *Is Europe on the 'Right' Path? Right-Wing Extremism and Right-Wing Populism in Europe,* edited by Nora Langenbacher and Britta Schellenberg. Berlin: Forum, 2011.

[5] Ahmari, Sohrab. "Dancing over Catastrophes: The Far Right and Roma in Hungary," *Dissent* 59, (2012): 16-21.

and unjust system".[6] Ahmari argues that among the post-Soviet bloc countries, "Hungary suffers from one of the highest rates of post-transition disillusionment".[7]

The presence of the far right in Hungarian national politics was first established when MIÉP (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja,* Hungarian Justice and Life Party) won seats in the Hungarian Parliament in 1998. In the intervening years, different parties have come to prominence and the current government is led by the far-right, anti-EU Fidesz party. Since Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's election in 2010 and re-election in 2014, Fidesz has rewritten the Hungarian Constitution, militarised the country's southern borders, led a campaign against migrants, and governs "over a culture within which racist speech and prohibited far-right paramilitary activities are tolerated".[8]

The situation has only intensified since the start of the migrant crisis and the desperate plight of tens of thousands of people seeking refuge in Europe. Hungary has been at the frontline of refugee attempts to reach safety in Europe. There is a clear perception that other European countries have not provided sufficient support, leaving refugees stranded and border countries struggling to cope. Some of the responses to this crisis enacted by Hungary – building border fences, volunteer border policing, housing refugees in container housing – have caused an international outcry, but have been popular in a country where right-wing ideology and sentiments are supported by the government and a large section of the population. Anti-migrant and xenophobic views have now become part of the

[6] Kelemen, László, Zsolt Péter Szabó, Noémi Zsuzsanna Mészáros, János László, and Josef P Forgas. "Social Cognition and Democracy: The Relationship between System Justification, Just World Beliefs, Authoritarianism, Need for Closure, and Need for Cognition in Hungary," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 2, no. 1, (2014): 197-219.

[7] Ahmari, *Dancing over Catastrophes*, 16.

[8] Liz, *Hungary: Power, Punishment and the 'Christian-National Idea'.*

mainstream in Hungarian political rhetoric which can be argued to legitimise parts of the ideology of far-right groups and means that there are few opportunities for countering far-right and anti-European Union messages on a national or local level.

The political party Jobbik has had connections to far-right street-level movements and organisations (especially the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement). In recent years, these ties have grown more complex. Since 2013, Jobbik has pursued a more centrist position, causing many one-time supporters from groups such as the Outlaw Army and New Hungarian Guard to come into conflict with the party.[9] Now that Jobbik is positioning itself more in the mainstream right, there is still a demand among supporters for a far-right political party. To fill this gap, Identitesz was formed in September 2015 as a 'Conservative Student Movement' and in March 2017, Identitesz announced plans to become a political party. On 8 July, 2017, Identitesz and the Outlaw Army formed a coalition movement called Strength and Devotion (*Erő és Elszántság*). They claim this coalition will form a 'true' right in Hungarian politics, and declared war on liberalism. It remains to be seen what this coalition, and new political party, will mean for the far right and politics in Hungary.

THE LANDSCAPE OF VIOLENCE AND FAR-RIGHT GROUPS IN HUNGARY

The far right in Hungary is not a single united force but is rather made up of cross-cutting groups that share some aims, practices and ideologies in common but differ on others. Krekó suggests that the overlapping categories are the following:

[9] Index. "Vona to Jobbik: Find a New Party President If You Don't Like My Politics! [Vona a Jobbiknak: Keressenek új pártelnököt, ha nem kell a politikám!]," *Index*, 23 November, 2015. Accessed 26 July, 2017. http://index.hu/belfold/2015/11/23/neppartosodas_jobbik_merskeletek_radikalisok_tisztujitas_vona_gabor_2_resz/?token=7b45d0bcfd68c30301f9b65f42511c0f.

- Political parties functioning within the confines of the democratic political system (even if they criticise it) and seeking votes.
- Movements and groups, often affiliated with political parties or supporting them, but not standing in elections (e.g. Hungarian Guard and its successors).
- Marginal neo-Nazi and Hungarist organisations looking to distance themselves from the rest of the far right and openly aiming to overthrow the democratic system.[10]

The far right is strongly embedded within the Hungarian political system. The landscape of the far right in Hungary is vast, turbulent, and constantly changing, and provides some difficulty for categorisation. In Hungary, a country with a ruling conservative party that has radical right tendencies and that has adopted aspects of far-right ideology, the definition of what is 'far' has shifted. This shift has allowed for a mainstreaming of many far-right beliefs, hence one can refer to a 'mainstream far right'. The non-mainstream far right, however, can refer to those street-level organisations with a potential for violence. The four groups discussed below fit into the second and third of Krekó's categories and are considered here as those groups which are undoubtedly currently active, and exhibit the highest potential for violence.

The New Hungarian Guard

The Hungarian Guard Movement was formed in 2007 with 56 members, chosen to commemorate the 1956 revolution, with the original aim of instilling fear in Roma. The Hungarian Guard was dissolved by the government in 2009 for threatening Roma after a march in Tatárszentgyörgy but reformed three weeks later, as the New Hungarian Guard Movement (Új *Magyar Gárda Mozgalom*) with chapters in most of Hungary's nineteen counties.

[10] Krekó, Péter. "Hungary" in *Preventing and Countering Far-Right Extremism: European Cooperation, Country Reports*, edited by Alex Glennie, Sebastien Feve, and Vidhya Ramalingam. London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2012.

They are an ultranationalist organisation whose members pledge to defend the Hungarian state, nation, values, and culture, and consider themselves "a self-defence alliance that transcends parties and borders".[11] They wear military-style uniforms and employ the fascist symbols of the 1944-1945 Arrow Cross, along with the red-and-white striped Árpád flag.[12] The Hungarian Guard claim their goals abide by the official Hungarian Constitution but, at the same time, their goals must abide by the "ancient rights of freedom and ancient traditions".

The Hungarian Defence Movement

The Hungarian Defence Movement (*Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom*) was formed in October 2014 from the movement For a Better Future Hungarian Self-Defense (*Szebb Jövőért Magyar Önvédelem*; henceforth Better Future), originally a security patrol unit for the New Hungarian Guard that was disbanded in 2014 following violence and intimidation in a number of predominantly Roma neighbourhoods. They argue it is their duty to protect the "Hungarian population around Hungary, as law enforcement officials are busy protecting the borders while murderers and robbers run rampant in villages".[13] The Movement, identifying as an NGO, is active online, and their Facebook page has nearly 2,500 supporters. They regularly organise children's summer camps and music festivals featuring local white-power and extremist bands as well as organising

[11] The New Hungarian Guard Movement. "The New Hungarian Guard's Honour Code [Az Új Magyar Gárda becsületkódexe!]," *The New Hungarian Guard Movement*, 26 April, 2013. Accessed 17 January, 2017. http://ujmagyargardamozgalom.com/az_új_magyar_gárda_becsületkódexe.

[12] Árpád was the chieftain who led the Magyar tribes into the Carpathian Basin. His dynasty, which came to an end in 1301, is represented by the red-and-white striped flag.

[13] Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom. "Create a HDM Chapter in Your Area! [Alakitsd meg te is településeden a MÖM helyi szervezetét!]," *Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom*, Accessed 26 July, 2017. http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Alakitsd_meg_te_is_telepuleseden_a_MOM_helyi_szervezetet_&min=160&translate

food and clothing drives along with Jobbik. The group has mostly presented a threat to Hungary's Roma population, with the paramilitary section of the organisation offers combat training to members and they regularly patrol streets with high Roma populations.

The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement

The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (*Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom*; henceforth HVIM) self-identify as a radical youth nationalist movement who campaign for unification of Hungarian people outside Hungary's current borders. Founded in 2001, the movement's name recalls the Hungarian sixty-four counties (excluding Croatia) before the Treaty of Trianon. They often advocated for violence, and refer to supporters as 'warriors' and to a 'battle' they are fighting. They have clashed with people at the Budapest Pride parades, and since spring 2015 have focused especially on migrants.

The Outlaw Army

Formed in 2008, the motto of the Outlaw Army (*Betyársereg*) is "Ne bánstd a magyart, mert pórul jársz"! which loosely translates to "Don't hurt Hungarians, or else"! The group is led by Zsolt Tyirityán, one of the most well-known figures in the Hungarian far-right scene, and has around 300 members divided into 10-15 clans. They claim to be a defence organisation who draw criminal, dangerous, and anti-social elements of society to the attention of law enforcement. The Outlaw Army is closely tied to other far-right groups, especially HVIM and Identitesz, and provide security at protests and events organised by other groups.

Having sketched four of the groups engaged in far-right violence in Hungary this report now moves to consider some specific cases of violence.

- *Hate crimes*. Statistical records of hate crime in Hungary, as across Central and Eastern Europe, suggest that incidence is low but these low figures obfuscate the true picture as a number of struc-

tural and social factors lead to the non-reporting, under-reporting, and under-recording of hate crimes and violent incidents.

- *Violent incidents against Roma. T*he Roma have been the most threatened minority in Hungary, especially by the far right. All far-right groups mentioned above have in some way threatened Roma citizens, and the very presence of these groups continues to intimidate Roma as indicated in the examples below. Following heavy criticism from NGOs about police conduct in this case, a special unit was established to investigate incidents of anti-Roma violence and rewards were offered for information about the attackers.
- *Violence against migrants. S*ince 2015, the arrival of migrants from the Middle East has been problematised by the conservative right. The far right, in particular, characterised these migrants not as individuals fleeing war-torn areas, but as 'economic migrants' seeking new lives in prosperous Europe. There have been numerous incidents of violence against migrants. The Hungarian government has done little to counter negative constructions of migrants and, further, has adopted anti-migrant policies which have attracted criticism from the European Union. Fences have been constructed along the Serbian and Croatian borders, and the government held a referendum in 2016, supported by an extensive anti-migrant billboard campaign on the EU's proposed resettlement quotas. There are also reports of Hungarian law enforcement officials and soldiers mistreating migrants.[14]

Within this wider context there have been several incidents of far-right violence toward migrants and refugees, often involving members of the Outlaw Army or Jobbik. Such incidents are outlined in the second part of the chapter.

[14] "Hungarian Soldiers on the Border Are Beating Masses of Refugees [Tömegesen verik a menekülteket a magyar egyenruhások a határon]," *Index*, 5 March, 2017. Accessed 29 July, 2017. http://index.hu/belfold/2017/03/05/tomegesen_verik_a_menekulteket_a_magyar_egyenruhasok_a_hataron/.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the data and discussion offered in this report that the political and policy environment in Hungary is not currently conducive to developing and enacting policy to address far-right extremism and violence. In recent years, for example, whilst severe restrictions have been placed on sections of the media, the government has done little to curb far-right media outlets. It is also clear that there are a range of interventions across all levels, from international bodies to local third sector organisations, that may help to increase understanding of the attraction of far-right ideologies and, alongside this, begin to address some of the causes and consequences of far-right violence. While it would be beneficial to address discrimination and exclusion in the mainstream, for example by tackling segregated schooling, the policy recommendations below focus specifically on recommendations to tackle far-right violence. A multifaceted response is needed from government and third sector organisations that increases information sharing and promotes robust policy responses for tackling far-right violence.

1. Take a Stronger Stance against Far-Right Violence

The political elite and government must take the lead in condemning hate crime and far-right violence, including hate speech. For example, it would be appropriate for the government to develop a set of criteria precluding members of parliament and political parties from being formally partnered with, being members of, or providing financial support to groups explicitly engaged in hate speech or violence. This could be achieved through developing a code of conduct, that makes expectations clear, for example, that elected representatives and public employees must refrain from hate speech or discriminatory actions.

2. Improve Information-Recording and Definitions

The ability to tackle far-right violence will be enhanced with greater knowledge about the motivations, networks, and activities of groups and individuals involved. Allocating appropriate resources to monitor online and offline activities will help to develop a more detailed understanding of far-right activists. It is suggested that the government, in cooperation with local NGOs and other groups, start a 'watch list' of potentially dangerous far-right groups.

In addition, a strong legal framework underpinned by clear definitions, especially of hate crime, needs to be developed in order to respond to far-right violence and illegal activities. Such a framework should include the full range of different grounds upon which individuals and groups may be targeted. Concrete measures should be developed to increase the quality of data available on violent incidents and hate crimes. Training on recognising and recording such incidents, informed by perspectives from civil society groups, should be provided to key agencies such as police and security services. The establishment of a National Hate Crime Reporting Body is necessary to develop a clearer understanding of the numbers and types of incidents in Hungary.

3. Adopt a More Inclusive and Less Securitised Approach to Tackling Far-Right Violence

In recent years, Hungary has adopted a predominantly securitised approach to the far right, with law enforcement and intelligence agencies playing the major role in identifying and tackling violence from individuals and groups. This 'security lens' can cause mistrust between civil society groups, security services, and others which could be addressed through a more diverse approach to

tackling radicalisation. The government should implement a range of less stigmatising programmes, for example civil society interventions and education programmes to help prevent people becoming radicalised and engaging in far-right violence. Additionally, a more active approach is needed to challenge extremist views and to help people exit such violent groups and activities.

4. Introduce Me Lasures to Reduce the Perceived Legitimacy of the Far Right

The government, and its representatives, must address the legitimisation of far-right ideologies and values in the public sphere, including the mainstreaming of far-right rhetoric and ideas. Media, government, and third sector organisations need to work together to counter the narratives of far-right politicians and groups that blame social and economic problems on minority groups, such as Roma, Jews, and migrants.

5. Develop Cooperation Between The State, Third Sector Organisations, and Communities

Success in addressing far-right violence requires a multifaceted approach involving input not only from government agencies, but also new initiatives with third sector and community groups working in cooperation with statutory organisations. Such cooperation would help build trust in targeted communities and improve public understanding of the threat from far-right ideologies. More broadly, developing intercultural exchanges and dialogue between diverse communities could facilitate greater mutual understanding and tolerance. For this strategy to be effective, campaigning groups, local community representatives, religious groups, and other third sector organisations need to be involved in meaningful engagement with statutory bodies.

6. Work To Support Victims of Violence

Victims of violence are more likely to report their experiences if appropriate support mechanisms are in place. This could be facilitated by increasing levels of trust between victims of violence, those who work to support them, and statutory authorities responsible for combatting violence. Strategies could include, for example, greater training to strengthen awareness of far-right violence and its consequences among relevant state agencies. For those victims who do come forward, better support needs to be provided to ensure they feel their experiences are properly addressed, for example through providing hate crime sensitivity training to relevant front-line service personnel.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CASE STUDIES

While the first part of this report focuses on the policy recommendations relevant from the research presented, the second half of this report elaborates on the specific case studies of the far right in Hungary, as well as a detailed analysis of the data available on the far right.

THE FAR RIGHT IN THE HUNGARIAN CONTEXT

The Hungarian far right is made up of a range of groups, organisations, and movements. The landscape of the far right in Hungary is turbulent and ever-changing, hence providing difficulty in categorisation. In a country where a radical conservative government has adopted aspects of far-right ideology, the definition of what is 'far' can shift. Hence, a difference can be drawn between the mainstream and non-mainstream far right, in which political parties can be considered mainstream and street-level movements with potential for violence non-mainstream.[15] Herein, for the sake of simplicity, the term 'far right' will refer to those organisations of activists who have a potential for violence, and who do not directly have influence on the political sphere. When referring to the new 'mainstream far right', we refer to the new form of right-wing conservatism seen in the Hungarian parliament.

While each far-right organisation holds to its own ideological position they share a number of positions in common. Many of these, such as xenophobia, anti-Ciganism, and anti-Semitism can be found in far-right groups across Europe whilst others are specific expressions of Hungarian ethno-nationalism and far-right ideology.

[15] This report will predominantly consider the four active Hungarian far-right groups with the highest potential for violence. This report will not cover Hungarian chapters of international hate groups, such as Blood & Honour, and will not cover inactive organisations.

This section begins by examining the specific nature of far-right groups in Hungary.

The Treaty of Trianon, signed on 4 June, 1920, and marking the end of the First World War, redrew Hungary's borders to under a third of the country's previous size and reduced the population from 18 million to just less than 8 million. This left many ethnic Hungarians stranded in surrounding countries.[16] Upper Hungary was claimed by Slovaks and Czechs, Serbs joined with Croats and Slovenians, and Transylvania joined Romania.[17] Hungary quickly became "the most nationally aggrieved state in all of Europe because of the great proportion of its territorial and demographic losses".[18] This continues to be a source of humiliation and anger in some ethnic Hungarians, and all nationalist movements employ the powerful rhetoric of irredentism, the desire to return to the pre-Trianon borders of 'Greater Hungary', in their discourse.

Anti-Ciganism is the strongest feature among the Hungarian far right. Extreme versions of Hungarian ethno-nationalism employ the idea of a 'lesser' or 'less-pure' Hungarian to distinguish outsider groups from the 'pure' Hungarian nation. The Hungarian far right, for example, has revived the term 'gypsy criminality' (*cigánybűnözés*), which suggests that Roma are genetically programmed to be criminals. While this idea is not new, it is the political party Jobbik, Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*; hereafter Jobbik) that has pushed the term into the public sphere. Anti-Ciganism, or anti-Roma sentiment, has led to numerous violent clashes in recent years. Indeed, violence against

[16] Hajdú, Tibor, and Zsuzsa L. Nagy. "Revolution, Counterrevolution, Consolidation" in *A History of Hungary*, edited by Peter F. Sugar, Péter Hanak, and Tibor Frank, 295-318. London: IB Tauris and Co, 1990, 295-318.

[17] Molnár, Miklós. *A Concise History of Hungary.* Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001.

[18] Payne, Stanley. *Fascism: Comparison and Definition.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980.

Roma started as soon as unemployment began to rise after the end of the Soviet regime. Violent clashes began in 1990, especially in eastern Hungary, where skinhead groups attacked Roma settlements,[19] and threats against Roma continue to this day.

Anti-Semitism is a common feature of the far right across Europe, but recently the Hungarian government has again been accused of anti-Semitism, most recently due to their large-scale billboard campaign against George Soros.[20] Another facet of anti-Semitism commonly seen among the Hungarian far right is Holocaust revisionism, which may involve the idolisation of Szálasi,[21] promotion of the belief that Horthy[22] was helping Hungarian Jews rather than cooperating with Hitler, and removing or diminishing blame from the Hungarians for their part in the Holocaust.

The general social conservatism of the far right in Hungary is crystallised in, among other things, openly expressed homophobia. The current Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Alliance (*Fidesz - Magyar Polgári Szövetség*; henceforth Fidesz) government has been openly homophobic, recently hosting an American Christian organisation accused of being an anti-LGBT hate group[23] and rewriting the constitution in 2014 to explicitly define marriage as 'between a man and a woman'. Members of far-right organisations also regularly clash

[19] Hockenos, Paul. *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

[20] Dunai, Marton. "Hungarian Jews Ask PM Orban to End 'Bad-Dream' of Anti-Semitism," *Reuters*, 6 July, 2017. Accessed 27 July, 2017. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-soros-orban-jews-idUSKBN19R24L.

[21] Ferenc Szálasi was the leader of the national socialist Arrow Cross Party – Hungarist Movement, and briefly ruled Hungary during the Second World War. Szálasi claimed not to be anti-Semitic, but rather 'a-Semitic', as he advocated all Jews leave Hungary for elsewhere. He also suggested bringing the people of the Carpathian Basin together under Hungarian leadership. Szálasi's Arrow Cross Party was responsible for much of the horror experienced by Jews during the Holocaust in Hungary.

[22] Miklós Horthy served as Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary from 1920 to 1944.

[23] Trait, Robert Trait. "Hungary's Prime Minister Welcomes US 'Anti-LGBT Hate Groups'," *The Guardian*, 26 May, 2017. Accessed 27 July, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/26/hungary-lgbt-world-congress-families-viktor-orban.

with people at the yearly Budapest Pride parades, going as far as to physically assault participants and threaten activists with death.[24]

Since 2015, the arrival of refugees and migrants into Hungary has been a large source of concern for the conservative right. Especially among those of the far right, these migrants are constructed not as individuals fleeing war-torn areas, but as 'economic migrants' or 'illegal migrants' seeking new lives in prosperous Europe. In 2014, the countries of the European Union received approximately 900,000 asylum applications, a number which rose to 1,300,000 in 2015.[25]

Indeed, physically aggressive threats to migrants caught along the borders also come from Hungarian law enforcement officials and soldiers, as migrants were reported to have been beaten, shot with rubber bullets, and bitten by dogs.[26] Supporters were not to engage with migrants, however, as the emphasis was on "outdoor training and community strengthening".[27]

All of these aspects – irredentism, anti-Ciganism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and newly anti-migrant sentiments and rising Islamophobia – along with xenophobia and ethno-nationalism are found to varying degrees in each Hungarian far-right organisation. Most of the violence, and threat of violence, exhibited by these groups can be tied to these categories, most especially against Roma, the Jewish population, LGBT people, and most recently migrants.

[24] French, Maddy. "Hungarian Gay Rights Activist's Fight with Fascism," *Al Jazeera*, 4 February, 2015. Accessed 27 July, 2017. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/01/hungarian-gay-rights-activist-fight-fascism-150125100542416.htm.

[25] "Asylum Statistics," *Eurostat*. 21 June, 2017. Accessed 29 July, 2017. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics.

[26] "Hungarian Soldiers on the Border Are Beating Masses of Refugees," 3 May, 2017, https://index.hu/belfold/2017/03/05/tomegesen_verik_a_menekulteket_a_magyar_egyenruhasok_a_hataron/".

[27] "The Outlaw Army Are 'Training' against Migrants [Migránsok ellen 'edz' a Betyársereg]." *Népszava*, 22 July, 2015. Accessed 29 July, 2017. http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1064336-migransok-ellen-edz-a-betyarsereg.

FAR-RIGHT GROUPS IN HUNGARY

The Hungarian political and far-right landscape is turbulent and ever-changing. It is made up of an intricate network of organisations and movements which are constantly disappearing and reforming in new combinations. This network of far-right groups also has ties to the complicated political sphere in Hungary, and indeed there is some blurring between conservatism and the far-right creating somewhat of a 'mainstream far-right'.

The far right in the political sphere

After Russia entered Budapest in 1945, putting an end to the Nazi occupation, Hungary saw 44 years of communist rule, during which time far-right groups were officially and publicly non-existent. This began to change in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when, due especially to the changing political climate and the end of the so-called 'Kádár' era of 'goulash communism', the far right began to experience a resurgence.

The first major far-right political party to emerge, in 1993, was the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*; henceforth MIÉP). The party was founded and led by István Csurka, who subscribed to the ethno-nationalist idea of intolerance toward 'non-pure' Hungarians.[28] MIÉP argued that the post-communist transition was being led by people who were 'anti-Hungarian' and that these should be replaced by 'national forces of resistance'.[29] These ideas of evil 'anti-Hungarians' led nationalists to connect Jews with liberalism, the Soviets, and Bolshevism. Around the same time, Albert Szabó founded the Hungarian Welfare Association (*Magyar Népjóléti Szövetség*, MNSZ), a political party which

[28] Hockenos, *Free to Hate: The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*.

[29] Kovács, András. "The Post-Communist Extreme Right: The Jobbik Party in Hungary" in *Right-Wing Populism in Europe. Politics and Discourse*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 223-234.

included a skinhead youth faction. MNSZ subscribed to Szálasi's Hungarist ideology, in addition to post-communist issues, and eventually dissolved in 2000.

In the 1998 national elections, MIÉP won 5.5% of votes and 14 seats in parliament. However, in 2002, their vote share fell to 4.4%, and in 2005, MIÉP joined with the newly founded Jobbik. Founded in 2003, Jobbik was founded as a neo-fascist political party which openly has close links to hate groups and paramilitary organisations.[30] Combined, Jobbik and MIÉP gained 2.2% of votes in 2006, but Jobbik quickly became the third-largest political party in Hungary behind Fidesz and MSZP[31] with 16.67% of the vote in the 2010 parliamentary elections and 20.22% in 2014. At this point their ideology was openly anti-liberal and anti-EU, and their rhetoric was most often homophobic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Roma.[32] Jobbik has also successfully reawakened the Roma question by resurrecting and legitimising the notion of *cigánybűnözés*, 'Gypsy Crime'.[33] Since the 2014 national elections, however, Jobbik have adopted a 'softer' and more centrist tone; the party's leader, Gábor Vona, has described his new vision for Jobbik as a 'modern conservative party'.[34]

The current Hungarian conservative government Fidesz, formed as an anti-communist party in 1988 as the Alliance of

[30] Vidra, Zsuszanna and Jon Fox. "Mainstreaming of Racist Anti-Roma Discourses in the Media in Hungary," *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 12, (2014): 437-455.

[31] The Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt), the largest 'left-wing' party in Hungary.

[32] Bartlett, Jamie, Jonathan Birdwell, Péter Krekó, Jack Benfield, and Gábor Győri. *Populism in Europe: Hungary.* London: Demos, 2012.

[33] Juhász, Attila. "'A 'cigánybűnözés' szó politikai karrierje' [The Political Career of the Word 'Gypsy Crime']," *The Political Capital Institute*, 2010. Accessed 20 July, 2017. http://www.politicalcapital.hu/blog/?p=1937578.

[34] Thorpe, Nick. "Is Hungary's Jobbik Leader Really Ditching Far-Right Past?" *BBC News.,* 15 November, 2016. Accessed 25 April, 2017. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37976687.

Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*), has been described as a "mainstream conservative party with radical right policies".[35] Indeed, the Hungarian political environment provides fertile ground for the expression of far-right ideas over the last few years. Since Viktor Orbán's election in 2010 and re-election in 2014, Fidesz has rewritten the Constitution, militarised the country's southern borders, led a campaign against migrants, and governs "over a culture within which racist speech and prohibited far-right paramilitary activities are tolerated".[36] Indeed, it can be argued that Fidesz have now exchanged places with Jobbik on the political left-right scale. In recent years, Fidesz have demonstrated autocratic tendencies, are fervently anti-EU and 'anti-Brussels', and have led a strong anti-migrant campaign. Most recently, Fidesz has led an aggressive campaign against the Hungarian-American Jewish philanthropist George Soros and has attempted to close the Central European University, which he founded. Anti-migrant and xenophobic views have now become the mainstream in Hungarian political rhetoric, something that may serve to legitimise the ideology of far-right groups.

An overview of violent far-right organisations in Hungary

Jobbik's connection to far-right street-level movements and organisations in Hungary has been strong since the party's foundation. Jobbik and its president, Gábor Vona, have had close ties to several far-right groups that engage in violence.[37]

[35] Mudde, Cas. "'Is Hungary Run by the Radical Right?" *Washington Post*, 10 August, 2015. Accessed 24 April, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/10/is-hungary-run-by-the-radical-right/?utm_term=.677fa5e78028.

[36] Fekete, *Hungary: Power, Punishment and the 'Christian-National Idea'*.

[37] "MTI Has Reported on the New Hungarian Guard's Day of Comradery Event [Az MTI hirt adott az Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom bajtársiasság napi rendezvényéről]," *Népszava*, 4 July, 2015. Accessed 26 July, 2017. http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1062512-az-mti-hirt-adott-az-uj-magyar-garda-mozgalom-bajtarsiassag-napi-rendezvenyerol.

In recent years, however, these ties between the political party Jobbik and other, more extreme groups, have been growing more complex. Since 2013, Jobbik has been pursuing an increasingly 'softer' and more centrist image, causing many one-time supporters to turn away from the party.[38] Indeed, Zsolt Tyirityán, leader of the Outlaw Army, has had an openly turbulent relationship with Jobbik,[39] and the leader of the Guards of the Carpathian Homeland Movement, Sándor Horka, has recently been openly critical of Jobbik's leader Gábor Vona about the changing public face of the party.[40] In an open letter to Vona, Horka called for the fellow New Hungarian Guard member to publicly return his New Hungarian Guard military-style waistcoat as a symbol of Jobbik moving too far away from its original radical roots. While Jobbik is seemingly making significant strides to distance itself from far-right organisations and movements, there are questions about the sincerity of this new direction. Indeed, it has been shown that extreme far-right groups, specifically the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, have received considerable financial support from NGOs with close ties to Jobbik.[41]

Now that Jobbik is positioning itself more in the mainstream right, there is still a demand among supporters for a far-right political party. Aiming to fill the gap left by Jobbik, Identitesz was

[38] "Vona to Jobbik: Find a New Party President If You Don't Like My Politics! [Vona a Jobbiknak: Keressenek új pártelnököt, ha nem kell a politikám!]", 23 December, 2015. Accessed 17 January 2017, https://index.hu/belfold/2015/11/23/neppartosodas_jobbik_merskeletek_radikalisok_tisztujitas_vona_gabor_2_resz/".

[39] Juhász, *The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is*, 24.

[40] "Chaos: Newer Attacks against Gábor Vona from within Jobbik [Káosz: újabb támadás Vona Gábor ellen a Jobbikon belül]," *Origo*, 14 January, 2017. Accessed 9 April, 2017. http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20170114-visszaveszik-vona-gabortol-gardista-mellenyet-debrecenben-ellene-tuntetnek.html.

[41] "Hungarian Radical Right Wing Youth Movement Enjoys Public Financing." *Átlátszó* 28 July, 2014, Accessed 29 July, 2017, https://english.atlatszo.hu/2014/07/28/hungarian-radical-right-wing-youth-movement-enjoys-public-financing/.

formed in September 2015 as a 'Conservative Student Movement' by political science student Balázs László. Their slogan is "*Hazaszeretet, hivatástudat, közösség*", which loosely translates to "Love of home, sense of place, and community",[42] and, as part of the larger European Identitarian Movement, they claim to be building a 'new right'. The basis of the new right, as they state, is: (1) a belief in God and to be honest; (2) loyalty to one's country; (3) the desire for hierarchy, order, and quality; (4) community-consciousness and social sensibility; and (5) uncompromising willpower and a tough work ethic. On 8 July, 2017, in Vecsés, Identitesz and the Outlaw Army formed a coalition movement called Strength and Devotion (*Erő és Elszántság*). They claim this new movement will form a 'true' right in Hungarian politics, and have declared war on liberalism. Balázs László resigned as the president of Identitesz in July 2017 in order to focus on this new movement, which has a strong likelihood of becoming a political party.

As shown above, the far right is strongly imbedded into the mainstream Hungarian political system. Beyond political parties, the two other categories of far-right groups in Hungary are movements and groups, who can be affiliated with political parties and often have violent tendencies, and more marginal extremist organisations who distance themselves from the remainder of the far right.[43] It has been growing increasingly complicated to track currently active organisations and their networks, as many groups have been decreasing their online profiles following Facebook banning several pages and the disappearance of several of the organisations' websites. The groups discussed below are those groups which are undoubtedly currently active, and who have the highest potential for ongoing violence.

[42] Identitesz. "Identitesz." Accessed 20 July, 2017. http://identitesz.blog.hu/.

[43] Krekó, *Hungary*, 24-30.

The New Hungarian Guard

The Hungarian Guard Movement was formed in 2007 with 56 members, a number chosen to commemorate the 1956 revolution,[44] with the original aim of instilling fear in the Roma.[45] The Hungarian Guard was dissolved by the government in 2009 for threatening Roma after a march in Tatárszentgyörgy.[46] The group was reformed just three weeks later, and now exists as the New Hungarian Guard Movement (Új *Magyar Gárda Mozgalom*), which is now strategically split into local chapters. They have chapters in most of Hungary's nineteen counties, and engage in constant recruitment activities.

The New Hungarian Guard Movement are an ultranationalist organisation whose members pledge to defend Hungarian values and culture, and consider themselves "a self-defence alliance that transcends parties and borders".[47] Their seven tenets are: honour, 'Hungarianness,' trust in God, fellowship, helpfulness, bravery, and loyalty to the Hungarian Guard. As with some other groups, the Hungarian Guard have revitalised fascist symbols of the 1944-1945 Arrow Cross: the use of the red-and-white striped Árpád flag[48] and wearing a uniform of black boots, black trousers, black sleeveless vests, white shirts, and a black cap emblazoned with the Árpád stripes. According to the Hungarian Guard's now seemingly obsolete website, their goals can only be those which abide by the official Hungarian constitution.[49] However, at the same time their goals

[44] LeBoer, Adam. "Marching Back to the Future: Magyar Garda and the Resurgence of the Right in Hungary," *Dissent 55*, 2008: 34-38.

[45] Juhász, *The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is*.

[46] MTI, "Court Dissolves Hungarian Guard, Claiming Right-Wing Group Insults Roma Minority."

[47] The New Hungarian Guard Movement, "The New Hungarian Guard's Honour Code [Az Új Magyar Gárda becsületkódexe!]", Accessed 17 January, 2017, http://ujmagyargardamozgalom.com/az_új_magyar_gárda_becsületkódexe.

[48] Árpád was the chieftain who led the Magyar tribes into the Carpathian Basin. His dynasty, which came to an end in 1301, is represented by the red-and-white striped flag.

[49] Új Magyar Gárda Mozgalom. "Céljaink [Our Goals]." Accessed 17 January, 2017. http://www.gardamozgalom.org/celjaink.

must abide by the "ancient rights of freedom and ancient traditions". Ultimately, they claim to only have one basic rule: to protect the Hungarian state and the interests of the Hungarian nation.

While no longer as active in protest actions, they are still a paramilitary organisation with violent tendencies. In the latter case, the perpetrators were not identified by police as they were not asked for identification on site, but were later tracked down by the Háttér society.

The Hungarian Defence Movement

The Hungarian Defence Movement (*Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom*) was formed in October of 2014 out of the movement For a Better Future Hungarian Self-Defense (*Szebb Jövőért Magyar Önvédelem*; henceforth Better Future), originally For a Better Future Civil Guard Organisation (*Szebb Jövőért Polgárőr Egyesület*). The For a Better Future movement was founded in 2010 as a security patrol unit for the New Hungarian Guard.[50] Founded and led by Tibor Attila László, the group was disbanded in 2014[51] following violence and intimidation in Gyöngyöspata, Kunhegyes, Cegléd, and Devecser.[52] The Better Future Movement became nationally famous in 2011 for incidents in the village of Gyöngyöspata, where the group patrolled the village for several weeks terrorizing Roma residents. The movement was accused of threatening the rights and safety of people in Cegléd, and at events in Kunhegyes and Devecs-

[50] Lambert, Sean. "The New Hungarian Guard/For a Better Future Hungarian Self-Defense," *The Orange Files*, 23 June, 2014. Accessed 27 July, 2017. https://theorangefiles.hu/the-new-hungarian-guardfor-a-better-future-self-defense/.

[51] "Más néven alakult újjá a feloszlatott Szebb Jövőért [The Disbanded for a Better Future Is Formed Again under a New Name]," HVG, 18 October, 2014. Accessed 1 April, 2017. http://hvg.hu/itthon/20141018_Mas_neven_alakult_ujja_a_feloszlatott_Sze.

[52] "Legally Binding: They've Disbanded For a Better Future Organisation [Jogerős: feloszlatták a Szebb Jövőért Egyesületet]," *Index*, 10 August, 2014. Accessed 27 July, 2017. http://index.hu/belfold/2014/10/08/jogeros_feloszlatjak_a_szebb_jovoert_egyesuletet/.

er they likened Roma to criminals, using terms like "vermin, spawn of Satan, and rats".[53]

Currently, the Hungarian Defence Movement is quite active online, with a regularly updated website and Facebook presence. Their Facebook page, where they identify themselves as an NGO, has nearly 2,500 supporters and is updated daily. The group regularly organises camps and music festivals supporting local white-power and extremist bands. The group presents a public image of a community organisation, organising food and clothing drives in cooperation with Jobbik and depicting families with children on their Facebook page.[54]

The group mostly presents a constant threat to Hungary's Roma population. The paramilitary section of the organisation offers combat training to members, as seen in videos on the group's website.[55] The Hungarian Defence Movement still regularly patrol streets of areas with high Roma populations, who are referred to as 'pigs' on their website. They argue strongly that nothing is being done to protect the 'Hungarian' population around Hungary, and that it is their duty to do so. They encourage new chapter formations as they argue law enforcement officials are busy protecting the borders, and meanwhile murderers and robbers run rampant in villages.[56] Whilst terms such as these are not explicitly anti-Roma, the underlying message is generally understood to be about Roma people and these actions are, thus, forms of intimidation.

[53] "Legally Binding: They've disbanded for a Better Future Organisation [Jogerős: feloszlatták a Szebb Jövőért Egyesületet]." Index. 8 October, 2014. Accessed 17 January, 2017. https://index.hu/belfold/2014/10/08/jogeros_feloszlatjak_a_szebb_jovoert_egyesuletet/.

[54] The Hungarian Defence Movement also organises a summer camp for children, see http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Kezdetet_vette_Zagyvarekason_a_MOM_Gyermektabor

[55] Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom, "Videos."

[56] Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom. "Create a HDM Chapter in Your Area! [Alakitsd meg te is településeden a MÖM helyi szervezetét!]," *Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom*, Accessed 26 July, 2017. http://www.magyaronvedelmimozgalom.com/index.php?q=hireink/bejegyzes/Alakitsd_meg_te_is_telepuleseden_a_MOM_helyi_szervezetet_&min=160&translate.

The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement

The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement (*Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom*; henceforth HVIM) self-identify as a radical youth nationalist movement on their website.[57] Founded on 21 April, 2001, by László Toroczkai, the movement's name pays homage to the sixty-four counties of Hungary, with the exclusion of Croatia, which existed before the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. Their slogan is 'Faith, Loyalty, Bravery' and their ideology is strongly irredentist, revisionist, and xenophobic.

The main seat of HVIM, along with the related Outlaw Army (see below) is in the southern town of Szeged. However, the founders of HVIM came from Hungary, Germany, and the Hungarian region of Serbia: Szeged, Hódmezővásárhely (the only Székely town outside of Transylvania), Budapest, Stuttgart, and Szabadka (Subotica, Serbia). One of the strongest ideologies of HVIM is irredentism, and seeking autonomy for Hungarian lands outside of Hungary's current borders. Indeed, after only one year of existence, in 2002, HVIM entered the Sekler area of eastern Transylvania, Romania, where they showed support for Sekler autonomy and clashed with police. They have now developed active groups in several Hungarian-inhabited areas of Transylvania. The leaders of HVIM have been regularly banned from entering Romania.[58] They also have several chapters in Slovakia, where László Toroczkai was declared a *persona non grata* for five years in 2006.[59]

Since their foundation in 2001, HVIM has been very active in organising conferences, supporting politicians, publishing their own magazine, organising meetings and protests in Hungarian re-

[57] "A mozgalomról' [About the Movement]," *HVIM*, Accessed 3 November, 2015. http://www.hvim.hu/mozgalomrol.

[58] "Banned from Romania [Kitiltás Romániából]," *HVIM*, 10 June, 2017. Accessed 27 July, 2017. https://www.hvim.hu/single-post/2017/06/10/Kitiltas-Romaniabo.

[59] Juhász et al., *The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is*, 16.

gions of surrounding countries, organising anti-Trianon and other demonstrations, and even hosting an annual music festival. They now have several chapters across Hungary and in surrounding countries. Their recently banned Facebook page, where they were listed as a Non-Governmental Organisation, had over 3,600 supporters. The recent deletion of their Facebook page and of their old website has prompted the banner "They can erase us from the internet, but we'll meet on the streets"! on their new website.

The group has frequently advocated for violence, and often refer both to supporters as 'warriors' and to the 'battle' that they are fighting. The group has clashed with people at the Budapest Pride parades,[60] and since spring of 2015 have focused especially on the issue of migrants in Hungary.[61]

The Outlaw Army

Formed in 2008, the motto of the Outlaw Army (*Betyársereg*) is "Ne bánstd a magyart, mert pórul jársz"! which loosely translates to "Don't hurt Hungarians, or else"! The Outlaw Army is, of the currently existing far-right groups in Hungary, the one with the largest potential for violence. They claim they refuse double standards, oppression, and foreign rule, because they were born as free sons of the Hungarian plains and intend to stay that way. They believe in God and the most ancient unwritten laws, and claim loyalty to other members to be of highest importance.[62]

[60] "Gays and Nationalists Face Off in Hungary During Budapest Pride," *HVIM*, 14 July, 2017. Accessed 27 July, 2017. https://www.hvim.hu/single-post/2017/07/14/Gays-and-Nationalists-Face-Off.

[61] "HVIM Continues the Fight against Migrants in Budapest [A HVIM Budapesten is folytatja a harcot a bevándorlás ellen]," Betyársereg. 28 July, 2015. Accessed 26 July, 2017. http://betyarsereg.hu/a-hvim-folytatja-a-harcot-budapesten-is-a-bevandorlas-ellen-video/.

[62] "Nem fogadjuk el a kettős mércét, az elnyomatást, idegenek uralmát, mert a puszták népének fiaiként szabadnak születtünk és azok is maradunk még a rabságban is. Hiszünk Istenben és a legősibb íratlan törvényekben, tiszteljük a betyárbecsület-kódexet, soha egymást el nem áruljuk, 'Betyársereg' [The Outlaw Army]," HVIM. Accessed 3 November, 2015, http://www.hvim.hu/betyarsereg.

The Outlaw Army is led by Zsolt Tyirityán, who is one of the most well-known figures in the Hungarian far-right scene. They assert that they are a loose alliance, or society, of self-organised clans which operate under the traditions of Eurasian civilisations – avoiding the ascription of 'army' or 'organised group' so they cannot be dissolved. According to an interview with Tyirityán conducted in February 2016, the group has approximately 300 members spread out across the country, divided into 10-15 clans.[63] He claims that the Outlaw Army is merely a defence organisation who try to draw criminal, dangerous, and anti-social elements of society to the attention of law enforcement. Tyirityán stated that one must have right-wing values to become a member of the Outlaw Army, which to him mean patriotism (*patriotizmus*) and communal spirit (*közösségi szellem*). Potential members of the organisation must also have a strong history in either martial arts or strength training.

The Outlaw Army is closely tied to other far-right groups, especially to HVIM and Identitesz, and often provide 'security' for different protests, marches, and events for various far-right groups, including the Hungarian Guard and Pax Hungarica. The group has repeatedly claimed to not be a threat to the general public, and to only exist to aid Hungarians and protect the country in ways the government cannot. They are, however, a group of men with violent tendencies, who regularly meet to strength-train and practice martial arts and combat.

The legitimisation of the far right

The relationship between far-right groups in Hungary is a very complex phenomenon. It forms a multi-level network of different forms of organisations and movements, many of which have connections to larger governmental bodies in the country. It is clear

[63] YouTube. "BETYÁRSEREG: Hungary's Most Infamous Nationalist Group," 26 February, 2016. Accessed 14 April, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stDtqxMVN3g.

that several of these far-right groups feel not enough is being done in the country to help the 'tormented Hungarian population', and that they should be the ones to put things right. It is indisputable that Jobbik have a strong link to a number of these paramilitary groups, and indeed Fidesz has been accused of turning a blind eye to the intimidation tactics of Jobbik and these groups.[64]

The government has, to date, done little to stop these violent far-right organisations from developing and thriving. For example, when police are present at far-right marches and events, or at street patrols of villages, they rarely clash with the far-right organisations, rather essentially providing them with an escort. Indeed, some law enforcement officials are recruited from the same culture that creates the members of far-right and paramilitary organisations.[65] In fact, the 5,300-member police officers' trade union announced a formal alliance with Jobbik, which resulted in "increasing a sense of impunity for violence against Roma".[66] In 2008, four nationalists were convicted of the killing of six Roma individuals, as well as creating a group to terrorise Roma. Two of the murderers were being watched by the Hungarian intelligence services, which included tapping their phones. Just prior to the first serious attack in July of 2008, when 15 rounds were fired into three Roma homes in a small village near Budapest, this surveillance was suspended. It was later discovered that the getaway driver had once been an informant for the Military Security Office, and the subsequent attacks were not treated as a priority by the intelligence services.[67]

[64] Fekete, *Hungary*, 50.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Halász, Katalin. "The Rise of the Radical Right in Europe and the Case of Hungary: 'Gypsy Crime' Defines National Identity?" *Development* 52, (2009): 490-494.

[67] Fekete, Liz. "State Intelligence Agencies and the Far Right: A Review of Developments in Germany, Hungary and Austria," *IRR European Research Programme, Briefing Paper 6*, 2013.

In other areas, such as education, the Fidesz government has also taken steps that may be interpreted as legitimising aspects of extreme far-right ideology. For example, key texts from Hungarian Jewish authors, such as Nobel-prize winning Imre Kertész, have been removed from the national school curriculum, while the works of anti-Semitic writers of the interwar period, such as Albert Wass and József Nyiró, are on suggested reading lists.[68] The party has also presented awards to some controversial public figures who have expressed anti-Semitic and anti-Roma views. The 2013, Tancsics prize for journalism, for example, was awarded to TV broadcaster Ferenc Szaniszlo who once described Roma people as 'apes', although, following protests, the Hungarian Human Resources Minister asked for the state honour to be returned. In 2016, the Golden Cross of Merit was given to Zsolt Bayer for his work in journalism. In a 2013 article, Bayer wrote that a large number of Roma are "[n]ot fit to live among human beings. They are animals and behave like animals", and, in 2016, he wrote that "in the case of driving over a Gypsy kid, we should step on the gas".[69]

Additionally, while Fidesz have placed serious restrictions and sanctions on Hungarian media,[70] they have done little to curb far-right media outlets. The far-right media indeed promotes the image of organisations and movements, including violent paramilitary and vigilante organisations. They serve to advance the myth of the far right, and place these more violent organisations at the centre of far-right public thought.[71]

[68] Fekete, *Hungary*, 45.

[69] Goulard, Hortense. "Hungary Gives Award to Writer Fined for Racism," *Politico*, 24 August, 2016. Accessed 29 July, 2017. http://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-anger-grows-viktor-orban-award-writer-racism/.

[70] "Hungary Passes Law Boosting Government Control of Media," *Reuters*, 21 December 2010. Accessed 28 July, 2017. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-media-idUSTRE6BK6KF20101221; Byrne, Andrew. "Orban Tightens Grip on Hungary's Media," *Financial Times*, 16 August, 2016. Accessed 28 July, 2017. https://www.ft.com/content/50488256-60af-11e6-ae3f-77baadeb1c93.

[71] Juhász et al., *The Truth Today Is What Putin Says It Is*, 26.

FAR-RIGHT ACTIONS IN HUNGARY

Far-right groups in Hungary regularly organise and participate in non-violent events throughout the country, for which the main purposes are community building, attracting new recruits, and the spreading of far-right messages and ideas. These events are generally organised by one far-right group, but are open to all far-right supporters. At the same time, violent events are not uncommon. These are seen in the form of more organised street patrols and protests, mostly in areas inhabited by Roma, or in the form of vigilantism by one or more members of a far-right organisation.

Annual events

The annual calendar provides a range of moments through which far-right groups can organise to commemorate key moments in Hungary's national history and promote their ideas in public spaces. The majority of these occur in the capital, Budapest. Other annual events held around the country, such as music festivals, heritage festivals, and even a children's summer camp, further serve to build and strengthen relationships among movement members, and to strengthen their beliefs in far-right ideology.

One of the biggest events takes place in February, on the Day of Honour (*Becsület Napja*). This day, celebrated since 1998, commemorates 10 February, 1945, when German and Hungarian forces attempted to break out of Buda castle as the city was encircled by Soviet and Romanian troops. The event is a symbol of affirmation of the far-right groups to their historical predecessors, Szálasi's Arrow Cross. The Day of Honour was originally organised by the Hungarian Blood and Honour, but the group was proscribed in 2004.[72] Following this, until 2012, the Hungarian NF organised the commemorations; these are now joint-

[72] Virchow, Fabian. "Creating a European (Neo-Nazi) Movement by Joint Political Action?" in *Varieties of Right-Wing Extremism in Europe*, edited by Emmanuel Godin, Brian Jenkins, and Andrea Mammone, 197-213. London: Routledge, 2013.

ly organised by Pax Hungarica in conjunction with HVIM, the Outlaw Army, and supported by other groups. Far-right groups also commemorate other events, such as the Day of National Coalescence (*Nemzet Összetartozás Napja*) on 4 June which remembers (or rather, protests) the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. This day generally involves a march from the 1956 Memorial Square to the Romanian embassy, as it is also a day to show solidarity with the Seklers campaigning for autonomy. These marches tend to be relatively peaceful, with little police presence.

From 2000 until 2015, HVIM organised the Hungarian Island (*Magyar Sziget*) festival in Verőce. This long-weekend festival featured popular right-wing bands, as well as cultural programmes and appearances of far-right figureheads. HVIM began organising the Highland Hungarian Island festival, named for the area of Slovakia in which the festival takes place, in 2007. This festival, which is in an area that was once part of Hungary, is still organised annually. The Hungarian Defence Movement also organises a yearly 'Hungarian Defence Days', which presents three days of cultural events, lectures by major far-right figureheads, and concerts by well-known far-right bands. The group also recently began organising a six-day summer camp for small children, which was attended by 38 children in 2017. Children had daily self-defence lessons, partook in Hungarian arts and crafts, and learned Hungarian history and traditions.[73]

Hate crimes

There have been numerous instances of aggressive, and even violent, far-right activity in Hungary. Statistical records of hate crime in Hungary present an unreliable picture and suggest that incidence is low. This can be due to several factors, most likely of which are the underreporting of hate crimes to authorities, and ad-

[73] YouTube. "HDM Days and Children's Summer Camp Interview 2017 [MÖM napok és gyermektábor interjú 2017]," 11 July, 2017. Accessed 29 July, 2017. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-bIRpuaprg.

ditionally the failure of the authorities to record these incidents as hate crimes. Moreover, data collection on hate crimes has generally been low across Central and Eastern Europe.[74] In Hungary, a hate crime is defined under the Criminal Code of Hungary, in Act IV of the 1978 on the Criminal Code (as amended 2013) Section 216.[75] Rather than being directly called 'hate crime', however, the criminal code refers to "violence against members of the community".

Several national and international groups monitor hate crimes in Hungary: the Working Group Against Hate Crimes (*Gyűlölet-Bűncselekmények Elleni Munkacsoport*; GYEM); the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR); the Háttér Society; the Hungarian Helsinki Committee; the Legal Office for the Defense of National and Ethnic Minorities (*Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Jogvédő Iroda*; NEKI); and the Society for Civil Liberties (*Társaság a Szabadságjogokért*; TASZ), to name a few. Additionally, there are several other human rights, Jewish, Roma, and refugee organisations which monitor hate crimes in Hungary and the region.

Each year, ODIHR conduct an annual report on hate crime, an extensive analysis to determine the amount of hate crimes in the

[74] Krekó, *Hungary*.

[75] Violence Against a Member of the Community: (1) Any person who, because of another person's being a member or a presumed member of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group or a certain group of population – especially due to a disability, sexual identity or sexual orientation – displays a conspicuously anti-social conduct that is capable of causing alarm in members of the group is guilty of a felony punishable by up to three years of imprisonment. (2) Any person who assaults another person for being a member or a presumed member of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group or a certain group of population – especially due to a disability, sexual identity or sexual orientation – or compels him or her by applying violence or threats to do, to not do or to endure something shall be punishable by one to five years of imprisonment. (3) The punishment shall be two to eight years of imprisonment if the violation against a member of a community is committed a) by force of arms; b) armed with a weapon; c) causing a substantial injury to interests; d) by the torment of the injured party; e) as a group; or f) as a criminal conspiracy. (4) Any person who engages in preparations for violence against a member of a community is guilty of a misdemeanour punishable *by up to two years of imprisonment.* Legislation Online, http://www.legislationline.org/topics/country/25/subtopic/79.

country recorded by police and prosecuted, as well as the nature of the attacks.[76] The most recent information available on their website is from 2014, and the trends are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF ODIHR ANNUAL REPORTING ON HATE CRIME

Year	Hate crimes recorded by police	Prosecuted	Sentenced
2015	Not available	Not available	Not available
2014	79	23	Not available
2013	43	30	14
2012*	38	16	Not available
2011*	37	28	Not available
2010*	19	12	Not available
2009*	15	18	Not available

*Prosecution figures include crimes of incitement to hatred and discrimination

The rising numbers in hate crimes over the years does not necessarily indicate that there is an increase in hate crimes across the country. Rather, it could be an indication that individuals are more likely to report being a victim of, or witness to, a hate crime. More research would be required to determine the exact causes. However, the marked drop in the percentage of prosecuted cases is concerning. Analysis of the annual data shows that most recorded hate crimes were attacks against property, and a smaller percentage were attacks against people. Xenophobia and anti-Semitism were the two most frequent categories, the other two being attacks against Roma and LGBT individuals. Non-reporting and underreporting

[76] Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. "*ODIHR Hate Crime Reporting: Hungary.*" OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Warsaw. http://hatecrime.osce.org/hungary, 2014. Accessed 3 May, 2017.

has been highly documented in hate crimes.[77] In Hungary, it is likely that Roma and LGBT individuals are even less likely to report, especially as there is little trust in authorities.[78] The non-reporting of hate crimes, particularly by LGBT individuals, has been well documented.[79] There also seems to be a fear of secondary victimisation – that is, the fear of mistreatment by police authorities and the general fear of publicly revealing one's sexual orientation.[80] Of course, many other factors are at play in a victim's choice to not report, including believing it to be futile and considering the incident to be merely a personal matter.[81]

Violent incidents against Roma

The Roma are the most threatened minority in Hungary, especially by members of far-right violent groups. All groups mentioned above have in some way threatened Roma citizens, and the very presence of these groups continues to intimidate Roma.

In the small village of Tatárszentgyörgy, just south of Budapest, a series of murders of Roma took place from 2008 to the summer of 2009. In February 2009, a family home was set alight by several individuals, who then shot at those trying to escape, killing a father and his five-year-old son. Suspects were apprehended in Au-

[77] Chakraborti, Neil. "Mind the Gap! Making Stronger Connections between Hate Crime Policy and Scholarship," *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 27, no. 6 (2016): 577-589; Herek, Gregory M. "Hate Crimes against Lesbians and Gay Men: Issues for Research and Policy," *American Psychologist* 44 , no. 6 (1989): 948–955; Herek, Gregory M., Jeanine C. Cogan, and John R. Gillis. "Victim Experiences in Hate Crimes Based on Sexual Orientation," *Journal of Social Issues* 58, no. 2 (2002): 319-339.

[78] Krekó, *Hungary*.

[79] Berrill, Kevin and Gregory Herek. "Primary and Secondary Victimization in Anti-Gay Hate Crimes" in *Hate Crimes: Confronting Violence against Lesbians and Gay Men*, edited by Gregory Herek and Kevin Berrill, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1992; Herek, *Hate Crimes against Lesbians and Gay Men*; Herek, *Victim Experiences in Hate Crimes*, 289-305.

[80] Berrill and Herek, *Primary and Secondary Victimization in Anti-Gay Hate Crimes*.

[81] Herek, *Victim Experiences in Hate Crimes*.

gust of 2009 and accused of murdering six Roma and injuring 55 others.[82] The police were heavily criticised by Hungarian NGOs for their investigation into this case, after which they set up a unit to investigate incidents of anti-Roma violence and offered a reward for information about the attackers.[83]

In August 2012, more than 700 supporters of Jobbik, the New Hungarian Guard, the Better Future Movement, and the Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement descended on the village of Devecser.[84] After holding demonstrations in the village centre, they moved to the homes of local Roma residents where they threw rocks and threatened inhabitants. One local resident recalled that "it was like hell. Bottles and stones were falling on us like a hailstorm". This resident also stated that children were terrified, and "we asked the police to protect us but they wouldn't".[85]

In March 2011, the Better Future movement (now the Hungarian Defence Movement) and the Hungarian Guard, along with the Outlaw Army and *Véderő* (a now non-existent group, translating to 'defence forces'), entered the village of Gyöngyöspata in Eastern Hungary. This village of 2,860 people was particularly targeted due to its high percentage of Roma inhabitants, 450 of whom lived, for the most part ,on the same street.[86] Far-right groups remained in the village for nearly one month tormenting the locals. Their arrival prompted hundreds of, already poor, residents to flee the village. In mid-April, Véderő organised a paramilitary training

[82] Verseck, Keno. "Hungary Silent over Roma Killing Spree," *Spiegel Online*, 23 June, 2013. Accessed 28 July, 2017. http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/trial-in-hungary-little-outrage-over-far-right-murders-of-6-roma-a-912709.html.

[83] Halasz, *The Rise of the Radical Right in Europe*, 492.

[84] Farkas, *Devecser: The Far-Right Returns [Devecser: visszatér a szélsőjobb]*.

[85] Černušáková, Barbora. "The Roma People's Hungarian Hell," *Politico*, 25 January, 2017. Accessed 29 July, 2017. http://www.politico.eu/article/the-roma-peoples-hungarian-hell/.

[86] Ahmari, *Dancing over Catastrophes*, 16.

camp in Gyöngyöspata. Because of this training camp, about 300 Roma women and children were evacuated by the Hungarian Red Cross.[87] Prime Minister Orbán initially dismissed the evacuation as a publicity stunt but, under pressure, sent 400 police officers to break up the camp. Eight members of Véderő were arrested for harassment, and the Roma population returned home. Shortly afterward, fights broke out with local Roma which resulted in three people being sent to hospital. In May of that year, the leader of the Outlaw Army presented this fight as a murder attempt by the Roma residents against their organisation. In June 2011, László Toroczkai referred to the injured members of the Outlaw Army as victims who were attacked by a group of Roma. Following the violence, the village of Gyöngyöspata elected a mayor from the Jobbik party.

Individual actors

In August 2016, Budaházy György and 16 other members of the group the Arrows of the Hungarians (*Magyarok Nyilai*) were sentenced for acts of terrorism, conducted between 2007 and 2009. Crimes committed by the group included attacks on offices of political parties and the personal homes of politicians involving bombs and Molotov cocktails. Additionally, they threw Molotov cocktails at two gay venues in Budapest just prior to the 2008 Gay Pride Parade. Budaházy was sentenced to 13 years in prison.[88]

On 26 October, 2016, a police officer was killed in the Western Hungarian village of Bőny. This is the very village where the Hungarian National Forum (*Magyar Nemzeti Arcvonal*; MNA), led by István Győrkös, had their headquarters and training ground. Founded in 1989, the MNA were a paramilitary and National So-

[87] Ibid.

[88] JAK. "György Budaházy Was Sentenced to 13 Years in Prison [Budaházy György 13 év fegyháyt kapott]," *Index*, 30 August, 2016. Accessed 29 July, 2017. http://index.hu/belfold/2016/08/30/budahazy_gyorgy_magyarok_nyilai_ugy_itelet/.

cialist organisation with a goal of preparation for armed conflict. The 76-year-old Győrkös opened fire on two officers of the National Bureau of Investigation who were searching his house. One officer died at the scene; Győrkös was also shot, but survived. It has now been revealed that Győrkös and the MNA had ties to Russia;[89] this seems to be only one of Russia's ties to the Hungarian far right. Győrkös now maintains that he had not intended to shoot the officer, but that the gun fired when he was shot and bent over. Ballistics experts are currently investigating. The MNA was disbanded in December 2016.

CONCLUSION

This report has sketched the landscape within which far-right violence occurs in Hungary in order to consider some of the causes and consequences of far-right radicalisation. We have drawn attention to some of the main extreme and radical Hungarian far-right groups that are currently active and outlined a number of recent violent and intimidatory incidents to demonstrate the types of actions that such groups are involved in. This report has shown how the traditional targets of the far-right hate speech and violence in Hungary, including Roma and Jewish people, continue to suffer violence but also that this takes place within a broader context of discrimination and exclusion, particularly in relation to Roma people. We have also pointed to an emerging Islamophobia and xenophobia, fuelled largely by rhetoric about Hungary's role in the European migrant crisis. We have shown the ways that both the mainstream and non-mainstream right are engaged in anti-migrant and anti-Islamic rhetoric that has also spilled over into violence against migrants by radical extremist groups.

[89] Byrne, Andrew. "Shootout Raises Fears over Russian Ties to Hungary's Far Right," *Financial Times*, 27 November, 2016. Accessed 29 July, 2017. https://www.ft.com/content/66d3993a-b0b8-11e6-9c37-5787335499a0.

The focus on far-right violence in Hungary is especially important because of the ways in which the mainstream and non-mainstream far right interconnect and interact with each other. Crucially, far-right violence in Hungary cannot be considered in isolation from the wider social and political context of the electoral popularity of the mainstream right. We have shown how these connections allow the promotion and, to some extent normalisation, of violent and radical far-right groups and ideologies. In order to tackle far-right violence and radicalisation in Hungary further work needs to be done to understand these interconnections and their effects.

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Emerging trends in the European political context, including the rise of nativist nationalism and the emergence of hostile public discourses on immigration, have brought ideas traditionally attributed to the far-right into mainstream discussion, in the process popularising and in some cases 'normalising' them in the eyes of particular audiences.

Especially since the turn of the new millennium, the discussion on the dynamics of, and threats from, violent radicalisation has received considerable fresh attention since a series of recent terrorist attacks testified to its highly disruptive and destructive potential. Taken together with the appreciable rise in instances of hate speech and in violent incidents against vulnerable groups (Muslim, Jewish, Roma communities; immigrants and refugees, etc.), it is now feared that we may be witnessing a much broader and profound 'reverse wave' towards more intolerance, exclusion, and normalisation of violent extremism in contemporary societies.

Hedayah
countering violent extremism

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